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County approves Related Group for \$307M redevelopment project

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The Miami-Dade County Commission unanimously approved the selection of a unit of Miami-based the [Related Group](#) for the \$307 million redevelopment of the Liberty Square housing project in Miami's Liberty City.

Related Urban would build 1,332 new housing units at Liberty Square and 216 units at Lincoln Gardens in nearby Brownsville. Both are low-income communities and the existing public housing stock is decades out of date.



Related Urban would redevelop the public housing at Liberty Square in Miami and build new... [more](#)

This would be the largest public housing project ever in Miami-Dade and it was heavily advocated for by county Mayor [Carlos Gimenez](#). The deal would be a ground lease between the county and Related Urban, which won a competitive bidding process against other developers.

Gimenez said the contract ensures that the county would not contribute more than \$46 million for the project and that a community prosperity fund would receive \$10 million up front, plus 20 percent of the project's revenue to spend on Liberty City's needs, such as small business development, first-time homebuyer assistance and scholarships. Of the 6,100 construction jobs created by the project, Gimenez said the developer promised that 30 percent would go to Liberty Square or public housing residents. These residents would also be hired for 70 percent of the post-development jobs.

"The only way to get out of poverty is through a good job and we will have good job for those that want them," Gimenez said.

Related Group CEO [Jorge Perez](#), who started his company building public housing before focusing on luxury condominiums, pledged that he would be fully involved in seeing that Liberty Square is a success.

"This is transformative," Perez said. "It's not just a neighborhood project. It's a citywide project. It can be a national model for urban rehabilitation."

[Albert Milo](#), head of Related Urban, said that no residents of Liberty Square or Lincoln Gardens would be displaced during construction. That's because people moving out of units undergoing rehabilitation could temporarily move into vacant units on the site. Most of those vacant units are currently not in habitable condition, so Related Urban would fix them.

Milo noted that 50 percent of the construction contracts would go to local small businesses under the deal.

Located at the northwest corner of Northwest 62nd Street and Northwest 12th Avenue, Liberty Square would have 640 public housing units, 120 affordable elderly apartments, 224 affordable family units, 288 workforce housing units and 60 home-ownership units that would be for either affordable housing or workforce buyers. The commercial and community components would include a 40,000-square-foot grocery store, 15,000 square feet of retail for local businesses, a community center with free WiFi, an Alonzo Mourning Family Foundation youth center, a YMCA family center, a [University of Miami](#) UHealth facility, a Jessie Trice Community Health Centers clinic, a facility for the Foundation for Sickle Cell Disease Research and job training programs with [Miami Dade College](#) and [Florida Memorial University](#).

Lincoln Gardens would have 105 public housing units and 111 affordable housing units.

Although she voted for the project, County Commissioner [Audrey Edmonson](#) sharply criticized Milo and the selection process for the project in her district. She said the concerns of people in Brownsville weren't given proper consideration and left the community fractured. She accused Related Urban of paying residents with money and giveaway items, such as sunglasses and massages, to support the project. The county's inspector general said during the meeting that it was investigating those allegations.

The project still requires approval from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Florida Housing Finance Corp.