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[Events](#) **Plan shows larger youth center**

By John Ruch June 22, 2007

JACKSON SQ.—A bigger Youth and Family Center is one of the key features in Phase 1 of the recently revised Jackson Square redevelopment plan, presented to the community Tuesday night at Bromley Hall.

"We wanted to have a big impact in Phase 1 and establish Jackson Square as a place," said Chrystal Kornegay, deputy director of Urban Edge, one of the members of the Jackson Square Partners development team.

Partners expects to begin Phase 1 construction in about a year. The total redevelopment of more than nine acres of largely vacant land will run at least through 2013.

Partners also announced that it finally has begun talks with the city's Public Works Department (PWD) about reconfiguring a road salt shed in the area, which is necessary for a large chunk of the redevelopment plan. The salt shed has been a question mark in the planning process for years.

"We've actually had really productive meetings" with senior PWD staff, said Jen Faigle of Partners member Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPNDC).

The salt shed issue was formerly key to siting a recreational facility that might include an ice rink. The plan now sites that facility on Columbus Avenue, facing the Youth and Family Center across the street.

Partners filed its overall redevelopment plan last fall. It includes 14 new buildings, hundreds of units of mostly affordable housing and thousands of square feet of storefront retail space. Besides the Youth and Family Center, community space includes a recreation center that may feature an ice rink.

At the June 19 meeting, Partners presented revisions to the plan made with community input and filed last month with the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). It also focused on Phase 1, which involves four new buildings.

Phase 1 is focused on the triangular empty lot at Centre Street and Columbus Avenue, next to the Jackson Square T Station, and the area directly across Columbus.

Right on the corner will be 225 Centre St., a five- to six-story mixed-use building. The Youth and Family Center will sit on another point of the triangle, facing north up Columbus. It is designed to wrap around an existing T ventilation tower to "kind of hide it," Faigle said.

Partners drew complaints last fall when it cut the Youth and Family Center's size from 40,000 to less than 20,000 square feet, citing financial feasibility. The size is now boosted to 30,500 square feet.

The center will be operated by the Hyde Square Task Force (HSTF), a Partners member. Jesús Gerena of the HSTF said staff members have been considering ways to make the facility financially sustainable. That includes a recent trip to a center in Washington, D.C. that is linked to an ice cream shop that both employs youths and helps fund the center. He cited it as a possible model for Jackson Square.

The 225 Centre building will feature 103 rental units, 35 of them affordable, and 16,700 square feet of retail facing on both streets and toward the T station. A surface parking lot will sit behind the building and face the T station.

"Is there a way to increase the number of affordable rental units at 225 Centre Street?" asked resident Richard Heath. "I'm very unhappy with only 35 very measley [affordable] apartments available. There has to be a way...for these two august neighborhood development corporations [JPNDC and Urban Edge] to find more apartments in that building" for low-income tenants, he said.

Bart Mitchell of Partners affiliate Mitchell Properties said that would be infeasible, but noted that about 50 percent of the housing in Phase 1 is affordable.

Urban Edge plans to renovate its Webb Building headquarters at 1542 Columbus and demolish a one-story section currently housing a state Department of Youth Services (DYS) secure facility for teens. A new mixed-use building would then be built on the site at 1562 Columbus, on the corner of Ritchie Street.

A new, stand-alone DYS facility will go behind the Webb Building. The new

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