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Packard Dev. plans \$45m shopping ctr. on former Westinghouse Elec. site

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Packard Development of Newton is planning to build a \$45 million shopping center on a 41-acre parcel of land at the site of the former Westinghouse Electric Corporation plant on Page Blvd. Packard anticipates about 20 stores, including large format retailers and discount department stores, small neighborhood convenience stores and two restaurants, according to a company spokesperson.

The company is affiliated with New England Development.

Brian Connors, deputy director of economic development, said the project is a large private investment in the neighborhood, and will result in significant tax revenue to the city. The site is zoned Industrial A, allowing retail use without a special permit, but the process includes local and state reviews, he said.

"We want to be sure it is a project that is designed well and fits into the neighborhood, and is something the neighborhood is happy with."

The project includes the demolition of all buildings on the property. The demolition will include two rooftop radio towers that date back to the 1920s. WBZ Radio was founded at the Westinghouse plant in 1921. It was the first commercial radio license granted specifically for broadcasting in the country, according to WBZ's web site. It is now based in Boston. Ralph Slate, chairman of the city's Historical Commission, said he is not aware of any historical restrictions related to demolition.

The shopping center will be developed under a long term lease with the current owner, Deborah Black, a vice president with New England Development.

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