

To: Land Use Committee of the City of Newton Board of Aldermen

From: Lou Mercuri, Planning Horizons

Re: 271-283 Auburn Street

Date: June 3, 2015

On behalf of the petitioner for this land use petition, Planning Horizons is submitting this report regarding the availability of parking for the proposed 94-seat restaurant at 271-283 Auburn Street in Auburndale.

#### Restaurant Proposal

The petitioner (Noble and Devine Holding Company, LLC) is proposing to use the space at 271-283 Auburn Street in Auburndale to construct a 94-seat casual restaurant. The restaurant would require interior renovations to existing retail space and no additions or expansions are needed to accommodate the proposed use. At one time, a 71-seat restaurant known as the Auburndale Café operated at this site. The proposed restaurant would initially be open 7 days a week during dinner hours but it is envisioned that a lunch time opening will occur at a future date. This proposal includes provisions for 9 employees on site during the busiest shift and that 40 of the 94 seats would be configured in a bar/lounge area. A parking analysis conducted by the Inspectional Services Department (memo from Jane Santosuosso to John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services dated April 1, 2015) reveals that the 94-seat restaurant creates an onsite parking requirement of 46 spaces. Under present conditions, a total of 26 parking stalls exist onsite, the differential of 46 required spaces vs. 26 provided creates the necessity for a 20-space parking waiver request under this petition.

#### Existing Conditions

The proposed restaurant would be located within the commercial block at 271-283 Auburn Street on a property that houses 7 office and service uses. The property abuts the Massachusetts Turnpike to the south and the site access occurs at the intersection of Lexington Street. A 26-space parking lot, including three handicap spaces, exists onsite. Within the lot there is parking on both the street-facing side and at the rear of the building accessed from a narrow driveway on the northerly boundary of the lot. The area is comprised of a mix of office, service, and retail uses most of which operate exclusively during daytime hours.

The proposed restaurant and night time operation will need to rely on its own parking onsite but also will need to demonstrate public parking availability in the surrounding areas. It is generally established that parking for restaurant uses in village centers needs to be accommodated within a comfortable two-minute walk to the site.

Planning Horizons conducted extensive surveys of parking usage in the area at lunch and dinner hours in May 2015. Although the restaurant initially plans to open for dinner hours only, it was decided to survey the area at the lunch hours as well, in the event an expansion of the operating hours occurs at some point after the commencement of operations. The surveys include available public parking areas within a two-minute walk of the proposed restaurant.

Part of the submission for this special permit application is a plan entitled “Area Plan, 271-283 Auburn Street, located in Newton, Massachusetts” dated June 1, 2015 prepared by VTP Associates, Land Surveyors, which identifies four parking locations surveyed for potential use by patrons and employees of the proposed restaurant. The four areas and surveyed capacities are noted as follows:

1. 271-283 Auburn Street, onsite parking lot, **26** available spaces including 3 handicap spaces
2. Lexington Street northbound from intersection with Auburn Street and site entrance to Commonwealth Avenue, 8 2-hour metered spaces , and Lexington Street southbound (opposite side), 4 2-hour metered spaces between the municipal lot entrance and Auburn Street, total of **12** available spaces on Lexington Street
3. Auburn Street, 16 1-hour unmetered spaces on retail side between Lexington Street and 319 Auburn, and 8 1-hour unmetered spaces on Turnpike side (going east) between the fire hydrant (opposite 319 Auburn) and Lexington Street intersection, total **24** spaces on Auburn Street
4. Municipal metered lot (spaces are 6-hour maximum) behind Village Bank, accessed from Lexington Street, **36** spaces including 4 handicap spaces

The inventory of these four parking areas includes a total of **98** public parking spaces all within an approximately two-minute walk of the site. There is additional parking available beyond these areas on Auburn Street and to the south on Central Street.

Parking Methodology and Results

To get a complete picture of the parking demand and supply in the area, it is necessary to evaluate the proposed restaurant operation and peak periods. It is expected that the peak periods will occur at the weekday lunch hour (assuming these hours of operation are introduced) between 12:00 and 1:00 PM, and in the evening hours between 6:00 and 7:30 PM. It is difficult to determine the potential busiest day and time, but it is believed that Thursdays and Fridays would best capture the conditions on the more crowded days.

Planning Horizons surveyed all of the available parking locations on 15 different occasions: 7 counts were conducted during the dinner hour and 8 counts were conducted at the lunch hour. All of the dinner counts were conducted between Tuesdays and Saturdays. The lunch counts were also conducted between Tuesdays and Saturdays.

The 8 lunch counts were conducted between May 16 and May 28, and all counts were conducted between 12:15 PM and 12:30 PM. Two counts on each of the Wednesdays through Fridays were

conducted. Weather conditions were typically average and there were no extremes during this period. The day-by-day summary of all the counts follow and are further referenced in Appendix I.

The 7 evening or dinner counts were conducted between May 19 and 29 and all counts were conducted between 6:15 PM and 7:00 PM. There were two separate counts conducted on Thursdays and Fridays during the time period. The day-by-day summary of all the counts follow and are further referenced in Appendix I.

The results of the data are marked by two factors. First, the overall parking demand in the area is greatest during the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM due to the number of mixed office and retail uses in the vicinity. Therefore, the peak dinner operations (5:00 PM and later) will have a limited impact on the parking demands in the area.

Related to this issue is the greater demand and parking usage during the lunch hour, however the proposed restaurant will likely serve the needs of local businesses and office uses in the area. Those customers and employees will walk to the establishment thereby further limiting parking demands.

The second factor relates to where parking is available at the peak periods. Our results show that there is plenty of available parking in the nearby municipal lot as well as along both Auburn and Lexington Streets at both the lunch and dinner hours. The following data summarizes the information at the lunch and dinner time periods from all of the counts. The roman numerals indicate the chart numbers at the end of this report.

Lunch Peak Hour Count 12:30 PM			
Parking Area	Capacity	Average Occupancy	Average # Vacant Spaces
271-283 Auburn St. Site Lot (I)	26	15	11
Lexington St. Municipal Lot (II)	36	15	21
Lexington St. between Auburn St. and Commonwealth Ave. 2-hr metered (III)	12	8	4
Auburn St. between Lexington and 319 Auburn St. 1-hr unmetered (IV)	24	16	8
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44</b>
Dinner Peak Hour Count 6:30 PM			
Parking Area	Capacity	Average Occupancy	Average # Vacant Spaces
271-283 Auburn St. Site Lot (I)	26	3	23
Lexington St. Municipal Lot (II)	36	4	32
Lexington St. between Auburn St. and Commonwealth Ave. 2-hr metered (III)	12	5	7
Auburn St. between Lexington and 319 Auburn St. 1-hr unmetered (IV)	24	8	16
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>78</b>

The data indicates that there is on average a plentiful surplus of available parking in the area to allow the 20-space parking waiver. At present there are 44 and 78 vacant spaces respectively during the lunch and dinner peak hours. The most widely available area is the municipal parking lot with 21 and 32 spaces available at the lunch and dinner times respectively. This lot is typically at least 50% empty, and the lot is

metered for 6-hour maximum parking. The site lot shows on average 11 available spaces at lunch and 23 available spaces in the evening. Using single day counts (see Appendix I) for all areas, the data reveals a minimum of 29 spaces with up to 49 spaces available at lunch time on any given weekday. Saturdays are even more available and every evening count showed a minimum of 60 spaces available.

Finally, considering the level of office-related activity in Auburndale at lunch, the petitioner will rely on considerable walk-in traffic from nearby offices, businesses, and residents at the peak periods.

The restaurant and other businesses in the area are also eligible to use the nearby Auburndale Business Permit Parking Passes on the other side of the Turnpike bridge along Central Street. This newly-adopted program provides an opportunity for the restaurant and its employees to park off site, freeing up closer parking spaces for patrons of the restaurant and surrounding businesses.

#### Summary and Conclusion

Based on the observations, the proposed casual sit-down restaurant and its operation can readily meet the 20-space parking waiver requirement as there are, on average, 44 and 78 available short-term parking spaces respectively at the lunch and dinner hours. Much of the lunch time traffic at the restaurant will be generated from walk-ins from neighboring businesses without introducing any significant parking demands. Even though a lunch time operation is not planned as part of the initial opening, this study demonstrates plenty of available parking at the lunch hour and even more at the peak dinner hours.

<b>Appendix I</b>				
<b>Summary by Day of Week - All Areas</b>				
<b>Lunch Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	60° showers	12:15 PM	52	46
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	65° sunny	12:30 PM	66	32
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	56	42
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	85° sunny	12:30 PM	69	29
5 Friday, May 15, 2015	70° cloudy	12:30 PM	62	36
6 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	12:30 PM	49	49
7 Saturday, May 16, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	47	51
8 Saturday, May 23, 2015	60° sunny	12:30 PM	32	66
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Dinner Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	65° clear	7:00 PM	10	88
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	60° cloudy	6:15 PM	25	73
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	70° sunny	6:30 PM	38	60
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	80° cloudy	6:30 PM	19	79
5 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	6:15 PM	8	90
6 Friday, May 29, 2015	75° sunny	6:30 PM	18	80
7 Saturday, May 23, 2015	65° sunny	6:30 PM	14	84
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>78</b>

<b>Chart I</b>					
<b>Location: 271-283 Auburn Street Site Lot</b>					
<b>Lunch Time Counts</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>	
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	60° showers	12:15 PM	21	5	
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	65° sunny	12:30 PM	21	5	
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	16	10	
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	85° sunny	12:30 PM	19	7	
5 Friday, May 15, 2015	70° cloudy	12:30 PM	18	8	
6 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	12:30 PM	11	15	
7 Saturday, May 16, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	11	15	
8 Saturday, May 23, 2015	60° sunny	12:30 PM	4	22	
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>Dinner Time Counts</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>	
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	65° clear	7:00 PM	0	26	
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	60° cloudy	6:15 PM	4	22	
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	70° sunny	6:30 PM	6	20	
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	80° cloudy	6:30 PM	6	20	
5 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	6:15 PM	0	26	
6 Friday, May 29, 2015	75° sunny	6:30 PM	1	25	
7 Saturday, May 23, 2015	65° sunny	6:30 PM	1	25	
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>	

<b>Chart II</b>				
<b>Location: Lexington Street Municipal Lot</b>				
<b>Lunch Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	60° showers	12:15 PM	11	25
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	65° sunny	12:30 PM	20	16
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	15	21
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	85° sunny	12:30 PM	20	16
5 Friday, May 15, 2015	70° cloudy	12:30 PM	16	20
6 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	12:30 PM	15	21
7 Saturday, May 16, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	15	21
8 Saturday, May 23, 2015	60° sunny	12:30 PM	11	25
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Dinner Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	65° clear	7:00 PM	6	30
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	60° cloudy	6:15 PM	3	33
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	70° sunny	6:30 PM	6	30
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	80° cloudy	6:30 PM	4	32
5 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	6:15 PM	2	34
6 Friday, May 29, 2015	75° sunny	6:30 PM	4	32
7 Saturday, May 23, 2015	65° sunny	6:30 PM	4	32
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>

<b>Chart III</b>				
<b>Location: Lexington Street from Auburn Street to Commonwealth Avenue (easterly side) and Municipal Lot to Auburn Street (westerly side) 2-hour metered</b>				
<b>Lunch Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	60° showers	12:15 PM	4	8
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	65° sunny	12:30 PM	5	7
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	9	3
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	85° sunny	12:30 PM	9	3
5 Friday, May 15, 2015	70° cloudy	12:30 PM	10	2
6 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	12:30 PM	9	3
7 Saturday, May 16, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	8	4
8 Saturday, May 23, 2015	60° sunny	12:30 PM	6	6
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Dinner Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	65° clear	7:00 PM	0	12
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	60° cloudy	6:15 PM	7	5
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	70° sunny	6:30 PM	10	2
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	80° cloudy	6:30 PM	4	8
5 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	6:15 PM	5	7
6 Friday, May 29, 2015	75° sunny	6:30 PM	2	10
7 Saturday, May 23, 2015	65° sunny	6:30 PM	4	8
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>



<b>Chart IV</b>				
<b>Location: Auburn Street, both sides from Lexington Street to end of Village Bank (#319 Auburn Street) 1-hour unmetered</b>				
<b>Lunch Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	60° showers	12:15 PM	16	8
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	65° sunny	12:30 PM	20	4
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	16	8
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	85° sunny	12:30 PM	21	3
5 Friday, May 15, 2015	70° cloudy	12:30 PM	18	6
6 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	12:30 PM	14	10
7 Saturday, May 16, 2015	65° cloudy	12:30 PM	13	11
8 Saturday, May 23, 2015	60° sunny	12:30 PM	11	13
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Dinner Time Counts</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Spaces Used</b>	<b>Spaces Available</b>
1 Tuesday, May 19, 2015	65° clear	7:00 PM	4	20
2 Wednesday, May 20, 2015	60° cloudy	6:15 PM	11	13
3 Thursday, May 21, 2015	70° sunny	6:30 PM	16	8
4 Thursday, May 28, 2015	80° cloudy	6:30 PM	5	19
5 Friday, May 22, 2015	70° sunny	6:15 PM	1	23
6 Friday, May 29, 2015	75° sunny	6:30 PM	11	13
7 Saturday, May 23, 2015	65° sunny	6:30 PM	5	19
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>