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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

## Rite-Aid in Allston to close in spring; rival pharmacy CVS to open in fall

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 16, 2012 09:20 AM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Rite-Aid in Allston will close this spring. Rival retail chain CVS plans to renovate, add a drive-thru pharmacy and open in that space in the fall. The plaza also includes a Dunkin' Donuts, a hair salon, a tax preparation office and three vacant storefronts.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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Retailer CVS Corporation plans to open a new 13,000 square-foot convenience store with a drive-thru pharmacy in an Allston shopping plaza that will take over the space of an existing Rite-Aid store by the coming fall.

The Woonsocket, R.I.-based chain plans to begin renovations of the building within the retail plaza along Brighton Avenue by late spring, company spokesman Mike DeAngelis said by phone.

“We like that location because it’s near the corner of Brighton Avenue and Cambridge Street,” and also near where Brighton and Harvard Avenues intersect, making it “conveniently accessible to shoppers,” the CVS spokesman said.

Spokesman Eric Harkreader confirmed that rival pharmacy chain Rite-Aid plans to vacate the retail spot this spring after the company was unable to come to terms with the property’s landlord to extend its lease there.

The spokesmen for each of the two companies declined last week to provide more specific dates for their respective closing, renovation and opening plans. The Rite-Aid spokesman said he could not provide a more specific timeline for that store’s closure because those details have not yet been finalized.

The shopping plaza is comprised of five commercially-zoned parcels that together account for about 67,200 square feet, or about 1.5 acres, of property worth a combined \$4.15-million, city assessing records show. All five plots and their buildings are owned by Hallston Realty Associates, LLC, according to the city and state records.

According to filings with the state, that entity is owned and managed in part by two prominent developers John L. Hall II, president of Suffolk Downs race track, and Richard L. Friedman, whose company transformed the former Charles Street Jail into the luxury Liberty Hotel and who regularly hosted President Clinton and his family at his estate on Martha’s Vineyard in the 1990s.

Messages left for Hall at downtown-based Hall Properties, Inc., where he is a principal, and for Friedman at Cambridge-based Carpenter & Company, Inc., where he is president and COO, were not returned last week.

Norwood-based company HallKeen, which manages the Allston shopping plaza, also did not return messages seeking comment about the impending exit of Rite-Aid and arrival of CVS and about an adjacent building in that plaza that was demolished recently, about 15 months after the city labeled it among about [150 properties](#) fire officials [deemed unsafe](#) and just over three years after a [fire forced the closure](#) of the then-decade-old, flagship location of Brazilian restaurant chain Cafe Belo, which for a while afterward ran a small, take-out only location in another spot in that plaza.

And, prior to a [Globe review](#) about the local towing industry, neither Hall nor Friedman had returned phone messages for a story published last month that detailed the staggering number of vehicles that have been towed from the Allston shopping plaza where CVS plans to open.

That [Globe review](#) found that roughly 3,550 vehicles over a 31-month span from spring 2009 to fall 2011 were towed for illegally using the Allston shopping plaza's 63-space lot, more than twice as many cars than at any other address in Boston over that same timeframe. The second-leading location was at the South Bay mall in Dorchester, a lot with more than 30 times as many parking spots.

The CVS spokesman declined to comment last week about the lot's parking and towing situation since the retail company does not own or lease any of the plaza's parking area. Two of the plaza's current tenants, Rite Aid and Dunkin' Donuts, said through spokesmen in last month's [Globe story](#) that they do not request that cars be towed.

The [Globe's review](#) also found that Robert's Towing Inc., which owns an impound yard one mile away in Brighton, generated an estimated \$465,000 in cash from towing cars from the Allston shopping plaza, assuming the company collected the \$131 fee they charge per tow.

The towing company's trucks were watched by [Globe reporters](#) patrolling the customer-only parking lot, hiding with their lights off behind a building as they were hunting for cars to tow.

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

The former home of the flagship location of Brazilian restaurant chain Cafe Belo has been razed. Three years ago, a fire forced the closure of the then-decade-old restaurant, which for a while afterward ran a small, take-out only location in another spot in that plaza. About 15 months ago, the city labeled that building among about 150 problem properties that fire officials had deemed unsafe.



(Jessey Dearing / Globe file)

A Robert's Towing company truck hauled away a vehicle this summer from the parking lot in the shopping plaza along Brighton Avenue in Allston.

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