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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

State to vote on plan for 'Boston Landing' commuter rail station near New Balance project in Brighton

Posted by Matt Rocheleau May 15, 2013 03:03 PM

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(MBTA)

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A key state Transportation Department panel voted unanimously Tuesday to

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A key state Transportation Department panel voted unanimously Tuesday to support a plan for new commuter rail station in Brighton, which New Balance would pay to construct and to operate for at least the first decade after the station opens.

The station would sit next to an area where the shoe company is building a massive, \$500 million development project.

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The station proposal was approved by the finance committee of the state agency's board of directors. It is scheduled to be considered for final approval by the entire Transportation Department board on Wednesday, May 22.

The station would be called "Boston Landing." New Balance officials have said previously they hope it would [open in 2014](#), which would make it the first completed component of the company's large development.

The station would include a single platform, centered between the eastbound and westbound tracks of the Framingham-Worcester line, said Mark Boyle, the MBTA's assistant general manager for development.

The conceptual plan envisions that riders would be able to access the station directly from Guest Street and Everett Street, Boyle said. The station would feature elevators and ramps to comply with accessibility standards.

The initial schedule would include two inbound stops at the station during the morning rush hour and two outbound stops there during the evening rush hour. Boyle said officials will evaluate the station's use to determine whether to increase or decrease how often trains stop there.

It has not yet been determined which [fare-pricing zone](#) the station will fall under, T officials said.

Construction is estimated to cost between \$14 and \$16 million, he said.

New Balance would pay to design and build the station. The company would also pay all maintenance costs for the first 10 years the station is opened. After

the first decade, the state and New Balance will reassess how maintenance costs would be paid for.

The T would also benefit from increased commuter rail ridership and revenue, Boyle said.

The station would be designed and built with oversight from the MBTA and state officials. If the state transportation board approves the proposal, a public community process about the project's design would likely begin within 60 days after approval, Boyle said.

New Balance would also pay to manage the community review process and for the T's staff and consultant costs associated with overseeing design and construction, officials said.

The company first announced plans for the station [last summer](#). At that time, the company planned to name the new station New Brighton Landing, which was the name of the limited liability company New Balance created to lead the area's development.

But the LLC changed its name to Boston Landing in March, according to filings with the state, and the proposed station name has changed with it.

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

There were once three commuter rail stops in Allston-Brighton, each along the Framingham/Worcester line. Those stations closed about five decades ago when the Massachusetts Turnpike was built. The neighborhoods also once had additional rail access on the A Branch of the MBTA's Green Line, which was shut down more than four decades ago. Today, the Green Line's B Branch serves parts of Allston and Brighton.

In 2009, the state's transportation department studied the potential for a new commuter rail station in Allston-Brighton, but officials said, even as recently as last spring, that plans for a station were not being pursued and one would not be built in the area for decades.

Boyle said the station New Balance is proposing will be a major benefit for the area.

“The new station will not only serve the New Balance campus, but it will also serve the Allston-Brighton community and it will serve other institutions in the area,” he said.

Boyle said officials from New Balance have said some area institutions plan to provide shuttle access to and from the station, but Boyle declined to name the institutions because he has not spoken to them directly.

He said other private companies have made significant contributions to help build and renovate local public transit stations, including plans for a developer to help pay to expand Yawkey Station and for another developer to help pay to build Assembly Square Station.

“This is another example of the critical link between public transit and economic development,” Boyle said.

In a separate, but closely-related project, New Balance plans 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](#) will create a 1.45 million square-foot “health and wellness district” across about 14 acres of property.

The company [began demolition](#) on the development last fall. New Balance has said it expects to 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.

The project has already been approved, but New Balance recently [requested city approval](#) to alter some of its plan for parking. The company wants to add a sixth floor to its existing Brighton Landing parking garage. The additional floor would hold about 250 parking spaces and would allow New Balance to eliminate the same number of parking spaces from in and around the new buildings the company plans to construct next door.

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