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Advance moving forward with town center in Bridgewater after key local approval

By Joshua Burd, April 21, 2016 at 8:25 AM

Advance Realty says it has received zoning approval to redevelop 62 of the 110 acres at the former Sanofi U.S. research campus in Bridgewater, paving the way for a mixed-use town center that will complement the suburban commercial space at the site.

The developer can now move forward with a plan to build 400 luxury apartments and several other “amenities of urban life,” including restaurants, a wellness center, a grocer, entertainment, shops and outdoor recreation, according to a news release. After receiving zoning approval from the township last week, Advance now plans to seek site plan approval to raze eight unused buildings this fall in order to begin construction on the town center.

Construction is expected to take roughly two years.

“We’re going to take what was an insular, single-tenant corporate campus and transform it into a central point for gathering, innovating, living and having fun,” Peter J. Coccoziello, Advance Realty’s founder and CEO, said in a prepared statement. “It’s a project that will change the face of New Jersey, and we are excited to move forward.”

Advance, in partnership with CrossHarbor Capital Partners, acquired the campus in 2013 from global pharmaceutical company Sanofi, which had relocated its research and development arm to the Boston area. The company left behind a sprawling campus off I-287 that included 800,000 square feet of modern laboratory space that was only about a decade old, along with older buildings that could be knocked down to make way for a mixed-use component.



Since then, the Bridgewater-based firm has been working with the township on the zoning changes that are needed to add the residential space and other amenities. In the meantime, it has been refilling the commercial space with a host of life science tenants, while rebranding the park as the New Jersey Center of Excellence.

Advance and CrossHarbor reached a major milestone last fall, when Nestlé Health Science announced it would relocate and bring more than 250 jobs to the Bridgewater site. The company now plans to bring personnel from around the world to a 180,000-square-foot space.

The commercial component is now about 70 percent leased, Advance said. It has managed to attract new users due in part to its location — the campus sits off or near Routes 202/206, 22 and 28, in the heart of the state’s life sciences corridor, while being three miles from I-78.

“Advance Realty and Bridgewater Township have a shared vision to create an interconnected community of residents, workers, visitors and globally-recognized leaders in life sciences, hospitality and retail at the New Jersey Center of Excellence,” Coccoziello said. “Doing so will open new channels for economic growth for the State of New Jersey.”