

Construction Sites Rising (Finally) on the South Boston Waterfront

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Over the coming decade, Bostonians will witness that rarest of things in a centuries-old city: the birth of an entirely new neighborhood. Concrete and steel will spread across an enormous swath of the South Boston waterfront, eventually to be wrapped in a skin of shining glass. In time, the crews of construction workers will give what to a steady flow of neighbors and coworkers inhabiting a vibrant and wholly new district.

Political and financial obstacles have thwarted previous development on the waterfront, leaving it famously gaping and barren, a potential paradise sitting underutilized as a giant parking lot. But in the failures of the past lie today's opportunity. Waterfront land allows creation from the bottom up, without the messy immoralities of building atop someone else's memories (much less their historic commission protected architecture). Developers John B. Hynes III, Joe Fallon and John Drew are prepping dozens of buildings and more than 10 million square feet of shopping, hotel, office, and condo space, and ground has already been broken on Fallon's Fan Pier, an eight building project that hugs the harbor. Forget the West End: Bostonians haven't seen such activity since the swamps of the Charles were filled in the mid 1800s. We're changing our boundaries, updating our maps- a new frontier in an old city, ready for rediscovery.