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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

New Balance hopes to extend Guest Street, eyes new commuter stop

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 11, 2012 01:19 PM

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In red on the map above are a series of new roads New Balance hopes to add as part of its development proposal. The roads include an eastward extension of Guest Street connecting to Everett Street and a series of service roads looping around, and one cutting through, the northern development area. Outline in yellow are the proposed development sites.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

New Balance and Stop & Shop disclosed plans Tuesday night that aim to ease traffic around the shoe maker's recently announced development proposal in Brighton by extending Guest Street.

Under the proposal, Guest Street would continue eastward over adjoining properties owned by the businesses to connect the roadway to Everett Street.

New Balance officials also said that the company is "committed to looking at all options" to add a commuter rail station near the proposed 14-acre project along Guest Street.

The development plans call for a new company headquarters, hotel, sports complex and three office buildings along with retail, restaurant, parking and green space.

"We are prepared to do whatever it takes to get a commuter rail stop here at Everett Street," said Jay Rourke, project manager for the proposal's developer, [New Brighton Landing, LLC](#), a sub-entity of New Balance.

Representatives for New Balance presented the company's proposal Tuesday night before a crowd of more than 75 at the WGBH headquarters. It was the Boston Redevelopment Authority's first community meeting in the city agency's public review and approval process for the project.

Rourke, a former project manager for the Boston Redevelopment Authority who joined New Balance last July, said an ideal spot for a commuter rail stop

Toilets

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ary, a state transportation department spokesman said adding a
er rail stop in the neighborhoods: "is not off the table ... [but] presently,

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A few residents expressed concern Tuesday that New Balance's pro
construct 1.4 million square feet of building space could cause a str
traffic.

But, Guy Busa of Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, said that proje
hope to take number of short-term steps along parts of Market and
Beacon streets, including improved traffic signal timing, sequencing
addition of proper road markings, signage, turn lanes and right-of-
indicators.

And, New Balance also hopes to extend Guest Street about one qua
past where it ends at Arthur Street to connect it to Everett Street, h
current idea is to have Guest Street continue east by running along
perimeter of Stop & Shop's parking lot and through properties cont
grocer and shoe company.

Development officials said extending Guest Street could help ease e
traffic in the area by steering some drivers to use Braintree Street,
existing outlets that connect to Cambridge Street.

BILL O'Brien, a consultant for Stop & Shop, said that the supermarket

New Balance's overall plans and that the two companies have been collaborating on the idea of extending Guest Street throughout the development's design process.

New Balance spokeswoman Amy Dow said extending Guest Street is subject to approval from the city's transportation and public works departments.

Contingent upon that approval and the New Balance development scheduled in spring 2013, the Guest Street extension is expected to be completed within the next two years, O'Brien said.

More details about the development proposal:

Under plans released in early February, New Balance envisions one "health and wellness district" across a 609,000 square foot site that ranks among the top 10 largest proposed or ongoing development sites in Boston, according to a spokeswoman for the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The district, located next to the company's current headquarters, would overtake an area currently occupied by surface parking lots and low-level warehouse buildings.

Rourke, his colleague at New Brighton Landing Kevin Craig and David Manfredi of Elkus Manfredi Architects, said the project would include:

- A 130-foot-tall, 250,000-square-foot new company headquarters building that mimics the shape of a running shoe located on the north-east corner of the project area.
- Three 165-foot-tall office buildings with 650,000 square feet located on the north-west corner of the project area.
- A 205-foot-tall, 140,000-square-foot boutique hotel with 100 rooms on the south-east corner of the project area.
- A 95-foot-tall, 345,000-square-foot sports complex with an 80,000-square-foot hydraulic-banked track and field facility with 30,000 seats, a 125,000-square-foot, NHL-regulation ice rink with 1,000 seats, an 80,000-square-foot fitness club and 30,000-square-foot medical center. The facility may include venues for basketball, tennis and general recreation. It would be the only building south of Guest Street and the complex is intended to be accessible to the public and local residents with some aspects reserved through memberships and contracts.

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- About 65,000 square feet of ground-floor retail along each block of Guest Street. The retail space would include a New Balance store and restaurants that would be open past 9 p.m. and likely until 11 p.m.
- Nearly one acre of green space throughout the site.
- About 1,750 garaged parking spots altogether. About 1,550 spots would be in three levels of parking – one below-grade, one at-grade and one above-grade – underneath the headquarters building site. At least 200 more spots would be in one below-grade level of parking underneath the sports complex.
- An east-west service road looping behind the new development would run parallel to the turnpike and connecting to Guest Street at the development's western edge and, at the project's eastern edge, to Arthur and Guest streets meet. A north-south service road would cut in between the section of development north of Guest Street.
- Sidewalks along Guest Street would be 15-foot wide with tree wells and bike lanes and public on-street parking along Guest Street.
- Creation of about 400 full-time construction jobs and 600 part-time construction jobs.
- Creation of about 3,000 new, full-time jobs, including an about 20 percent increase in its current headquarters staff to 660 workers.
- New Balance's current 10-story headquarters would be vacated and that space out to new tenants. The existing Massachusetts Electric Construction Company building on the site's eastern edge would be razed. The site at 180 Guest St. houses one of the national electric company's two headquarters.

The project would be built in six phases starting with a three-month and site preparation phase scheduled to begin this coming fall and construction slated to start in 2013.

Portions of the below-grade parking garage structures north of Guest Street would be built during a second phase followed by construction of the new headquarters and the sports complex in the third phase. The fourth phase would entail the hotel construction. The remaining below-ground parking north of Guest Street would be built in the fifth phase. The sixth phase would see up to three office buildings built.

The plans were well-received Tuesday. Several residents at the mee

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development leaders to consider doing what they can to add a pede
walkway over the adjacent turnpike to help connect to the neighbo
of the highway. Rourke said that would likely be a longer-term pro

Concern was also raised that, if a new commuter rail stop were to l
nearby, it would need designated parking spaces to go with it. Rou
a potential station would not have its own parking, which would b
other commuter rail stops in urban settings. Instead, the station is
be accessed by people walking, bicycling, riding other public transp
those being dropped off, he said.

The area where New Balance hopes to develop is a key section of a
area of Brighton that the city, in conjunction with local residents a
representatives from local business stakeholders including New Bal
[over the past year.](#)

In three separate deals – [two last March](#) and [the third in October](#) -
the company's landholdings along Guest Street five-fold within sev
New Balance spent a total of \$33.8-million to buy the commercial
that it hopes to develop.

Next community meeting planned

A second community meeting on the project is scheduled for Mon.,
p.m. in the WGBH auditorium. The public comment period on the
planned development area filing will end Mon., May 7. For more in
on submitting comments, [click here.](#)

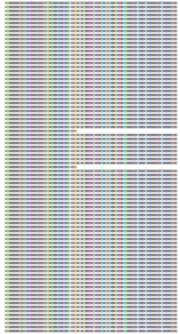
Another and separate public review and comment period will begin
Balance files a more-detailed project notification form, expected in
months.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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