

The Mount Vernon Group to launch new Allston Green District



The Element, 65 Brainerd Road - Allston, MA

Mayor Thomas Menino and The Mount Vernon Company said a new way of sustainable living is being labeled as the Allston Green District. The Mount Vernon Co. will build and manage 500 apartment units and engage tenants with the city's first innovative "Green Tenant Declaration," which enables tenants to minimize their carbon footprints by reducing energy and water use, increasing recycling, and using bicycles and public transit.

The Allston Green District will encompass seven buildings owned by the Mount Vernon Co. within a two-block area along Commonwealth Ave., Griggs St. and Brainerd Rd. It will feature three new LEED Certified Silver, Gold and Platinum residential buildings, along with three existing residential buildings and one ground-level retail space that will be upgraded with new high-efficiency heating systems, super insulated walls and additional green practices.

"This is a unique project that truly engages residents in sustainable living," said Menino. "The Green Tenant Declaration is an innovation in the tenant-landlord relationship and will serve as a blueprint for the local Allston community and all of Boston in meeting our sustainability goals."

The Allston Green District represents one of the largest private rental housing initiatives in Boston designed to meet the standards of a new generation of residents and small businesses committed to sustainable living. The Green Tenant Declaration details what is expected of the tenant including minimizing energy and water use, separating waste into recyclables, organics and electronics and using alternative transportation. For its part, Mount Vernon has committed to providing the infrastructure for tenants to meet these expectations, report annually on building wide energy use, and incentivize tenants to reduce their energy by sharing the savings.

"We're thrilled to bring this groundbreaking residential initiative to Allston, injecting new energy and sustainable living practices into the neighborhood," said Bruce Percelay, chairman and founder of the Mount Vernon Co. "We hope this initiative will make Allston a leader in environmentally sustainable living and will reinforce Boston's role as a national leader in this emerging field."

The Allston Green District will begin to take shape this June with the completion of the first 100-unit residential building, called The Element, at 65 Brainerd Rd. The building includes a 2,000 s/f roof deck with recycled synthetic grass with a panoramic view of downtown Boston, a movie theater, a fully equipped club room, and 100 parking spaces with a car wash station.

In addition to The Element, plans for the District include a new 79-unit building to be named The Edge at 60-66 Brainerd Rd., which will begin construction in June of this year and is set for completion in August of 2013. The Edge will be at minimum LEED gold certified and innovative features will include sub-metering of electricity, heating and water in each unit, electric car charging station, PV solar panels on the roof.

Existing buildings in the District include The Gateway at 1298-1302 Commonwealth Ave.; The Matrix at 8 Griggs St., which will feature a new super-insulated façade; The Metro at 74-86 Brainerd Rd.; and, a ground-level retail space at 1304-1312 Commonwealth Ave.

The Mount Vernon Co. will provide District residents with single-stream recycling, organic waste and electronic waste bins, in addition to hosting annual contests for residents and businesses to foster innovative green thinking. The company also has committed to pursuing energy efficiency upgrades in its existing area portfolio, including new heating systems and high efficiency windows where needed.

Additional elements of the Allston Green District development will include:

- Solar power panels on at least one of the buildings
- Super-insulated floor-to-ceiling windows designed to maximize natural light
- A Hubway bicycle rental station and on-site Zipcars
- Hydration stations in new residential buildings to reduce plastic consumption
- Separate HVAC systems and water meters for each unit
- EnergyStar appliances
- Public art promoting the environmental theme
- Rooftop yoga classes
- Plantings along Brainerd Rd.

The development represents the latest success in the city's pursuit of sustainability improvements. The city of Boston was the first in the nation to adopt Green Building Zoning. The city also recently implemented a new "Stretch" Energy Code that requires new residential and commercial buildings to be about 20% more energy efficient than the state's basic requirements.

"This cutting edge development is not simply about green construction, it uniquely engages residents to be part of the solution by reducing energy and water use and embracing sustainable transportation alternatives," said Jim Hunt, Boston's chief of environment and energy. "I commend the Mt. Vernon Company for providing their residents with high performance housing and the tools necessary to Greenovate Boston."