

SCHLESINGER AND BUCHBINDER, LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

STEPHEN J. BUCHBINDER
ALAN J. SCHLESINGER
LEONARD M. DAVIDSON
A MIRIAM JAFFE
SHERMAN H. STARR, JR.
JUDITH L. MELIDEO-PREBLE
BARBARA D. DALLIS
PAUL N. BELL
KATHERINE BRAUCHER ADAMS
FRANKLIN J. SCHWARZER
RACHAEL C. CARVER
ADAM M. SCHECTER

1200 Walnut Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02461-1267
Telephone (617) 965-3500

www.sab-law.com
Email: sjbuchbinder@sab-law.com

April 17, 2020

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Ms. Nadia Khan
Committee Clerk
Land Use Committee
Newton City Council
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459-1449

Re: Riverside Station/355 Grove Street and 399 Grove Street / #26-20 and #27-20

Dear Nadia,

I am forwarding herewith responses to comments and questions received from Councilors Greenberg, Kelley, Laredo, and Markiewicz prepared by the development team dated April 17, 2020. This represents the third set of responses to comments and questions from Councilors or the Planning Department.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Buchbinder/mer
Stephen J. Buchbinder

SJB/mer
Attachments

cc: (By Email w/attachments)
Mr. Neil Cronin
Mr. Robert Korff
Mr. Damien Chaviano
Mr. David Roache

Riverside Station

Response to Comments

April 17, 2020

Response to Comments

Number	Commenter (Alphabetical Order)
A	Councilor Greenberg
B	Councilor Kelly
C	Councilor Laredo
D	Councilor Markiewicz

Councilor Greenberg

Comment A.1

Could the bike corral and storage area be moved to a safer location other than the center of the transportation loop?

Response

Based on concerns that were voiced through the Land Use process, we have relocated the bike corral and storage area from the center of the transportation loop to the ground floor of Building 7 in the area closest to the T station.

Comment A.2

Could there be pedestrian/bike only travel lanes through the complex?

Response

There are already ped-only trajectories in two places down the hillside—in the amphitheater and to the hotel square—and along the sides of the Transit Green, but to create more of them would mean turning one of the existing streets into a street without vehicles. This is not possible as all of the development's streets are needed to move cars and buses around. All trajectories that can be ped-only are already ped-only.

Comment A.3

Is there a possibility to share the parking spaces in the MBTA lot?

Response

The MBTA has been unwilling to share their parking spaces because they anticipate the need for more spaces than they have now to accommodate a growth in ridership from the development. However, the MBTA has accounted for in the lease the right to put those spaces into the shared parking in the event they determine there is not the anticipated demand.

Comment A.4

It would be important to have a pedestrian/bike, possibly shuttle, connection between the Riverside train/bus station and the Auburndale commuter rail station.

Response

While an improved pedestrian and bike connection from the site to Auburndale is challenging over existing roads due to various rights of way and land control constraints, an improved connection from the development to Auburndale will be created via the improvements to Recreation Road and the link to the MWRA trail. By making this connection, one could walk or bike from Lower Falls or the Riverside development down Recreation Road to the improved bridge over the Charles River at the Lasell Boathouse. From the Lasell Boathouse, bicyclists and pedestrians can enjoy a safe walk or ride down the residential Charles Street to

Auburn Street. The station is two short blocks down Auburn Street from Charles Street. In all, this route is almost entirely on protected paths or low traffic residential roads. The petitioner has included a shuttle from the development to Auburndale as a possible mitigation measure in the event trips exceed 110% of projections.

Comment A.5

Monetary penalties for exceeding acceptable trip counts similar to the TDM conditions in Northland's project.

Response

Monetary penalties for exceeding trip counts will not reduce trips to the development. The TDM package proposed includes measures aimed at reducing trips by encouraging residents, tenants and visitors to pursue alternate means of transportation.

Comment A.6

Could space be made for community gardens? Perhaps behind Building 1 and rooftops gardens?

Response

Community gardens are relatively land-intensive and are not being considered for the open spaces. The area behind Building 1 is owned by the MBTA and no longer part of the development parcel. The building rooftops cannot be made accessible to residents as doing so would require adding a partial story to a building to allow access.

Comment A.7

Implementation of noise reducing building components and/or landscaping to protect the neighborhoods of Lower Falls and the residents of Riverside along Rt 128.

Response

Buildings 1 and 2 would largely shield the neighborhoods of Lower Falls from any noise generated from within the site. These buildings (office and hotel) have no external balconies facing the highway and would act as a buffer.

Comment A.8

In regards to the amphitheater, it was stated that there is an area for stage performances at the top of the amphitheater next to the playground. If I am correct, the ground slopes down from that area making it difficult for folks who are seated below to view the stage. Usually, the stage would be at the bottom of an amphitheater.

Response

There has been discussion about a “movable” stage as part of the amphitheater design. If a stage is to be accommodated, it would be placed at the bottom of the amphitheater where there is ample space.

Comment A.9

I look forward to the details of the design and amenities of the Hotel green, the playground near the amphitheater, transit loop green and the transit green. A water feature would be a wonderful addition to this community.

Response

A revised proposal for the Hotel Green has been developed. Prominently featured in this area will be a safe fenced-in space for play, the amphitheater green is well developed and programmed with pockets of level areas and the “Jack and Jill” hill at its base, and the transit green is intended to be an open lawn area to allow for flexible use. A water feature is not currently envisioned in these spaces.

Comment A.10

I understand that buildings constructed with passive house standards must have simple lines to achieve a high performing thermal envelope, but I was wondering if faux facades with interesting materials and features could be used to add interest to the look of these buildings.

Response

The Passive House demand for simple building volumes is actually well in keeping with the aesthetic of this project thus far, which is inspired by simple New England building forms. While most contemporary projects tend to favor jaunty facades with many projecting and receding bays, that is not the approach taken here. To the degree that decorative features are proposed, they are mostly shallow façade articulations and attached balconies, neither of which should substantially impact a Passive House Strategy.

Comment A.11

I agree with President Albright's comments that as one travels down Grove street it appears that the buildings of this complex have their backs to the adjacent neighborhood.

Response

Buildings 7 and 6 have ground floor retail with glass storefront facing Grove Street, and Building 5 has stoops and doors. We agree that Building 3 would benefit from having a residential lobby entrance on Grove and Building 6 would benefit from having a residential through-lobby connecting Grove and Main Streets; we are investigating those items. While building 4 may not have entrances directly adjacent to Grove Street, its center courtyard is exposed to view from Grove Street.

Councilor Kelly

Comment B.1

What is "county drainage" (was a note on the PowerPoint presentation by the developer)?

Response

“County drainage” is a term used to describe stormwater collected from pavement that is conveyed directly to a landscape BMP (i.e., a roadside swale) without first being collected in a traditional closed drainage system. County drainage provides a means for sediment, debris and contaminant removal. The naming/terminology is derived from rural roadways where this method of stormwater management is more common. It is more difficult to create this condition in more developed areas like Newton where curbs and paved sidewalks are more typically required.

Comment B.2

Adding several more true Passive House buildings would be beneficial- exploring on how to incorporate the kinds of design features Robert Korff wants to be sure are possible for the aesthetic quality he seeks with details, materials, facade treatments etc. with the high performing thermal envelope and continuous insulation should be productive.

Response

The proponent agrees that more, true Passive House buildings would be beneficial environmentally, however some of the energy savings and air tightness measures come at a diminished “return” on cost if the return is measured in energy savings. The team feels it is better to set a higher energy performance baseline for all residential buildings by designing these using Passive House principles. The proponent has pushed three buildings beyond that baseline to Passive House certification. If the proponent were to commit to certify more Passive House buildings, it would have to come at the cost of the overall improved baseline. As a baseline all of our residential buildings will have high performing thermal envelopes with continuous insulation and a focus on air tightness, compartmentalization and energy performance. Because of this, in aggregate, a significant improvement in energy performance for the whole project will be achieved beyond simply designing to meet the Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code.

The proponent has agreed and committed to study all residential buildings for Passive House feasibility and certify three buildings. If it turns out through these studies that more buildings can be certified without a major increase in hard costs or at the expense of the overall project aesthetics, additional buildings will be considered. These studies will be conducted closer to the time of construction; therefore no further commitments of certification can be made at this time.

Comment B.3

Rooftop solar panels installed where possible vs. just "ready"- we are years away from making commitments possible by providers and incentives are currently reduced, but I hope a maximum of installed v. ready rooftops for solar will be done. I appreciate that Mark Development will continue to monitor the solar market.

Response

The proponent remains committed to installing solar if the market changes and is in discussions with the MBTA about solar panels on the roof of their garage

Comment B.4

**pursue negotiations with the T for using the parking garage roof for solar installation.*

Response

As has been discussed, the garage is now solely owned by the MBTA, who will ultimately have the decision as to whether or not they would like to install panels on the garage. However, the petitioner understands the importance to the community and is continuing to work with the MTBA to find a solution.

Comment B.5

Refinement of where green roofs and vertical walls will be located, and what the intention of those are (O2 production, visual appeal, community gardens, etc.).

Response

Successful use of vertical gardens and green walls are difficult in our climate. Generally, because the upper partial floors have been eliminated from the residential buildings, there is no rooftop access for residents to provide rooftop gardens and the visual appeal of green roofs will not be apparent as they are out of view. The residential roof areas will either be used for the outdoor units of the heat pumps, elevator overruns, generators, energy recovery units or reserved for future solar installations. Generally, there will not be meaningful rooftop space available for green roofs.

Comment B.6

Reduce the amount of untreated stormwater runoff that will be directed without treatment to water bodies (eg. Charles River).

Response

A comprehensive stormwater management system utilizing redundant BMPs have been designed to restore a more natural water cycle and protect surrounding natural resources. Presently, a significant amount of impervious area discharges directly to the Charles River basin with limited controls. In the future condition, the vast majority of annual rainfall events will be captured, treated and a significant portion will be infiltrated into the ground.

Comment B.7

What will the collected rainwater and greywater be used for in addition to landscape irrigation, any other uses?

Response

We anticipate the rainwater collection will be used solely for irrigation demands. The volume of water collected is insufficient for other uses. Greywater will not be collected and reused as the logistics of collecting greywater and reusing it for the residential buildings is cost prohibitive.

Comment B.8

With the reduction in density through the LFIA negotiations, I understand that overall open space and connectivity to trails and river has been reduced. I would like to see the previous commitments to Greenway connections upheld.

Response

The original commitment was a \$6.0 million contribution to the efforts of the Riverside Greenway Working Group. The scope was not defined, but the petitioner envisioned being able to repair the two rail bridges with those additional funds.

Comment B.9

Electricity and solar as the energy sources (for heat and cooking) in residential and common areas. Provide information and education to tenants about upping to 100% renewable option.

Response

Presently, the City has a commendable standard of a default power supply of 62% from renewable sources. The proponent is committed to sustainability and to the extent possible will encourage tenants to enroll in the 100% renewable option.

Comment B.10

Plant selection can help with both noise and pollution mitigation, including vertical green walls. Drought tolerant where applicable (some may be the opposite: liking "wet feet" when closer to the river eg.), native species preferred for environmental sustainability goals.

Response

The design team has a long experience of plant selection in urban and town settings in New England. All species will be chosen with a preference towards native species or low maintenance plants that will thrive rather than simply survive. An essential component to success includes adequate soil volume for root systems for large shade trees, appropriate planting soil components, and proper drainage (both surface and subsurface). An equal objective will be to provide a rich and diverse plant palette which provides wildlife habitat and seasonal interest.

Green walls and/or green screens will be studied as an alternative/supplement to natural plantings in specific locations, keeping in mind our New England climate and high maintenance.

Comment B.11

Shuttle to commuter rail in Auburndale provides yet another transit-oriented option beyond the Green line subway.

Response

The petitioner agrees that a shuttle to Auburndale would be a great additional transit-oriented option for the development, however it would come at a significant upfront cost. As such, the petitioner has proposed this as a potential measure in the event trips exceed 110% of projections.

Councilor Laredo

Comment C.1

How many workers will be on site during construction and where they will park?

Response

During the initial stage of construction, prior to the opening of the garage, approximately 150 construction workers will park on site. During this phase, we have allocated portions of the existing Hotel Indigo site and a presently unused portion of the MBTA Maintenance yard that will be cleared and leveled prior to the start of the garage construction. These areas are sufficient to handle construction parking at this initial stage. After the opening of the garage, construction parking will peak at about 250 vehicles. At that point there will be approximately 1,000 unused parking spaces available for construction workers in the garage in addition to the space in the MBTA maintenance yard. During phase 2 of construction at least 250 spaces will be available in the garage until that phase is complete.

Councilor Markiewicz

Comment D.1

The request for consideration for signalization of the Grove St. / Woodland Street intersection was deemed to meet the warrants for signalization per VHB. Can you please specify which warrant(s) was used and what the statistics in support of that determination are? The expectation is that traffic counts would be based on post Riverside completion, but it would be useful to understand if interim phases were considered as construction activity will also bring traffic albeit only during the construction timeline. Since other signalization will be provided, can you provide the same information for those intersections regarding warrants used and statistics used to make the determination?

Response

On March 20, 2020 VHB submitted a memorandum to the City outlining a traffic signal warrant evaluation that was conducted at the intersection of Grove Street and Woodland Road. As outlined in the memorandum the signal warrant evaluation was conducted three ways, reviewing 2020 existing traffic conditions, reviewing 2029 No-Build Conditions, and assuming that the Riverside project were in place, 2029 Build conditions. The evaluation focused on the three primary volume warrants that is typical for assessing the need of and warrants for traffic signalization:

- Eight-Hour volume warrant
- Four-Hour volume warrant
- Peak-Hour volume warrant

If any of the warrants were to be met during any of the periods reviewed, justification for a traffic signal could be made. As outlined in the memorandum, the intersection does not meet any of the signal warrants for the three conditions evaluated, including the future 2029 Build condition.

In addition to the three warrants described above, there are six other traffic signal warrants outlined in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control (MUTCD). While none of the six additional warrants are met at this intersection, the warrants are listed below with the reasoning why they do not apply at this location:

- Warrant 4 (Pedestrian Volume) – This warrant is not applicable as the current number of pedestrian crossings at this location does not meet the minimum number of crossings required to meet any of the cases for Warrant 4. The minimum threshold to meet this warrant is 107 people crossing per hour for four hours or 133 people crossing per hour for one hour. It is not anticipated that this warrant will be met in the future either as the total number of pedestrian crossings would need to more than double over four hours to meet Warrant 4, which is not anticipated due to the Riverside redevelopment.
- Warrant 5 (School Crossing) – While the intersection is close to the Williams Elementary School, this warrant is not applicable as there are currently adequate gaps in the traffic stream during the period when schoolchildren are crossing due to the all-way stop control nature of the intersection.
- Warrant 6 (Coordinated Signal System) – This warrant is not applicable as neither Grove Street nor Woodland Road currently contain an adjacent signalized intersection within 1,000 feet that could become part of a coordinated traffic signal system.

- Warrant 7 (Crash Experience) – Warrant 7 is satisfied when five collisions correctable by signalization occur over the most recent 12 months. A review of crash data determines that this warrant is not applicable as only one crash occurred at the study area intersection in 2017, the most recent full crash data is available from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.
- Warrant 8 (Roadway Network) – This warrant is not applicable as the study intersection is not the common intersection of two major routes.
- Warrant 9 (Intersection Near a Grade Crossing) – This warrant is not applicable as the intersection is not near an active grade crossing.

Comment D.2

Continuing with intersections, Hancock at Woodland is a major path to Williams. One block south on Hancock is the main entrance for walkers. There are also bus stops for South and Brown at Woodland/Williams. The roads and intersections involved here are frequent cut throughs for traffic looking to jump from the 128/90 intersection over to the Pike entrance (Exit 16) on Washington St.

Response

Review of the peak hour traffic volumes at the Woodland Road/Hancock Street intersection versus the Grove Street/Woodland Road intersection suggests that the Woodland/Hancock location sees significantly less peak hour traffic than the Grove/Woodland intersection (68% less during both the AM and PM Peak hours). With this in mind, meeting traffic signal warrants at this location is extremely unlikely.

Comment D.3

Where is the TDM? Will MD agree to institute financial contributions to mitigate costs and other impacts caused if the TDM is not successful or if traffic counts exceed projected numbers provided in MD's traffic studies and associated peer reviews?

Response

The TDM was submitted on December 9th 2019. At the request of the Planning Department, a follow-up TDM memo was provided on January 14th, 2020, addressing options for further mitigation in the event traffic counts exceed 110%. One of the measures would be to fund up to \$750,000 in additional public transit subsidies to mitigate traffic.

Comment D.4

Who will pay for the proposed traffic roundabout for the southbound access to 128, plus any new sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic signalization? Assuming it is MD, is it contemplated that all cost will be borne by MD or is there a limit at which point MD will seek assistance in funding and if so, who would that source of funding be?

Response

All of the off-site traffic mitigation measures are a project cost and the proponent will be responsible for the funding.

Comment D.5

With respect to the aforementioned “roundabout” and other infrastructural costs for roads, traffic signals etc, will MD agree to bear all costs regardless of amount in order to comply with the plans provided as part of this petition? Will cost challenges for the aforementioned have an impact on other contributions for public spaces, for example, improvements to Charles River access, the Greenway or bike lanes?

Response

All of the off-site traffic mitigation measures are a project cost and the proponent will be responsible for funding. This will not impact the commitments to other project mitigation measures.

Comment D.6

How will protected bike lanes be made “protected”? Does the protection mechanism apply to all parts of the bike lanes be they east - west and north - south? Can you specify the different types of protection if applicable and whether this has been subject to peer review?

Response

The bike facilities are being reviewed and discussed with the City of Newton. Under the two scenarios being discussed, both plans account for a completely protected bike facility on the “project side” of Grove Street and the connection from the development to the proposed Riverside Park along Recreation Road. These protected facilities are either a) raised cycletracks at sidewalk level that have a planted buffer between cyclist and road or b) have a paver/tactile material buffer between cyclist and pedestrian. The bicycle facilities along Grove Street over the I95 will be protected by a raised median. The only portion of the bicycle facilities that will be at roadway grade will have a painted/spatial buffer and limited to the commuter bike traffic heading NE from Newton Lower Falls to Auburndale. Further discussion is required on the “golf course” proposed bike lane.

Comment D.7

Can you explain how each of the different types of traffic will be managed as directed to and within the garage? Is there a parking management plan that we would put in summary form in the Council Order conditions?

Response

Traffic within the site and garage will be managed through a variety of wayfinding signage both static and dynamic as well as parking management staff. Generally, this management will be required at peak hours and during events such as Red Sox games. The garage is flexible in that all entrances will allow access to all portions of the garage.

When entering the site, office users and residents will be directed towards the garage entrance at the southern end of Building 10 at Road A near Building 1. MBTA users will be directed to the central garage entrance in Building 9. Should queuing occur entering at either location, either dynamic signage or parking staff will direct users to the alternate entrance.

When exiting the site, users exiting towards the highway end of the site will be encouraged to use the Building 10 egress to reduce traffic on site and on Main Street. Those headed towards the north will be encouraged to

use the Building 9 egress. Should congestion either on site or in the garage occur, either dynamic signage or parking staff will direct users to the more efficient route.

On game days, generally daily commuters and office tenants will be exiting while Red Sox fans arrive. Red Sox customers will be directed to enter at the Building 9 entrance while exiting office tenants will be directed to exit via Building 10. This will reduce the potential for conflicts of left turns entering the garage crossing the path of those who are exiting. Traffic at the Building 9 entrance will be managed by parking staff on all game days.

Comment D.8

Can you develop a parking plan with Alexandria Real Estate, the owner of the Riverside Center complex? There may be opportunities to increase capacity using less space that would then be available for future development in support of potential urban rail and related projects?

Response

The petitioner has reached out to Alexandria to better understand the new ownerships' plan for the property and any synergies that might exist between the two properties. Given that the adjacent property is an office use, as opposed to the residential use, the demand peaks of the two properties are similar only creating a downtime at night, when the office park is empty and the residents and hotel guests are the only remaining cars in the new development. Therefore, it is hard to envision an opportunity to create capacity using less space in order to free up land for the urban rail or other related projects.

Comment D.9

Can the MBTA and developer clarify the amount of parking spaces that will be available for commuters during the construction phases. Will there be more or less spaces than available today at any point, if so, when and how many. If there is to be a variable amount available between the start and finish can you provide an approximation of how many spaces available against a pro forma timeline? In the event spaces are reduced at some point, what mitigation processes would be in place to prevent traffic and parking problems in the adjacent neighborhoods?

Response

Currently there are 958 parking spaces available with an average peak demand of 650 spaces. During construction, there will be a minimum of 450 parking spaces available to commuters. To handle the shortfall, the MBTA has been willing to allow for the detour of parkers to Woodland Station which typically has an excess capacity of over 200 spaces. A robust signage package will need to be installed in order to educate users of this option. This condition is anticipated to last only for the first 15 months of the project construction. As part of the CMP the petitioner is willing to discuss enforcement within the neighborhood in the event a problem exists.

Comment D.10

How will you work with the abutting neighborhoods to resolve traffic and parking problems that may occur at various times, the expectation is that there be real time assistance (in addition to a traffic enforcement response by the City)

Response

The project TDM Manager is being designated as the person that anyone from the community should contact should there be any ancillary traffic and parking issues, on site or in the abutting neighborhoods. Once fully built, the petitioner feels that the parking problem that has existed in the past will be resolved through the mixed-use nature of the project and the corresponding shared parking program. As noted above, if neighborhood parking proves to be a problem the petitioner will commit to implementing a traffic enforcement plan.

Comment D.11

I would like to see/understand how traffic would flow on any given day given drops offs and Buses in the station area while garage and street traffic are also going on. The question is about trying to understand if queueing would likely occur and how that will that be managed. For example: would there be personnel directing traffic, signals or nothing at all? Has the Fire Dept. reviewed circulation and agreed to whatever plans/controls are proposed?

Response

Based on the extensive analysis and planning that has gone into this project, as well as very conservative assumptions regarding project traffic generation, operations at access driveways, internal intersections, and the transit loop is expected to operate well. While there will certainly be some queueing at critical intersections during peak hour conditions, the analysis shows that the queues will be fairly well managed. The expectation for the transit loop is that there is adequate space for the buses, shuttles, and for the public to drop a passenger. For passenger pick-up, there will be spaces provided in the garage for that purpose. No passenger vehicles will be allowed to sit in the transit loop while waiting for a passenger. The area will be well signed regarding the intended operation. While the expectation is that no personnel will be needed on a regular basis to enforce or supplement traffic operations and parking, the TDM manager who will be present on site will monitor the activities and should personnel be needed for any reason, they will be provided to ensure quality operations.

Comment D.12

With respect to the role of Riverside and the logistical impact of the implementation of “Urban Rail”, specifically where would additional platform(s), equipment and other physical requirements be placed and what is the unused capacity in that area today or what are the plans to repurpose that capacity if necessary?

Response

As we understand it, there are presently no plans for the implementation of Urban Rail at Riverside Station so any analysis of this is purely speculative. The maintenance yard and maintenance building are located between the Worcester Line spur rail and the development parcel. Any relocation of the maintenance yard and maintenance building would certainly be cost prohibitive. Because there is no feasible way to relocate the maintenance yard, any Urban Rail facilities would be restricted to the spur rail itself and the development parcel will be of no benefit to any such construction as construction would need to occur on the adjacent office park.

Comment D.13

Will MD commit to designing adequate space for Urban Rail access or reserve space contemplating a station at grade for the Urban rail trains as well as enabling access from the adjacent site (Riverside Office Park). I realize that MD does not control the MBTA plans for urban rail or other transit initiatives but the community would like to understand the extent to which this is going to be possible if and when the T/DOT develops a plan and what contingencies or allowances may be contemplated so expansion will not be precluded in the future.

Response

See response D.12. The development parcel will not play a role in any future of urban rail.

Comment D.14

It would be helpful to get as complete a vision as possible from the MBTA/DOT with respect to Urban Rail and the role of Riverside in future plans.

Response

The MBTA will be at the Land Use hearing on April 7th, at which time we are expecting to hear of any future plans that have been contemplated to date. To date, our understanding that plans (or a vision) to connect Urban Rail to Riverside Station are limited.

Comment D.15

The Council does not have a copy of the lease and amendments between DOT/MBTA and Normandy/MD - it would be helpful to see and understand the details in these documents. Can you provide copies?

Response

The petitioner is willing to provide the original executed lease, however the MBTA has a policy that they do not release any unexecuted documents while negotiations are underway.

Comment D.16

Will Riverside experience increased demand for parking or service when the Allston Interchange project is undertaken and if so, can this be accommodated using the planned extant/planned facilities or will more capacity be needed? Are changes to the proposed plan likely even this is still an unknown at this point? If unknown, when can we expect to see a plan and attendant mitigation?

Response

It is our understanding the MassDOT and the MBTA have been in coordination regarding the long-term Allston Multi-modal project and bridge reconstruction projects along I-90 and Greenline expansion plans. As has been stated, the MBTA has significant plans for expansion of the Greenline services along the corridor. Planning to include increase of ridership due to general growth and long-term construction activities have been factored into the planning. The Allston Multi-modal plans are expected to begin later this year while their construction of the proposed project likely would not begin until 2021. Green line expansion activities continue to progress in parallel to the project.

As has been discussed in previous responses, the current parking count is approximately 65% of capacity. In the event the parking demand exceeds this number through either the new development or further transit improvements in other locations, there is the ability to increase the number of parking spaces through a managed valet system. This is a strategy that has been discussed and will be part of the parking management plan with the MBTA.