



Old Colony Square well under way

By Nancy White / nwhite@cnc.com

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Cohasset —

From the dusty remains of an old boatyard and an aging strip mall has risen a mammoth of a building, currently just steel framing, but will eventually be a bustling commuter oriented shopping district and apartment complex.

Next door to the Greenbush commuter rail Cohasset station, the Old Colony Square development — a mixed-use development of restaurants, shops and apartments — is making progress day by day.

The developer, Connell Cohasset Greenbush LLC, an affiliate of New Jersey-based Connell Real Estate & Development Co., received approval from the Planning Board for the town's first — and only — transit oriented overlay district, or TOD. The mixed-use project got the green light in the fall 2007 and broke ground last fall.

Right now, the site has no signed leases for the roughly 32,000 square feet of first floor retail space. There is also a free-standing 3,400 building with drive-through available.

Matt Curtin of The Dartmouth Company, which is heading up the effort to lease the space, said they anticipate having some signed leases by the mid-summer. They are aiming to deliver signed leases for one-half to three-quarters of the space by the late fall.

"We're looking for service retailers," said Curtin giving examples of dry cleaners, quick serve restaurants, day spas and coffee shops. "Things that will serve the community."

Curtin said optimistically some retail could open before Thanksgiving, but it is more likely businesses would open in early 2010.

In addition to the first floor retail space are 16 residential apartments on the second floor. There will be a mix of one- and two-bedroom units; two of which will be considered affordable housing. According to the development's website, the "luxury residential apartments" feature open floor plans with lofts, hardwood floors, gourmet kitchens, gas fireplaces, balconies and a private fitness center.

The development includes a vehicle and pedestrian connection to Cohasset Station. There are other pedestrian-friendly design elements including bike racks, walking paths to the train station and convenient access to Wompatuck State Park via an adjacent bike path across the street. Traffic lights are also slated for the intersection to aid people coming in and out of the train station and shopping complex.

The project will be the town's first and only transit-oriented district project. The development has done its best to comply with the spirit of the TOD bylaw, as defined in the town's zoning bylaws and as encouraged by the state's "smart growth" initiative. The intent of TOD developments is to encourage sustainable living by locating a high-density, mixed-use center near public transportation. The idea is to take cars off the road and create pedestrian friendly living.

The complex is creating a brand-new entrance to Cohasset. The architecture, which received praise during the Planning Board's site plan review hearings, has varying roof heights, different storefront façades, cupolas and a clock tower centerpiece.

For more information about Old Colony Square, visit www.oldcolony-square.com.

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