

Highline Times

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Square construction begins

By **TIMES/NEWS News Services**

City residents are invited to celebrate the start of construction of Burien Town Square at a groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday, Oct. 10.

The event, which will include U.S. Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Jim McDermott as speakers, will be at noon on the Town Square site at Southwest 152nd Street and Fourth Avenue Southwest.

Murray and the rest of the state's congressional delegation have been instrumental in obtaining millions of dollars of federal funds for the project.

"We invite both current and future residents to come down and celebrate the start of this wonderful project," said Mayor Joan McGilton. "This is an important event in the history of our community. "

The public can come early and enjoy entertainment that will be provided by a Highline High School music group. There will be displays that show what Town Square will look like when completed in 2010. Food and drinks will be provided.

Town Square developer Urban Partners will provide information about the condominiums and retail space that will be in Town Square. Those attending will be able to put their names on interest lists for residential units and retail space.

Town Square is the centerpiece of the cultural and economic renewal of Burien's downtown that began with the reconstruction of Southwest 152nd Street in 2002-03.

Economic revitalization of the central business district has been a goal of the city council since Burien incorporated in 1993. City leaders have long envisioned a central gathering place in the heart of the community.

The city and its partners in the project, the King County Library District and Urban Partners, will invest \$138 million to create Town Square, which is planned "as a vibrant place to live, work, shop and gather as a community," according to a Burien news release.

Town Square will include more than 41,000 square feet of public space for community gatherings, cultural performances, art, and other events and celebrations.

About 43,000 square feet of new retail space will bring new shopping opportunities with about 200 new jobs to Burien.

Approximately 400 high-quality condominiums, town houses and live/work lofts for residents who want the conveniences of living close to the city's hub of activity will be part of this downtown center.

Anchoring one corner of Town Square will be a joint Burien City Hall/King County Regional Library building.

A public/private partnership, Town Square is being built without additional taxes from city residents.

Urban Partners, the private developer, will pay the majority of costs. The city and library system will share the cost of the joint city hall/regional library.

The city is funding construction of the public park, and streets and other elements of the infrastructure serving Town Square.

Initial work on Town Square will take place this fall inside the existing buildings with removal of fixtures and materials. Actual demolition of the structures won't occur until December or January 2007.

The park, city hall/library, and residential/retail building at the southwest corner of the site will be first structures to be built, with completion in 2008.