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May 25, 2010

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Last updated: May 21, 2010 08:18am

Hotel, Retail Construction Begins at Rowan Boulevard

By Alyson Grala

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Rowan University Student Housing

GLASSBORO, NJ--The next wave of construction on master redeveloper Sora Holding's \$300-million Rowan Boulevard revitalization project is about to get underway as a Marriott Courtyard hotel and conference center and the first two mixed-use retail buildings begin construction in early September.

The five-story hotel will offer 100 rooms, including eight suites and a total of 2,654 square feet of meeting space. There will also be an adjacent 6,000-square-foot restaurant. Construction is expected to wrap up by winter 2011. The first mixed-use building will have 22,000 square feet of retail space on its ground floor and housing and multipurpose space for Rowan University honors students on its upper floors, while the second building will have 10,000 square feet of retail and a 1,218-square-foot multi-level parking garage serving the hotel, retail shops and university students.

In August 2009, construction was completed on Rowan Boulevard's Phase I, with new Rowan University student housing, and construction is currently underway on a 36,000-square-foot Barnes & Noble Collegiate Superstore--which should be completed by November 2010--and Phase II of student housing for another 324 students--which will wrap up in early August. "The boulevard is destined to be a new retail hub for thousands of Rowan University students and hundreds of thousands of residents in Glassboro and the surrounding region," says Greg Filipek, a principal with Sora.

Along with projects currently underway, Rowan Boulevard will feature an additional three mixed-use retail buildings: a 38,000-square-foot space with market rate housing above; a 40,000-square-foot asset with senior housing; and a 22,000-square-foot building, also with residential space. Construction will begin in late 2010 or early 2011. When complete, the boulevard will offer a total of 185,000 square feet of retail space, 40,000 square feet of office and 307,000 square feet of residential.

Rowan Boulevard is expected to attract as many as 60 new retail stores, boosting the local economy by more than \$48 million annually when it wraps up in 2012. More than 70,000 square feet of retail space has already been reserved.

In addition to Sora's \$300 million investment in Rowan Boulevard, an additional \$3 million worth of roadway construction was funded by NJDOT and federal sources as well as a \$1-million Rowan University grant provided to the Borough of Glassboro for planning and preconstruction expenses.

Rowan Boulevard is the cornerstone of a much larger revitalization encompassing a total of 81 acres in several adjoining neighborhoods in Glassboro's downtown. Overall, the project is expected to feature more than 125 new retail stores with the potential of infusing the local economy with \$225 million in annual sales when fully completed.

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