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## **Project of the Month: 238,000 s/f Cornerstone Square in Westford reaches 92% occupancy; to open in October**

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Keats' "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" is upon us, also signaling this autumn the long awaited opening of Cornerstone Square, now 92% leased with several great retail spaces still available for lease.

Developer Robert Walker speaks of the tremendous anticipation for Cornerstone Square to open. "Selling the vision we have for this project has been a long process, but as we near completion, the excitement for residents to walk these sidewalks, dine at these eateries and shop these stores, is wonderful," Walker said.

The site, comprised of 31 acres with 3,000 ft. of frontage at exit 32 at the intersection of I-495, Boston Rd., and Littleton Rd. (Rte. 110), was assembled "to provide the area with a 'town center' environment, with unique access to premiere commerce and every day needs suited for today's fast-paced, multi-tasking lifestyle," said exclusive leasing agent Dusty Burke of American Commercial Real Estate.

Walker, who has planned and built more than 40 commercial developments and achieved national attention for his innovative conversion of a portion of military base Fort Devens to a vibrant mixed-use "town center," emphasizes his passion for excellence. "We are very excited to open our doors in October with a visionary center of 13 gorgeous buildings and two miles of beautifully landscaped walkways for shopping, dining, professional and personal services, and social interaction."

Walker and Burke are thrilled about the tenants for Cornerstone. "As premiere anchor for Cornerstone, Market Basket attracts an international roster of familiar and loved stores including, Panera, Verizon, Petco, Five Guys Burgers, Great Clips, Marshalls and Homegoods which are conveniently positioned to attract a range of local and regional customers," said Burke. "Cornerstone has been selected by one of New England's premiere restaurateurs to open Euviva Cocina, the first in a new chain of contemporary Italian restaurants. Just as important are the talented local business people who bring their stores to Cornerstone including Westford Florists, Premiere Cleaner, Renaissance Jewelers, Elements, Riverbend [Kitchen Design and Appliances], Sweet Kiwi Frozen Yogurt, Dalla Nails, and a unique wine making store, Vintner's Circle, where customers make their own brand of wine."

According to Burke several fabulous retail locations at Cornerstone are now available for lease. They include a 3,100 s/f end cap next to Market Basket, 1,000-4,000 s/f at or facing the main entrance, 1,000-5,000 s/f between Petco and RiverBend, and a 2,500 s/f free-standing bank branch pad or building with double drive-thru featuring outstanding access and visibility from the intersection at Boston and Littleton Rds.

Cornerstone Square has approximately 100,000 vehicles passing by per day on its abutting

roadways of I-495, Boston Rd. and Littleton Rd. (Rte. 110). Walker and Burke identified the site as a premier retail/office location years ago and began preliminary steps to develop the site in 2007. The project broke ground in the late fall of 2011, and has been progressing on schedule to meet its expected opening of next month.

Walker said his confidence in the project's success stems from three factors: solid residential demographics, an impressive corporate high tech presence in the area as well as, unparalleled access and convenience.

Large companies such as IBM, Red Hat, Juniper Networks, Comcast and Goodrich are expanding and building a strong base in the area. With the growing business presence, Cornerstone Square will enhance the local attraction in the region. Westford is home to a high income, well-educated population, with great public school systems and increasingly popular retail facilities. The proximity of the Cornerstone Square restaurants and businesses will be an important aspect of the increasingly popular Westford community.

Because of this regional high tech commitment, Cornerstone Square has been designed to accommodate and attract medical and dental facilities which require a world class commerce center with exceptional parking and convenience for their patients. Family Eye Care, for example, will open at Cornerstone an outstanding medical facility to provide the region with complete eye care from retail through surgery. Similarly, Westford Veterinary Hospital will be opening in a regional state-of-the art facility at Cornerstone. "We outfitted portions of Cornerstone to accommodate professional services for all who live and work in the region," said Walker.

The Cornerstone Square center is designed to create a "modern village" concept to support the diverse employment and consumer needs of the local community. Designed by Joseph D. LaGrasse & Associates, Inc., the architectural style of the project is meant to evoke the permanence of traditional New England structural design, along with the dynamic qualities of modern day retail and office space.

It boasts a diverse group of tenants, and although the floors, walls and ceilings remain unfinished, the building will be detailed in a contemporary "Federalist" style, with the structures predominantly constructed in brick exterior with precast stone foundations and accents. The window and door openings will be enlarged to highlight each retail venue as an inviting storefront showcasing the activities within.

The best part about Cornerstone Square is Walker's commitment to "Buy American." Republic Building Contractors, Chapman Construction, and the engineering firm, Hancock Associates, are under a strict mandate from Walker to buy and utilize American made and manufactured products (barring significant cost increase or availability issues). "To date, the project is over 90% American made and manufactured," said Walker. "It's important that we support utilizing products in our own country and we've found that by asking our contractors to do this, it's one way we can contribute to improving our economy."