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ALLSTON BRIGHTON, FENWAY-KENMORE

## BU plans \$24m sports field, 350-space garage on west campus in Allston

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 14, 2012 01:04 PM

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(Courtesy: Boston University / Clough Harbor and Associates)

New Balance Field is scheduled to open in fall 2013, allowing for Boston University to increase its athletics offerings.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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Boston University announced today a \$24-million project to build a 110,000-square-foot athletic and recreational field and a 350-space parking garage underneath the field on property the school owns along the western edge of its campus in Allston.

Brighton-based shoe and athletic apparel company New Balance has pledged \$3 million to the university to help fund the project and it will be called New Balance Field, the school said.

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PHOTOS

### Boston University's sports field and garage



The new open-air sports space will sit atop a new subterranean parking garage. Together, the field and parking complex will replace an existing surface parking lot and an aging BU building on a block next to the school's Nickerson Field, school officials said.

The building at the corner of Babcock and Gardner Streets will be razed and the programs

it houses -- the university's band and ROTC programs, along with stored furniture -- will be relocated, as the university's news website [BU Today](#) first reported this morning.

The planned sports space design includes a surrounding brick façade that will have several openings. Stadium seating for 1,000 people is included along with a 500 square-foot press box.

Through filing its institutional master plan, the university has received zoning approval for the project from the city's redevelopment authority, a spokeswoman for the city said. However, before construction can commence, the project will still need gain approval through a large project public review process, which will begin once the school files a detailed project notification form with the redevelopment authority.

BU officials said the school hopes to break ground on the new sports complex, which will virtually double the university's on-campus field space, this spring, shortly after commencement, and expects to complete construction by fall 2013.

The added outdoor recreational space will allow the university to bring its women's field hockey program back to its own campus and add varsity sports, including a men's varsity lacrosse team that the school plans to debut at Nickerson Field the spring after the new field is built.

The field and parking garage that will be underneath the field are planned to encompass a block surrounded by Babcock, Gardner, Alcorn, and Ashford streets. The parking garage will be accessible from Ashford Street.

A small leafy park is planned to be installed on the field's western side.

"New Balance Field will be a major addition to our athletic and recreation facilities," said a statement from university president Dr. Robert A. Brown. "I am very grateful to New Balance for its leadership and support and to our alumni who have given generously to make this facility a reality. The field will benefit not only our student-athletes and the greater Boston University community, but it will allow us to expand our very successful NCAA Division I athletics program."

The school also said that, beginning with the 2012-2013 season, women's lightweight rowing will be added to the university's sports offerings marking the first time BU has expanded its roster of sports since 2004, when women's ice hockey was added.

The new, 2.5-acre field space will allow the university to also add men's lacrosse, which will play and practice at Nickerson Field, by elevating it from a club sport at BU to varsity status beginning with the 2013-2014. Once men's varsity lacrosse begins at BU, the total number of sports offered at the school will reach 25 -- 14 women's sports and 11 men's sports.

New Balance Field will also allow BU to increase the number of intramural sports, such as ultimate Frisbee, and to bring back club sports, such as the men's and women's rugby, that have had to play at sites off campus.

While the new field will be primarily used by women's field hockey and intramural sports, it will free up on-campus outdoor recreation space for other uses.

At BU, three varsity teams and nearly 200 intramural groups compete for coveted space at Nickerson Field.

Boston University's women's varsity field hockey team had to leave Nickerson Field in 2001 after a type of synthetic turf that is too soft and slow for the sport was installed, school officials said. The nationally-ranked squad has not played or practiced at its own school for the past 11 years. Instead, the team has had to travel to games and practices at one of two Cambridge schools, MIT or Harvard.

"This is another giant step forward for our program, with strategic investments in programs that are vital to the continued development of our department and the enhanced national visibility of the BU Athletics' brand," said a statement from BU Assistant Vice President and Director of Athletics Mike Lynch. "We are thrilled with this development and wish to thank all those who are helping to bring it to fruition."

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(Courtesy: Boston University / Cannon Design)

A photo of the existing block, surrounded by Babcock, Gardner, Ashford and Alcom streets, where the new

field will reside.



(Courtesy: Boston University)

A rendering of the new field.

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