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Developer proposes 280 apartments, retail near Forest Hills Station in Jamaica Plain

Posted by Matt Rocheleau July 24, 2013 10:05 AM

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(Boston Redevelopment Authority)

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A development team is proposing to build 280 apartments, ground-floor retail

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A development team is proposing to build 200 apartments, ground-floor retail shops, outdoor open space and 185 parking spots in the Forest Hills area of Jamaica Plain, where other significant public and private projects being planned.

The 300,733-square-foot proposal for 3593-3615 Washington St. would be called "The Commons at Forest Hills," according to a copy of a [140-page plan](#) filed this week with the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Two companies are spearheading the development, The Brennan Group, a Beacon Hill-based lobbying firm, and the John M. Corcoran Company, a Braintree-based real estate, development and investment firm, according to a joint press release the development team issued Wednesday.

The plan calls for constructing four buildings on the 2.8-acre site ranging in height from three to five stories. Across the property, about one acre would be used for open space, including courtyards, private decks, a common roof deck and green space.

There would be a total of 7,960 square feet of space for ground-floor retail and commercial use, according to the plan.

The proposal includes 169 parking spots for residential use and another 16 spaces for commercial and retail use. All but about 30 of the parking spots will be in ground-floor garages under the proposed buildings.

There would be 225 bike parking spots for residents and 25 more spaces for bike parking for visitors.

Housing would consist of 44 studios, 115 one-bedroom, 111 two-bedroom and 10 three-bedroom apartments. Thirty-seven of the units would be designated as affordable housing.

The project would also include streetscape improvements such as new street trees, lighting and installation of a bicycle lane along Washington Street, according to the plan.

The developer will aim for the project to receive LEED Silver certification for environmental sustainability. It would be a smoke-free property, development officials said.

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Work on the project would start in the spring or summer of 2014 and take about two years to build, according to the proposal. It would create an estimated 325 construction jobs and 15 full-time jobs.

The site is next door to the Casey Overpass, which is [scheduled to be torn down](#) next year and replaced with a network of surface roads by the fall of 2016.

The proposed development site is also less than 800 feet from the Forest Hills MBTA station, which is due for improvements as part of the state's overpass replacement project. And, the site is nearby other private developments have been recently been proposed or built.

About a half-mile south, another developer [has proposed](#) building a 130,000 square-foot mixed-use development. Across the street from that property is a new 44,000 square-foot mixed-use [development](#).

Two summers ago, a developer filed with the city [a proposal](#) to build a five-building, 208,000-square-foot, mixed-use development on a 3.4-acre plot that would abut the Commons at Forest Hills project. The Jamaica Plain Gazette [reported in May](#) that that proposal, for 3521-3529 Washington St., is moving forward again after it had stalled for about a year when hazardous chemicals were [discovered](#) on the former car lot site.

The site at 3593-3615, where the Commons at Forest Hills would be built, was used for about 100 years by the former Hughes Oil Company for bulk storage and distribution of petroleum products.

"The giant above-ground oil tanks have been removed and an extensive environmental cleanup is nearing completion, including the removal of 30,000 tons of contaminated soil," the development team said in a release this week.

"The Commons at Forest Hills Station will be a beautiful and vibrant place to live with shops and amenities," said a statement from project spokeswoman Connie Kastelnik.

"It will be truly transformative, giving the neighborhood a more human feel, with increased pedestrian activity that will create its own sense of place and serve as a catalyst for future investment in this section of Forest Hills," she added.

The property, which abuts New Washington and Burnett streets and Orange Line and commuter rail tracks, is occupied by several partially-vacant, low-level industrial buildings and parking lots and is currently used for office space and to store and sell electrical equipment and building materials.

The property is owned by Cambridge-based Arborway Corporation, which bought the site in 1980 for \$350,000. It is now worth about \$1.6 million, according to city records.

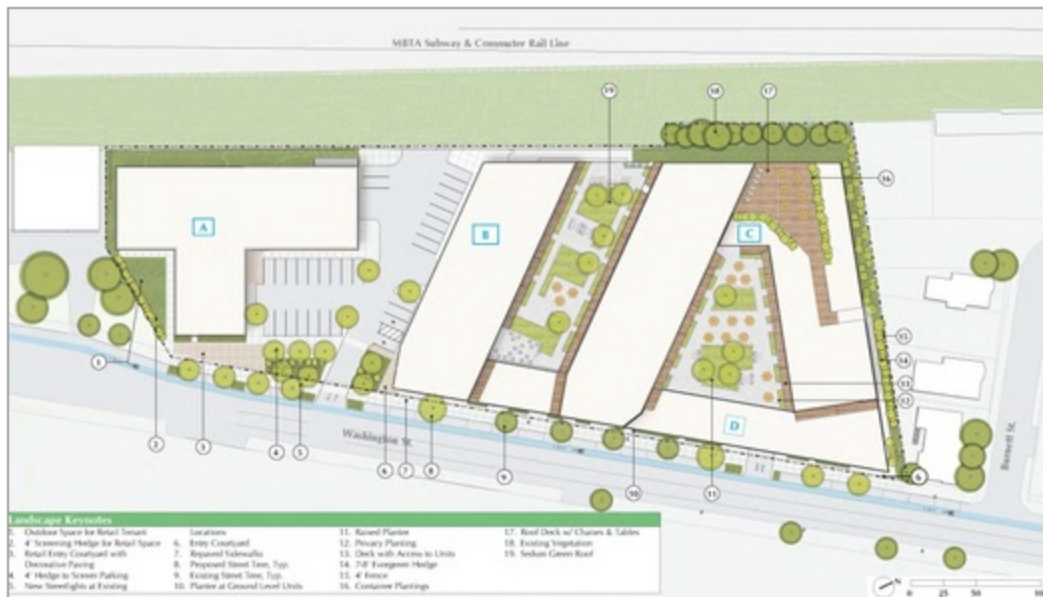
The detailed development proposal was filed with city officials this week by Forest Hills Arborway, LLC, an entity owned by Richard J. High, president of the John M. Corcoran Company. The project was first outlined in a letter from that entity to city officials last month.

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