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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

New Balance aims to open commuter rail station in 2014

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 9, 2012 12:41 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

New Balance hopes to open a commuter rail station in Brighton in 2014, which would make it the first completed component of the company's massive planned development.

Officials for the athletic apparel company [announced plans](#) this past summer to build and fully-fund the commuter rail station on the Framingham-Worcester line. But, until this week, the company had not said when construction of the station would start or end.

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New Balance spokeswoman Amy Dow said in an e-mail that design and permitting of the

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New Balance, new headquarter designs

station are expected to be completed in 2013 and that building the station would finish the following year.

Residents of Brighton and Allston have long pushed for a new commuter rail station in the community.

The company is also preparing to construct a new headquarters, sports complex, hotel, up to

three office buildings along with retail, restaurant and recreation space on Guest Street. The **half-billion dollar development** would build a 1.45 million square-foot “health and wellness district” across about 14 acres of property.

New Balance has said it hopes to start work on the development as soon as this fall and complete the six-phase project within about a four-year span. The headquarters, sports complex and the hotel are expected to be completed by 2015. The office buildings are expected to be built by 2017.

Meanwhile, the athletic apparel company recently bought two more properties nearby. But company officials they have no specific plans for either site and said the purchases are unrelated to their larger development plans.

Subsidiaries of the company spent a total of \$8.8 million in recent weeks on the latest acquisitions: two adjacent North Beacon Street properties that encompass a combined 1.9 acres.

One of the sites at 217 N. Beacon St. houses a Grossman’s Bargain Outlet. The other, at 221 N. Beacon St., is home to the nonprofit Vocational Advancement Center, which provides job training and related services to people with disabilities.

“We don’t have specific plans at this point,” New Balance spokeswoman Amy Dow said in an e-mail. “These are opportunistic purchases since these properties were for sale – usage may include current Guest Street area tenant relocation.”

A company sub-entity paid \$3.8 million on Oct. 25 to E.C. Barton & Company for the one-acre 217 N. Beacon property, Dow said, confirming a recent report by the [Boston Herald](#). In a separate deal on Sept. 28, another sub-entity of New Balance paid \$3.8 million to the job training organization to buy the 221 N.



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Beacon property, which is just less than one acre.

The job training center is leasing its current space from New Balance while it looks to relocate to a smaller location, hopefully nearby and within the next six months to a year, said Amy Bell, executive director of the Vocational Advancement Center.

“We definitely are still going to be in business,” she said Thursday. “This building was just way too big for us.”

Calls Wednesday to the outlet store and were answered, but officials who could provide further comment were not immediately available.

The New Balance spokeswoman said the purchase of the two properties was “not related” to the company’s ongoing development plans.

Asked if New Balance hopes to buy any other sites in the area, Dow said: “We continue to evaluate property that becomes available for purchase but are not actively seeking any additional acquisitions.”

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