Riverside Station

Response to Councilor Comments Received through 02/28/20

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Response to Comments

Number	Commenter (Alphabetical Order)
1	Councilor Albright
2	Councilor Bowman
3	Councilor Downs
4	Councilor Greenberg
5	Councilor Kelly
6	Councilor Krintzman
7	Councilor Laredo
8	Councilor Markiewicz

1. Councilor Albright

Comment 1.1

We saw how you come off 128 going north and how you get back onto 128 going north. How does one get back on to 128 going the other way from site?

Response

Access to Route 128 southbound will be via the existing ramp off Grove Street from Quinobequin Road. To get from the Site to Route 128 southbound vehicles will either turn left from the site (Main Street) onto the Recreation Road Extension and stay straight to go across the bridge over the interstate to the new roundabout or will turn right out of the existing driveway onto Grove Street and then will turn left at the new intersection of Grove Street at Recreation Road Extension to go across the bridge over the interstate to the new roundabout. At the roundabout, vehicles will use the third exit to access Quinobequin Road and the Route 128 southbound on-ramp.

Comment 1.2

I learned that there will be a database of license plates by usage. Could this system be better described?

Response

The existing MBTA surface parking lot currently uses an online registration system for collection of parking fees. We intend to use a similar system, i.e. "license plate recognition" for all users of the parking garage. The system will allow monthly and daily visitors to register their license plate through the online system in order to make payments and expedite access both in and out of the garage. An additional benefit is that this will allow us to create a user database which will help us better understand behavioral patterns in order to more efficiently manage users of the garage.

Comment 1.3

What are the highest priority intersections to address - the ones that will be directly affected by the project and what should be done about them to mitigate the effects?

Response

The highest priority intersections to address are the ones that will see the greatest impact from the project, which includes the intersections of Grove Street at the Route 128 southbound ramps, Grove Street at the Route 128 northbound ramps, and Grove Street at the "Road B" Driveway. The intersection of Grove Street at the Route 128 southbound ramps will be reconstructed to include a single-lane roundabout, which will be able to improve overall operations while also slowing down vehicles coming off Route 128. The Route 128 northbound ramp will be reconstructed and lengthened to intersect the site directly at Main Street while a new intersection at Grove Street along the Recreation Road Extension will direct vehicles heading toward the site to not use Grove Street. To improve the intersection at Grove Street and the "Road B" Driveway three will be three mitigation measures; 1) a new signal will be installed 2) a right-turn lane will be added westbound on Grove Street and 3) left-turns will be prohibited from Grove Street eastbound into the site.

Comment 1.4

At an earlier meeting several of us raised questions regarding the rotary by the T and the conflicts there between cars, buses, pedestrians and bikes. Please address this conflict point to let us know how safety will be addressed. A statement was made that they will be "opening up" the transit loop. What does that mean?

Response

We have heard the concerns regarding a potential conflict of users at the Transit Plaza. To mitigate this concern, we have redesigned the ground floor of the Parking Garage so that the "kiss-and-ride" users and TNCs will have a dedicated (covered) waiting area for both pick-up and drop off. We have also rerouted the local and regional shuttles so that they now travel through the garage and berth at the far side of the plaza (closest to the garage).

Under this scenario, the only vehicles that circulate the loop are the relatively infrequent MBTA bus berthing and passenger vehicles that are live and dropping off passengers. Passenger vehicles will not be allowed to stop and stand within the square. In addition to these circulation changes, two additional pedestrian crossings will be delineated to direct pedestrians to the safest crossing route and to signal to vehicles that pedestrians may be crossing in these locations. These changes reduce conflict points while also allowing additional MBTA bus berths in the event the MBTA elects to expand service at Riverside Station. Finally, we are also looking at an alternative design for the plaza that would eliminate the bicycle parking in the center of the square.

Comment 1.5

Lines of traffic at several intersections were predicted by the LFIA presentation. Do the peer reviewers agree with this? If so, what is the resolution? If not, please explain.

Response

Peer Reviewer to respond.

Comment 1.6

Problem was raised regarding the inability of a group home to load and unload a van at the roundabout. Does the peer reviewer believe this is a problem and if not why not? If so, what is the solution? Is there a driveway at the group home that can be used by the van rather than the street?

Response

Peer Reviewer to respond.

2. Councilor Bowman

Comment 2.1

Two safe pedestrian and bike crossings need to be created along Grove in front of the project. One close to condominiums at 416 Grove St. (there is a crossing there now) is essential. A second crossing close to the T entrance is also necessary. I am concerned about the planned placement of this crossing as it is immediately adjacent to a wide driveway to the maintenance facility for Woodland.

Response

It is anticipated that the existing crosswalk, located just north of the condominium complex driveway would be maintained and bolstered to tie into the new pedestrian and bicycle environment on the project side of Grove Street. On the north side of the project, near the emergency access driveway that will allow only emergency vehicle access and potentially MBTA Bus access during emergency operations, there will be a new crosswalk with rapid reflectorized flashing beacon (RRFB) installed at this location to allow pedestrian and bicycle crossings at this location and will connect to existing side walk on the east side of the Grove Street. The RRFB will have advance warning signage that is connected to the signal on the north side of the train trestle to ensure advance warning of a potential stop that could be required.

Comment 2.2

The redesign for 95 seems like it will return Grove St to more of an arterial roadway as opposed to a highway on and off ramp, including creating safer entrances and exits. Please confirm that the neighborhood will still have access to both 128S and 128N (one of the commenters said he would no longer have access to 128N).

Response

The neighborhood will still have access to both Route 128 southbound and Route 128 northbound. The access to Route 128 southbound will be in the same location as under existing conditions, but the intersection with Grove Street will be reconstructed as a single-lane roundabout. The access to Route 128 northbound will be via a new signalized intersection opposite the site at Main Street. Drivers from the neighborhood will use the new Recreation Road Extension and then will turn left at the new signal to access Route 128 northbound. The design for Grove Street will remove the direct ramp access from Route 128 northbound creating a safer roadway with fewer conflicts on Grove Street and transforming the roadway into more of a local street with slower vehicle speeds.

Comment 2.3

I support seeing a traffic simulation as suggested by Councilor Krintzman. It should include pedestrians and bike movements.

Response

Traffic simulations, using Vissim software, have been created for the proposed weekday morning and evening peak hour conditions and have been submitted to the City. In these simulation files, pedestrians are incorporated at all study area intersection locations. For off-site locations, the existing observed pedestrian

volumes were carried through to the proposed conditions; at crosswalk locations throughout the Site, projected future pedestrian volumes based on full occupancy of the Site are modeled. Additionally, in an effort to provide a conservative model, the existing bicycle movements observed throughout the study area continue to be modeled as on-street bicycle movements under the proposed condition, rather than utilizing the separated shared-use path. While additional bicycle trips are not modeled along the separated shared-use path in the simulations, any additional bicycles that travel along the shared-use path will not have any interaction with vehicles throughout the study area.

Comment 2.4

Will left turn movements from Deforest and Pierrepont be safe enough given roadway changes? Might it be faster and safer to have right out only?

Response

If it is difficult for drivers to turn left out of Deforest Road and Pierrepont Road onto Grove Street, drivers will now have the option to turn right onto Grove Street and reverse direction via the new roundabout at the intersection of Grove Street and the Route 128 southbound ramps/Asheville Road. It is not anticipated that it will be necessary to restrict left turns out of Deforest Road and Pierrepont Road as the upstream signal at the new intersection of Grove Street and Recreation Road Extension should provide gaps in traffic coming from the east. In addition, during off-peak hours there should be minimal issues turning left out of the side streets and it would be overly restrictive to prohibit left turns coming out of the side streets.

Comment 2.5

What plans are being made for the group home that currently loads their van from Grove St. I believe the address is 511 Grove. Stopping here with new road configuration will be dangerous and impact bi-directional path.

Response

To the extent possible, the southbound Grove Street travel lane, leaving the roundabout, will be widened to provide as much width as available within the roadway layout to accommodate van loading.

Comment 2.6

Would city consider a narrower lane width past site? 10' each lane and 9' for right turn lane? Will keep traffic safe steady speed and give room for landscaped buffer on east side of Grove.

Response

The proposed roadway widths are typical roadway widths that meet the MassDOT design guidelines. While narrowing certain lanes may be possible with MassDOT approval, lane widths below 10 feet are not typical and likely inappropriate for this area where there will be commercial and bus activities.

Comment 2.7

Mobility lanes (designed to be attractive to people biking, on scooters, in wheelchairs and other) should to be designed on Grove from Lower Falls Community Center past the Riverside site. On the east side of Grove, it should be a raised sidewalk level path going one direction. This will provide people coming from Washington and Quinobequin (which will be getting a multiuse path along the DCR land). If it could be created with a grass buffer that would be best. On the west side/project side, there should be a bi-directional protected path so that residents of LF have the most direct and safest way to access Riverside.

Response

The proponent is not proposing geometric or roadway section changes past the roundabout at Quinobequin Road.

Comment 2.8

The multiuse path along Recreation Road (part of Riverside Greenway) needs a protected intersection/safe connection to the MWRA path. This intersection does not have good sightlines and the intersection will have more vehicle traffic after Recreation Road is made two way. Making this connection along with the work being done as part of the Riverside Greenway will create an easy connection from Riverside to the Auburndale Commuter Rail and Auburndale businesses by walking or biking and the Brandeis Commuter Rail and the Blue Heron Trail by bike.

Response

As part of the proposed infrastructure enhancements, the existing slip ramp from Recreation Road to the Route 128/I-95 CD Road is being eliminated which will remove a critical weave section on the CD Road which is significant. As a result of the ramp being eliminated the MWRA Path that is being proposed will be a much more desirable connection with no vehicular traffic adjacent. Establishing a safe crossing between the multi-use path and the MWRA Path is a critical feature as noted in the comment. With the elimination of the slip ramp, the intersection with Recreation Park Driveway becomes a simple three-way intersection. It is anticipated that a crosswalk would be introduced in the immediate area of the driveway although final location will have to be evaluated for sight lines to ensure the most appropriate location is identified.

Comment 2.9

Completion of the Two Bridges is critical to support connectivity from Lower Falls to the site, Lower Falls to the trail network and the site to recreational and open space at Leo J Martin and beyond. How can we get the two bridges funded and built?

Response

The commitment to fund 100% of the design will be a big step forward towards moving this project along. Based on conversations with DCR, there appears to be a meaningful interest to complete the construction work, as was the case with two bridges along the Charles River.

Comment 2.10

Is there a place for TNC drop-off and other drop-off on Grove? What will prevent a car from just stopping to discharge a passenger?

Response

Based on concerns we have heard from the City and the neighborhood we have not designed a TNC drop-off location on Grove Street. Given the general circulation patterns of the area, TNC vehicles are unlikely to be traveling on the southbound side of Grove Street, where a drop-off may be possible as the predominant direction of vehicles are accessing the site in the northbound direction. The project will require TNCs to include a "geo-fence" which will limit where pick-ups can occur; however the geofence will not be able to prohibit drop-offs in unauthorized locations. If this proves to be a problem, we will need to take measures such as additional signage and / or enforcement through our 3rd party management company.

Comment 2.11

What is the plan for deliveries to residences?

Response

Specific loading locations are provided either in each building or on the adjacent street front. Certain delivery locations will be restricted to box-truck size vehicles while the loading docks for buildings 1 and 9 will accommodate larger delivery vehicles.

Comment 2.12

There is a potential conflict of bikes and cars at entrance of Main St (between bldgs. 1 and 2) and 128 N off ramp

Response

Bicycle and pedestrian activity in the area of Buildings 1 and 2 would be accommodated by the multi-use plan (along Recreation Road) and the wide sidewalks that are proposed along Main Street between buildings 1 and 2. In addition, there is a crosswalk proposed along the Main Street side of the new signalized intersection allowing for safe crossings for both pedestrians and bicycles.

Comment 2.13

What will be the connection from the Two Bridges to the site? I am concerned that a drop down to Recreation Road will involve significant switch backs to achieve ADA compliant grade change.

Response

To eliminate the need for significant switchbacks for the ramp to the Two Bridges, we have asked the MBTA to allow for a 10'-12' easement on their property. This is an ongoing discussion which involves the MBTA, DCR, and the Greenway Trail network.

Comment 2.14

What can be done to increase the ease of biking to the site from across Newton? Suggested key points that could be addressed. Comm Ave Carriage Lane; Waban, Upper Falls and Newton Highlands (either Beacon St or Quinobequin); West Newton (neighbor ways to carriage lane?)

Response

The proponent appreciates that the project improvements are part of a greater network of connections; however the locations referenced are far beyond the project scope.

Comment 2.15

Bike connections from Auburndale, Waltham, Weston, and Wellesley will be made safer and more direct with the completion of the Riverside Greenway.

Response

The Proponent strongly supports the completion of the Riverside Greenway and the project includes improvements to several key pieces of this network

Comment 2.16

Is there a planned space for bike share to access nearby transit or run errands? What about bike share for recreational use? Having bikes available for casual use may encourage people to bike more frequently.

Response

Our understanding is that Newton has eliminated the recent bike share program. If a program is put in place, we would welcome bike sharing and would provide accommodations. To encourage biking, in addition to providing storage spaces for the public, we will be providing a bike repair and maintenance space open to the public.

Comment 2.17

Is there a planned space for bike share to access nearby transit or run errands? What about bike share for recreational use? Having bikes available for casual use may encourage people to bike more frequently.

Response

Our understanding is that Newton has eliminated the recent bike share program. If a program is put in place, we would welcome bike sharing and would provide accommodations. To encourage biking, in addition to providing storage spaces for the public, we will be providing a bike repair and maintenance space open to the public.

Comment 2.18

The site should be easily navigable by people on bike, meaning a clear and safe route into the site and easy access to bike parking. There are four use cases: Employees, MBTA Riders, Retail Customers, Residents

Response

The project has been designed with ease of use in mind. Employees and residents will have substantial enclosed, secure bicycle parking evenly distributed throughout all buildings. MBTA riders will also have secure bicycle parking in the ground floor of Building 7 accessible from the station entrance at grade. Retail customers will have bicycle parking on street distributed and adjacent to storefront entries. Cyclists will be encouraged to use the two-way cylcetrack on Grove Street and enter the site through one of several lateral connections. Additionally Main Street is intended to be mixed traffic with slower speeds to encourage cyclists to move with traffic.

Comment 2.19

Transit signal priority is a good idea. How can it be implemented at this site? Does MBTA have a standard yet? Should be made available to all larger shared rides (shuttles).

Response

Transit signal priority can be implemented at the three proposed signalized intersections. The MBTA has a standard methodology for TSP that allows the green cycle on an approach to be extended if it senses a bus is approaching. To the extent it is possible, we would encourage expanding its use to shuttles; however at this time the proponents and its consultants are unaware of how the protocols for public transportation could be extended to private shuttles. We will explore this possibility with MassDOT as the signal design process progresses.

Comment 2.20

How is the space behind Building 1 being used? Is this for commercial trucks? MBTA?

Response

The space behind building 1 will be used for truck maneuvering, electrical transformers, building outdoor equipment and other outdoor utility equipment and meters. It may also accommodate tanks storage for materials associated with a potential lab use of the building. Beyond the project parcel boundary, the land will be used by the MBTA. The space behind Building 1 will not be used as a secondary driveway/access to the site and will not have a paved physical connection that will allow drivers to bypass the main intersection.

Comment 2.21

Are there detailed accessibility plans for MBTA access? Where is the HP parking? Where is drop-off? What is the distance from parking and drop-off? How are platforms reached?

Response

Approximately 1,000 MBTA parking spaces will be located at the northern end of the parking garage on levels 3-8. These 1,000 parking spaces require 20 accessible parking spaces. 16 of these required spaces will be located on levels 3-5 immediately adjacent to the northern pair of garage elevators, which are closest to the Green Line station. Additionally, 4 accessible spaces will be located at grade closest to the station.

For vehicles dropping off a disabled passenger including paratransit vehicles such as MBTA's "The Ride", there is a dedicated accessible drop-off location. Additionally, the remaining drop-off area will be designed as accessible even though they are not designated as such.

The station itself will be accessible via a pair of elevators that bring passengers to the platform level.

Comment 2.22

Is there a plan to deal with spillover parking in the neighborhood?

Response

Given the mixed-use nature of the project, we have demonstrated through our shared parking analysis that the garage will provide more than adequate parking for the site. To manage parking volumes, we also have the option of implementing a valet system when needed that will allow for increased capacity. On Red Sox weekday gamedays, we also will be providing additional staffing to manage the flow of cars through the property and in and out of the parking garage.

Comment 2.23

How can additional bike parking be accommodated if need be?

Response

The project will include an ample amount of bike parking throughout the site. The residential units will include bike parking at a quantity equivalent to 110% of the total unit count. The quantity of MBTA bike parking spaces will be doubled from what exists currently. For short-term commercial bike parking, individual bike parking spaces will be distributed throughout the site in the sidewalk furnishing zone. We do not anticipate that additional bike parking is warranted, but if it is necessary building and site areas could be converted and reallocated as necessary to accommodate additional demand.

Comment 2.24

Will there be bike parking specifically for hotel workers?

Response

Yes, the hotel will provide bike parking for its workers.

Comment 2.25

Should there be bike parking directly in the office building including access to showers?

Response

Yes, we intend to provide bike parking in the office building. If tenants show an interest in having a locker room with showers we would be willing to consider that as part of the design of the building. The quantity and location of bike parking for the office building will ultimately be determined once a tenant or tenants are identified.

Comment 2.26

Bike parking in buildings should have direct access to outside if possible, rather than going through building lobbies.

Response

Generally, bike parking is located adjacent to building lobbies for convenience and security. Due to the layout of the buildings and factors such as topography, direct access to the bike rooms from the exterior may not be feasible. Presently, the bike rooms in buildings 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10 have direct exterior access and through design we will aim to create more bike rooms with direct access if possible.

Comment 2.27

Bike parking should also have easy access to charging facilities as some bikes have internal batteries or person biking may not have access to charging while at the site (eg. They stopped for lunch or don't have a safe place at work to charge)

Response

As bicycle charging becomes more ubiquitous and standardized, the design of bike parking facilities may evolve to accommodate this. Presently, because there is no standardization of this technology and therefore a firm commitment to accommodating this technology cannot be made. Accommodations including providing circuits and conduits to bike parking locations will be made at this time to future-proof these facilities as the technology evolves.

Comment 2.28

A multiuse path along Quinobequin is being designed by DCR. Connecting from there to Grove will create another important Newton and regional connection.

Response

We agree.

Comment 2.29

Multi-use path along the Green Line Eliot to Riverside could provide much needed regional connectivity

Response

We agree.

Comment 2.30

The Green Line improvements and expected dates of improvement to service levels and capacity is important to the project. Green International's report showed a chart detailing ridership vs. capacity currently vs. policy changes vs. implementing supercars. Without the purchase of supercars capacity at peak periods will be an issue. What is the demonstrated commitment to fully fund super cars?

Response

The ridership vs. capacity chart does not necessarily identify a capacity issue. At the very shoulder of the peak hour, the policy capacity shifts sharply while the actual ridership declines at a more gradual rate. This does not mean that the trains do not have the capacity to accommodate the riders; it means that the trains will be operating at a rush-hour level capacity past what is defined as the "rush hour". This chart is conservative as it assumes that all added riders boarding at Riverside Station will have destinations beyond the most constrained points in the system. In other words, the analysis assumes that all the Riverside riders remain on the Green Line through its peak passenger load point, whereas in reality, some or many will alight at stations prior to that peak load point.

Regarding the MBTA's commitment to the increased capacity, further details are available at www.mbta.com/projects/green-line-transformation. Even without the Supercar Type 10 train cars, the MBTA is making investments to increase service/capacity. For e.g., the MBTA is adding to its existing fleet today (Type 9 cars), while it's also replacing track and upgrading signals that will allow for some elimination of today's speed restrictions. For the D Line, these improvements are expected by December 2020.

Comment 2.31

What is the expected impact on Riverside and Green Line usage during I-90 improvements? How does the timing of that align with the project timeline for Riverside?

Response

It is our understanding that 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 Greenline services along the corridor. Planning to include increase of ridership due to general growth and the long-term construction activities have been factored into planning. The Allston Multi-modal plans are expected to begin later this year while the construction of the proposed project likely would not begin until 2021. Green line expansion activities continue to progress in parallel to the projects.

Comment 2.32

What is the vision for inner core rail at this site? Per advocates? What commitments has the MBTA Control Board made on this?

Response

To date, we have not seen plans that lay out what the MBTA envisions for the inner core rail. We have had preliminary discussions identifying two locations for a platform, one within the MBTA's service yard and one at an adjacent property. Our understanding is that there has been no design work done on either scenario. There have been no commitments by the MBTA Control Board to further this discussion at this time.

3. Councilor Downs

Comment 3.1

Want to hear about regional rail and how it meshes with this plan. The T is comfortable with GLT, but what about spur. How many real time transit displays?

Response

MBTA to respond.

Comment 3.2

Wants a Bike Simulation.

Response

Bike activity is generally built into the VISSIM model that has been prepared for the project. However, the VISSIM platform does not provide for specific bicycle simulation activities

4. Councilor Greenberg

Comment 4.1

How does geofencing work?

Response

With geofencing, when a passenger opens up the app to order a Lyft or Uber they are directed to pick a specified point where the driver will pick them up. The passenger is not allowed to pick any point within the geo-fenced area, only one of the designated points. Geofence systems are in place at Logan Airport and in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston. This prevents drivers from idling wherever they want when waiting for a passenger to arrive.

Comment 4.2

Bike parking in square not safe.

Response

The idea of bike parking in the square was presented by the peer review team. We like the concept and to address the safety concern, we have provided additional crosswalks into the square so that bicyclists feel safe entering and exiting the site. However, in light of further feedback from the community and City Council we are preparing an alternative design for consideration.

Comment 4.3

Flexibility in use of 1,000 spots for overflow

Response

In our agreement with the MBTA, if the MBTA determines that their 1,000 spaces are not being utilized as envisioned, they have the right to put the parking back into the overall queue which we will manage on their behalf.

5. Councilor Kelly

Comment 5.1

Station is not in direct line of visibility. Site planning and wayfinding.

Response

Wayfinding, specifically for the MBTA Station and Platform, are critical to their success. The MBTA is spending a lot of time thinking through what they would like to see in both these locations in addition to the wayfinding. We are more than happy to share those plans once they are formalized with the MBTA.

Comment 5.2

1 way 2 way recreation road effects people who live there now.

Response

The creation of a 2-way Recreation Road presents a benefit for the residents of Lower Falls and Auburndale. Presently, any vehicle traveling from Route 30 in Weston to Riverside Station will either need to cut through Park Road and Concord Street in Lower Falls or Comm Ave and Auburn Street in Auburndale. The reconfiguration of Recreation Road as 2-way provides a direct route for these trips to access Riverside Station directly without impact to the neighborhoods. Furthermore, residents will have easy, convenient and safe access to Riverside Park via car, bike or on foot in both directions by the 2-way road or the multi-use path that this work will also include. This will unlock easy access to this underutilized resource for residents both in the local neighborhood and areas of Newton beyond.

Comment 5.3

Red Sox games, weekday, weeknight? What is it.

Response

The nature of the shared parking will provide additional buffer parking on gamedays and evenings to further address Red Sox parking concerns. On weeknights, the office portion of the garage will empty out, providing hundreds of spaces in addition to the MBTA 1,000 parking spaces – the same is true on weekends. For the six weekday games we will be providing additional onsite management and valet parking if necessary.

Comment 5.4

Bike Parking how do you get it off the top rack?

Response

Rack systems such as the Dero Decker include a lift system to extend the upper-tier bicycle to the ground level to allow users to place their bicycle on the rack without having to lift the bicycle up. A system such as this will be implemented to address this concern.

Comment 5.5

Increased bus options

Response

Presently, only one MBTA bus route and several regional shuttles use the site a s a destination. The Proponent will work with the MBTA and other transit agencies to encourage increased service. To be successful we ask that City Councilors engage in the same exercise with the MBTA.

6. Councilor Krintzman

Comment 6.1

Please demonstrate how/where the traffic estimates for TNCs was included in traffic projections as well as parking analysis

Response

Since the popularity of TNCs as a mode of transportation is a relatively new phenomenon, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) does not provide any hard data on the effects of TNCs on trip generation. While TNC operators are required to report activity to MassDOT, the information that is currently presented is for the general number of trips that start and end in Newton each year and is not useful in deriving potential usage to any given site. However, the mode shares used to estimate the trip generation are very conservative and result in a higher percentage of site-generated vehicle trips than is likely to occur. Part of the reason for the conservative vehicular mode share is to consider the presence of TNCs, as some of the vehicles entering and exiting the Site included in the vehicular mode share will be TNCs. In addition, in the build year 2029 it is unknown what share of trips will be done via TNCs. Ten years prior there were no TNCs and today they are a regular feature on the roadway. As such, it would be challenging to forecast the share of TNC trips ten years into the future due to changing travel patterns and technology. Therefore, a separate TNC mode share percentage has not been developed and instead is included in the highly conservative vehicle mode share.

TNCs were not factored into the parking analysis as it is not expected that the TNCs will occupy any of the parking spaces. There will be designated curbsides where TNCs can pick-up and drop-off passengers without occupying parking spaces.

Comment 6.2

Is it possible to restrict parking spaces within the garage to certain uses during certain hours of the day? If so - will enforcement be possible?

Response

Restricting parking to certain times of the day and uses within the garage we believe negates the benefit of a shared parking garage. We do intend to patrol the garage and if we determine MBTA users are not parking in their nested location (or vice-versa) we will be implementing a ticket and tow system.

Comment 6.3

Is the developer willing to include the city and or the neighbors in the selection of the TDM manager or association?

Response

Yes

Comment 6.4

The developers described a 4 year period for monitoring of traffic. Four years seems insufficient to ensure adequate implementation. How about 7 years, with counts every 3 months, or any period with 36 consecutive months (12 consecutive counts) with counts demonstrating counts below 110% of projection?

Response

The 4-year period was agreed to in the previous Riverside approval and we feel it is more than adequate to understand traffic patterns and implement further mitigation if necessary.

Comment 6.5

Will the developer please provide a simulation of the traffic upon full build out (including how the roundabouts will function)?

Response

Yes, this has been submitted to the City and we would propose a separate viewing session open to the public to walk through this simulation.

Comment 6.6

Will the peer reviewer please provide a complete analysis of the proposal to remove the bike lane on the South Side of Grove Street and any benefits / drawbacks that would result?

Response

Peer Reviewer to respond.

7. Councilor Laredo

Comment 7.1

On a general note, can we get a copy of the agreement between the developer and the MBTA. Has the Planning Department reviewed this agreement and, if so, what comments does it have on it?

Response

The original Ground Lease is the document that we are currently operating under while we work through the Amendment. It conflicts with MBTA protocol to release a draft document prior to the finalization, which we intend to do once we complete our work with the City Council.

Comment 7.2

How will we measure the amount of traffic going into and leaving the site? Please provide specifics.

Response

Formal traffic counts will be conducted at the site entrances. Pole mounted cameras are the primary source of traffic data collection and will very likely be used in this case at both site driveways.

Comment 7.3

Will those measures include counting vehicles used for delivery services and ride sharing?

Response

The counts can distinguish between motor vehicles and larger commercial vehicles. However, at this point in time, there is no way to distinguish ridesharing operator from normal motor vehicle activity. Perhaps by the time that the project is constructed and operational, technology may allow for collection of data for ridesharing but that technology does not currently exist.

Comment 7.4

What specific TDM measures will be in place if the amount of traffic is greater than expected?

Response

Per the original approval, in the event the traffic exceeds 110% of the projections, we would propose the following additional TDM measures:

- Increasing participation with T-Pass Purchases by improved marketing and/or increasing the level of subsidy.
- Expanding T-Pass subsidy participation beyond residential units, with a cap of $750,000 cost to the development.

- Adding a shuttle system to connect to other transportation hubs/points of interest, to be determined through the site-specific surveying practices described above.
- Incentivizing office operators to vary employee work schedules (including telework) by publicizing the research demonstrating the correlation between increased productivity and flexible work schedules, by setting up an explicit system for rotating employees through shared parking spaces, or by other means.
- Expanding bicycle sharing opportunities onsite and in the area.
- Working with the MBTA to assess the potential for expanding bus operations to and from the site.
- Increasing the cost of daily parking for non-MBTA daily or weekly users.

Comment 7.5

Who will be responsible for determining the need for added TDM measures and subsequent enforcement?

Response

Our thought is that this will be coordinated through the City of Newton's Planning and Transportation Departments.

Comment 7.6

The time for oversight of traffic should continue for several years after the site is fully built and occupied.

Response

As outlined in the proposed Traffic Demand Management (TDM) Plan, traffic monitoring will be conducted for at least four years after full occupancy of the buildings. If the TDM Plan is found to be complete and ongoing as outlined in the TDM Plan and the submittal of Ongoing Monitoring and Reporting Plans have been found satisfactory over four consecutive year, i.e. minimum of three consecutive plan submissions-then the Projects' Ongoing Monitoring and Reporting Plan requirement will shift to one submittal every three years. At that point, the City will conduct a site visit of the project once every three years, to confirm all approved physical measures in the project's TDM Plan continue to be implemented and/or intstalled.

Comment 7.7

Who will be doing the work for the exterior roadway improvements and, if not the City, who will have oversight of this work?

Response

The Proponent and its contractors will conduct this work under the supervision and oversight of MassDOT.

Comment 7.8

The developer stated that it intends to take down trees and bushes in the area where a car enters the roundabout. Who will be paying for this work and who will be doing it in the future?

Response

In coordination with requests from MassDOT, the offsite improvements will include some brush clearing and grading adjustments to improve site lines. This brush area will be replaced with grass. These areas will be maintained as part of MassDOT's ongoing lawn maintenance program.

Comment 7.9

Please have the peer reviewer comment on putting the ramp under the bridge.

Response

Peer Reviewer to respond.

Comment 7.10

When were the counts for the total of existing trips done?

Response

The counts of the existing MBTA Driveways were conducted in June 2018 and the counts of the Hotel Indigo were conducted in September 2018. Both of these counts were conducted when local schools were still in session and regional seasonal adjustment factors were reviewed to confirm that both June and September represent months with above average traffic volumes.

Comment 7.11

What limits will there be on deliveries to the site?

Response

Currently, no specific delivery limitations are proposed related to time of deliveries or frequency. Specific loading locations are provided either in each building or on the adjacent street front. Certain delivery locations will be restricted to box-truck size vehicles while the loading docks for buildings 1 and 9 will accommodate larger delivery vehicles.

Comment 7.12

Who will pay for attendants and other extra personnel on game days? What assurance do we have that those extra employees will be in place?

Response

The proponent will cover the cost of any necessary personnel. Through the ongoing monitoring of the TDM measures, additional staffing will be documented as required and verified by the City.

Comment 7.13

Who will pay for attendants and other extra personnel on game days?

Response

The proponent will cover the cost of additional personnel and/or attendants during game days.

Comment 7.14

Who will pay for maintenance of the parking structures?

Response

The Proponent is responsible for all maintenance of the garage including the MBTA's portion of the parking spaces.

Comment 7.15

Please provide more information on handicap parking.

Response

Accessible parking is provided and distributed throughout the garage and site in excess of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) as well as the City's Zoning Ordinance. These spaces will be provided at the ground level of garages 9 and 10 as well as within the MBTA's reserved portion of the garage to serve their customers. Please note that based on feedback from the Community we have located four (4) handicap spaces in Garage 9 at the ground level closest to the MBTA point of entry. Additionally, there will be spaces provided within the on-street parallel parking as shown on the plans.

Comment 7.16

Please provide more information about parking during construction.

Response

During Construction, 450 MBTA customer parking spaces will be provided within the existing parking area. Generally, this is sufficient parking to handle the demand of the lot. At peak occupancy, the lot sees approximately 630 cars. To handle and buffer against this peak demand, the MBTA will direct customers to the Woodland Station garage, which has 559 spaces, and per the MBTA has an average availability of greater than 200 spaces.

Comment 7.17

Please explain what, if any, ability there will be to expand parking if ridership on the T increases.

Response

Typically, the current MBTA surface parking lot sees a peak utilization of about 63% (+/- 630 spaces). The proposed garage includes 1,000 spaces dedicated to MBTA users which has been demonstrated to be more than adequate in the event additional parking is needed.

Additionally, the proponent made a substantial concession to support future expansion of service by the MBTA by returning a large portion of the original leased premises to the MBTA. This portion of the property may allow for several expansion opportunities by the MBTA including additional train storage, an additional commuter parking garage or both.

Comment 7.18

Does the parking for the hotel take into account events that may be held there in addition to the number of rooms.

Response

Yes, the calculation is based on a ratio that includes events and business usage of the hotel.

Comment 7.19

Please have the peer reviewer comment on potential traffic back-ups within the parking garages.

Response

Peer Reviewer to respond.

Comment 7.20

What limitations will there be on parking on neighboring streets adjacent to the site?

Response

Anecdotally, the project team has heard from neighbors that parking in the neighborhood becomes problematic during extreme-case scenarios such as the Boston Marathon or sports victory parades. The shift from a 958-space surface lot to a 1990-space parking garage affords additional flexibility in these events. It can be expected that office user demand will be decreased by some amount on these days and provide additional buffer space beyond the already-increased number of MBTA spaces. This should help to alleviate the desire to park off-site to some degree. Ultimately, parking restrictions on neighboring streets is under the control of the City. If the neighbors desire to include parking restrictions in their neighborhood, the proponent would support this.

Comment 7.21

Please provide more detailed information about future access to urban rail.

Response

At this time, there are no further details about future urban rail at this site of which we are aware. The MBTA has been asked on multiple occasions by the City Council in a public forum whether the project design would preclude the option of urban rail in the future, and the answer has been unequivocally no. We are not aware of any plans that exist for this concept.

Comment 7.22

Please provide more information about future access to bike trail networks.

Response

The Charles River park improvements that are proposed as part of this project would create a great bike trail network from Lower Falls and Auburndale around the Riverside Station Development site and up to Commonwealth Avenue through the reopening of the MBTA Depot Tunnel. There have been further discussions about connections in both Lower Falls, near the Leo J. Martin Golf Course, and by Lyons Field that would further enhance this network.

Comment 7.23

Please describe in more detail the proposed bike lanes not only in front of project but down the full length of Grove Street and think more broadly about bike lanes on the full length of Grove Street

Response

We are currently working with City staff to develop a solution not only for the project but also to improve connections between Auburndale and Lower Newton Falls.

Comment 7.24

I have concerns about unprotected bike lanes - they are not safe enough for cyclists and more difficult for drivers.

Response

Similar response to 8.16 above but with the additional comment that the team is striving to provide at least one protected means of access along a majority of Grove Street in both directions.

Comment 7.25

Please comment on the current number of cyclists versus drivers in this area and anticipated changes with bike lanes.

Response

The team and the City of Newton believe that multimodal transportation is the best solution for our neighborhoods, cities, and towns. Please refer to the transportation analysis regarding increase or decrease vehicular demands. In regard to changes due to new bike lanes, this connection will be a valuable link to providing a more robust multimodal network and will increase the opportunity for cyclists and pedestrians to easily connect to different locations within Newton and neighboring communities.

8. Councilor Markiewicz

Comment 8.1

Maximum queue length difference of opinion. Concerned about T's response on the expansion adequacy.

Response

Comment Noted.