

The Land Use Committee (the “Committee”) held a public hearing on September 25, 2018 and working sessions on November 13, 2018, December 11, 2018, and January 15, 2019 on these petitions. This memo reflects additional information received by the Planning Department as of March 7, 2019. A current schedule of meetings on these petitions is also attached (**Attachment A**).

Project Update

The petitioner has provided revised plans and updated studies for review by the Planning Department and its peer reviewers. The proposed modifications include changes to the massing of certain buildings, the amount and location of open space, the location of the community building and playground, and the amount of proposed retail space.

This memorandum is focused on the proposed revisions related to Site Design and Open Space and Housing and Economic Impacts. The petitioner has also submitted revised materials related to Transportation aspects of the project; these will be discussed at the meeting currently scheduled for April 9, 2019.

Site Design and Open Space

As discussed in its letter dated February 6, 2019 (**Attachment B**) the petitioner has identified certain modifications to the proposed project made in response to comments received at previous hearings on Site Design and Open Space and on Housing and Economic Impacts. These changes include:

- Parking for Buildings 5 and 6, formerly above grade, has been pushed below grade allowing the massing of these two buildings to be broken down into smaller, individual buildings separated at grade by “residential scaled laneways,” a change that also creates additional open space within these blocks and opportunities for circulation.
- The size of Building 4 and the surface parking lot behind Building 4 have been reduced;
- The total number of parking spaces has been reduced from 1,953 to 1,595;
- The “Mobility Hub” has been relocated to the center of Building 7;
- The Village Green has increased in size as previously proposed parking and general vehicle access along its perimeter has been eliminated;
- The community building and playground area (which has been expanded and is now identified as a “neighborhood park”) have been relocated adjacent to the Greenway near the intersection of Pettee Lane and Main Street;
- A location for a dog park has been identified in the north end of the site west of Tower Road Extension.

The petitioner has also provided written responses to previous comments by the Planning Department and its consultant peer reviewer, the Horsley Witten Group (**Attachment C**),

The proposed revisions have been reviewed by the Planning Department and Horsley Witten with the understanding that at this time the Petitioner’s proposed revisions are a partial response and that the petitioner shall submit more detailed plans at a later date. Horsley Witten offered preliminary comments (**Attachment D**) based on its review of the updated materials, specifically responding and

keying its observations to the petitioner's above-referenced response. While noting that more information from the petitioner is required for detailed review of the revised design, the peer review generally notes that the changes appear to be significant improvements to the design.

For its part, the Planning Department offers the following comments in response to the revised conceptual site plan and proposed revisions:

- The proposal to locate the parking in Buildings 5 and 6 entirely underground results in a dramatic improvement to the massing and permeability of these buildings and presents exciting opportunities for additional open spaces. This change also improves circulation and helps solve the problem of locating typical back of house uses (trash, loading, garage entrances, etc.) in buildings that previously had no back side;
- The revised location of the Mobility Hub helps mitigate concerns that Building 7 would be oriented more towards the interior of the site and ignore Needham Street;
- The increase in open space and relocation of the community building and playground also appear to be positive changes.

The Planning Department concurs that additional details are necessary to fully assess the revisions, and recommends the petitioner focus on details such as pedestrian circulation through the site and between the parking garage and the rest of the site and the design and intended use of the open spaces and community space. Given the reduction in on-site parking spaces, the Planning Department also recommends the petitioner provide details of how the shared parking will operate and be managed. The Planning Department looks forward to reviewing the plans as they are further refined.

Housing and Economic Impacts

The petitioner has provided written responses to previous comments by the Planning Department and its consultant peer reviewer, RKG Associates (**Attachment E**).

The revised project plans change modify the project's development program. While the proposed office space remains unchanged (180,000 square feet in the existing mill building), the number of dwelling units has been reduced by 22, from 822 to 800 (a decrease of 2.7%), and the amount of retail space has been reduced by 70,200 square feet, from 185,200 to 115,000 square feet (a decrease of 40%).

The Planning Department notes that in its initial peer review report, RKG estimated that Northland's original proposal would have created approximately 111,400 square feet of actual net new retail beyond that already extant at the site. As such, the reduction of retail space in the current proposal by 70,200 square feet means that the project would create a total of approximately 41,200 square feet of net new retail space. Also, as indicated by the petitioner, 40,000 square feet of the proposed retail space is currently foreseen to be used for up to 6 restaurants.

The economic and fiscal impacts of the proposed changes to the project are analyzed in the attached review by RKG (**Attachment F**). Of note, RKG notes that the new iteration of the project could be expected to result in a positive fiscal impact of \$1.07 million annually, somewhat lower than the \$1.21 million shown in the petitioner's revised report dated February 13, 2019 (**Attachment G**), with the difference likely attributable to mathematical discrepancies and/or differences in projected per unit residential valuations.

The Planning Department notes that while the proposed reduction in retail space may reflect concerns about the amount of proposed retail space and its future viability, it recommends the petitioner explore options to replace the eliminated retail space with other commercial uses such as small and medium office spaces, lab space, coworking space, arts/theater/entertainment uses, and boutique hotel uses, with every reasonable effort being made to provide active uses at the ground floor of buildings.

Additionally, the petitioner should provide information regarding any changes to the residential unit mix or affordability levels.

As noted above and in the attached schedule for the Land Use Committee's review of the rezoning and special permit petitions, the next public hearing session for the proposal is scheduled for April 9, 2019 and will be focused on revisions and responses to comments on the Transportation aspects of the petitions.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A	Current schedule for Land Use Committee public hearings (dated February 8, 2019)
Attachment B	Petitioner project update letter, February 6, 2019
Attachment C	Petitioner's response to Horsley Witten initial peer review and Planning Staff comments (Northland), dated February 2019
Attachment D	Horsley Witten updated peer review re revised site and open space plans, dated March 7, 2018
Attachment E	Petitioner's response to RKG initial peer review re fiscal and economic impacts (Northland), dated February 2019
Attachment F	RKG updated peer review re revised fiscal and economic impacts, dated March 1, 2019
Attachment G	Petitioner's memorandum re Project Revisions and Response to RKG Peer Review Comments, Fiscal Impact Analysis (Fougere), dated February 13, 2019
Attachment H	Petitioner's Summary of Economic Impact Analysis (Landwise), dated February 8, 2019

ATTACHMENT A

TENTATIVE LAND USE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Updated February 8, 2019

NORTHLAND NEEDHAM STREET/OAK STREET

Special Permit # 426-18 and Request to Rezone #425-18

Land Use Committee Date	Topic	Description
9/25/2018	Project Overview	Applicant to introduce project and committee to discuss schedule.
11/13/2018	Site Design and Open Space	Review of site plan, including placement of buildings, roads and open space as well as sight lines and shadows.
12/11/2018	Housing and Economic Impacts	Review of proposed residential and commercial program, including: analysis of the number of housing units, including affordability levels; the commercial mix; and the overall fiscal and economic impacts of the proposed project.
1/15/2019	Transportation	Review of the proposed internal street network and circulation including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and analysis of the traffic impacts, shared parking proposal, and transportation demand management strategy.
2/12/2019	Project Update	Preview of project revisions and discussion of schedule.
3/12/2019	Site Design and Open Space/ Housing and Economic Impacts	Review of revisions and responses to comments regarding Site Design and Open Space and Housing and Economic Impacts.
4/9/2019	Transportation	Review of revisions and responses to comments.
5/14/2019	Architecture and Design Guidelines and Sustainability and Stormwater	Review of design guidelines that will regulate future detailed architectural design of the proposed buildings; review of the sustainability report and stormwater mitigations.
6/11/2019	Mitigations and Conditions	Discussion of necessary mitigation measures and proposed conditions.

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February 6, 2019

Gregory R. Schwartz, Chairman
Land Use Committee
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459

Re: Northland Needham Street Petitions # 425-18 and #426-18

Dear Chairman Schwartz:

Northland is grateful to the Committee for the time and attention spent on its very important project on Needham Street. We understand as Mayor Warren originally said that this is a “generational opportunity”, so the Company intends to work to make the project the best it can be.

An important part of doing that is listening to the Committee’s comments and the comments of the peer reviewers and the community and adapting to what is heard.

We have presented to you on September 25, November 13, December 11 and January 15. Immediately after the November 13 meeting on Master Planning our architects from Cube 3 and Stantec together with Keith O’Connor of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM) in New York reviewed and evaluated the comments of Horsely Witten Group and the Land Use Committee at that meeting.

After the December 13 meeting the team together with placemaking/retail consultant Streetsense, Inc. of Washington D.C. undertook a similar review of programming and in particular the commercial elements based on the site plan comments and the comments of RKG Associates and the Committee.

In both cases the team was asked to review the Northland master plan with attention to the most significant comments we heard. Our notes indicate those comments and the source of the comments were:

Site Design – November 13

- Buildings 5 and 6 frontages were long, and we should look at breaking them up to provide both E-W and N-S access (Planning, Horsely Witten,

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Urban Design (Kaufman, Doolin), Councilor Auchincloss, Councilor Lipof, Councilor Markiewicz, Councilor Crossley)

- Building 4 – not enough access to the Oak Street Park (Planning)
- Building 7 – mid-building permeability (Horsely Witten, Councilor Downs, Councilor Kelley, Chairman Schwartz, Councilor Laredo)
- Building 4 – recommended parking underground (Horsely Witten)
- Village Green – width of driveways around 4 sides (Horsely Witten, Urban Design (Dooling), Newton Highlands NAC (Lichtin), Councilor Greenberg, Councilor Downs, Chairman Schwartz)
- Location of Community Building (Planning, Horsely Witten, Newton Highlands NAC (Lichtin), Councilor Greenberg)
- Parking – both the number of parking spaces and the above ground garages in Buildings 5 and 6 were discussed (Horsely Witten, Councilor Auchincloss, Councilor Downs)

Commercial Spaces – December 11

Many of the comments at the December 11 hearing dealt with programmatic proposals including affordability, schools and the proposed tax revenues from the project rather than physical planning. However, certain comments from the City's RKG peer review, particularly comments as to programming, were also reviewed by Northland's planning and design team including retail and marketing consultant Streetsense, Inc. For example the RKG report of December 3, 2018 states on page 19:

“Nonetheless, there appears to be a mismatch between the proposed retail square footage at Northland and RKG's estimated supportable new retail square footage... It is also possible that the first floor retail space could remain vacant at Northland if sales are not high enough to support the quantity of retail proposed.”

In conclusion RKG stated also on page 19 and 20:

“RKG believes that the amount of retail proposed exceeds the spending within a reasonable drive time of the site.”

“RKG's estimate of supportable retail is substantially less than what is proposed at Northland Newton. RKG has concerns that this space may sit vacant if built or result in sales transfer from other commercial activity centers across the City.”

On review of the RKG report the Planning Department said in its December 7 memo on page 8, “...staff recommends the petitioner explore diversifying the proposed commercial space...”.

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Northland has taken each of these comments seriously as constructive and thoughtful analysis. Northland and the design team have spent the past several weeks developing a revised plan to respond directly to the comments of the Committee, Planning and the peer reviewers. An overview of the revised plan is attached as “Key Plan Refinements” contrasted with the prior plan entitled “Original Proposal”. The refinements are focused on six ideas:

- Permeability: Buildings 5 and 6 have been split into 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B and 6C with “Laneways” through Buildings 5A and 5B and 6A, 6B and 6C. Building 4 has a smaller footprint to increase permeability from the Oak Street Park to the Village Green.

Permeability of Building 7 has been enhanced by moving the Mobility Hub to the center of the building. Since the Mobility Hub will be uniquely positioned to have pedestrian traffic going through it as a public space with access on Needham Street and Unnamed Street, the Mobility Hub itself will serve as the permeability of the building.

- Parking: Parking formerly in the Building 5 and 6 structures has been placed below ground in a two level parking structure and reduced by over 20% from 1,953 spaces to approximately 1,595. Limited parking remains on the surface.
- Neighborhood Playground/Community Building: The Neighborhood Playground and the Community Building (now Building 13) have been moved from Tower Road south to a new site close to the Depot and the Greenway parking area for ease of public access.
- Village Green: Main Street has adjusted to create a more distinct entry angle and add area to the Village Green.
- Open Space: Open space is increased.
- Commercial Spaces: The retail spaces are reduced from 185,200 net to 115,000 net. The retail space is a significant factor in the traffic calculations.

The building reconfiguration has also led to a reduction of units from the previously proposed 822 units to 800 units. However, Northland has committed to maintain affordability at 123 units as previously proposed.

There is a lot of work to be done to bring all the architectural detail and civil engineering for the revisions to an appropriate level for review by Planning and the peer reviewers. It is our hope that our schedule for review can be:

- February 12 – we will present these plans with comments from Brian O’Connor from Cube 3. We understand that although Planning has seen copies of the plans attached to this letter, they

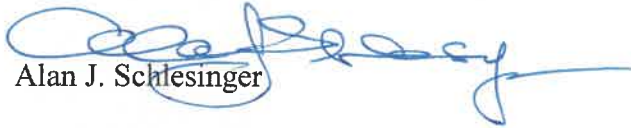
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February 6, 2019

will not have had the opportunity to review them in any meaningful way, nor will the peer reviewers have had an opportunity to review the revisions.

- By February 15 we intend to submit revised reports as to site planning, fiscal impact and traffic in form sufficient for review by the City's peer reviewers
- On March 12 at the scheduled hearing date we will present the plans in a more formal manner and we hope to be able to receive and respond to the revised peer review comments on planning, fiscal and traffic.

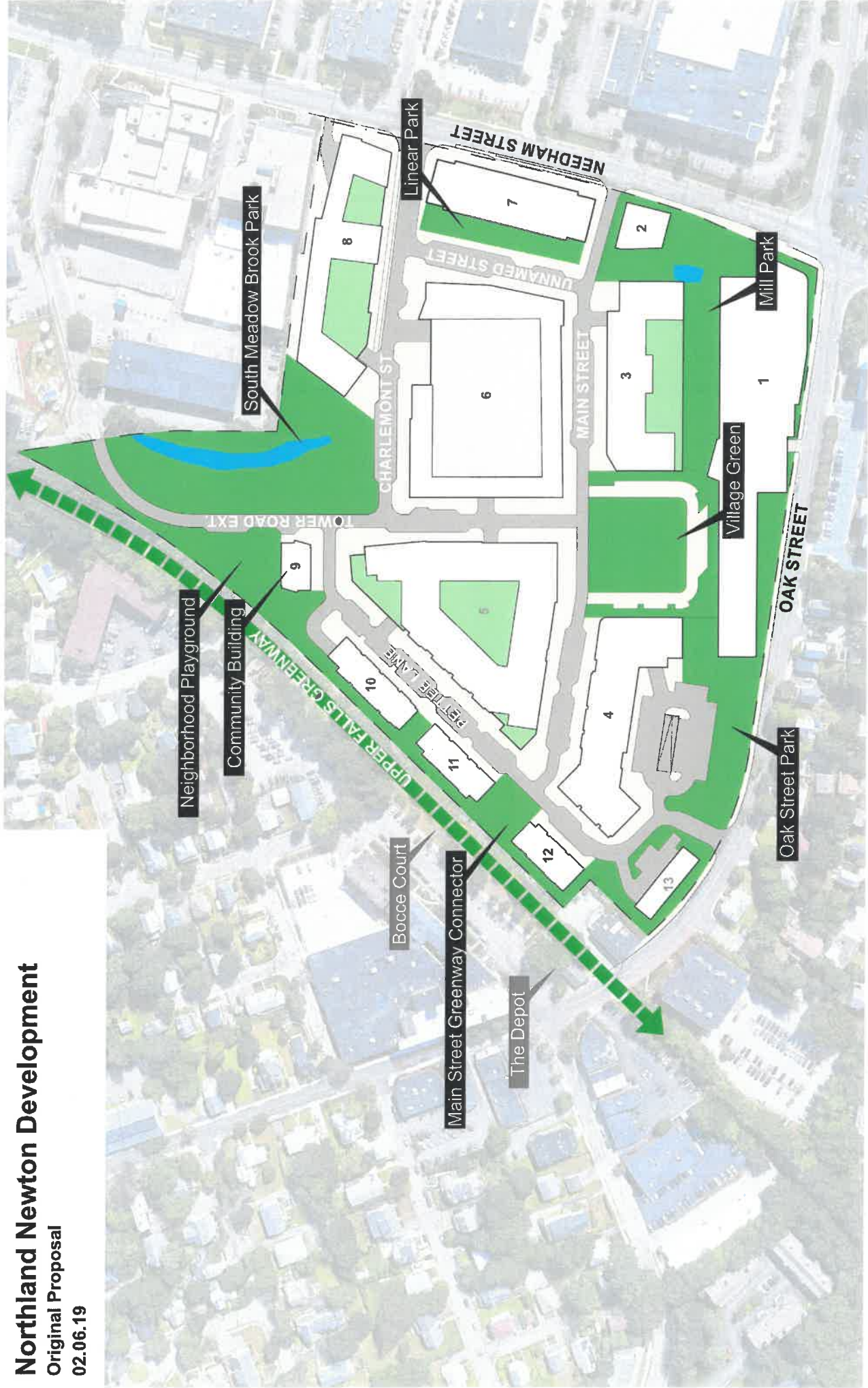
We are hopeful that on March 12 we will be able to get a sense as to whether the design changes have addressed the Committee's concerns, and we hope to be able to move from there to the discussion of sustainability and engineering, revisiting transportation to the extent necessary and moving forward with the Committee's deliberations.

Very truly yours,


Alan J. Schlesinger

cc: Land Use Committee
Planning Board
Planning Department
City Clerk

Northland Newton Development
 Original Proposal
 02.06.19

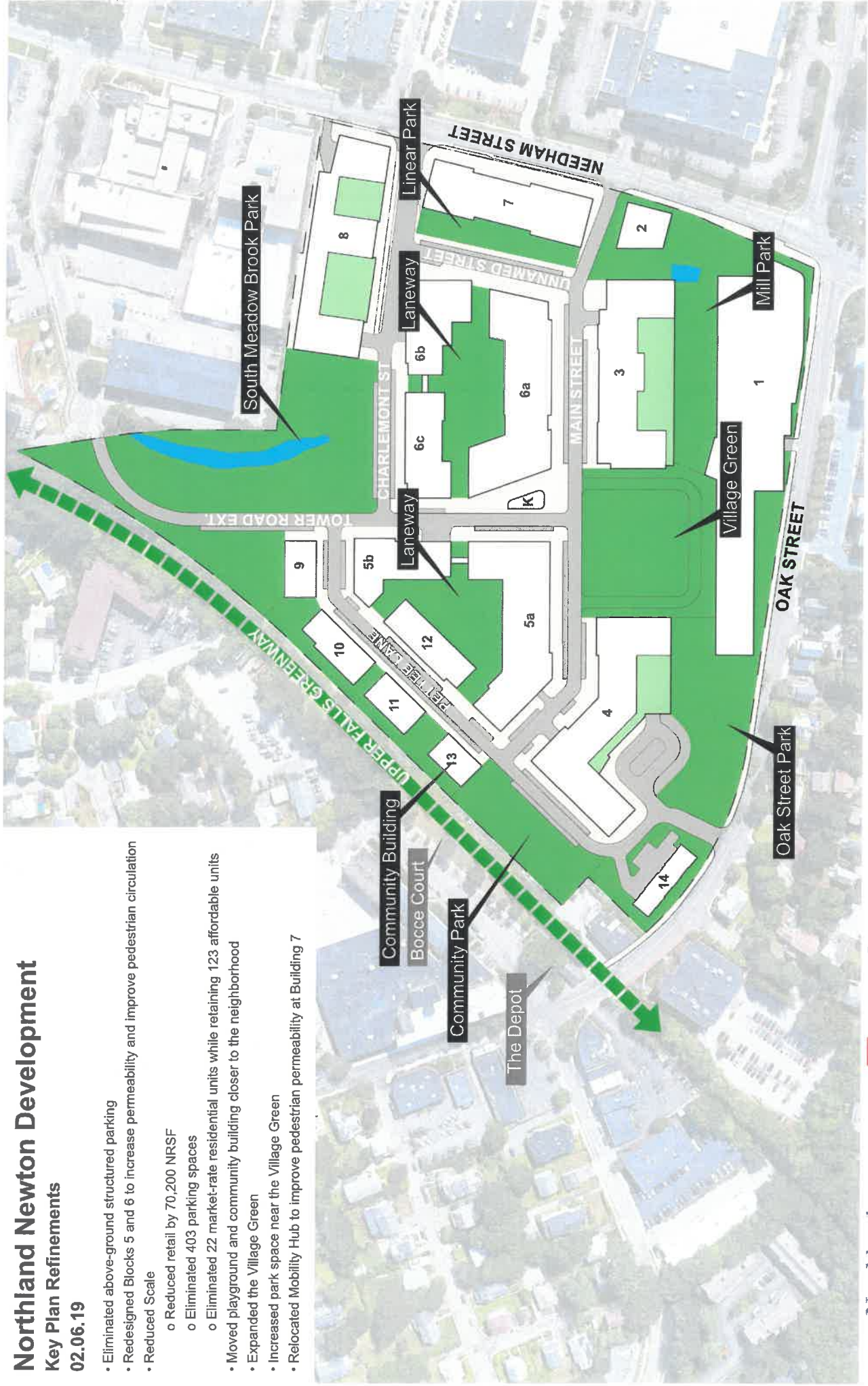


Northland Newton Development

Key Plan Refinements

02.06.19

- Eliminated above-ground structured parking
- Redesignated Blocks 5 and 6 to increase permeability and improve pedestrian circulation
- Reduced Scale
 - o Reduced retail by 70,200 NRSF
 - o Eliminated 403 parking spaces
 - o Eliminated 22 market-rate residential units while retaining 123 affordable units
- Moved playground and community building closer to the neighborhood
- Expanded the Village Green
- Increased park space near the Village Green
- Relocated Mobility Hub to improve pedestrian permeability at Building 7



ATTACHMENT C

Responses to the
November 6, 2018 Horsley Witten Group Peer Review
and
Planning Staff Comments
from
Northland Investment Corporation
February 2019

Planning Department comments:

1. HW highlighted Building 7 as presenting a challenge for flow-through retail in particular and **recommended the petitioner look at strategies to frame Needham Street while addressing parking, access, and permeability.**

Response:

The Petitioner's design team is focused on creating an optimal balance of pedestrian permeability along Needham Street with an active building edge. The Mobility Hub will serve as a key connector through Building 7 with wide glass storefronts on both sides of the building and an inviting, well-lit and transparent space. In Petitioner's response plan, the Mobility Hub has been relocated to the center of Building 7 to allow greater pedestrian permeability and access from Needham Street the heart of the development, and also to allow provide for two activated end cap retail spaces better situated to serve both Needham Street and the development.

2. HW also made recommendations regarding the internal circulation such as **reviewing turning movements at the mobility hub, extending the drop-off lane on Building 6, and reducing internal travel lane widths.**

Response:

To be addressed in the traffic and transportation responses.

3. The Planning Department recognizes both Building 7's importance and the challenge it represents for creating a truly active environment along Needham Street. Ground level retail is projected for this building, yet experience indicates **that "flow-through" retail is difficult to operate, and the tendency of stores is to limit access/egress to one side** (usually the one better oriented to available parking).

The Planning department recommends that the petitioner examine strategies to bring activity through the building – perhaps by creating a large street level arcade through the building or perhaps redesigning it as two smaller buildings- to visually and/or functionally connect Needham Street with those elements of the project "behind" Building 7.

Response:

See response to comment number 1 above.

4. **Can a pedestrian passageway that respects the historic nature of the structure be created through Building 1 (the existing mill building) to create an additional entrance to the site on Oak Street?**

Response:

A public pedestrian connection through 156 Oak Street mill building is undesirable due to the elevation differential between the street level at the Oak Street side and the Village Green. In addition, the Petitioner does not want to encourage parking on Oak Street to access the project. In Petitioner's response plan, the pedestrian pathway entrance at Oak Street is being improved and the Oak Street Park and its connection to the Village Green is being expanded. Petitioner's design team is evaluating opportunities to strengthen the pedestrian connection from Oak Street through Oak Street Park to the Village Green.

5. Building 4 faces Oak Street but is set back with the small Oak Street Park and a surface parking lot directly fronting Oak Street. Aside from this location, the proposed project has screened off-street parking well. The Department **recommends that the petitioner explore alternative options such as expanding Oak Street park and placing parking below grade or within a building, or redesigning Building 4 as two smaller buildings facing one another with one located somewhat closer to Oak Street, and open space in between the buildings.**

Response:

In its response plan, Petitioner has decreased the size of both Building 4 and the surface parking lot behind Building 4. The Oak Street Park has been expanded and will be richly landscaped with trees, planting, and a pedestrian pathway connecting Oak Street to the Village Green.

6. **Department will need additional information on the community space's expected management structure, mission, operations, and programming to better assess the appropriateness of this proposed location.** Planning believes this information will evolve through the review process and the location and function of the community center can be revisited at a future meeting.

Response:

The Petitioner has had discussions with several groups that would have an interest in using the community building, including arts groups, Upper Falls neighborhood groups, the YMCA and others. No final arrangements have been made yet with any groups regarding the use or management of the community building. As part of the response plan, the community building and the neighborhood park have been relocated to be closer to the Depot area of the Greenway.

7. The Department is also concerned that the scale of several of the proposed blocks and buildings are relatively oversized. the perimeters of Buildings 5 and 6 exceed (albeit slightly) the quarter-mile standard generally applied for "walkable blocks. While the blocks are on the large side, some of the buildings themselves far exceed recommended lengths for active, human-scale streetscapes. Buildings 5 and 6 in particular comprise the entire blockfronts **and the Planning Department recommends the petitioner break these into smaller buildings, with 180 feet as a goal for maximum building façade lengths.**

Response:

Petitioner has taken to heart the comments from Councilors, the Planning Department and the peer reviewer to reduce the scale of blocks 5 and 6 to create greater permeability and connectivity throughout the site. In its response plan, Petitioner has eliminated the above-ground structured parking within blocks 5 and 6 and relocated it underground. Buildings 5 and 6 also have been broken up into smaller buildings bisected by new pedestrian connections through the blocks via residential scaled laneways. The laneways will function as active courtyard spaces and pedestrian connections, providing additional open and landscaped spaces.

8. The Department recommends the **Petitioner explore placing Building 5's parking level below grade. This modification could have the concurrent benefits of lessening this large structure's apparent mass, giving it a street-level appearance of separate buildings, and creating a large open space.**

Response:

In its response plan, Petitioner has eliminated the above-ground structured parking within blocks 5 and 6 and relocated it underground. Buildings 5 and 6 also have been broken up into smaller buildings bisected by new pedestrian connections through the blocks via residential scaled laneways. The laneways will function as active courtyard spaces and pedestrian connections, providing additional open and landscaped spaces.

9. The Department also recommends **the Petitioner explore breaking Building 6 into multiple buildings.** At a minimum there should be a break in the building façade every 180 feet to give the appearance of multiple buildings and both north-south and east-west pedestrian access should be provided through the building, lined with active uses and of sufficient width and height. Staff believes such passages could create more street-level interest and help “break down” what could be perceived as overly large structure.

Response:

In its response plan, Buildings 5 and 6 have been broken up into smaller buildings bisected by new pedestrian connections through the blocks via residential scaled laneways and Petitioner has eliminated the above-ground structured parking within blocks 5 and 6 and relocated it underground. The laneways will function as active courtyard spaces and pedestrian connections, providing additional open and landscaped spaces.

10. **Make the “bump-outs” along Pettee Lane larger and install seating to enhance that street's residential street nature.**

Response:

Petitioner's revised plans make a series of changes to enhance Pettee Lane's residential feel including the relationship of the community park and community building, lowering the scale of Building 4 and breaking up Building 5. All of these design changes are intended to enhance the residential quality of the street.

11. It is unclear how snow storage and removal would be handled. The petitioner should be prepared to describe its plans for this issue.

Response:

Petitioner will develop a snow storage removal plan (SRP) based upon the final approved plan. Part of the SRP will provide for off-site snow removal as necessary.

12. Horsley Witten's review of the parks and open space within the project noted the parks are spread out around the development and each serve a particular purpose with an assumed user group. HW concurred with the overall approach and recommended **that the petitioner further consider the intended users and incorporate design details to meet the needs of these users.** Suggestions include **reviewing elements such as access, park elements, bathrooms, ADA parking and drop offs, on-street parking, bicycle infrastructure, play areas adjacent to outdoor food venues, and seating options.** HW provided **specific recommendations such as adding bicycle racks to the Main Street connection to the Greenway, providing gateway elements between the Village Green and Oak Street Park, providing seating and tables in the Mill Park, and adding benches in the hardscaped area where the shuttle bus pull off is located.**

Response:

All parks and open spaces will meet requirements for ADA accessibility. Petitioner's landscape architect has taken into account the recommendations noted above and they will be incorporated in the final design of individual park spaces.

13. **Additional information on the precedent sites for the Village Green, recommended a stronger connection between the playground and South Meadow Brook Park, and recommended the final plant schedule more closely align to the sustainability and ecological restoration goals.**

Response:

In its response plan, Petitioner has relocated the playground to a more central location in Upper Falls Village and within the site to establish a more prominent connection with components of the development and easier access by the community. The final plant schedule will include a mix of native and non-native but appropriate plantings to align to the project's sustainability and ecological restoration goals.

14. Regarding the design of the Village Green itself, the Planning Department **suggests the need to work with the petitioner and others to explore issues related to whether ADA access through the village green should be provided. It also recommends the inclusion of additional shaded seating around its perimeter.**

Response:

The Village Green will provide ADA accessibility. In its response plan, Petitioner has expanded the Village Green and has eliminated general vehicle access and parking around it, which will create greater opportunity for landscaping and shaded seating areas.

15. As for the other proposed park and open spaces, the Planning Department notes that:

- **Shading would also be important at the playground and requests additional detail on that issue;**

Response:

Petitioner concurs and will incorporate into the final design of the relocated playground area.

- **The installation of built-in seating at appropriate locations, especially including spaces for wheelchairs to be located in and around such facilities is encouraged;**

Response:

Petitioner concurs and will incorporate into the final design of all park spaces where appropriate.

- **The various play areas should be programmed for different age groups as indicated by design and equipment;**

Response:

Petitioner's landscape architect will take this into consideration in the final design of the playground.

- **An appropriate location for an off-leash dog area should be identified;**

Response:

Petitioner intends to include a dog park within the development on the north side of the site, west of Tower Road Extension.

- **The petitioner should confirm and maintain the accessibility of Mill Park for all users;**

Response:

The Mill Park will be ADA accessible and available for all users.

- **The petitioner should identify how it proposes to provide for and ensure permanent ongoing public access to the project's public spaces including the above referenced parks and open spaces as well as the street system;**

Response:

Petitioner will agree to make public access to the project's parks and street system a condition of the special permit for the development, subject to rules and regulations applicable to all persons at the property.

16. Create a "Sustainable Living" theme for Needham Street focused on the natural amenities of the area including the Charles River, South Meadow Brook, and the Upper Falls Greenway. (Vision for Environmental Health)

Planning Department staff recommends that the petitioner highlight these amenities with wayfinding and educational signage.

Response:

Petitioner has consistently noted that the proposal is a significant upgrade from existing conditions. Elements of both sustainability and the historic context will be highlighted in displays on the site. Petitioner intends to highlight South Meadow Brook and provide connections to The Upper Falls Greenway. Both locations will be identified through wayfinding signage.

17. Require new development/redevelopment to incorporate new publicly accessible open spaces in the Needham Street area. (Vision for Environmental Health)

Planning Department staff recommend that if the petition is approved, a condition be included requiring these spaces stay open to the public in perpetuity.

Response:

Petitioner will agree to make public access to the project's parks and street system subject to rules and regulations applicable to all persons at the property a condition of the special permit for the development.

18. Place bike racks, benches, and informational, educational, and/or play features along trails. (Vision for Environmental Health)

Planning Department staff recommend that this park and connection include bicycle racks, seating, and wayfinding signage.

Response:

The parks will all have bicycle racks, seating and wayfinding signage.

19. Locate parking behind and/or below buildings (Vision for Design)

Planning Department staff recommends the petitioner further investigate pushing parking below ground wherever possible and breaking up large buildings at the ground level. As most of the proposed buildings will have four visible sides the petitioner should also continue to find creative ways to screen any un-lined parking areas as well as loading areas.

Response:

In its response plan, Petitioner has eliminated the above-ground structured parking within blocks 5 and 6 and relocated it underground. Buildings 5 and 6 also has been broken up into smaller buildings bisected by new pedestrian connections through the blocks via residential scaled laneways. The laneways will function as active courtyard spaces and pedestrian connections, providing additional open and landscaped spaces.

20. Line public open spaces with active facades to invite people to utilize the public space (Vision for Design)

The central gathering space in the development, the "Village Green", is lined by active residential and commercial uses on all sides. In addition, office workers at the Mill Building will be required to park within Building 6 and walk adjacent to the Village Green to get to the Mill Building, adding additional pedestrian activity in this area. The Mill Park is lined by the Mill

Building on the southern side and Building 3 on the northern side. This section of Building 3 is parking and does not have active uses, however the linear park will benefit from the adjacent office use of the Mill Building. **The petitioner should take extra care in designing the façade of Building 3 to ensure this section is well screened.**

Response:

Petitioner acknowledges this comment and will take appropriate care in the final design of the rear façade of Building 3.

21. Work with property owners to activate the Greenway and its edges with art installations, access into abutting shops, direct entries, public gathering spaces, etc. (Vision for Design)
petitioner has noted however that due to the cars that park perpendicular to the Greenway on Chestnut Street, some low landscaping may be necessary in order to block headlights from the residential units in the townhouse buildings.

Response:

In its response plan, Petitioner has relocated the community building and playground into a community park along the Greenway in a central location near Upper Falls Village and The Depot with convenient access to parking.

22. Require new building heights to meet residential heights at neighborhood edges; utilize grade change and upper story setbacks to reduce visible height of larger buildings
Planning staff recommends that the petitioner provide sections through the taller buildings and internal streets within the site.

Response:

In its presentation on November 13, 2018, Petitioner provided sections through the plan, running east/west from Upper Falls across Needham Street, and running south/north from Oak Street to 233 Needham Street.

23. Encourage deep lots along Needham Street to be divided into smaller blocks to increase walking route options and public space opportunities; set requirements for changes in building facades to break up the massing of buildings.
Staff recommends the petitioner aim to increase pedestrian connectivity through the larger blocks by breaking up buildings or providing alternative connections through the buildings.

Response:

In its response plan, Petitioner has eliminated the above-ground structured parking within blocks 5 and 6 and relocated it underground. Buildings 5 and 6 also have been broken up into smaller buildings bisected by new pedestrian connections through the blocks via residential scaled laneways. The laneways will function as active courtyard spaces and pedestrian connections, providing additional open and landscaped spaces. The Mobility Hub also has been relocated to the center of Building 7 to allow greater pedestrian permeability and access from Needham

Street the heart of the development, and also to allow provide for two activated end cap retail spaces better situated to serve both Needham Street and the development.

24. Establish standards for and encourage active commercial front yards along Needham Street, e.g. outdoor dining, new tree planting, lighting, etc.

Planning staff would like to see more attention paid to this edge and more opportunities for activity along Needham Street, as discussed above.

Response:

The Petitioner's design team is focused on creating an optimal balance of pedestrian permeability along Needham Street with an active building edge. The Mobility Hub will serve as a key connector through Building 7 with wide glass storefronts on both sides of the building and an inviting, well-lit and transparent space. In Petitioner's response plan, the Mobility Hub has been relocated to the center of Building 7 to allow greater pedestrian permeability and access from Needham Street the heart of the development, and also to allow provide for two activated end cap retail spaces better situated to serve both Needham Street and the development.

Horsley Witten Group Comments:

1. The City's Comprehensive Plan land use strategies focus on Smart Growth and place centered planning. With Newton being mostly built out, strategic redevelopment provides an opportunity for the City to grow within the existing land use, transportation, and open space framework. The majority of the Northland Newton Development site is currently impervious, featuring existing building roofs and generally underutilized parking areas. The project development concept appears to be consistent with Newton's goals for mixed-use Smart Growth development. For this review, our analysis is limited to preliminary site layout, access to the site and movement within the site, organization and design of public spaces, and sense of place. We have not reviewed economic or traffic/transportation impacts. At this point our comments are limited to "big picture" design framework, understanding that future detailed design development review will be required.

Response:

Per HW's comment, the original plan successfully addressed Smart Growth and place-centered planning. The response plan advances these goals further by enlarging some of the project's parks, further reducing impervious surface, and improving numerous details that enhance public space programming and the project's overall sense of place.

2. The scale of the proposed development requires structured parking to meet the proposed program requirements. Proposed structured parking is mostly "wrapped" with mixed-use building space including active ground floor uses, which is strongly encouraged to reinforce vibrant and beautiful streetscapes, an active public realm, and "eyes on the street" for safety and comfort.

Response:

The response plan has moved the above-ground parking below grade to reduce the scale of the internal blocks and create greater permeability through the site.

3. The plan defines a clear center, focusing internally on the proposed Village Green and framing Main Street and the Village Green with active commercial uses and consistent building frontage. The Upper Falls Greenway and Needham Street are also treated as active frontages, requiring dual-sided buildings that front both onto these edges as well as internal streets. This requires advanced approaches to architecture, service/loading, circulation, and use and tenant mix, especially for Building 7 as discussed in further comments. The existing mill building (Building 1) provides much of the edge condition fronting on Oak Street, facing the existing residents to the south, with the inclusion of Pettee Lane and the proposed pedestrian connection into the site from Oak Street via Oak Street Park. The edge condition to the north varies, consisting of the proposed playground and community building, Tower Road, the streamside park, and Building 8 backing onto existing buildings. HW concurs with the general approach, with more detailed review comments for specific streets and buildings in following comments.

Response: As architectural design advances, we will continue to apply best practices to maximize high quality edges and frontages along important streets, parks, and corridors such as Needham Street, Main Street, and the Greenway. Where possible, loading access and other “back” conditions have been shifted to edges that least impact our primary public spaces or internalized within buildings and thus fully concealed from view. We are also planning to tightly manage loading and servicing activities to avoid times of peak traffic or activity.

4. The site plan layout as currently configured meets Needham Street at logical points, setting up an internal framework of walkable blocks and increasing connectivity to Needham Street consistent with the vision expressed in the Needham Street Area Vision Plan to increase intersection density and reduce block sizes. The distance between Charlemont Street and Main Street is approximately 350 feet, and the distance from Main Street to Oak Street is approximately 360 feet – far exceeding the existing auto oriented intersection density.

Response:

In our response plan, Buildings 5 and 6 have been subdivided into multiple buildings each to increase walkable permeability through their blocks.

5. The alignment of Charlemont Street at a signalized intersection in the location shown on the plans offers the potential to extend the street network east of Needham Street, with improved linkage to Christina Street, consistent with the Needham Street Area Vision Plan vision for a better-connected roadway system.

Response:

The realigned and signalized Charlemont intersection is indeed intended to significantly improve bike and pedestrian access across Needham Street to support connections to the neighborhoods and bike corridors to the east.

6. The proposed separated shared use path connects the Upper Falls Greenway to Needham Street at the Charlemont Street intersection, taking advantage of proposed intersection crossing improvements on Needham Street to facilitate pedestrian/bicycle access to the east and a

potential future greenway connection over the Charles River. HW recommends the proposed intersection design and details be confirmed to clearly and comprehensively address the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and other disadvantaged users to maximize safety and comfort at this key crossing location.

Response:

The design of the Needham Street/Charlemont intersection has been completed by MassDOT in anticipation of a construction start in the next 12 months. VHB provided input to MassDOT to coordinate design parameters for the crossing. As on-site design advances, we will continue to optimize the dedicated bike lane connection to the Upper Falls Greenway for safe, comfortable, and convenient bike and pedestrian circulation to, from, and through the project.

7. As currently proposed the two-way shared use path takes a 90-degree turn by the bioretention area in order to cross the street and continue between the playground and community center. Is there a way to make this angle less severe? The design might incorporate a boardwalk section of path to bring bicyclists over the bioretention area, view the stream, and potentially park the bikes to use the stream observation area.

Response:

Comment noted. We will explore how we can improve this condition as we advance design details of the Response Plan.

8. Tower Road is designed to intersect Main Street at a “T” terminating on the Village Green at a raised intersection condition. HW concurs with this design element for its traffic calming and placemaking benefits. Because the vehicular circulation is proposed one-way around the Village Green, it appears that the turning and queuing conflicts that may have been presented by the intersection offset will be minimized. An offset intersection is also proposed at Charlemont Street and Tower Road. HW concurs with this general approach, however recommends additional details be provided as the design progresses and during traffic engineering review to ensure safety and function at these intersections.

Response:

The response plan has eliminated the vehicular circulation around the Village Green. The raised intersection is being reviewed in connection with street redesign around Main Street.

9. In conjunction with the termination of Tower Road at the Village Green, HW understands Pettee Lane has been designed with a jog at Tower Road and a jog south of proposed Main Street to provide traffic calming and discourage “cut-through” traffic to Oak Street and residential neighborhoods south of the project. HW concurs with this approach.

Response:

No response required

Following comments regarding the development from the block, street, and building Scale:

10. Building 4, Building 8, and Building 13 are the only proposed buildings that appear to be oriented with a clear front and back. All other buildings face high quality public realm on multiple sides, and in some cases, all four sides. This will require multiple building facades appropriate for facing the high-quality public realm proposed in the plan, and careful coordination of service, loading, deliveries, trash/recycling, and parking garage access. It appears part of Charlemont Street is dedicated to service, deliveries, and garage access for Building 6 and Building 8. Additional information is required to clarify these functions for all buildings.

Response:

Agreed. Most buildings indeed require high-quality façade designs on most or all sides to help enhance (and not detract from) the streets and parks they frame. Our design guidelines address these concerns in numerous ways. For example, façade demising ensures prominent building edges are divided into multiple segments of distinct architectural expressions along key faces. Loading areas have been embedded into buildings or otherwise concealed from view where possible and loading/servicing activities will be limited to off-peak times to the extent possible. While Charlemont Street plays an important role in accessing buildings 6 and 8, the street and the buildings along it are designed with the pedestrian experience in mind. Garage and service portal breadths have been minimized and parking and other utilitarian uses largely concealed from view by active uses such as housing.

11. Building 7 is proposed with active frontage on both the Unnamed Street to the west and Needham Street. The placement of Building 7 with active frontage on Needham Street is consistent with the Needham Street Area Vision Plan for increased walkability and placemaking within the corridor. The building design may pose challenges due to its dual frontage. HW requests additional information regarding the proposed design of Building 7, potential tenants and their orientation to both streets, expected points of arrival via vehicle/pedestrian/bicycle/other and flexibility for this building to adapt over time as the Needham Street corridor evolves. Additional methods to frame Needham Street with active building frontage and address parking/access/permeability should be investigated. There appears to be opportunity to provide a gateway public open space fronting Needham Street in this location. This may benefit the development and the Needham Street streetscape, but would have to be balanced to maintain the significant benefits provided by a rhythm of consistent building facades facing the street, especially when Needham Street is in the preliminary stages of a long-term character transition.

Response:

The Petitioner's design team is focused on creating an optimal balance of pedestrian permeability along Needham Street with an active building edge. The Mobility Hub will serve as a key connector through Building 7 with wide glass storefronts on both sides of the building and an inviting, well-lit and transparent space. In Petitioner's response plan, the Mobility Hub has been relocated to the center of Building 7 to allow greater pedestrian permeability and access from Needham Street the heart of the development, and also to allow provide for two activated end cap retail spaces better situated to serve both Needham Street and the development.

12. The existing Mill Building is a barrier to accessing the site from Oak Street. HW understands the location of the intersection of Pettee Lane with Oak Street was designed to minimize cut-through vehicular traffic and shifting the intersection location further east may be infeasible due to topography. HW recommends additional detail regarding pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the site via Oak Street Park be explored. See comments in the Parks and Open Space review section of this letter.

Response:

A public pedestrian connection through 156 Oak Street mill building is undesirable due to the elevation differential between the street level at the Oak Street side and the Village Green. Also the Petitioner does not want to encourage parking on Oak Street to access the project. In Petitioner's response plan, the pedestrian pathway entrance at Oak Street is being improved and the Oak Street Park and its connection to the Village Green is being expanded. Petitioner's design team is evaluating opportunities to strengthen the pedestrian connection from Oak Street through Oak Street Park to the Village Green.

13. The location of the community building, Building 9, is adjacent to the playground, shared use path, and Upper Falls Greenway. HW recommends additional information be provided detailing the anticipated operation of this building and potential programming to clarify the building's function and review its proposed location. Parking spaces at the playground are limited and additional information should be provided on who the intended users are and how they would be accessing the site. Ensuring there is convenient access to the playground for parents with children will be part of its success.

Response:

In its response plan, Petitioner has relocated the community building and playground into a community park along the Greenway in a central location near Upper Falls Village and The Depot with convenient access to parking on Chestnut Street. The Petitioner has had discussions with several groups that would have an interest in using the community building, including arts groups, Upper Falls neighborhood groups, the YMCA and others. No final arrangements have been made yet with any groups regarding the use or management of the community building.

14. The perimeters of the blocks occupied by Building 5 and Building 6 both slightly exceed 1/4 mile, a typical measure of a walkable block. Both buildings are designed to occupy the entire block with internal wrapped parking decks, thus minimizing pedestrian permeability through the blocks. This may also be detrimental to the "park once" strategy proposed by consolidated visitor parking within the Building 6 parking deck, especially for elderly or other mobility impaired visitors. HW recommends that additional strategies to improve permeability and walkability be considered.

Response:

By pushing structured parking underground, we have subdivided buildings 5 and 6 into multiple buildings each with public "laneways" creating new permeability through the centers of the blocks. We have also shortened building 6's Main Street frontage by "pulling back" the corner at Tower Road. Universally, our design guidelines include numerous strategies to reduce the pedestrian's perception of block length. For example, demise lines ensure prominent building facades are "broken" into segments of distinct architectural expression. Active ground floors, high-quality streetscape design, and unique parks populate the public realm with dynamic visual

and experiential diversity to keep pedestrians engaged as they walk. Entrances to the public parking garage in building 6 are positioned to insert visitors centrally and directly “into the action” along Main Street from which point desirable destinations are a short walk away.

15. Is parking for the existing mill building provided in the Building 6 parking deck? Is the Building 6 parking deck the only “public” parking location for office users and visitors to the site (other than on-street parking)? Where is ADA parking for the existing mill building provided?

Response:

Parking for the mill building (office use) will be provided in the central garage, which in the Response Plan is now under the footprints of Buildings 5 and 6. Handicap parking spaces will also be in the central garage. An accessible route from the garage (via an elevator) to the front entrance of the mill building is provided.

16. The location and alignment of the mobility hub requires access to the site via Main Street to align pick-up and drop-off on the east curb adjacent to Building 7. HW recommends the function of turning movements - design vehicle turning movements to facilitate these maneuvers, as well as traffic impacts on the Needham Street and internal intersections, be reviewed in more detail as the design progresses (HW understands that others will review the traffic movements).

Response:

This is addressed in the traffic and transportation peer review and responses.

17. Why does the drop-off lane along the east face of Building 6 not extend to Main Street for either drop-off or on-street parking purposes?

Response:

Petitioner’s response plan has re-designed the eastern edge of building 6 to create multiple buildings and a curb cut for laneway access and separate loading access.

18. Limited on-street parallel parking is proposed in the vicinity of the Village Green, including the Tower Road approach. Understanding that this is a shared street condition which, properly detailed, should provide significant traffic calming and placemaking benefit, has additional on-street parallel parking in this location been considered?

Response:

Further design will continue to maximize traffic calming in primary pedestrian areas with strategies such as raised intersections, on-street parking, landscape, and other streetscape design features (and combinations thereof).

19. Ten-foot wide travel lanes are generally considered a maximum for safe slow-speed streets and maximizing placemaking benefits. HW requests clarification for eleven-foot lanes proposed for Tower Road, Charlemont Street, and the Unnamed Road.

Response:

Throttling the pavement width down is just one technique but we are trying to strike a balance between achieving slow travel speeds and accommodating a variety of turning movements. 20’ wide is the minimum allowable for fire truck access under the MA State Fire Safety Code. The

width has been increased to 24' along Main Street to minimize traffic flow constraints resulting from on-street loading by retailers, and even for autos maneuvering into and out of the on-street parking spaces.

20. The proposed one-way loop around the Village Green is designed with a 20-foot travel lane. This is wide given the one-way condition, especially in a shared-street design adjacent to the Village Green. HW recommends that the Applicant clarify this decision.

Response:

This is per fire department requirements as we understand them. It is also a width that if a vehicle is parked temporarily, a second vehicle can get by. The width of the loop will be further evaluated in the response design. The drive will serve as an emergency response and limited service access only, and 20' wide is the typical allowable minimum for fire truck access under the MA State Fire Safety Code.

21. HW understands additional detail is being developed regarding shade analysis and welcomes review of this information as soon as it is available.

Response:

In its presentation on November 13, 2018, Petitioner presented an animated shadow study showing minimal to no impact on surrounding neighborhoods and the proposed parks within the project.

Following comments regarding the Parks and Open Space:

22. The Northland Development has seven different named parks: Village Green, Mill Park, Linear Park, South Meadow Brook Park, the Neighborhood Playground, the Main Street Connection to the Greenway, and Oak Street Park. These parks are spread out around the development and each serves a particular purpose with an assumed user group. HW concurs with the approach to provide a diverse variety of open spaces around this development; however, HW recommends considering the intended users and incorporate design details to meet the needs of the various users. Access to or between the parks, park elements, bathrooms, etc. can be reviewed with a more explicit vision of who is likely to occupy which space. Handicapped parking and drop offs, on-street parking, bicycle infrastructure, additional play areas adjacent to outdoor food venues and bathrooms, seating options, etc. all help make these outdoor spaces more comfortable to a variety of users. For instance:

- Bike racks could be added at the Main Street Connection to the Greenway for bicyclists taking a break or parking their bikes to enter the development.
- The Oak Street Park would benefit from gateway elements and open sight lines into the Village Green so it seems more welcoming and less like a back door. As designed the park consists largely of a sloped sidewalk connection and bioretention system.
- Seating and tables could be included in Mill Park for the office employees.

- Benches could be included in the hardscaped area of the Linear Park where the shuttle bus pull off is located.

Response:

The Petitioner concurs with the recommendations above. As design progresses, we will continue to refine how each park is programmed and detailed so the project offers facilities, features, and activities for a wide range of visitors and residents.

23. Information on precedent sites per the proposed uses of the Village Green open space is required to review whether the scale of the park suits the vision. Currently the lawn space is approximately 100'x120' in the Village Green, this compares to 180'x160' of park space at Needham's Town Hall which is used for farmer's markets and performances. The space in Needham has trees within its lawn. The lawn space adjacent to Dewey Square by South Station in downtown Boston is approximately 65' by 190'. Programs for this space include seasonal ice skating rinks, "screens on the green", visitors eating lunch in lawn chairs and a variety of other uses. Currently the space shown for the Northland Village Green is open and flexible, amenable to multiple programmatic uses like the space by Dewey Square. HW concurs with this approach, however additional information would be beneficial to ensure the scale correlates with the intended uses.

Response:

Comments noted. There are many different opinions on how the green should be used, and as the dialogue continues the programming may change. The Response Plan increases the size of the green and eliminates everyday use of the loop road. The Petitioner is committed to keeping the Village Green largely open and grass while allowing for passive and active recreation.

24. HW recommends combining the benefits of having the playground and South Meadow Brook Park across the street from one another. Like the hardscaping detail that follows the stream to the daylighting location, elements of the playground could speak to being in close proximity to the stream as well as the bioretention area, and educational signage or other features could be spread between both parks acting as a connection between them. Per the vision of Environmental Health in the Needham Street Vision Plan to create natural areas that encourage activity and environmental education, the opportunities in these parks should be maximized. In addition, HW recommends utilizing other parks and streetscape stormwater elements around the Northland Development as opportunities to meet the environmental education goals with signage and actively connecting people with nature.

Response:

Petitioner will provide additional detail based on the revisions in its response plan, which relocates the playground to a more central location to Upper Falls Village and parking. Petitioner intends to highlight South Meadow Brook and provide connections to The Upper Falls Greenway. Both locations will be identified through wayfinding signage.

25. Currently the plant set includes a draft plant schedule. More than half of the trees on the plant schedule are not native. A final plant schedule is required to review the plant selection for these spaces, however the selection of the plants should both align to the sustainability, community and wellness site design and ecological restoration goals of the Northland Guidelines by using native and drought tolerant plantings to reduce irrigation and save water.

Response:

Native plantings will be utilized for natural areas within the site. For more dense locations, plant material selections will be made based on the greatest potential for flourishing in a certain location, given considerations for water demand, shading and tree form.



March 7, 2019

VIA EMAIL

Ms. Jennifer Caira
Chief Planner
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, Massachusetts 02459-1449

Re: Site Plan & Open Space Review – *Response to Revision 1*
Northland Newton Development
Mixed Use Development Special Permit Site Plan Review

Dear Ms. Caira:

The Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW) is pleased to submit this peer review response regarding revised site plan and open space concepts for the Northland Newton Development located on Oak Street, Needham Street, and Tower Road in Newton, Massachusetts. We understand that the revised Special Permit/Site Plan Review Application includes the construction of 800 residential units, 180,000 square feet (sf) of office space, 115,000 sf of retail space and community space in 14 buildings on 22.6 acres of land.

HW provided an initial Site Plan and Open Space Review letter dated November 6, 2018. The following response documents and revised plans were provided by the Petitioner and reviewed by HW as summarized in this letter:

- Responses to the November 6, 2018 Horsley Witten Group Peer Review and Planning Staff Comments, Northland Investment Corporation, dated February 2019;
- Northland Newton Development, RKG December 2018 Peer Review Responses, Northland Investment Corporation, dated February 2019;
- Project Revisions and Response to RKG Peer Review Comments, Fiscal Impact Analysis, by Fougere Planning & Development, Inc., dated February 13, 2019;
- Response to BETA Group, Alta Planning + Design comments, The Northland Newton Development Transportation Peer Review, prepared by VHB, dated February 22, 2019;
- Site Plans for The Northland Newton Development, Needham Street/Oak Street, Newton, Massachusetts, prepared by VHB, dated August 6, 2018 last revised February 14, 2019, which includes:
 - Overall Site Plan Sheet C-4
 - Layout and Materials Plan Sheet C-6.1
 - Layout and Materials Plan Sheet C-6.2
 - Layout and Materials Plan Sheet C-6.3

We understand that the Petitioner's submittal at this time is a partial response, with more detailed plans to be submitted in the future. The following major changes have been made to the design since the original submittal reviewed by HW:

- The Mobility Hub has been relocated to the center of Building 7;
- The size of Building 4 and the surface parking lot behind Building 4 have been reduced;
- Above grade structured parking within blocks 5 and 6 has been eliminated, and Buildings 5 and 6 have been broken up into smaller buildings bisected by "residential scaled laneways";
- Parking and general vehicle access has been eliminated from the Village Green design;
- The community building and playground area have been relocated closer to the depot area of the Greenway, with the playground area expanded and labeled a "neighborhood park"; and
- A dog park is intended for the north side of the site, west of Tower Road Extension.

The above changes appear to be significant improvements to the design based on consideration of HW review elements. More information is required for detailed review of the revised design. We offer the follow preliminary comments based on our review of the updated materials, specifically responding to the "Responses to the November 6, 2018 Horsley Witten Group Peer Review and Planning Staff Comments" as numbered in that document:

Planning Department Comments:

1. Revision of Building 7 to locate the Mobility Hub at the center of the building with two end cap retail spaces should help spread activity along the length of this building rather than focus activity near Charlemont Street as previously proposed. More detailed design is necessary for review of "wide glass storefronts on both sides and inviting, well-lit, and transparent spaces" as noted in the Petitioner's response. The footprint of the building does not appear to have changed. Concern regarding a single building with dual frontage in this location remains. Location of the mobility hub in the center of the building does not necessarily improve activation of Needham Street frontage if transit operations are focused on the Unnamed Street.
2. See traffic and transportation responses.
3. See response to comment #1 above.
4. The Petitioner notes that a public pedestrian connection through the 156 Oak Street mill building is undesirable due to topography and desire to limit public parking on Oak Street, but that opportunities to strengthen the pedestrian connection from Oak Street through Oak Street Park to the Village Green is being evaluated. Additional design detail (layout, grading, etc.) is needed to review this connection.
5. Additional design detail (layout, grading, etc.) is needed to review the impact of reduction of Building 4 and the surface parking lot behind Building 4 on Oak Street Park.
6. Relocation of the community building and the neighborhood park and apparent expansion of the neighborhood park's size should have a positive impact on the ability of this space to serve community needs and better connect to the Greenway. Additional information is needed to understand the design and programming of this park.

7. Breaking up of Buildings 5 and 6 with new pedestrian connections as shown should have a very positive effect on walkability and human-scale placemaking efforts for the project. Additional information regarding parking access and circulation, loading, and laneway design is needed to review the updated design in more detail.
8. See response to #7.
9. See response to #7.
10. HW concurs with the relocation of the neighborhood park as shown. Additional information including design of the neighborhood park, parking intent for Buildings 9-11, and design of the ends of Buildings 5a and 5b is required to fully assess proposed changes to the Pettee Lane streetscape.
11. HW understands that a snow removal plan will be provided by the Petitioner in the future. The plan should be reviewed to ensure adequate provision for snow storage, snow removal, and impacts on natural resources.
12. More detailed design of park spaces as the design progresses is required to review access and amenities.
13. HW concurs with the relocation of the neighborhood park as shown. Final design of park spaces is required to review planting and sustainable design approaches.
14. Elimination of general vehicle access and parking from the Village Green loop does slightly expand the area usable for landscape and seating, but may result in less activity within the space during certain times. Additional information regarding the design, programming, and operation of the Green and adjacent buildings is necessary to evaluate programming, activation, circulation, loading, operation and management of this space during various expected conditions. HW recommends the traffic and transportation peer review consider impacts on parking supply and convenience.
15. Final design of park spaces and the playground is necessary to review noted elements. It is noted that the Petitioner has stated the intent to include a dog park and will agree to make public access to the project's parks and street system a condition of the special permit. Location of the dog park and management of pet waste must be carefully considered to minimize impacts on South Meadow Brook. This may be another environmental educational opportunity.
16. An updated design for South Meadow Brook within the development has not been provided. Intent to include wayfinding and educational signage has been noted by the Petitioner. Detailed design of sustainability elements and signage is necessary to review details.
17. No response necessary.
18. No response necessary.
19. See response to #7. In addition, more information regarding access to underground parking (vehicular and pedestrian) is necessary to review circulation, open spaces, and streetscape. What is the intent for Building K?
20. Comments regarding design of Building 3 and Mill Park still stand. Additional design detail is necessary to review.

21. The community building and playground have been relocated to a more central location which should enhance potential for partnerships with property owners and arts organizations to achieve access, gathering, and arts objectives. Additional design detail is required to evaluate access and parking.
22. No response required. Revised elevations will be reviewed when submitted.
23. See responses to comments #1, #7, and #19.
24. See response to comment #1.

HW Comments:

1. No response necessary.
2. Moving the above ground parking below grade to create greater permeability through the site is a significant improvement to address the stated concerns. Additional design detail is required to review circulation, parking, loading, and open space.
3. HW concurs that the preliminary plans do appear to shift loading and other “back” conditions to edges that least impact the public realm. Further architectural and street design detail is required to confirm loading/service and public realm details are appropriate. More details regarding loading and servicing activities should be reviewed when they are developed, in conjunction with parking management plans.
4. No response necessary.
5. No response necessary. See traffic and transportation comments for more detailed comments regarding this intersection.
6. HW concurs that further design development is required to verify the optimal bicycle connection from Needham Street to the Greenway, especially at intersections. HW recommends safety and comfort for all users be considered, including clearly addressing pedestrian and bicycle travel on Charlemont Street and Tower Road connecting to the Greenway and to the Village Green. See traffic and transportation comments for more detailed review comments.
7. This comment has not been addressed. More detailed information regarding the design of the shared use path and South Meadow Brook restoration is necessary for review.
8. Additional information regarding the design, programming, and operation of the Village Green and adjacent buildings is necessary to evaluate programming, activation, circulation, loading, operation and management of this space during various expected conditions.
9. No response required.
10. HW concurs with the overall approach. As the design progresses, review of more detailed architecture and street design will be necessary to ensure loading and service are appropriately located and designed, and agreements/plans are in place for appropriate management of loading and service activities post-construction.
11. See response to Planning Department comment #1.
12. See response to Planning Department comment #4.

13. HW concurs with the relocation of the community building and neighborhood park as shown. Additional information including design of the community building, programming intent, and neighborhood park design is necessary for full review. Where will ADA parking be provided for the community building? What is the intent for loading and trash/recycling pickup for Buildings 9-13?
14. HW concurs with the improvements to push structured parking underground and subdivide Buildings 5 and 6. More information is needed regarding the design intent for the "laneways" and parking circulation (vehicular and pedestrian) for these blocks.
15. More information is needed to determine the location of the pedestrian access from the central garage to the Mill Building. Proper signage and wayfinding throughout the project will be required and should be submitted as part of more detailed design review.
16. See traffic and transportation comments.
17. HW understands the eastern edge of Building 6 has been redesigned. Additional more detailed street and laneway design is necessary for review. For example, is a mid-block crossing of the Unnamed Road required to connect the Building 6 laneway to the relocated transportation hub?
18. More detailed street design is required for review.
19. The Newton Street Design Guide recommends 10-11 feet travel lane widths, with a maximum of 12 feet only for arterial streets. HW recommends minimizing travel lane widths to the maximum extent practicable. Additional loading detail is required. On-street loading zones should be designed to minimize encroachment into travel lanes.
20. HW understands that the width of the loop is being further evaluated. The loop drive lane width might be reduced bumping the travel way edges in while providing "pull-off" locations for parking, loading, and fire staging and/or emergency loading zones.
21. The shadow study should be submitted for review, updated per the latest building design.
22. Agreed – further review will be required as design progresses.
23. HW concurs with the general approach to the design and programming for the Village Green. Additional information is required regarding the change to limit vehicular access around the loop.
24. HW concurs with the revised community building and playground location. As previously noted, further detail is required to review both locations. Further detail is required to review the South Meadow Brook Park design, which could integrate with the multi-use trail connection from Needham Street to the Greenway.
25. No response necessary. A detailed planting plan should be provided for review as design progresses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this review for consideration by the City Council and Planning Board. We hope that you find these comments helpful in your evaluation of the site plan concept and the open space layout for this project. Please feel free to contact Jon Ford at jford@horsleywitten.com or 401-272-1717, or Janet Bernardo at jbernardo@horsleywitten.com or 857-263-8193, with any questions.

Sincerely,

Horsley Witten Group, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Ford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jonathan Ford, P.E.
Senior Project Manager – Community Design

ATTACHMENT E

Northland Newton Development RKG December 2018 Peer Review Responses Northland Investment Corporation February 2019

Planning Department comments:

1. The project proposes ground floor commercial uses for most buildings. The petitioner has stated the uses will vary from neighborhood-scale to medium-scale retailers with more of a regional draw. The petitioner has also committed to providing 10,000 square feet of commercial space at reduced rents for local retailers. **Planning Staff recommends the petitioner provide additional details on this proposal.**

Response:

The overall project ground-floor “retail/commercial/service/professional” square footage has been reduced to 115,000 square feet and will include not just traditional retail, but also personal/professional-service/office space. Despite the reduction in overall retail square footage, Northland remains committed to providing up to 10,000 square feet of retail/commercial/personal/professional space at discounts up to 25% of the typical market rents for the specific type of use.

2. As proposed, 45 of the 822 residential units would be designed and constructed as accessible units, meeting the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board 521 CMR 9.4, Group 2A Dwelling Unit requirements. At least 5%, or 41 units, must meet the Group 2A requirements. As analyzed by RKG and discussed further below, the units are proportionally distributed according to number of bedrooms, size, quality, price, and location. The exception is Building 13, where the petitioner has several options for providing an accessible unit in a building with townhomes. Of the 45 accessible units, 7 are identified as both affordable and accessible. While this meets the distribution requirements, given the need for affordable accessible units, **Planning Staff recommends that half of the accessible units also be deed-restricted affordable units.**

Response:

Note that the with the reduction of the unit count to 800 units from 822, Northland is maintaining the affordable unit count at 123

Per MAAB §9.4.2 The Group 2A units are required to be evenly distributed across the units according to price. As submitted in the Preliminary Inclusionary Housing Plans, per the MAAB requirements, 5% of the affordable units are proposed to be accessible to Group 2A standards.

Northland is willing to make such a shift, but understand we would be required to seek a variance with the State Accessibility Board for non-evenly distributing the Group 2a units toward the lower income units. Northland will need to seek advice of their Accessibility Consultant on viability of this variance with the MAAB.

3. The petitioner has proposed dedicating 10,000 square feet of commercial space to small and local businesses with some level of reduced rent. Planning Staff recommend the petitioner provide additional details for this proposal.

Response:

Please see response to comment number 1 above.

4. None of the accessible units would be a townhouse dwelling (located along the western boundary of the site), and, as the RKG report notes (see p. 31), the petitioner has not yet identified how it intends to satisfy applicable state accessibility regulations regarding townhouses. While the seven affordable and accessible units meet the distribution requirements, given the strong need for affordable and accessible units, **Planning Staff would like to see half of the 45 accessible units also be identified as deed-restricted affordable units.**

Response:

Please see response to comment number 2 above. In addition, Per MAAB §9.4.2, the Project will use the Townhouse exception (a) to substitute a fully accessible flat of comparable size, amenities, etc. elsewhere in the project.

5. Staff recommends that Northland comply with the proposed Inclusionary Zoning ordinance requirements that are currently before Council, which would provide for a total of 145 deed-restricted affordable units, broken down by the following income tiers:
 - Tier 1 (up to 50% AMI): 21 units
 - Tier 2 (51%-80% AMI): 103 units
 - Tier 3 (81%-110% AMI): 21 units
 - Total = 145 units

Response:

Northland is committed to complying with the inclusionary housing ordinance in effect at the time of project approval. Please note however, that despite reducing the number of units from 800 to 822, Northland will still provide 123 units of affordable housing. Northland notes that the project as proposed will be the largest contribution of affordable housing units in any project in the history of the City

6. Staff also recommends that 23 of the accessible units be included in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 affordable units. In addition, related to the community benefits / mitigation fees discussion that may take place throughout the planning approval process, we recommend that Northland consider a one-time contribution to the City's Inclusionary Zoning Fund, to be targeted for the creation of new affordable Tier 1 units.

Response:

Northland intends to comply fully with the ordinance in place at the time of approval and is proposing additional municipal improvements and mitigation in addition to its affordable housing.

7. Planning Staff acknowledges that there is likely limited potential for additional significant office space at the proposed site, beyond the 180,000 square feet proposed. However, given the analysis from RKG and Camoin, **staff recommends the petitioner explore diversifying the proposed commercial space and evaluating the potential for additional small office space, coworking space, lab space, or unique hotel models.**

Response:

The Project as submitted does propose a mix of flexible uses. One example, within the "Retail" GFA designation that was proposed, was to include up to 10,000 SF of Medical Office Space. The Project is requesting flexibility for future tenants within the Special Permit that would allow, among other potential program elements, the following uses: for-profit schools and laboratory or research facilities.

The Project team is currently reviewing the possibility and feasibility of including "flexible commercial" to be an allowable use within the proposed "Retail" GFA. Approval of this concept would allow smaller professional office spaces, medical office spaces, co-working spaces, and a wider variety of commercial space to be distributed through-out the intended active ground-floor areas of the project.

8. Planning Department recommends that the petitioner consider including additional uses to the project, such as hotel space, co-working space, and other possible uses to further diversify the economic activity at the site and increase the project's resiliency for shifting economic conditions.

Response:

The Project is requesting flexibility for future tenants within the Special Permit that would allow, among other potential program elements, the following uses: for-profit schools, and laboratory or research facilities consistent with residential uses.

The Project team is currently reviewing the possibility and feasibility of including "flexible commercial" to be an allowable use within the proposed "Retail" GFA. Approval of this concept would allow smaller professional office spaces, medical office spaces, co-working spaces, and a wider variety of commercial space to be distributed through-out the intended active ground-floor areas of the project. Northland will ask the City Council to allow flexibility as to future uses with controls as to the aggregate number of dwelling units, aggregate parking or other metrics

9. Planning Staff assumes students are unlikely to affect Newton Public Schools prior to 2023 at the earliest but requests the petitioner provide additional details as to when units will come on-line

Response:

The first units would be available for occupancy approximately four years after special permit approval (est 2023). It will take approximately four years from the start of occupancy to have all of the units completed.

RKG Comments:

1. Does the proponent have rent projections for the housing units by size and type?

Response:

Since the units will not be coming “online” for nearly four years, it is too early to establish accurate or reliable rent projections.

2. What is the anticipated allocation of the affordable units by AMI?

Response:

Per the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, the allocation of the 123 units will be as follows:

- 62 units at 80% AMI
- 61 units at 50% AMI

As part of the final Inclusionary Housing Plan, the distribution will be proposed to be allocated proportionally across all unit types, subject to approval by the City. Northland intends to propose that Building 8 be an “age friendly” building which may include a slightly disproportionate (increased) ratio of affordable units and accessible units and other features catering to a senior demographic.

3. If first floor retail/commercial space remains vacant for a substantial period of time, does the proponent anticipate changing the use from commercial to residential through a change to the Special Permit?

Response:

No. Northland anticipates that the number of dwelling units to be capped at 800. It may be prudent to provide flexibility as to whether some of those units might be on the ground floors of certain buildings excluding the ground floors of certain other buildings. For example, we contemplate either residential or commercial uses in the “Laneway” in Building 6.

4. Request a market study and market plan for the 180,000 square feet of office space from Northland.

Response:

Northland has engaged Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) as the commercial broker for the 180,000 square foot Saco Pettee Mill. NKF was selected to represent and market the building based on their extensive knowledge of the specific market area that the Saco Pettee Mill Building is in. They have also participated in and informed the redesign of the Mill based on their market knowledge.

5. Are there more specifics on the tenants being sought, or are there any letters of intent?

Response:

No, it is too early in the development process for letters of intent given that we cannot promise a delivery timeframe to potential tenants. The Mill building is being reconfigured from a single-tenant building to a flexible multi-tenant Class A office building.

6. Is the intent to create Class A office space with competitive spaces and amenities?

Response:

Yes.

7. Are there plans to divide up the building into a series of smaller spaces, or is Northland intending to secure one or two large leases with anchor tenants?

Response:

*See response to 5 above. We will market to tenants that need large spaces as well as tenants that need smaller spaces **to the extent the building configuration will allow.***

8. Request a market study and marketing plan for the 185,200 square feet of ground floor space from the proponent. RKG's estimate of supportable retail is substantially less than what is proposed at Northland Newton. RKG has concerns that this space may sit vacant if built or result in sales transfer from other commercial activity centers across the City.

Response:

Northland has engaged an additional retail consultant, Streetsense, who was instrumental in reassessing the market in light of RKG's concerns, resulting in a reduction to 115,000 square feet of retail/commercial/flexible space.

9. Are there more specifics on the tenants being sought, or are there any letters of intent?

Response:

As in the response to question 5 above, it is too early in the development process to negotiate letters of intent.

10. Will the ground floor space include small offices for personal and professional services, or will the space be 100 percent occupied by retailers and restaurants?

Response:

The Project as submitted does propose a mix of flexible uses within the ground floor, the "Retail" GFA is intended to include restaurants up to 1,595 seats, retail and personal services up to 115,000 sf including Medical Office up to 10,000 sf. The Project as submitted also requests a special permit to maximize the flexibility of leasing of the ground floor by making allowable: ground-floor residential, restaurants with more than 50 seats, for-profit schools, educational uses, drive-in businesses, open air businesses,

places of amusement, radio or TV broadcasting studios as well as lab and research facilities without the need for additional special permits.

11. If ground floor occupancy is slow and vacancies remain, are there any plans to shift the use of that ground floor space?

Response:

The Project as submitted proposes a flexible mix of approved uses at the ground floor in order to achieve a functional capacity to adapt within a variety of uses without requiring the project to seek additional approvals. We expect the aggregate number of units and the aggregate parking demand to be capped.

12. Were hotel uses considered for the site?

Response:

The Project as submitted does request a special permit to maximize the flexibility of future tenants by making hotels allowable without the need for additional Special Permits. Northland does not believe a hotel at this location is a feasible idea at this time.

13. RKG understands that Landwise used the IMPLAN model to present Newton specific economic impacts of the Northland proposal. Further explanation is needed from Landwise as to how they estimated IMPLAN economic impacts specific to Newton. Were Newton specific multipliers used or a factor that brings region/state level economic impacts down to the city level?

Response:

*We rely on the IMPLAN data to model the impacts at the zip code level (with the City representing ten different zip codes). In order to get zip code level data IMPLAN has a process that brings county level data down to the zip code level through a "share" style analysis. More detail about the specifics can be found here:
<https://implanhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115009506087-How-Zip-Code-Files-are-Estimated>*

14. Why was a factor of 50% used to estimate construction wages for the project? In RKG's experience, this figure is usually between 30%-35%.

Response:

The short answer is that the 50% is an IMPLAN number. Even so let us try to explain the difference.

IMPLAN defines "Labor Income" more broadly than just construction wages and includes benefit and proprietor income, which RKG may not include in their calculation.

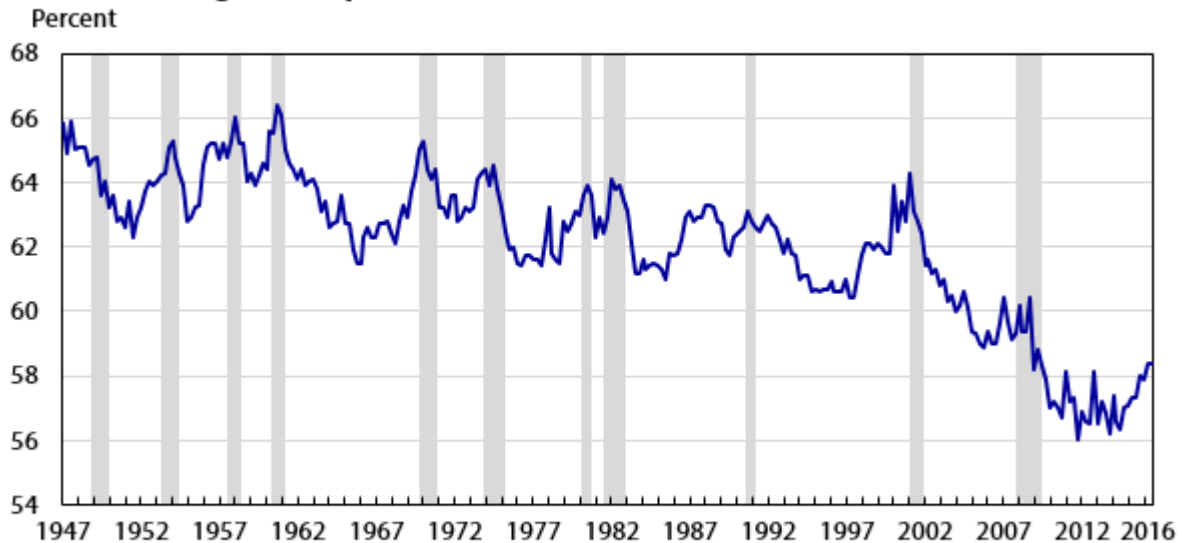
Labor Income = Employee Compensation + Proprietor Income

- *Employee Compensation – wages and benefits for employees in a corporation.*

- *Definition and data from by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)*
- *Includes: wages and salaries, commissions, tips, bonuses, severance payments, regular supplementary allowances, transit subsidies, employer contributions to employee pension and insurance funds*
- *Proprietor Income – labor compensation of a proprietor business*
 - *Definition and data from by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)*
 - *Does not include capital income*

Figure 1 shows the evolution of the labor share across all industry sectors from 1947 to 2016. The 52% figure calculated for the Northland project is consistent with the overall average.

Figure 1. Labor's share of output in the nonfarm business sector, first quarter 1947 through third quarter 2016



Note: Shaded areas indicate recessions, as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Additionally, IMPLAN provides the share of “Employee Compensation” to “Total Output” by sector and region. This metric excludes proprietor income and as such better correspond to RKG’s definition.

The table below outlines the percentages by industry sector in both Newton and State of Massachusetts. The development costs provided by Northland were allocated across these industry sectors, with most of the costs attributed to the Construction sector.

Industry Sector	Share of Total Development Cost	% of Total Output attributed to Employee Compensation	
		Newton	State of MA
57 – Construction of new commercial structures, including parking lots	70%	29%	22%
449 – Architectural, engineering and related services	17%	33%	31%
62 – Maintenance and repair construction of nonresidential structures	8%	18%	13%
56 – Construction of new highways and streets	4%	16%	11%
395 – Office furniture merchant wholesalers	1%	30%	25%
	100%	29%	22%

The weighted average of the percentages for Newton is 29%, a figure that relates more closely to the 35% figure provided by RKG.

- RKG understands that Landwise is considering the full 185,200 square feet of future retail space to all be net new to the project. There is a possibility that some portion of the proposed retail will be filled by tenants in the retail center that exists on the property today. RKG suggests the economic model offer a low and high estimate of impacts to reflect the possibility that not all the planned retail space will be net new.

Response:

The comment is noted. Northland does not currently have any agreements in place that would extend the leases of the existing retail tenants. Northland does not know if any retail tenants will return, so Landwise assumed that the retailers would be net new. We can run numbers on different assumptions, but we do not believe the results would be significantly different or affect the developer’s plans.

16. Since none of the townhouses in Building 13 are proposed to be accessible to Group 2A, how does the proposed project meet the Townhouse exception noted in 521 CMR 9.4.2? Is the Group 2A accessible live/work unit in Building 5 intended to serve as a substitute flat of comparable size and amenities? Will one of the townhouse units provide space for the future installation of a wheelchair lift for upper story access? Will one of the townhouse units provide space for the future installation of a residential elevator for upper story access?

Response:

Per MAAB §9.4.2, the Project will use the Townhouse exception (a) to substitute a fully accessible flat of comparable size, amenities, etc. elsewhere in the project.

17. How will the proposed project meet the accessibility requirements for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing as stated in 521 CMR 9.7? Which of the 822 total units will be set aside to fulfill the 2 percent requirement?

Response:

Per MAAB §9.6, 2% of the total number of dwelling units in the complex, and within each constructed phase of the project shall comply with the section. Although not yet defined, the units will be evenly distributed throughout the Project unless an additional unit is added to Building 8

18. Under the current Inclusionary Plan Set, 82 percent of the Group 2A accessible units will be located in market rate apartments and only 16 percent will be located in the affordable units. Would the developer be amenable to shifting more of the accessible units to the affordable side rather than the market rate side? It is plausible that there may be a greater demand for units that are both accessible and affordable compared to accessible at market rate price

Response:

Per MAAB §9.4.2 The Group 2A units are required to be evenly distributed across the units according to price. As submitted in the Preliminary Inclusionary Housing Plans, per the MAAB requirements, 5% of the affordable units are proposed to be accessible to Group 2A standards.

Northland is willing to make such a shift, but we understand it would be required to seek a variance with the State Accessibility Board for non-evenly distributing the Group 2a units toward the lower income units. Northland will need to seek advice of their Accessibility Consultant on viability of this variance with the MAAB.

ATTACHMENT F

March 2019

NEWTON DEVELOPMENT PEER REVIEW NORTHLAND NEWTON DEVELOPMENT

City of Newton, Massachusetts

RKG Associates, Inc.
76 Canal Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02114



TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

At the request of the City of Newton's Planning Department, RKG Associates (RKG) has completed an updated peer review of the Northland Newton development located at the corner of Oak Street and Needham Street. The reviews and analyses conducted by RKG include the following, all of which are discussed in a series of memos below:

- Overall Changes to the Development Program
- Peer Review of Northland's Fiscal Impact Analysis
- Peer Review of Northland's Economic Impact Analysis

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CHANGES

RKG, as an independent consultant for the City of Newton, previously completed a peer review of the fiscal¹ and economic² impacts associated with the proposed Northland Newton development site. Following RKG's December 3, 2018 peer review memo, Northland offered revisions to the development proposal and program which include:

- A reduction from 822 residential units to 800 residential units, both include a 15 percent (unit count) affordable component.
- A reduction in the proposed retail program from 185,200 square feet (inclusive of 50,000 square feet of restaurant use) to 115,000 square feet, inclusive of a proposed 40,000 square feet of restaurant use. The total decline in proposed retail is 70,200 square feet, or 40 percent.
 - While tenants are unknown, the Applicant estimates three large format restaurants at 10,000 square feet each (or 30,000 square feet in total) and three smaller scale restaurants totaling 10,000 square feet. Total proposed restaurant space is now 40,000 square feet, representing a 10,000 square foot decline from the original.
 - Northland, in response to Newton Planning Staff concerns, "*remains committed to providing up to 10,000 (SF)...at discounts up to 25% of the typical markets rents.*"
- The proposed office development remains the same at 180,000 square feet.

¹ As prepared by Fougere Planning & Development, Inc., dated August 13, 2018.

² As prepared by Landwise Advisors, dated August 13, 2018.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

The updated fiscal impact analysis takes into account the proposed changes in the development program, revised tax calculations to Fiscal Year 2019, and issues raised in RKG's December 3, 2018 peer review. Based on these factors, the Applicant has revisited their estimates of fiscal and economic impacts to which RKG offers the following comments and questions:

RKG concurs with the findings that the proposed Northland Newton development will provide a positive net fiscal impact to Newton on an annual basis. RKG has reviewed the revised assumptions and inputs used by the Applicant and generally has no issue with either the metrics for calculating revenue or those for calculating costs.

- Estimates of value are generally consistent with Fiscal Year 2019 data from Newton. As was noted by the Applicant during their public presentation, RKG agrees that our prior differences are well within an established market range.
- Estimates of municipal service costs have been adjusted accordingly to reflect the new program development.

That stated, in RKG's current review, we note that there appears to be a math error on Page 2, Table 2. The formula for calculating the residential value and property taxes results in a potential over statement of residential taxes by nearly \$212,000. While this error does not result in a negative fiscal impact for the overall project, it does reduce the tax receipts from the residential portion of the project.

Residential Valuation and Taxes (as presented by Applicant)

$(800 \text{ units} \times \$312,000/\text{unit}) = \$269,880,000 @ \$10.45 \text{ (FY2019)} = \$2,820,246 \text{ in taxes}$

Residential Valuation and Taxes (as presented by RKG)

$(800 \text{ units} \times \$312,000/\text{unit}) = \$249,600,000 @ \$10.45 \text{ (FY2019)} = \$2,608,320 \text{ in taxes}$

Finally, RKG notes that the Applicant's revised analysis indicates that "SAC estimates are revised from 142 to 138." RKG points out that the estimate of 142 students was offered in RKG's prior peer review, while the Applicant's prior estimate was 120 students. The Applicant has increased the estimated number of students to the School Department's recommendation of 138 students.

CONCLUSIONS

Table 1 presents RKG’s reconciliation of impacts showing the difference between our calculation of net taxes and the Applicants. In Table 1, RKG assumes that the Applicant did make an error when calculating the per unit residential valuation which results in a difference of nearly \$212,000. RKG also notes it appears the existing “as is” property taxes of \$920,913 were not removed from the net tax calculation. As revised and offered by RKG, this new iteration of the Northland Newton development results in a net fiscal impact of \$1.07 million. The project overall still results in a positive fiscal impact, but by RKG’s calculations less than the \$2.20 million in the Applicant’s February 13, 2019 submission.

Table 1 – Reconciliation of Impacts

	FEB 2019	RKG 2019
Property Tax	\$ 4,028,112	\$ 3,816,186
Commercial	\$ 1,207,866	\$ 1,207,866
Residential	\$ 2,820,246	\$ 2,608,320
<i>less</i> City costs	<i>\$ (248,892)</i>	<i>\$ (248,892)</i>
<i>less</i> Education costs	<i>\$(1,984,854)</i>	<i>\$(1,984,854)</i>
Net Property Tax	\$ 1,794,366	\$ 1,582,440
<i>less</i> "as is" tax	<i>\$ -</i>	<i>\$ (920,913)</i>
Other Tax Receipts	\$ 406,121	\$ 406,121
TOTAL NET TAX	\$ 2,200,487	\$ 1,067,648

Source : Fougere Planning and RKG (2019)

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Similar to the fiscal impact analysis, the Applicant has submitted a revised analysis for estimating economic impacts. Revisions to the economic impact analysis reflect the smaller development program with a total development build out of 1.36 million square feet, down from 1.51 million square feet. This reflects the reductions in residential units, retail square footage, and parking. The economic impacts have been adjusted based on the new development program, and costs have been updated to reflect 2019 dollars.

Overall, RKG finds that the relationship between the reduction in square feet across the development program and reduction in economic benefits are generally proportionate. For example, there was a 28 percent reduction in overall square feet in the development which resulted in a 30 percent reduction in direct commercial/retail employment. Worth noting, while the total cost of the project declined by a little more than 2 percent due to the reduction in the development program, the estimated cost on a per square foot basis increased marginally because costs have been updated to reflect 2019 dollars.

- RKG considers the economic estimates prepared by Landwise to be reasonable and consistent with their prior methodology, concluding net positive employment, wage and general economic impacts for the City of Newton. As noted in our previous peer review memo, RKG does not have experience using the most recent iteration of the IMPLAN econometric model but appreciates the Applicant’s explanation for how the model derives localized economic impacts at the city level. While our estimated percentages for construction wages may differ, the Applicant

has pointed us to resources explaining how IMPLAN estimates localized impacts. Whether the Applicant uses the IMPLAN figure of 50 percent for construction wages or RKG's figure of 35 percent, the Northland Newton project will still result in positive impacts for both direct and indirect jobs and wages.

SUMMARY TABLES

A summary comparison of the development program, fiscal impacts, and economic impacts from the February 2019 analyses and the August 2018 analyses are offered in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 – Summary Comparison of Fiscal Metrics of the Northland Project

Northland Development - Newton, MA - Comparisons now and then	FEB 2019 \$	AUG 2018 \$	% Δ
Residential Units	800	822	-2.7%
Residential SF	1,050,095	1,080,000	-2.8%
SF per Unit	1,313	1,314	-0.1%
Structured Parking (spaces)	1,410	1,800	-21.7%
Surface Parking (spaces)	140	-	
Gross SF (all)	1,358,295 <i>of tot</i>	1,510,297 <i>of tot</i>	-10.1%
Commercial/Retail	308,200 22.7%	430,297 28.5%	-28.4%
Residential	1,050,095 77.3%	1,080,000 71.5%	-2.8%
Office SF	180,000	180,000	0.0%
Large Restaurant SF	30,000	30,000	0.0%
Small Restaurant SF	10,000	20,000	-50.0%
Other Retail SF	75,000	135,200	-44.5%
Student Count	138	120	15.0%
Student Costs (marginal) (2018 blend)	\$ 1,984,854	\$ 1,467,480	35.3%
Per Pupil	\$ 14,383	\$ 12,229	17.6%
Property Tax	\$ 4,028,112	\$ 4,513,797	-10.8%
Police	\$ (40,420)	\$ (56,502)	-28.5%
Fire	\$ (100,000)	\$ (100,000)	0.0%
Health	\$ (83,472)	\$ (85,728)	-2.6%
Other	\$ (25,000)	\$ (25,000)	0.0%
Gross before Education	\$ 3,779,220	\$ 4,246,567	-11.0%
NET with Education	\$ 1,794,366	\$ 2,779,087	-35.4%
OTHER TAXES			
Excise Tax	\$ 174,600	\$ 178,075	-2.0%
Local Option Tax	\$ 165,000	\$ 195,000	-15.4%
Pers Prop Tax	26,240	30,589	-14.2%
CPA Tax	\$ 40,281	\$ 45,138	-10.8%
Total Other Tax	\$ 406,121	\$ 448,802	-9.5%
NET ALL	\$ 2,200,487	\$ 3,227,889	-31.8%

Table 3 – Summary Comparison of Economic Metrics of the Northland Project

Northland Development - Newton, MA - Comparisons <i>now and then</i>	FEB 2019 \$	AUG 2018 \$	% Δ
Construction Costs (mill)	\$ 493.0	\$ 504.0	-2.2%
Per SF	\$ 363.0	\$ 334	8.8%
Direct Employment			
Construction	3,296	3,310	-0.4%
Office	977	977	0.0%
per SF (stabilized)	175	175	0.0%
Retail	345	494	-30.2%
per SF (stabilized)	300	337	-11.1%
Residential	24	24	0.0%
SALARIES and BENEFITS			
One Time Impacts			
Direct Economic (mill)	\$ 250.0	\$ 252.0	-0.8%
Indirect Jobs	1,023 31.0%	1,057 31.9%	-3.2%
Indirect Economic (mill)	\$ 67.0 26.8%	\$ 69.0 27.4%	-2.9%
Ongoing Impacts			
Direct Economic (mill)	\$ 149.0	\$ 152.0	-2.0%
Indirect Jobs	885 65.8%	900 60.2%	-1.7%
Indirect Economic (mill)	\$ 59.0 39.6%	\$ 59.0 38.8%	0.0%
TOTAL ECONOMIC (mill)			
One Time Direct	\$ 485.0	\$ 486.0	-0.2%
One Time Indirect	\$ 155.0	\$ 160.0	-3.1%
Ongoing Direct	\$ 333.0	\$ 340.0	-2.1%
Ongoing Indirect	\$ 141.0	\$ 143.0	-1.4%

ATTACHMENT G

FOUGERE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT, Inc. Mark J. Fougere, AICP

TO: Northland Development, LLC

FROM: Mark J. Fougere, AICP

DATE: February 13, 2019

RE: Project Revisions and Response to RKG Peer Review Comments, Fiscal Impact Analysis

In response to the Peer Review Report dated December 3, 2018 from RKG, this Memo addresses and updates the following relative to the Northland Development Fiscal Impact Analysis:

- Update estimated values based on new program.
- Provide supporting assessment data for office and apartment values.
- Updates tax revenue (2019) and other income streams.
- Updates School Age Children (SAC) estimates based on 800 apartment units along with applying Newton School Department's new SAC methodologies.
- Updates school costs based upon revised SAC estimates and School Department cost estimates.
- Updates Summary Table of estimated revenues and costs.

Revised Program

- 800 residential units (decrease from 822 units)
 - Studios: 80 (68 market – 12 affordable)
 - 1-Bdrms: 360 (303 market – 57 affordable)
 - 2-Bdrms: 320 (272 market – 48 affordable)
 - 3-Bdrms: 40 (34 market – 6 affordable)
- Retail: 115,000 net sq. ft. (decrease from 185,000 net sq. ft)
- Office: 180,000 sq. ft.

phone: 603-315-1288 email: Fougereplanning@comcast.net

Values and Assessments

Office Space:

RKG Comment: Office space value should be \$155/square foot, not \$180.

Response: The existing 180,000 square foot office building will be renovated into Class A space to compete in the Newton marketplace. The current local office market assessed values range from \$148 - \$265 a square foot (Table One Appendix). The weighted average of these properties is \$204 a square foot. In addition, a very comparable office property located at 1210 Washington Street is presently assessed for \$188 a square foot. Given these updated assessments, we believe the estimated assessed value \$180 per square foot originally assigned to the renovated office space is supportable based upon Town of Newton assessment data.

Apartments:

RKG Comment: Apartment value should be \$291,100 per unit not \$320,000.

Response: Reviewing 2019 assessments of three comparable apartment complexes, we found an average per unit value of \$312,962 (Appendix - Table Two). This is value is slightly less than that reported in the Fiscal Analysis, but reflects the current apartment market in Newton.

Revenue Estimates

Based upon the updated program and assessments in Table One, and now using the FY 2019 tax rate established in December 2018 the estimated property taxes including CPA surcharges will be \$4,068,393 annually.

Table One

Program	Square Feet	Est. Sq. Ft. Value	Est. Total Value		
Retail					
Total Retail Sq. Ft.	115,000	\$245	\$28,175,000		
Office					
Renovated - Oak Street	180,000	\$180	\$32,400,000		
Total Value Non-Residential			\$60,575,000	Taxes @ \$19.94	\$1,207,866
Apartments					
Studio - Three Bedroom	800 Units	\$312,000 / Unit	\$269,880,000	Taxes @ \$10.45	\$2,820,246
				Total Est. Taxes	\$4,028,112
				CPA Surcharge	1%
				Total Taxes	\$4,068,393

Updated Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Revenue

# Cars ¹	Value	Total Value
776	\$18,000	\$13,968,000

¹ Estimated 1 vehicles per unit, with 3% vacancy.

\$6,984,000/1,000 (50% reduction)	\$6,984
\$25 x \$6,984	\$174,600

Updated Local Meals Tax

Restaurant Tax Estimate	
Large Restaurant (10k Avg.)	30,000/SF
Small Restaurant (3k Avg.)	10,000/SF
Total	40,000/SF
Large Restaurant Gross Revenue	\$600/SF
Small Restaurant Gross Revenue	\$400/SF
Total Gross Revenue	\$22,000,000
Tax Revenue To Newton²	\$165,000

Updated Personal Property Taxes

Personal property taxes will be collected from a number of businesses that will reside within the Development area, specifically the proposed restaurants and office tenants. Based upon information supplied by the Board of Assessors, an average assessed value of restaurant personal property was calculated at \$.431 per square foot. The Development program includes 40,000 square feet of restaurant space, which will generate an estimated \$17,240 in personal property tax revenue. It is estimated that the renovated office building will generate \$9,000 a year (\$.05 per square foot), for a total estimated annual personal property tax revenue of **\$26,240**.

Updated Estimated Yearly Revenue

Table Two summarizes the revised estimated revenues from property taxes, CPA surcharges, vehicle excise taxes, local meal taxes and personal property taxes total \$4,434,233.

Table Two

Commercial/Residential Property Tax	\$4,028,112
CPA Surcharge	\$40,281
Excise Taxes	\$174,600
Local Meal Taxes	\$165,000
Personnel Property Taxes	\$26,240
Total Revenue	\$4,434,233

Schools

As the result of new school aged children (“SAC”) methodologies³ developed by Newton Public Schools, SAC estimates are revised from 142 to 138. In addition, the School Department

² Local meal tax rate .0075%

³ Ms. Kirrane, Director of Business and Planning for the Newton School System was consulted relative to the application of the three SAC Methodologies.

developed a new per student marginal cost estimate of \$14,383 which the School Department agreed was appropriate at the public hearing on November 13, 2018.

Table Three

	SAC
Method 1	151
Method 2	176
Method 3	173
Average	167
Less Private School - 12%	20.00
Less Out-of-assigned district – 5%	8.33
Total Estimated Public School Children	138

Table Four

Enrollment Profile	Grades
Elementary 50%	69
Middle 25%	35
High 25%	35

School Cost Summary

As summarized in Table Five, the School Department updated their per student cost estimates.

Table Five

	SAC	Cost
Marginal Cost@ \$14,383	138	\$1,984,854

Since the completion of the Fiscal Impact Analysis in August/2018, new school related information germane to the proposed project has arisen. Four new classrooms have been incorporated into the proposed renovation of the Countryside Elementary School, schedule to be completed in FY2026. In addition, a draft Enrollment Planning & Class Report produced by the Newton Public Schools, indicates that future enrollments will continue to be manageable over the next 10 years. This analysis took into consideration the proposed Northland development, as well as three other planned projects.

Police

Net new retail space has decreased from 114,447 to 44,247 square feet, reducing the estimated new call volume for the Police Department from 518 to 374 calls. Table Six summarizes the revised cost to the Department.

Table Six

4.5 Officers Per Sector			
Cost Per Sector	Salary	Officers per Shift	Cost
Day Shift	\$92,917	1.5	\$139,376
Night Shift	\$98,418	3	\$295,254
Total Sector Cost			\$434,630
Calls Per Sector	4,007		
Estimated Calls	374		
% Increase in Calls	9.3%		
Estimated Costs	9.3% x \$434,630 = \$40,420		

Fiscal Summary

Table Seven summarizes the updated fiscal impact from the proposed Development. Gross annual revenues to the City of Newton are estimated to be \$4,434,233 and estimated annual costs of \$2,233,746, with the proposed development providing an estimated yearly net positive impact to the City of **\$2,200,487**.

This cost estimate does not infer that the City’s budget will increase as a result of the proposed Development but assigns a “cost” to account for these new land uses in the community. Appropriate discussions with key decision makers within the City will determine if budgets need to be adjusted to address demands estimated in this Report.

Table Seven
Estimated Annual Fiscal Impact

	COSTS	REVENUE
Gross Rev. Taxes, CPA, Meals, Excise & Personnel Property Taxes		\$4,434,233
Estimated Municipal Costs		
Police	\$40,420	
Fire	\$100,000	
Health ⁴	\$83,472	
Other Departments	\$25,000	
School Costs	\$1,984,854	
Total Costs	\$2,233,746	
Net Annual Positive Fiscal Impact		+\$2,200,487
Net Increase in New Revenue (LESS existing tax revenue of \$990,898 per year)		\$1,209,589

⁴ 800 units with 2.22 persons per unit, 1,776 population at a per capita cost of \$47.

Appendix

Table One
Newton Office Space Assessments

Newton Office Comps					
233 Needham	Office	65,404	0.99	\$15,696,400	\$240
90 Oak Street (1238 Chestnut)	Office	145,149	2.15	\$12,934,700	\$89
1210 Washington Street	Office	96,080	1.82	\$18,028,000	\$188
2 Wells Ave	Office	132,588	10.01	\$19,500,000	\$147
1 Wells Ave	Office	85,788	7.95	\$17,432,100	\$203
7 Wells Ave	Office	119,086	7.80	\$17,652,200	\$148
75 Wells Ave	Office	263,492	12.80	\$44,989,500	\$171
275 Grove Street	Office	568,936	11.24	\$150,724,700	\$265
2150 Washington Street	Office	32,169	2.24	\$6,611,300	\$206
2310 Washington Street	Office	41,896	1.00	\$9,911,400	\$237
2221 Washington Street	Office	51,336	1.77	\$12,216,700	\$238
2223 Washington Street	Office	52,635	2.45	\$11,994,600	\$228
2227 Washington Street	Office	23,788	1.62	\$6,041,800	\$254
320 Needham Street	Office	43,500	2.24	\$7,516,800	\$173
109 Oak Street	Office	17,576	1.46	\$3,215,600	\$183

Table Two
Apartment Assessments

Newton Apartments	Units	Assess/Unit	Year Built	
109 Needham - Highland	294	\$297,692	2003	\$87,521,400
160 Boylston St. - Chestnut	204	\$339,335	2007	\$69,224,300
Woodland Station - Washington	180	\$308,017	2007	\$55,443,100
Apartment Average	678	\$312,963		\$212,188,800

School SAC Methodologies⁵

Method 1

Type	Units	SAC Ratios	Total SAC
Studios Market	68	0.000	0.000
Studios Affordable	12	0.000	0.000
1 Bed Market	303	0.000	0.000
1 Bed Affordable	57	0.000	0.000
2 Bed Market	272	0.214	58.208
2 Bed Affordable	48	1.018	48.864
3 Bed Market	34	0.800	27.200
3 Bed Affordable	6	2.792	16.752
Total	800		151

Method 2

SGR	Units	SAC
0.220	800	176

Method 3

Type	Units	SAC Ratios	Total SAC
Studios Market	68	0.062	4.21
Studios Affordable	12	0.062	0.74
1 Bed Market	303	0.038	11.51
1 Bed Affordable	57	0.038	2.16
2 Bed Market	272	0.441	119.95
2 Bed Affordable	48	0.441	21.16
3 Bed Market	34	0.338	11.49
3 Bed Affordable	6	0.338	2.02
Total	800		173

⁵ Newton School Department Enrollment Analysis Report, 2018, page 116.

ATTACHMENT H



date February 8, 2019

to Northland Investment Corp

from Landwise Advisors

project name Northland Newton Development

subject Summary of Economic Impact Analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

This executive summary highlights the analysis performed by Landwise Advisors to measure the economic impacts of the Northland Newton Development (“Development”), a new mixed used development proposed by Northland Development Corporation (“Northland”). For the purposes of the memo, all impacts are measured at the City of Newton (“City”) level. The 22.6-acre development site, located in Newton Upper Falls, lies at the northwestern corner of Needham and Oak Streets. The plan proposes approximately 1.4 million square feet of residential and commercial uses and is anticipated to be completed by 2024. The Development will generate considerable construction expenditures and new employment, both of which contribute to the City’s economy.

Landwise estimated the short-term (construction phase) and long-term (recurring) economic benefits using IMPLAN. IMPLAN is nationally recognized model for determining economic impacts that accrue to subject site jurisdictions as a result of capital investment and related job creation. The model is able to measure benefits that accrue to specific geographies. The following report highlights the assumptions and methodology used to develop the IMPLAN model and provides an overview of the projected impacts in City of the Newton from the Development.

II. METHODOLOGY & THE INPUTS

IMPLAN operates as an input-output model and each input indicates a change in the economy, such as a capital project or employment expansion/contraction. The outputs, or the economic benefits, represent either one-time or recurring impacts. The Northland Newton Development will generate both one-time benefits from construction and ongoing benefits from new employment and these impacts are quantified in the subsequent paragraphs.

Landwise used Northland Investment Corporation development cost estimates as inputs to derive the one-time impacts from construction. The costs were assigned to the applicable construction sectors in the IMPLAN model following the development program provided by Northland.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- 1,358,295 Total gross square feet
 - Commercial (office & retail): 308,200 gross square feet. *This includes the rehabilitation and selective demolition of portions of the 156 Oak Street office building.*
 - Residential: 1,050,095 gross square feet
- 1,550 total parking spaces (1,410 structured)

The construction is expected to occur in two phases, each lasting approximately two years. Costs were allocated by the phasing schedule to more accurately represent the benefits accruing over the construction period.

PHASING

- Sequence 1
 - Includes 156 Oak St Rehabilitation
 - Begins mid-2020
 - Complete mid-2022
 - Represents 70% of total development costs
- Sequence 2
 - Begins early-2022
 - Complete late-2023
 - Represents 30% of total development costs

The total development costs included in the IMPLAN model total **\$493 million (roughly 80% of the development budget)**. Landwise differentiated between new construction and rehabilitation costs as well as soft cost and hard costs. Land acquisition, project reserves, fees and interest were not included in the model, as these expenditures do not generate direct economic benefits.

To determine the recurring benefits, Landwise estimated the amount and type of employment that would be generated by each land use (retail, office, and residential). ***It is assumed that all employment is “net new” to the City of Newton.*** Each estimated employment figure represents total employment, including full time, part time, and temporary positions. The following lists the key assumptions that were used to derive the employment figures.

OFFICE EMPLOYMENT: 977 total employees

- 180,000 rentable square feet
- 95% occupancy
- 175 square feet / employee
- Average Salary: \$96,736.
- Assumes jobs will occur in the Information, Finance and Insurance, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, and Management of Companies and Enterprises NAICS Sectors.

RETAIL EMPLOYMENT: 345 total employees

- 115,000 gross square feet
- 90% occupancy
- 400 square feet/full-time equivalent (or 337 square feet/employee)
- The FTE figure was converted using IMPLAN's *FTE to Total Employment* conversion ratios.
- Assume jobs will occur in the Retail Trade NAICS sector.

RESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT: 24 total employees

- Figure provided by Northland

The total employment from new office, retail and residential projects totals to **1,346 total employees**.

III. THE IMPACTS

IMPLAN measures the economic benefits at three levels: Direct Employment (“1st Level”), Business to Business Spending (“2nd Level”) and Personal Spending on Local Services (“3rd Level”).

Description of impact levels for the one-time impacts

- 1st Level : includes salaries and benefits of employees involved in the construction and total economic output of those employees.
- 2nd level: includes construction related business-to business-purchases in the City of Newton and related economic output and taxes paid.
- 3rd level: includes economic output form household spending on goods and services purchased in the City of Newton.

SUMMARY OF ONE-TIME IMPACTS

Impacts from the Development are shown in 2019 dollars.

	Salaries / Benefits	Total One-Time Impact
1st Level Direct Employment	3,296 jobs / \$250M	\$485M
“Spin-Off” Impacts in the City of Newton		
2nd Level Business to Business Spending	314 jobs / \$27M	\$60M
3rd Level Personal Spending on Local Services	709 jobs / \$40M	\$95M
Total 2nd and 3rd Level Impacts in City of Newton	1,023 jobs / \$67M	\$155M

SUMMARY OF ONGOING (ANNUAL) IMPACTS

Impacts from the Development are all shown in 2019 dollars.

	Salaries / Benefits	Total Annual Impact
1st Level Direct Employment	1,346 jobs / \$149M	\$333M
“Spin-Off” Impacts in the City of Newton		
2nd Level Business to Business Spending	421 jobs / \$33M	\$79M
3rd Level Personal Spending on Local Services	464 jobs / \$26M	\$62M
Total 2nd and 3rd Level Impacts in City of Newton	885 jobs / \$59M	\$141M

IV. CONCLUSION

The economic impact analysis shows that the Development will generate substantial positive impacts in the City of Newton including one-time construction impacts and related spin-off employment; as well as ongoing annual impacts

once the project is built out. The **one-time impacts** include **\$485 million of direct impact** and **\$155 million of spin-off impacts** in the City of Newton. The **on-going annual impacts** include **\$333 million of direct impact** and **\$141 million of spin-off benefits** in the City. These positive economic impacts could be an important driver for the Newton economy for the coming decade and beyond.

V. COMPARISON TO FIGURES FROM AUGUST 2018

The economic impact shown in this memo vary slightly from the figures shown in August 2018. The changes stem largely from ***the reduction is the gross square footage of the project including 22 fewer residential units and 70,200 fewer square feet of retail***, for a total reduction of 98,078 square feet.

The result of this change is minimal but for **one-time impacts** the change in program reduces the direct impact from \$486 million to \$485 million and reduces the spin-off off impacts in Newton from \$160 million to \$155 million.

Additionally, for the **on-going impacts** the change in program reduces the estimated onsite employment from 1,495 jobs to 1,346 jobs, reduces the direct annual impact from \$340 million to \$333 million and reduces the annual spin-off effect in Newton from \$143 million to \$141 million.