



Coming soon! Old Colony Square is on the horizon

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Cohasset — Worried they had seen little action as to the construction of the shopping plaza in the Transit-Oriented District, the Planning Board asked the developers to come before them to give an update.

According to Planning Board Chairman Al Moore, the report was positive and the developers plan to begin work on the site this summer. The currently barren five-acre site, adjacent to the MBTA station right over the Hingham line, will be transformed into a flourishing mixed-use development with restaurants, shops and apartments.

The developer, Connell Cohasset Greenbush LLC, an affiliate of New Jersey-based Connell Real Estate & Development Co., brought forth plans for the town's first — and only — transit oriented overlay district, or TOD. The mixed-use project received site plan approval from the Planning Board in the fall.

The complex will create a new entrance gate to the Cohasset community. The shopping plaza, dubbed "Old Colony Square," will be a two-story complex with 33,000 square feet of first floor retail/commercial space in conjunction and 22,000 square feet of residential space on the second floor.

The project site was formerly housed a boat storage yard and a small retail center.

Architectural renderings of the project show varying roof heights, different storefront façades, cupolas and a clock tower centerpiece. During the site plan review, the developers indicated they would look for smaller retailers, not big box stores, to occupy the storefronts. Coffee shops, drycleaners, small restaurant chains, a fitness center and other independent retailers were offered as examples during the site plan review process.

A separate building situated closer to Chief Justice Cushing Highway (Route 3A) is slated for a 3,400 square foot bank with a drive-thru.

Negotiations with the MBTA for an easement between the two plots of land have delayed the project, said Moore in a phone interview. With that behind them, the developers plan to begin construction as early as this summer. Along with the shopping plaza, there will be an addition of a traffic light on Route 3A.

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.

Above the first floor retail in the main building will be 14 to 18 apartments, a combination of one- and two-bedroom units. Two of the apartment units will qualify as affordable under the state's Chapter 40B to comply with the town's inclusionary bylaw.

On site, the plans call for roughly 200 parking spots.

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

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