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Riverbridge North, LLC plans new 472,000 s/f mixed-use project to be constructed on 26 acres

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Riverbridge is a planned mixed-use village. The development site is located at the South Berlin rotary, where River Rd. West, Whitney Rd. and South St. converge. This 112-acre property will be constructed on 26 acres close to the roads and rotary, leaving 86 acres of undeveloped land surrounding the new village.

The site is just outside Rte. 495 in Metro West Boston. The "495 Corridor" has seen tremendous growth and development over recent decades. Rte. 290, which runs from the Mass. Tpke. (Rte. 90) south of the city of Worcester eastward to its termination at Rte. 495, passes by the Riverbridge site just before the 290/495 interchange. About 78,000 vehicle trips a day travel on Rte. 290 by the exit leading to Riverbridge.

Riverbridge is adjacent to The Solomon Pond Mall, a successful million s/f regional mall owned by Simon Properties, as well as 1.6 million s/f of R&D space on Donald Lynch Blvd.

On December 2nd 2009 the town meeting of Berlin adopted an Overlay Zoning By-law that attaches to the 112-acre site being redeveloped as Riverbridge. The overlay zone allows the following mix of uses on the 26 acres identified on the Plan as the "permissible building area".

- * 130,000 s/f of neighborhood commercial space (office, retail, restaurant, market, pharmacy, convenience store/gas station).
- * 115 apartments and condominiums (two may have three bedrooms, the balance are limited to 1 and 2 bedroom units).
- * Up to a 175,000 s/f Assisted Living Facility (maximum 90 independent living units and 75,000 s/f of space for administration, amenities, core area and nursing).

The Riverbridge Development Plan thus shows a well balanced mix of uses, with roughly 1/3 of the project making up the Assisted Living Facility, 1/3 the neighborhood-scaled commercial establishments, and 1/3 the apartments/condominiums.

Beginning with the 350+ "built in customers" the trade area of the Riverbridge commercial establishments is considered to be the central and northern parts of the town of Northborough, all of Berlin, the western part of Hudson, and the more proximate sections of Clinton, Boylston and Marlborough. Depending on the ultimate type of grocery, restaurants, gas station and liquor store, the trade area will also draw a measure of shoppers from the Donald Lynch Blvd. commercial area, and customers coming off Rte. 290.

The 10-mile radius numbers indicate a total population of 249,552, in 95,314 households, with a \$79,462 average household income.

On Donald Lynch Blvd. alone there are over 1.1 million s/f of retail, 1.6 million s/f of Class A office and R&D, two hotels, and a luxury apartment complex (Jefferson at Wheeler Hill).

Tenants at the Solomon Pond Mall include: Macy's, JC Penney, Sears, Regal Cinema, Bertucci's,

TGIF and over 100 specialty shops such as American Eagle Outfitters, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Coldwater Creek, Forever 21 and other well recognized retailers.

It is estimated that Riverbridge will generate a total new population of just over 350 people; approximately 52 in the 31 for sale condominiums, 180 in the 84 rental units and 120 in the Assisted Living Facility. When fully constructed, the Riverbridge businesses and facilities will employ over 440 workers along a spectrum of job types including business owners, office professionals, managers and support personnel.

In early May, Riverbridge will welcome its first commercial tenant, Nouria Energy Corporation of Worcester. Nouria, which owns over sixty convenience stores/gas stations, will operate a Shell station at its nearly completed 3,500 s/f convenience store at Riverbridge. The area has no gas stations for several miles in any direction. The store will feature a Dunkin' Donuts as well as a deli sandwich takeout area.

The Riverbridge development team that assisted in gaining the rezoning have designed and implemented the Nouria facility. These include Mike Dryden of Waterman Design Associates, Inc. of Westborough and Don Powers of Donald Powers Architects of Rhode Island. Together they have designed a beautiful New England styled building and canopy. The design includes a cupola that matches nearby structures, and an outside patio area.

Highland Development, LLC of Sudbury was chosen as the general contractor. Kevin Leverone, manager of Highland has a strong background in building gas stations and convenience stores. The contractor worked through this past harsh winter and brought the project in on time and within budget.

One of the early challenges facing Riverbridge was bringing water and sewer to the project. With the advancement of well water technology, under the direction of Skilling and Sons and Don Provincier Engineering LLC. Riverbridge now has enough on site pure water for the entire 472,000 s/f project. In these tough economic times Riverbridge appreciates the work of our financial consultants Goedecke and Company for their effort arranging both working capital and construction loans through Northern Bank from Woburn.

Worcester Business Development Corporation has served as an extra set of eyes in helping with the different challenges facing the development of a mixed-use project. Their knowledge of permitting and the trades in Worcester County has made them a true asset to the Riverbridge team.

Riverbridge, as always, wants to thank the people of Berlin for their continued support. During our application process we got to meet many of our new neighbors, and we have worked very hard to keep every promise we have made to the town, and to design a community that they will take pride in long into the future. The town has made us feel very welcome.