Riverside Station

Compiled Comments and Responses

March 20 - June 19, 2020

Responses to Comments Related to Site Design

1. *Are we sure that no mature trees will be cut on the east side of Grove street? Adding buildings, stoops, 8′ sidewalk and 10′ cycle track would suggest otherwise.*

   Response

   The project will not be cutting trees on the east (golf course) side of the site. The trees on the west (project) side of the site will be cleared for the items listed above. It would not be possible to accommodate the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and maintain the existing trees on the west side.

2. *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.

3. *Implementation of noise reducing building components and/or landscaping to protect the neighborhoods of Lower Falls and the 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.

4. *Regarding 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.

5. *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.

6. *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.

Update 6/19/20

A residential lobby entrance has been added on Grove Street to Building 3. It will allow entry directly from Grove Street to the amenity space and roof terrace in Building 3, overlooking the Hotel Green. For this reason, it can be expected that this will be an active and well-utilized entrance. This new entry along with proposed aesthetic treatments and signage will give Building 3 a clear front-facing presence that it previously lacked. There will now be a sense of arrival when crossing the Grove Street bridge. This presence will be carried down Grove Street in buildings 4-7 as each will have their own distinct character, street presence and interaction with the streetscape.

7. *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.

Update 6/19/20

$3.0 Million has been committed to offsite trails improvements to be implemented through an MOU with DCR. The $3.0 Million contribution represents a substantial step forward and is focused on either completing incomplete path links or providing design money to spur future investment in connections. The previous commitment included additional improvements to the park and not just the trails. While this scaling back of the commitment was unfortunate but necessary, the important fact is that the commitment to completing connections remains. This $3.0 Million contribution was initially part of an overall $5.7 Million mitigation proposal. This proposal has been subsequently increased to $7.4 Million to include an additional fund for future mitigation needs as they arise.

8. *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.

9. *Further information regarding the management and programing of the open spaces is necessary to understand their impact with respect to placemaking.*

Response

The management of the overall property will be handled by a 3rd party management company.

10. *The Planning Department recommends that the petitioner consider locations for incorporating art and incorporating the transit station into a placemaking strategy. More information is also needed to understand the flexibility regarding short-term and long-term approaches to retail.*

Response

The proponent will consider locations for art as part of the programming and landscape design. The Transit Station is a significant destination. Its location at the northernmost portion of the site, separated from the parking, retail, office, residential, and hotel uses, will encourage foot traffic through the open spaces in the site and along Main Street. Perhaps the most important feature of placemaking is people. Presently, pedestrians make the daily trek up the poorly maintained and uninviting Grove Street sidewalk to make their way from the transit station to the existing Hotel Indigo. One could imagine that this existing foot traffic will increase substantially with the significant increase in destinations to the south and the addition of open spaces and wide, inviting sidewalks.

In terms of retail, this is an evolving discussion based on market conditions. We have complete flexibility from a design perspective to accommodate short-term users as well as long-term users but we are not in a position, especially in the current environment, to provide any further commitments.

11. *The petitioner should explore whether there is a need for community space and what sort of space would be complementary to nearby community spaces. The petitioner should also provide information as to the management and oversight the public spaces.*

Response

In discussions with community members, there was a greater desire to focus mitigation funds from the project on a robust trail and park network as we have proposed. If that desire has changed the proponent is willing to revisit the conversation. As one would expect for a project of this scale, there will be on-site property management staff tasked with a variety of responsibilities including the management and oversight of public spaces. The proponent intends to manage these spaces to keep them clean, safe and well maintained. Additionally, the proponent has brought a consultant on to the project team to develop a plan to keep these spaces activated. The activation of these spaces will be executed collaboratively by the consultant's planning efforts and the proponent and the property management team.

12. *The petitioner should also consider including seating in the more active spaces for caregivers.*

Response

It is the intent of the open space and landscape design to create a variety of seating options to encourage people to rest and stay within the open spaces.

13. *As such, the petitioner should withdraw the relief to reduce the front setback along Grove Street.*

Response

The plan currently does not require this relief and it will be withdrawn as part of the Council Order.

14. *The Planning Department, however, recommends the petitioner make a significant effort to highlight the MBTA station and incorporate the station in the placemaking of the Project.*

Response

The Riverside Station redevelopment has been planned and designed around the premise of the MBTA Station as the primary destination. Its location will encourage pedestrians, bicyclists and others to traverse though the site to reach the destination. The station will be highlighted in several ways. First, a comprehensive wayfinding program will include clear direction to the MBTA parking and MBTA station through a series of vehicular-scale and pedestrian-scale signs. Second, by virtue of its linear spine orientation, Main Street terminates in the transit loop at the station. Even those who may not follow the signage in the site would most likely end up at the station by default. Finally, the station entry itself will be prominent and visible from Main Street and Grove Street. The wide entry to the station will include a noticeable canopy element that projects beyond building 7 over the sidewalk. This signage will be visible from Grove Street as well as from the northern segment of Main Street as it approaches the Plaza. It is worth pointing out that this is a top priority for the MBTA, which has design approval over the MBTA components. The MBTA has been clear that signage into the station and garage needs to be unmistakable.

15. *The proposed shared-use path should be extended to Recreation Road, rather than ending at the bridge over the Charles River as currently proposed. We recommend a 14'-wide shared bicycle/pedestrian path on the northeast side of the road in order to provide two-way access for all users while ensuring separation from vehicular traffic entering and exiting the highway. This would still maintain sufficient right-of-way on the existing bridge structure for two 11' vehicular lanes.*

Response

It is the intent of the design to extend the multi-use path beyond the Charles River all the way to Riverside Park. The revised design will eliminate the existing short hairpin onramp to I-95N/I-90, creating a 3-way T intersection with the MWRA facility access drive. The proponent is collaborating with DCR to extend a multi-use path along the MWRA driveway to connect to the Lasell Boathouse bridge. This will complete an important link of the Riverside Greenway, connecting the portions of Auburndale adjacent to the Boathouse to Riverside Park in Weston and subsequently to Lower Falls.

16. *The curb cut behind Building 1 that leads to the MBTA rail yard should be narrowed to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians using the shared-use path.*

Response

This curbcut width proposed is necessary for the occasional delivery and removal of new trains to the yard. Although the wide curbcut is not ideal, it is a compromise to keep these deliveries from utilizing the roads in the development. If the deliveries were to occur through the development, the roads would need to be widened significantly and significant portions of landscaping would need to be removed. The proponent will work with MassDOT though design approval to explore any further roadway geometric changes to reduce the width of this curb cut.

Update 6/19/20

Through a substantial redesign in coordination with the MBTA, the entry maneuvers have been refined and this has allowed the curbcut to be narrowed from the initially proposed 40' width to a more reasonable 24' dimension. Furthermore, through additional revisions, this curbcut has been relocated 24' further away from Building 1 to improve sight lines.

17. *Building 1 has no in-building bike room. This will encourage workers to drive to work, exacerbating traffic concerns.*

Response

Bicycle facilities are a typically required amenity for all office and laboratory-use tenants. Building 1 is currently designed as a shell building and will ultimately be fit-out and configured for the tenants that lease the building. Depending on the user, its number of employees and its preferred location the bicycle storage room and any associated lockers and showers will be designed and located as part of the tenant fit-out. Additionally, there is a bike room in garage 10 that is not allocated to any specific use. It is expected that this could be used to accommodate a variety of users including visitors to Building 1.

18. *Building 2 (Hotel) has no bike parking. While guests may be unlikely to bring bicycles, many hotel workers may arrive by bike.*

Response

Bike accommodations for hotel employees have been provided across the street in Building #10.

Update 6/19/20

The bicycle parking cage in the Building #10 garage has been expanded to include 196 spaces to accommodate the commercial employees and Building #1 tenants. It is conveniently located directly across the street from Building #1.

19. *Building 4 exterior access to bike room is from the middle of a long staircase/middle of the Amphitheater switchbacks.*

Response

The access is from the amphitheater side and via the ramp system. This is considered by the proponent as preferable to the alternative of no direct exterior access.

20. *Building 7 + 8 bike room could be more accessible from Transit Square.*

Response

This is a tradeoff for these buildings' retail and activation focus. The proponent prefers to prioritize sidewalk activation over accessibility to the bike room.

21. *Building 10 has two separate bike rooms. If one is intended to serve Building 9, please provide a diagram showing how to move from the bike room to the Building 9 residential lobby. In our opinion, this distance is too great and an additional bike room with a direct connection to the residential lobby of Building 9 should be added underneath the parking garage speed ramp, which travels up to the second level adjacent to the back of Building 9.*

Response

The proponent agrees that ideally the bike parking will be located in the building 9 lobby. For this reason, a bike room has been added to the revised plans, which will be submitted soon.

Update

A bike room is in Building 9 adjacent to the retail space to serve the Building 9 residential tenants.

22. *The omission of a retail/restaurant space in Building 1 leaves only one ground floor retail space in Hotel Square. The architectural qualities / transparency of the office lobby in Building 1 will be important for creating an engaging pedestrian environment.*

Response

Comment noted. The proponent agrees and will focus on the transparency and engagement of the ground floor of Building 1 during design.

23. *With the omission of the open space in front of Building 1, the small plaza remaining on the northeast corner of Road A and Main Street outside Building 10 now has an asymmetrical relationship to Hotel Square to the south. This small open space should be thoughtfully designed to complement the larger square and accommodate pedestrian traffic to/from a primary lobby for the central garage.*

Response

Comment noted.

24. *The rendering looking east on Main Street at the corner of Building 10 shows some of the architectural challenges that this building must address at the ground level in order to contribute to a well-articulated pedestrian environment at this prominent location.*

Response

Comment noted.

25. *Adding exterior entrances to the ground floor units in Building 3 will help to further activate the Hotel Green, improve the quality of the units themselves, and improve the pedestrian experience and sense of community.*

Response

The proponent agrees that unit entries around the Hotel Green will create further activation and engage the landscape. For this reason, the plan has been revised to include 6 units with direct entries in Building 3 and an additional 4 units with direct entries in Building 4.

26. *Special design consideration – architectural detail, lighting, site elements, etc. – should be incorporated into the pedestrian mews between Buildings 2 and 3 in order to make this a pleasant space.*

Response

Comment Noted.

27. *Building 3's architecture was discussed at length. The Proponent agreed to study alternative approaches to resolve the geometry of the tower element, two-story section of the Building fronting the hotel green, and 8-story residential massing.*

Response

The resolution of the tower geometry will be part of the final building design.

28. *HW recommends additional clarification be provided regarding loading requirements for Buildings 2, 3, and 4. The intent for service and passenger loading appears to be from loading zones marked on-street within Hotel Square. Will additional provision for service loading be required, especially for the hotel (i.e. larger trucks, varying time of day, etc.) so as to not disrupt the character of Hotel Square?*

Response

The on-street curb use in front of Buildings 2 and 3 are strictly loading and valet. The hotel does not include a large dining component and has on-site laundry, so it does not typically require large delivery vehicles.

29. *What is the intent for ADA access from Grove Street to the Hotel Square via the stair between Buildings 3 and 4?*

Response

A single-stop elevator will be included in Building 3, immediately adjacent to the stair. This elevator will provide an equally accessible route from Grove Street to the Hotel Green.

30. *The lower level ground floor of Building 4 contains the one remaining retail/restaurant space fronting on Hotel Square, and it is positioned well to enliven the expanded open space on the east side of the square with outdoor dining or activities. The rendering provided in this submission package does not depict the ground floor of Building 4 as having active, transparent storefronts and should be updated to reflect the revised plans.*

Response

The Proponent agrees that the rendering does not accurately reflect the intent of the ground floor of Building 4. The commercial space was added to this corner to increase the activity of this corner and create a visual terminus for those entering the site from the main intersection. It is expected that this corner will have a storefront-style façade at the ground level, similar to the other buildings with retail space.

31. *The integration of a Go Bus lease on the ground floor plan raises the question as to whether regional buses are planned to be incorporated into the square, which would not seemingly be complimentary to the proposed outdoor dining and amenity space.*

(HW) The Proponent clarified that Go Bus loading will take place within the Building 10 garage.

Response

The Go Bus space has been relocated to Building 10, opposite Building 1 on Road A. This was previously occupied by inactive space and will create a new pedestrian destination and activity on this sidewalk. The buses will berth inside the garage of Building 10 with convenient weather-protected access from the Go Bus space.

32. *Hotel Green appears to be designed to accommodate turning radius of GO Buses. This will make the space more vehicular-oriented and less pedestrian friendly.*

(HW) The Proponent clarified that Go Bus loading will take place within the Building 10 garage. The Site Layout and Materials Plan and the Building 4 Level 1 Plan should be revised accordingly.

Response

The turning radius of the hotel green has been designed to accommodate box truck deliveries and emergency vehicles/fire apparatus.

33. *Remove the parallel parking wrapping Hotel Green, thus creating a larger and more inviting open space that can be shared by residents, hotel guests, and office workers. On-street parking is appropriate along the building edges, but the spaces along the open space in the center will be less heavily used and will therefore serve only to make the vehicle travel lanes seem wider and occupy space that could otherwise be devoted to usable open space.*

(HW) The Proponent agreed to study removal of the parallel parking from the center of Hotel Square in order to widen the usable public space.

Response

This parking has been removed as noted and will be reflected in future revisions.

Update

The parallel parking wrapping the Hotel Green has been eliminated, as suggested, which is now reflected in the plans.

34. *Moving the GO Bus station to Hotel Green will make the service inconvenient for transit connections and could limit the use of the space and have a detrimental effect on its character (see above). If it must stay, the sidewalk area there seems insufficient and poorly designed for inter-city bus loading and unloading.*

(HW) The Proponent clarified that Go Bus loading will take place within the Building 10 garage. The Site Layout and Materials Plan and the Building 4 Level 1 Plan should be revised accordingly.

Response

The Go Bus space has been relocated as noted and will be reflected in future revisions.

Update

The Go Bus is in the Building 10 garage, as suggested, which is now reflected in the plans.

35. *Please clarify whether the knoll is proposed to be on the west or east side of the Amphitheater (shown both ways in different drawings).*

Response

The knoll will be located on the west side of the loggia as originally planned.

36. *The Transit Square is the most appropriate location for the GO Bus station. If this is impossible, consider placing the GO Bus station in Building 1. Buses could enter the site by traveling north on the on-ramp and using the curb cut for the MBTA railyard, thus avoiding the need to turn around within the site. There is a proposed amenity space on the ground floor of Building 1 adjacent to the proposed MBTA office space, this could be repurposed as the GO Bus stop.*

Response

The Go Bus station and bus berthing has all been relocated into Building 10. This is a similar location to the proposed Building 1 location but creates fewer conflicts and eases maneuvering.

37. *Consider swapping the position of the residential amenity and three residential units on the ground floor of Building 6 and providing these units with direct entries from the exterior. Currently these units are the only ground floor units facing Grove St. on this half of the site. As a result, they feel isolated.*

Response

The proponent is considering direct entries for these units to create more Grove Street activity. While they may feel isolated in the context of buildings 6 and 7, they are a continuation of the on-street units in buildings 3, 4 and 5.

Update

Building 6 is now designed with three ground-level units on Grove Street.

38. *The sidewalk along Grove St. should be made continuous along the site's frontage. The proposed small segment of sidewalk along Building 3 should be extended to connect with the rest of the sidewalk along this half of the site, and with the nearby reconfigured intersection.*

Response

A sidewalk extends along the entirety of the project frontage from the newly configured intersection at Building 3 all the way to the northernmost limits of the project adjacent to Building 7.

39. *Seeks more information on the planting and hardscaping strategy of the public spaces*

Response

Our strategy regarding planting has a couple of objectives:

- To create a robust planting plan that provides texture and color throughout the seasons.
- To use a palette that is comprised of native and/or low water demand plants.
- Is durable – plants that will thrive rather than just survive.
- Creates a robust shade canopy.

40. Allow for clear sight lines not only between cars and people but also within the space itself to provide a feeling of safety.

Response

In respects to the hardscape, the primary pedestrian circulation corridors will have a smooth cast in place concrete sidewalk with permeable 'furnishing' zone along the back of curb to collect rainwater, organize signs, light posts, and street furniture. In addition, café zones along buildings will receive a pedestrian scale unit paver to designate areas of congregation outside of the primary circulation zone. Other plazas and gathering areas will receive a combination of concrete paving and pedestrian unit pavers to give a rich texture and human scale to the open spaces. The unit pavers will be set on a stable base material and consists of smaller unit sizes such as 4"x8" with tight fitting joints (permeable pavers will have wider joints) to provide a small walking surface.

41. Seeks more information on connections to off-site open spaces (i.e. a narrative or plans that show which connections will be made and what types of infrastructure is necessary to make the connections)

Response

The project is providing two groups/types of off-site connections. The first group consist of improvement along Recreation Road and Grove St. The first is a primary connection along Recreation Road as part of the main project. This connection will consist of a 10-12' wide multiuse path completely separated from vehicular traffic (except potentially the bridge across the Charles). This multiuse path will provide connections to the MWRA site (which will link to other trail networks), Riverside Park, and the currently proposed Pony Truss Trail work along the Charles River. Grove Street connections will receive improved pedestrian and bicycle connections (final design to be determined with City of Newton) which connect to the Recreation Road improvements, the proposed rotary and community beyond.

For the second group of improvements, the proponent is working with local stakeholders to provide additional off site connections which include design and construction of the Depot Tunnel and small portion of Pony Truss Trail, improved connection from Riverside Park to MWRA site, and a connection from Rec Road to the end of the existing abandoned railroad bridge. The project is also anticipating providing design documents for the accommodation of a multiuse path on the two railroad bridges which span I95. See attached plan.

42. Suggests incorporating "pop-up" space in the project.

Response

Yes, this is something we intend to do.

43. Consider reserving space to Newton-based businesses.

Response

The development team will reach out to the Planning Department to get a clearer understanding of its thoughts on this matter.

44. *Seeks more information on connections to Charles River and trail networks including draft scopes of work, estimated costs, timelines, and wayfinding program.*

Response

We are actively working with Greenway Trail Network, DCR and the MBTA to further define the scope in order to refine our pricing and better understand the timing of events. As information becomes available, we will share that with the City.

Update

We are presently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the DCR related to the proposed scope of work.

45. *Are you trying to replicate a different transit plaza? If so, what is it?*

Response

The transit plaza is based on traditional paved squares that can be found across many urban cultures, most notably Italian and Hispanic. It is designed for versatility; the MBTA is given a clear path to move its buses, and the remainder is paved to accommodate a wide range of uses, with trees overhead to provide shade.

46. *How will Buildings 5 and 6 present to Grove Street?*

Response

Building 5's first-floor units will meet the Grove Street sidewalk with "front doors" and stoops to create a friendly, welcoming edge and opportunities for interaction between residents and passers-by. Because Grove Street slopes downward to the north, these stoops will vary in height to meet the grade of Grove Street.

Building 6, for its southern half, will have three residential units facing the sidewalk. At or near center, the main residential lobby will have a service entrance on the Grove Street side. Towards the north, the ground floor contains retail space intended for restaurant or café use. As the building approaches the Transit Square, a change in grade results in a split double sidewalk, the upper level of which is spill-out area for the retail space. This upper area, bounded by a balustrade, turns the corner to place a deep dining patio against the Transit Square.

47. *How big is the hotel green? Can it be bigger?*

Response

The Hotel Square is a very large space that reaches approximately 172 feet from building face to building face and it extends 215 from the edge of Main Street to Building 3. This space includes textured pavers, providing a woonerf condition for it's low-speed drop-off loop. This loop surrounds a green area that has been widened by 16 feet over the previous version by eliminating the parallel parking on the inner edge of the loop road. This green area is now approximately 64 feet by 164 feet, for an area of over 10,000 square feet, ideal for including a good-sized play area. The play area will receive a low wrought-iron-style fence to keep children from wandering across the woonerf.

48. *Is there a stage in the amphitheater? If so, will it be wired for sound?*

Response

The amphitheater does not include a stage. Although it takes on an amphitheater-like arrangement in shape, performances are not the primary purpose of this space and could take place on the wide sidewalk at its base. Provisions for power will be provided in all public gathering spaces to allow the use of amplification. This will be provided to allow their flexibility of use.

49. *What are the ground floor uses along Grove Street?*

Response

The ground floor uses along Grove Street will be residential in buildings 3, 4, 5 and portions of Building 6. The remainder of Building 6 and Building 7 will include retail.

50. *Label the shadow study more clearly, the Councilor did not know which buildings were which.*

Response

The Shadow Study will be revised for clarification.

Update

A revised shadow study (dated March 23, 2020), with identifying building numbers, was submitted.

51. *How far is the knoll from parked-or moving-cars? How useful is this space since it is close to cars and their exhaust?*

Response

The knoll is over 25 feet from cars. Cars will not be idling adjacent to the knoll so vehicular exhaust is not expected to be a major concern with its location.

52. *Is there a direct connection to the Two Bridges trail from the site?*

Response

Because the site does not directly abut the Two Bridges, a direct connection from the site through the MBTA property is not possible. However, an approach ramp parallel to Recreation Road is proposed as part of the proposed partnership arrangement with the DCR. The proponent will continue to work with the MBTA and DCR to obtain any necessary approvals or easements to allow for this approach to be as flat as possible and eliminate the need for significant switchbacks.

53. *Will there be street trees on both sides of Recreation Road?*

Response

Street trees are currently proposed on Recreation Road separating the multi-use path from the vehicular roadway. They will also provide a visual cue that this is a route with a destination. Because Recreation Road and the space along its southern edge is in MassDOT right-of-way, it unlikely that additional trees in this space will be allowed.

54. *Seating areas should be provided throughout the site.*

Response

The Project team concurs that seating areas are important and vital to the success of the open spaces and will include benches and seat-walls as well as other furniture where appropriate to encourage users to linger.

55. *The bike lane on the eastern side of Grove Street should be removed to allow for an improved setback along the western side.*

Response

The proponent has provided the Planning Department with several potential options and arrangements for the bike lanes and it is the Planning Department's position that any viable option must include a bike lane on the eastern side for bicycles traveling from Lower Falls to Auburndale.

Update

The discussion regarding this proposed bike lane is ongoing. The proponent concurs that removing the bike lane entirely would provide a better experience along the western side. The proponent also strongly opposes the implementation of a raised bike lane along the eastern side and if this is the desire of the City, the proponent will not be able to design it.

56. *Can the southbound right turn only lane be removed in favor of a larger setback.*

Response

The southbound right turn lane must remain to prevent the possibility of long queues backing up traffic towards the bridge and Riverside Center where there are insufficient sight lines.

57. *What is required to allow the bike lane on the eastern side of Grove? How does the bike lane affect the west side of Grove Street?*

Response

If the bike lane on the eastern side were to be deleted, the western curbline could shift up to 3 feet further from the buildings. Th shift is not the full width of the bike lane as MassDOT will require that a 2' shoulder be maintained on the eastern side if there is not a bike lane.

58. *Can the plan include a more desirable area for parents and children, safely separated from moving vehicles? The playground should also accommodate those with disabilities.*

Response

A play space will be the central feature of the Hotel Green. Surrounded by a slow-speed, low volume, woonerf-type street, and further enclosed by a low wrought-iron-style fence, this playground will be exceptionally safe.

59. *Will Building 1 be the tallest building in Newton?*

Response

In terms of stories, Chestnut Hill Towers are the tallest in Newton at 16 stories. The buildings are 165 feet tall at their face including penthouse. When measured from Route 9, they are 180 feet tall. Although Building 1 includes far fewer stories than Chestnut Hill Towers, because there is a potential for lab use in the building, high floor-to-floor heights and a tall mechanical space is required to accommodate the mechanical systems for this use. As a result, it is slightly taller than Chestnut Hill Towers by 5 feet at 170 feet tall.

60. *The bike lane on the eastern side of Grove Street should be protected.*

Response

An option for providing a protected lane on the eastern side has been created and will be presented. This option will require reducing the two-way path along the frontage of Building 6 to become a one-way path.

Update

The Planning Department rejected a proposed design that would include a proper protected bike lane on the eastern side because this proposal required reducing the bike lane on the western side to a single one-way lane. The Planning Department's proposal for a raised bike lane on the east side is not a proper protected bike lane and is not endorsed by the proponent or its engineers.

61. *Can the hotel green be improved? Can it be pedestrian only or partially pedestrian only?*

Response

Vehicular access through the hotel green is required for deliveries, move-ins, drop-offs, valet and most importantly ADA-accessibility so the vehicular access cannot be removed. Through the implementation of a woonerf-style curbless design, the space will clearly prioritize pedestrians and signal to vehicles that the primary purpose of the space is pedestrian use. The revised plan removes the parallel parking along the green.

62. *Have we considered retractable bollards for locations where we do not want vehicular access into the site?*

Response

Retractable bollards are only appropriate for use in areas that generally prohibit vehicular traffic but frequently allow specific vehicles access. The function more like a mechanical access gate. There are not locations in the side where these will be appropriate. For the emergency access to Grove Street, removable not retractable bollards will be used. These bollards are removed by staff on the development as part of traffic diversions for shifts in MBTA operations. It is anticipated that police officer control of this intersection would be in place when emergency operations were in place at this driveway.

63. *We need to understand more about the transit plaza.*

Response

The design of the transit plaza has been thoughtfully planned and coordinated in great detail with the MBTA. The proponent has advocated for this space to be as inviting as possible to people. Shuttles will be routed through the garage and will only use the southern curb of the transit square for boarding. Private vehicles will be allowed to drop passengers at the western cub of the transit square, however short-term parking will be provided in the garage at ground level for picking up and dropping off passengers. The other two curbs will be dedicated to the infrequent MBTA bus arrival. Because of this arrangement, it is expected that vehicular traffic in the square will be relatively light.

64. *Was there consideration for community gardens in the plan?*

Response

Community gardens are relatively land-intensive and were not considered as part of the open space uses.

65. *Could trees be installed to block noise and reduce air pollution?*

Response

Frequently spaced trees are proposed throughout the open spaces on site.

66. *Is there an alternate way to buffer the pedestrians along Main Street rather than two eight-foot wide parking lanes?*

Response

Curbside parking along both flanks is a key feature of almost every successful main street in the US. There are many reasons for this fact, including the way that it benefits businesses, calms traffic, and protects the sidewalk, but it is more useful to stress that this project has been designed with a strategy of emulating successful places and not taking undue risks with unproven configurations.

67. *Protected path of travel from the garage to the awnings along Building 8.*

Response

Awnings will be included along the frontage of building 8 to provide a weather-protected path for the majority of the route from the garage to the station

68. *How will the open spaces work?*

Response

The open spaces are intended to work as a series of complementary 'moments' within the project. Each space shall serve multiple uses and each is slightly different depending on the date, time and location within the site and the adjacent building/transportation program. The Transit Square and Green complement one another: The Transit square is a commuting hub with public access to various modes of transportation and commuter interactions as its primary focus, while the Transit green provides a primarily softscape passive counterpoint. The amphitheater provides both spaces for quiet contemplation during the majority of the days, while also accommodating larger planned events for special use. The hotel green also acts as a dual use space. It is a plaza which supports the active use of the hotel and retail while providing a community open space/playspace at its center.

69. *What are the connections to the River and what are their extents?*

Response

The proponent will extend a two-way extension of Recreation Road and a multi-use path to Riverside Park. This park connects to the River through an existing network of trails and bridges. Additional expansions of this trail network are proposed including the improvement and reopening of the "Depot Tunnel" connection to Charles Street, the final link to the MWRA trail and Lasell Boathouse Bridge and the design of the improvement of the Two Bridges over 128.

70. *Has the petitioner considered vertical green gardens? Rooftop gardens or rooftop solar?*

Response

Vertical gardens/green walls tend to be difficult to create successfully outdoors 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. The roofs will be solar-ready, and we are discussing solar panels on top of the garage with the MBTA.

Update

The project will include rooftop solar PV that will offset at least 25% of the common area electric load for the Passive House certified buildings.

71. How can the plan highlight the transit station?

Response

The Riverside Station redevelopment has been planned and designed around the premise of the MBTA Station as the primary destination. Its location will encourage pedestrians, bicyclists and others to traverse though the site to reach the destination. The station will be highlighted in several ways. First, a comprehensive wayfinding program will include clear direction to the MBTA parking and MBTA station through a series of vehicular-scale and pedestrian-scale signage. Its location will not be a secret. Second, by virtue of its linear spine orientation, Main Street terminates in the transit loop at the station. Even those who may not follow the signage in the site would most likely end up at the station by default. Finally, the station entry itself will be prominent and visible from Main Street and Grove Street. The wide entry to the station will include a noticeable canopy element that projects beyond building 7 over the sidewalk. This canopy will include signage/identification that will be coordinated with the MBTA to ensure its location is unmistakable

72. What percent of the beneficial open space is softscape versus hardscape?

Response

The percentage of soft vs hardscape varies within each of the open spaces, but as an average the ratio is approximately 50% hardscape and 50% softscape. The streetscapes with primary pedestrian sidewalks, street trees, permeable paving, benches, and planting beds will be predominantly hardscape with attention given to accommodating proper street tree soil volume through the use of raised tree beds and structural soil below the permeable pavers. Other spaces such as the amphitheater and transit green will be up to 66% percent softscape to accommodate a more passive use in these locations.

73. Can the hotel green be shifted towards Building 4?

Response

The arrangement of the Hotel Green has been thoughtfully planned and located. The deep sidewalks between the vehicular lane and Building 4 are an important pedestrian space to preserve.

74. The transit square needs to be looked at.

Response

The design of the transit plaza has been thoughtfully planned and coordinated in great detail with the MBTA. Although this is an ongoing discussion, the MBTA feels very comfortable with where we have landed at this point in the design. The proponent has advocated for this space to be as inviting as possible to people.

75. Safety of green spaces surrounded by traffic.

Response

While there are vehicular lanes around the hotel green, as has been described, the priority of this space is pedestrian, and the vehicular use of this area would not be accurately described as traffic. The other green spaces are primarily bounded by buildings or pedestrian sidewalks.

76. Can there be a safe space for kids?

Response

A play space will be the centerpiece of the hotel green.

77. The peer review team suggests the Proponent provide more detail for review, prioritizing "required" elements in the overall context of the proposed project design and budget.

Response

This comment requires further context and clarification. The development team will reach out to the peer review team.

78. 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.

Responses to Comments Related to Design Guidelines and Signage

79. *For northbound bicyclists using the two-way, off-street bicycle path on the west side of Grove Street, clear signage will be necessary at the curb cut between Building 6 and Building 7 to ensure that north-bound cyclists use the crosswalk to cross Grove St. and continue northbound in the on-street bicycle lane.*

Response

Wayfinding signage will be located both at the intersection between buildings 6 and 7 as well as the intersection of Grove Street and Recreation Road to identify that the lane on the east side of Grove Street is the route for destinations north of the site. There will be a Rapid Reflectorized Flashing Beacon (RRFB) introduced at the proposed crosswalk north of the Grove Street site driveway providing connection between bicycle facilities on the east and west sides of Grove Street.

80. *For northbound bicyclists using the on-street bike lane, clear signage should be provided at the new signalized intersection on Grove Street to instruct bicyclists accessing the station to make a left turn at the signalized intersection, rather than the unsignalized crosswalk further north on Grove Street. If space allows, a left turn box for bicyclists should be provided at the signalized intersection to provide a safe space for cyclists to wait for an opportunity to make the left turn and improve visibility between turning cyclists and northbound through traffic.*

Response

These comments will be considered and incorporated into the design to the extent allowed by MassDOT.

81. *While the three-level loggia element on the Main Street façade does provide some visual interest for the streetscape, pinching down the street section before opening it back up into Hotel Square, it does have the impact of screening sight lines to the retail space. Perhaps signage and lighting can be integrated into the loggia to help with visibility.*

Response

Though the rendering shows a heavier, more opaque loggia structure, the current intent is to build something lightweight and transparent. To the extent that retail space is located within, it is expected that signage will be tastefully integrated into the loggia.

82. *How does the plan align with the Washington Street vision regarding building length?*

Response

The Washington Street vision does not specifically address total building lengths. It only suggests that blocks should be less than ¼ mile in length.

The development team has designed the Riverside buildings to be a variety of lengths, actual and perceived. The longer buildings are demised in a variety of ways, so that some are broken up into what appear to be smaller buildings.

83. Can the Planning Department provide a chart detailing the height of Buildings 3-7 and their setback from Grove Street?

Response

Planning Department to respond.

84. What are the Planning Department recommendations regarding building height along Grove Street concerning the relationship to building height to street width?

Response

Planning Department to respond.

85. Will the buildings be broken down with demise lines?

Response

Yes, as noted in the Demise Line drawing in the Proponent's proposed Design Guidelines.

86. What does the term rowhouse mean?

Response

Rowhouses, sometimes called townhouses or brownstones, are buildings that look to be made up of an accretion of single-family houses connected by common sidewalls, similar to what can be found on Beacon Hill or in the Back Bay. In the context of this project, the term Rowhouse is used to describe a long façade that has been demised to create the appearance of such individual homes, breaking down its length and scale.

87. What is the required setback from Grove Street and what are the setbacks of the buildings along Grove Street?

Response

The required Grove Street setback is 25 feet. The building setbacks as proposed vary from 25.6 feet 27.5 feet.

Responses to Comments Related to Transportation

88. What is the incremental additional cost of a protected golf-course side bike lane vs. a painted lane vs. no lane?

Response

It is expected that the incremental cost associated with each option would be as follows:

$30,000 to convert from no bike lane to a street level bike lane assuming that it is painted solid green and includes thermoplastic markings.

$150,000-$200,000 to convert from a street-level bike lane to a raised bike lane. The variability in cost is associated with potential adjustments to the drainage system that have not yet been engineered pending the decided course for this scope of work.

89. If there is savings to be had in providing no bike lane on the golf-course side, where could or would those funds be invested instead?

Response

The funds to convert to a raised bike lane are not presently in the overall project budget. As discussed at the last Land Use hearing, the petitioner is willing to reallocate the $30,000 budgeted for a street level, painted bike lane to provide for further bike improvements to the Hamilton School Community Center.

90. How safe is the proposed roundabout for cyclists coming from Lower Falls toward 128?

Response

The roundabout in the proposed configuration is a single lane roundabout and as proposed a bicyclist coming from Lower Falls will have two options, either stay in lane and traverse the roundabout, or dismount, cross to the west side of the street and utilize the multi-use path that is being provided. The multi-use path allows bicyclists to avoid the roundabout. The design with these components follows "current practice" by MassDOT for roundabouts where bike and pedestrian activity is expected. It should be noted that bicycle activity in roadways has inherent risk associated with it, and this is particularly true on roadways where speeds are significant. The proposed roundabout will require that all vehicles slow down to speeds consistent with bicycle activity. Movement through the intersection will be relatively safe. However, we would anticipate that confident riders would choose to travel through the roundabout, while others would utilize the more comfortable option of utilizing the multi-use path.

91. Can the bike lane protection start at the Lower Falls side of the roundabout all the way to the rail trestle?

Response

The proponent has agreed to extend the protected bicycle accommodations all the way to the Hamilton School Community Center (up to the driveway) in the form of a two-way multiuse path from the roundabout. This will afford bicyclists a protected route from the Community Center to either Riverside Station or Riverside Park and beyond.

92. Please verify whether there is a right-turn slip lane on either entrance/exit side of the roundabout that connects to 128.

Response

There are no slip lanes proposed at the Route 128 Southbound Ramp/Grove Street roundabout.

93. Please verify that the grove street-to-grove street slip lane is signalized.

Response

There is technically no "slip" lane from Grove Street to Grove Street; rather it is a channelized right turn lane that will have signal control. The pedestrian crossing at this location will have signal protection

94. Is the Grove to Recreation Road right turn signalized or is it a free right?

Response

The Grove Street to Recreation Road right turn lane is a channelized right turn lane that will have signal control. The pedestrian crossing at this location will have signal protection.

95. Has Mark Development evaluated the likely usage of the Kiss-and-Ride location, and possibility of drivers using alternate locations?

Response

Careful consideration has been given to the Kiss-and-Ride location, quantity, and usage. Presently the station has two locations for Kiss-and-Ride to occur. There is a short hairpin loop right adjacent to the existing station that is shared with shuttle buses for live drop-off. Additionally, there are (7) 15-minute Kiss-and-Ride "waiting" spaces for the drivers picking up arriving passengers located further away in the existing bus loop area. Presently, 3 of the 7 are marked for use by Zipcar although it does not appear, they are presently used for car sharing.

The proposed design carries forward this general layout concept and makes some specific improvements. There will still be an area for the Kiss-and-Ride live drop-off in front of Building 8 adjacent to the station; however, it is no longer shared with the high volume of shuttle buses. The 15-minute Kiss-and-Ride "waiting" spaces have been increased in quantity to 10. They have been located in the garage for a few reasons. First, by locating the spaces in the garage, it provides weather protection. Second, it allows for the driver to pull right in and park and then pull out without mixing with vehicles in the transit loop. Finally, these spaces are not the most convenient for retail users and other guests so it reduces the likelihood that those users would be inclined to use the 15-minute waiting spaces. Kiss-and-Ride drivers would also be allowed to use the other short-term spaces on site. Although the spaces are not reserved for that purpose, it would not be prohibited. Given the high turnover of the Kiss-and-Ride activity, we do not see this as overly taxing on the short-term parking supply if it were to happen.

96. How will Mark Development enforce the No Left Turn into and from the Grove St. entrance?

Response

It is anticipated that signage would likely be adequate to enforce the no left turn into the site. However, the final design will be configured to allow future accommodation of additional treatments if necessary. Such treatments may include a channelization island flexible delineator posts to prohibit left turns into the site driveway from Grove Street.

97. How useful is the 2-bridges trail as a pedestrian/bike route without an at-grade connection to the development? Can one be added to the project?

Response

There will be an accessible path created connecting Recreation Road near Building 1 to the two bridges trail. This is included in the $3M of proposed offsite trail mitigation.

98. *How long is the walk via Recreation Road, MWRA Trail, etc. to the Auburndale Commuter Rail station? Will this be traversable via bicycle?*

Response

When the project is completed and the work in the $3M offsite trail mitigation is built, there will be a multi-use path for bicycles and pedestrians connecting the project to the Lasell boathouse. From there, it is a residential low-traffic route down Charles Street to Auburn Street safe for bicycling. The Station is about 800 feet down Auburn Street from Charles Street where bicycles would travel in the street. The total distance from the project entrance at Main Street to the station by this pleasant, largely protected and safe route is one mile.

99. *Can the MBTA study and perhaps re-instate the 500 express bus from downtown to Riverside?*

Response

The Proponent will work with the MBTA to encourage an assessment of the potential for revitalization of the 500 express but to downtown.

100. *When can councilors have a look at the animation of projected bicycle and pedestrian traffic into and leaving Riverside and along Grove Street post-construction?*

Response

Pedestrian and bicycles are included in the animations that have been prepared and presented for the AM and PM Peak hour periods. However, it should be understood that VISSIM, the platform used for the models, doesn't have the ability to separate bicyclists from pedestrians at intersections, so both are represented by pedestrian movement. The scale at which the models were presented was provided to focus on general traffic operations in and around the project site, and at the scale utilized it is hard to see the ped/bike maneuver, but they are built into the model. If necessary, new animations can be created that zoom into ped/bike maneuvers in key areas.

101. *Is the cycle track on Reservoir Road connected to the potential 2-bridges trail with a ramp? Or is it only going under the bridges?*

Response

As a part of the proposed $3M contribution to the trails network, the proponent would create a new accessible connection via a sloped path from Recreation Road to the two bridges.

102. *Are the overflow spaces adequate?*

Response

Presently the average peak demand for parking at Riverside Station is 636 parking spaces. When complete, the project will include 1,000 spaces dedicated to the MBTA, which is 57% greater than demand. The MBTA has deemed this adequate to accommodate future increases in demand and has built in the ability to place their spaces into the shared parking pool in the event there is an excess parking supply.

103. *There should be a daily parking rate, and no monthly discount for parking. If you have already paid for monthly parking here is more incentive to drive.*

Response

While this concept makes complete sense for discouraging office users from driving, in practice it will be very difficult to implement. The types of tenants we are looking to include will draw employees from the whole region and not just locally where they would be able to bike or take public transit. For this reason, these employers will expect to compensate the employees for their parking costs. If the employees are not paying the cost of parking, the disincentive of paying daily for parking is removed. Concepts such as offering "bike to work" rewards and paying the cost of public transportation passes we believe will be more effective in reducing demand. For residents, daily parking rates will not work as any resident with a car will need to garage it at the project.

104. *Concerned about slip lanes.*

Response

A detailed response has been prepared under separate cover and is included in **Attachment A**.

105. *Just to clarify, slip lane is not on the design?*

Response

There are no slip lanes proposed in the current design. The 2013 Riverside project included a slip lane at the off-ramp from I-95/128 South to avoid the roundabout. This has been eliminated at the request of MassDOT. To further clarify, a response has been prepared under separate cover and is included in **Attachment A**.

106. *One of the screens shows what the bridge area would look like – as far as a pedestrian walkway and bike lane, is that what extends on Grove Street?*

Response

What is shown on the bridge is a condition that is unique to the bridge and the approaches. The existing bridge is exceptionally wide and in its current configuration provides shoulder lanes on either side that are unnecessary and wide enough to fit 4 lanes of traffic. Because of this extra space, the design can provide sidewalks and buffered bike lanes on both sides.

107. Grove Street is 26 feet wide. What is its width after the project, and if we further reduce it because of the bike lane, what would it be?

Response

A detailed summary is included in **Attachment B**, which includes three alternatives. Alternative A (currently proposed, Alternative B (raised bike lane as requested by the Planning Department), and Alternative C (eliminating the bike lane).

Below is a summary of the alternatives in Tabular format:

	Existing	Alternative A Proposed	Alternative B Planning Preferred	Alternative C No East Bike Lane
Curb to Curb Width at Building 5	26'	28'	23'	28'
Curb to Curb Width at Building 6	26'	38'	33'	34'
Building 5 Setback from Curb	N/A	39'	38.5'	41'
Building 6 Setback from Curb	N/A	30'	29.5'	34'
Vehicular Travel Lanes	11'	11'	11'	11'
Western Bike Lane (Project)	N/A	10' (2-way)	10' (2-way)	10' (2-way)
Eastern Bike Lane (Golf Course)	N/A	5' at Street	5' Raised	N/A

Note the following:

The existing section of Grove Street from the Hotel Indigo to the bridge abutment is a 50-foot right of way and the paved roadway is 26 feet wide between the curbs. This space is allocated as two 11-foot lanes and two, 2-foot shoulders when it was last striped.

In the currently proposed condition, south of the main intersection, the roadway is 28-feet between the curbs and is allocated as follows: two 11-foot lanes, a 1-foot shoulder on the western edge and a 5-foot bike lane on the eastern edge. The travel lanes are the same as existing in width and the overall roadway is widened from existing conditions by 2-feet to accommodate the bike lane.

If the bike lane were eliminated, the proposed condition could match the existing at 26-feet. We are currently showing it as 28’ but it could be further reduced.

108. Was there any discussion about there being pedestrian, bike, and/or vehicle connections between the Riverside train station and the Auburndale commuter rail stop?

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.

109. We should look at doing what we think is most applicable regarding the warrants.

Response

As noted in the March 20, 2020 traffic signal warrant memorandum prepared by VHB and submitted to the City, the intersection of Grove Street at Woodland Road does not meet any traffic signal warrants today. In addition, projections of future conditions with the project in place were made and the signal warrants reviewed under that condition suggests that a signal is still not warranted.

110. What is your thinking around workers who work at McDonalds and who walk to and from the T?

Response

Unfortunately, there is no great solution for the limited number of people who make that walk. In its present condition, this is a treacherous walk where these employees must walk up the narrow Grove Street sidewalk, cross Grove Street where traffic does not stop, cross the I-95/128 off ramp, walk along the side of the I-95/128 S off ramp and then cross the off ramp. Much of this does not include adequate sidewalks or crosswalks. The proposed project includes extensive pedestrian and bicycle accommodations between the station and the interchange with I-95/128 S and Quinobequin Road. The vast majority of this walk will be significantly improved with no unsafe crossings. However, creating a safe pedestrian crossing of the I-95/128 off ramp to the McDonalds is not possible due to the existing off-ramp configuration. This dangerous crossing will remain.

111. How about spaces in the garage for The Ride?

Response

The spaces in the garage for "The Ride" are a transfer location for paratransit systems including "The Ride" allowing users of different paratransit systems to transfer from one van to another. This location in the garage has been reviewed by the MBTA and they have determined that proximity to the Green Line station for these spaces is not important. In fact, the existing location for these transfer spaces is in the southwest corner of the MBTA parking facility closest to the rear parking of the Hotel Indigo.

The transfer spaces for "The Ride" not used for picking up and discharging passengers from the Green Line station. A dedicated drop-off area in the transit loop at the station is provided for connecting "The Ride" to the station.

112. How about a covered walkway from the garage to the T, specifically over the roadway between Building 8 and 9?

Response

The majority of this walk is covered with the exception of the short section of roadway between buildings 8 and 9. This gap is about 30-40 feet where the driveway to and from the garage and loading areas crosses the path. It should be noted that this is a major improvement over existing conditions where commuters have to walk hundreds if not over 1,000 feet without any weather protection.

113. Will the developer charge for Parking in the office building? How will you do this?

Response

Monthly parking for office employees will be charged directly to the employer in addition to the rent of its occupied space. Visitors to the office building will pay an hourly/daily rate and have their parking validated and paid for by the tenant.

114. What if a tenant says it wants parking built into its lease?

Response

It can be expected that tenants will have varied demands for their allocation of parking spaces. By charging for the tenant on a per-space basis rather than building it into their lease, the tenant will be encouraged to optimize the number of spaces needed as they will have an opportunity to save costs by not using more spaces than they need. If they request parking to be built into their lease, a credit system could be implemented reducing their rent for unused spaces, effectively creating the same incentive structure.

115. How will visitor parking be managed?

Response

All parking will be monitored using a License Plate Recognition (LPR) system. Office employees, and hotel guests will park on the upper floors of Garage 10 and MBTA customers will park on the upper floors of Garage 9. The short-term visitors will park on floors 1 and 2 of the garage. These spaces will include an hourly/daily rate structure that will allow for free stays for those who visit for 2 hours or less. Those that exceed 2 hours will pay an hourly rate that exceeds the MBTA rate as a base to discourage use of the MBTA parking area and the rate will increase with the length of the stay. Office, retail, and restaurant tenants may validate the parking of their guests through a computerized/app-based system that is connected to the LPR program. In those instances, the tenants may validate a portion of the parking costs, which will vary with the desire of the tenant. There will not be a system in place where one could validate parking at the retail space and then take the T into Boston. The validation will only cover the hourly limitations that the retail tenant is willing to pay.

116. Need more specifics on how parking rules will be enforced and who will enforce them.

Response

The parking will be managed using the LPR system. The way the LPR system works is the same as the existing MBTA parking. The user downloads a free app to their phone, enters their license plate and pays through the app. As is the case today, if an individual does not want to use the app or simply does not want to pay, a bill will be mailed to their registered address and they will be charged an accruing late fee if they do not pay. If they fail to pay the parking fees in the MBTA portion of the garage, the MBTA has the ability to prohibit the user from renewing their registration in state. If this occurs in the non-MBTA portion of the garage, the license plate will be listed in the system for future towing for additional offenses. Towing will be coordinated by the professional management company that will oversee the entire garage.

117. We have traffic projections for up to 110 percent. What if traffic mitigation fails?

Response

Should the project result in traffic that exceeds the 110% of the projections that have been made, strategies to reduce traffic will be discussed with the city and ultimately implemented to create traffic conditions that are in the realm of the projections made. Some of the potential strategies that might be considered have been outlined, one of which include a potential shuttle to the Auburndale Commuter Rail Station. New technologies are constantly being advanced and all potential TDM strategies will be considered and discussed with the city to ensure compliance with the traffic cap requirement.

Update

The baseline TDM includes:

1. Shared Parking
    - Less than **3%** parking surplus
2. Unbundled Parking

- Residential, Office, and Hotel guests will be charged for parking in addition to rent/daily rate

3. Parking Pricing (variable)
   - Monthly (24/7)
   - Reverse Commuter
   - Daily
4. Bicycle Parking
   - Over 900 bicycle parking spaces (not including MBTA bicycle parking spaces)
   - Bicycle repair station and lockers
5. Adaptive Signal Control
6. Program for Sustainable Transportation
   - **Reimbursement equal to 80% of the cost of a monthly LinkPass ($72)**

   (LinkPass allows for unlimited travel on the subway, local bus lines, and the silver line.)
   - Contribution to facilitate bike-share station installation
7. **6-month PILOT Commuter Rail Bus Shuttle Service**
   - $130K for daily service 6x per day.

TDM Monitoring

1. Hire an onsite coordinator and TMA
2. Increase ongoing monitoring from 2 years to **5 years**
   - Will require 3 consecutive years of confirmation
3. Monitoring will start once all buildings have been constructed

Post Construction Mitigation (If Required)

If traffic specific to the development project is 110% or more of adjusted projections made in the TIA:

- Provide up to **$1,000,000 for post construction mitigation**.

Examples of potential measures include:

- Increasing the transit reimbursement by improved marketing and/or increasing the level of subsidy.
- Expanding transit subsidy participation beyond the dwelling units.
- Continuing shuttle service to connect to other transportation hubs or other points of interest, to be determined through the site-specific surveying practices.
- Increasing the cost of daily parking for non-MBTA daily or weekly users.

118. *I like the idea of a protected bike lane – protected 2 ways from Hamilton all the way to Williams. What would it cost? I'm struggling with the bike lane on the other side- whether unprotected or protected. There have to be tradeoffs. What are we giving up?*

Response

In spite of what was presented by the LFIA, this proposal would be extremely expensive and have significant physical and land-control hurdles. First, space under the existing bridge does not exist for this accommodation. Second, the entire roadway in front of the Riverside Center would need to be completely reconstructed. Finally, the utility poles for the entire stretch would need to be relocated or buried under ground. The cost for this work would undoubtedly be several million dollars.

Update

While the extension of the multiuse path to the Williams School is both cost-prohibitive and has right-of-way and land control issues, the extension to the Hamilton Community Center is less of a challenge. This extension represents a significant cost estimated to be in excess of $300,000.

119. *I still don't understand how it can be safe to bike through the roundabout. Also, by continuing the lane to Hancock Street in Auburndale – how do we finance that?*

Response

A bicycle can transition through the roundabout in one of two ways. First, they could remain in traffic northbound as they would be when they approach the roundabout and then they stay in traffic and transition into the new northbound bike lane on the bridge. Second, they could stop at the roundabout and cross in the crosswalk over to the 2-way cycle track and proceed on the other side of Grove Street across the bridge. A diagram of these two options is demonstrated in **Attachment C**.

120. *Go Bus is way on the other side of the development. Pedestrians will cross the parking garage to get to the Go Bus. Is there a dedicated path for a person taking the Go bus?*

Response

Pedestrians will be able to walk along Main Street from Riverside Station to the Go Bus waiting area. While this walk is longer than existing conditions, a significant portion of this walk is covered, surrounded by active retail, and is an overall pleasant experience. It should be noted that while some people do make that walk today, the majority of Go Bus passengers arrive by car.

121. *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.

122. *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.

123. *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.

124. *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.

Update

A 6-month PILOT Commuter Rail Bus Shuttle Service ($130K) for daily service 6x per day is proposed.

125. *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.

126. 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.

Update

A 6-month PILOT Commuter Rail Bus Shuttle Service ($130K) for daily service 6x per day is proposed.

127. 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.

128. *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.

129. *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 9, 2019. At the request of the Planning Department, a follow-up TDM memo was provided on January 14, 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.

Update

See updated response to question #117. (If traffic specific to the development project is 110% or more of adjusted projections made in the TIA, funds up to **$1,000,000** for post construction mitigation would be available.)

130. *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.

131. *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.

132. *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 cycle-tracks 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.

133. *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 parkin 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.

134. *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.

135. *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.

136. *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.

137. *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.

138. *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

The development parcel will not play a role in any future of urban rail.

139. *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.

140. *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.

141. *Along with these outside public spaces, the Planning Department recommends providing some interior public space related to the transit station. Such space could be used as a waiting area for either buses or trains with up to date transit information, arrival times and a public restroom, which would benefit commuters and residents. Do you have an update on the MBTA space?*

Response

Adjacent to the transit station entry, there will be two station-related components. To the left in Building 8 will be the MBTA station operations space, which includes a space for obtaining information and ticket vending. This space will ultimately be programmed by the MBTA, presumably the MBTA could post transit information, including arrival times, in this location. A public restroom could be included within the space, subject to approval by the MBTA. To the right in Building 7, there will be an enclosed bicycle storage area. By flanking the station entry with these two MBTA-related public uses, the entry will gain a feeling of activity and integration with the project and transit square.

142. *The plans also indicate that bicycle facilities will extend across Interstate 95 to the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Grove Street, Asheville Road, and Quinobequin Road, but the plans do not state what type of infrastructure, i.e. bike lane, protected bike lane, or sharrow that these connections will take. We received these graphics from Randy in a file entitled "19.11.04 Grove Street Sections (2)". I assume these will be finalized when the Grove Street bike lane is finalized.*

Response

The proposed shared-use path will be provided along the entire site frontage, the Grove Street bridge, and extend to the roundabout/Asheville Road. The bike lane will be separated from the travel lanes along the site frontage and on the bridge, and be at the road's edge between the bridge and roundabout.

143. *A two-way bike path is proposed on the west side of Grove Street, which transitions to standard one-way on-street bike lanes near the northern limits of the project. It is also unclear how the bike path connects to Riverside Center. The petitioner should provide more detailed information on the cross-section of Grove Street at this location, and how the bike lanes will transition to the existing condition north of the rail bridge.*

Response

The northbound lane of the two-way bike path is intended to serve as convenient access to the MBTA station from Lower Falls and Recreation Road. It terminates at the transit green, where northbound bicyclists can then enter the site towards the MBTA station and other destinations within the development. Bicyclists traveling through to Auburndale will be directed to the one-way bike lane on the eastern side of Grove Street through wayfinding at the intersection of Grove Street and the Recreation Road Extension. Both the southbound bike lane on the west side of Grove Street and the north bound lane on the east side of Grove Street transition to mixed traffic at the bridge and through the existing boulevard at Riverside Center.

144. *At the intersection of Grove St. and the I-95 exit ramp, a pedestrian crosswalk is proposed, but the two-way bicycle path does not have a dedicated space for crossing. In order to provide safe and adequate space for both bicyclists and pedestrians, the bike path should continue across both the exit ramp and the right turn lane from Grove Street parallel to the pedestrian crosswalk, with sufficient space in the refuge island for both bicyclists and pedestrians making the two-stage crossing.*

Response

These comments will be considered and incorporated into the design to the extent allowed by MassDOT.

145. *The two-way bicycle path on the northwest side of Grove Street is shown as continuing south/southwest over the bridge over I-95, but it terminates just on the far side of the bridge. The two-way bike path on the northwest side of Grove St. should be extended through the proposed roundabout at the Grove St./Quinobequin Rd. intersection, creating a safer connection to and from Lower Falls.*

Response

This change will be incorporated in the design.

Update

The two-way multiuse path on the development-side of Grove Street is now proposed to continue to the Hamilton Community Center.

146. *Safe pedestrian crossing from the center of Hotel Square to the north side of Main Street in front of Building 1 should be reviewed in conjunction with pedestrian desire lines and vehicle queuing from the intersection of Recreation Road and Main Street. A crosswalk from the green to the Building 1 corner and/or special paving or striping of the entire intersection of Main Street with Hotel Square may help vehicular and pedestrian circulation as well as help define sense of place at the west end of the site.*

Response

The traffic signal at Main Street will be owned and operated by MassDOT. This portion of Main Street is part of the approach to that signal and will be subject to the final review and approval of MassDOT. To the extent MassDOT does not take issue with this proposed crossing during their design review, it will be added to the plan.

147. *Would like to see a graphic representation of how Grove Street will be divided (similar to as is shown on Sheet C-7.1 of the submitted plans) that stretches from the roundabout to the signalized intersection in front of Building 3.*

Response

The team is working with the City staff to finalize the design and we will provide those drawings once clear direction has been agreed upon.

Update

This section has been included in all of the proposed bike lane studies submitted to the Planning Department in a conceptual form. The final engineered section will be completed as part of the off-site design plans.

148. *How will pedestrians get through the transit plaza?*

Response

The transit plaza includes continuous sidewalks on all 4 sides. Additionally, following the desire line from Main Street to the MBTA station, two crosswalks have been added to create a safe and clear route through the central plaza from Main Street to the MBTA Station.

149. *Concerning the hotel green, how useful is it to have parks surrounded by pavement? Would it be more useful to have a one-way in, one-way out and shift the green space to abut sidewalk?*

Response

The hotel green will have woonerf-style vehicular areas. The material will be unit pavers and the vehicular paths will be separated from the pedestrian and green areas by bollards and low fences, creating the feel of a continuous pedestrian environment and clear indication that cars are not the priority. In the current plan, there is no parking structure or other significant vehicular destination along this loop, so traffic volumes will be light. Because there is no terminal destination for vehicles, there is no possibility of a one-way pair as described; the vehicular path has to loop. The alternative, a single street with a cul-de-sac turnaround, is a suburban auto-era street type that is not in keeping with the goal of creating a walkable community.

150. *How will the transit plaza function for pedestrians and bicyclists?*

Response

The transit plaza includes continuous sidewalks on all 4 sides. Additionally, following the desire line from Main Street to the MBTA station, two crosswalks have been added to create a safe and clear route through the central square from Main Street to the MBTA Station for bicyclists and pedestrians.

151. How do you mix shuttles and private vehicles within the transit plaza?

Response

Shuttles will be routed through the garage and will only use the southern curb of the transit square for boarding and alighting. Private vehicles will be allowed to drop passengers at the western cub of the transit square; however, short-term parking will be provided in the garage at ground level for picking up and dropping off passengers. The other two curbs will be dedicated to the infrequent MBTA bus arrival. Because of this arrangement, it is expected that vehicular traffic in the square will be relatively light.

It is important to note that, while higher frequency bus service is certainly hoped for in the future, an MBTA bus typically arrives once every hour and ten minutes during peak periods. Even a doubling of service would still mean that you are far more likely to see a transit square that is free of buses than to see a bus picking up or discharging passengers.

152. Why is the southbound right turn only lane necessary?

Response

The southbound right turn lane must remain to prevent the possibility of long queues backing up traffic towards the bridge and Riverside Center where there are insufficient site lines.

153. concerned with pedestrian and bicycle access into the site. Someone needs to walk her through the plan.

Response

The pedestrian and bicycle access have been detailed as part of the Transportation-focused hearing and can be further described in the April Transportation-focused hearing.

154. The bike lane on the eastern side of Grove Street should be protected.

Response

An option for providing a protected lane on the eastern side has been created and will be presented. This option will require reducing the two-way path along the frontage of Building 6 to a one-way path.

155. Are there other options for the transit plaza? It seems chaotic.

Response

The design of the transit plaza has been thoughtfully planned and coordinated in great detail with the MBTA. The proponent has advocated for this space to be as inviting as possible to people. Shuttles will be routed through the garage and will only use the southern curb of the transit square for boarding and alighting. Private vehicles will be allowed to drop passengers at the western curb of the transit square, however short-term parking will be provided in the garage at ground level for picking up and dropping off passengers. The other two curbs will be dedicated to the infrequent MBTA bus arrival. Because of this arrangement, it is expected that vehicular traffic in the square will be relatively light.

156. *Please provide more information on the northbound bike lane on the eastern side of Grove? Is it redundant, and if not, does it need to be protected?*

Response

An option for providing a protected lane on the eastern side has been created and will be presented. This option will require reducing the two-way path along the frontage of Building 6 to a one-way path.

157. *The MBTA should state whether this petition prohibits future transit operations on site.*

Response

The MBTA attended the Land Use hearing on February 25th and confirmed that the current plan does not prohibit future operations on the site. Furthermore, the plan has already considered potential operational improvements that can be made down the road such as additional bus accommodations and train storage.

158. *We need to understand more about the transit plaza.*

Response

The design of the transit plaza has been thoughtfully planned and coordinated in great detail with the MBTA. The proponent has advocated for this space to be as inviting as possible to people. Shuttles will be routed through the garage and will only use the southern curb of the transit square for boarding. Private vehicles will be allowed to drop passengers at the western cub of the transit square, however short-term parking will be provided in the garage at ground level for picking up and dropping off passengers. The other two curbs will be dedicated to the infrequent MBTA bus arrival. Because of this arrangement, it is expected that vehicular traffic in the square will be relatively light.

159. *Do we need on-street parking along Main Street?*

Response

Curbside parking along both flanks is a key feature of almost every successful main street in the US. There are many reasons for this fact, including the way that it benefits businesses, calms traffic, and protects the sidewalk, but it is more useful to stress that this project has been designed with a strategy of emulating successful places and not taking undue risks with unproven configurations.

160. *What type of bollards will be installed at the emergency access driveways?*

Response

Removable bollards will be used. These bollards are removed by staff on the development team as part of traffic diversions for shifts in MBTA operations.

161. Is the crosswalk on Grove Street safe?

Response

The crosswalk at the northern end of Grove Street has been added to the plan at the direction of the City's Public Works Transportation Department. This crossing will include an actuated Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) to signal to vehicles that a pedestrian or bicyclist intends to cross at this location. In addition, signage that is interactive and connected to the RRFB will be placed on the north side of the train trestle to allow advanced warning of a potential stop required ahead.

162. How will the pedestrian and bicyclist circulation work?

Response

The pedestrian and bicycle access will be addressed at the April 7th hearing, which will be focused on transportation.

163. Can there be pedestrian only areas? Bike only areas?

Response

The areas that include vehicular access are necessary.

164. 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.

165. 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.

166. *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.

167. *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.

168. *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.

169. *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.

170. *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.

171. *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.

172. *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.

173. *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.

174. *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.

175. *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.

176. *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.

Update

The proposed plan now includes a multiuse path extending from the Hamilton Community Center to the two-way bike lane adjacent to the project.

177. *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.

178. *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.

179. *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.

180. *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.

181. *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.

Update

The proposed $3M trails improvement proposal includes the design and construction of a sloped walkway from Recreation Road to the bridge.

182. *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.

183. *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

184. *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.

Update

The proponent has learned that Newton is now committed to extending the bluebikes program from Boston into the City. The proponent is committing to contribute $50k towards the expansion of the system to the project site.

185. *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 cycle-track 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.

186. *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.

187. 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.

Update

In addition to the proposed redundant elevators to access the station, the project includes an accessible ramp to ensure access to the station for all if the elevators were to fail.

188. 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.

Update

The City is working with the neighborhood to develop a parking management plan on the neighborhood streets.

189. 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.

Update

The proposed plan has been enhanced to include in excess of 900 bicycle parking spaces. This proposal includes covered, secure parking for all users.

190. Will there be bike parking specifically for hotel workers?

Response

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

Update

Additional secured bicycle parking has been added to the parking garage for commercial employees, including hotel workers. This is part of the more than 900 bicycle parking spaces on site.

191. 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.

Update

While the future tenant may opt to include this feature in their proposed space fit-out, the project also includes a significant amount of covered, secure bicycle parking for commercial tenants that will be available for the office building. These are conveniently located directly across the street from the office building.

192. 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.

Update

Building 3 has direct access to the exterior from the bike room through the revised lobby and access from Building 5 is a short distance down a common corridor. With the exception of Building 8, all residential buildings have bicycle parking with convenient exterior access. As the project progresses through schematic design, we will aim to improve this aspect of Building 8 as well.

193. 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.

194. 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.

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

Response

We agree.

196. *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.

197. *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.

198. *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.

199. *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.

200. *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

201. *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.

202. *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.

Update

The MBTA bicycle parking has been moved into Building 7.

203. *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.

204. 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.

205. 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.

206. 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.

207. 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.

208. 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.

209. 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.

210. 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.

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

Response

Yes

212. *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.

Update

TDM Monitoring

1. Hire an onsite coordinator and TMA
2. Increase ongoing monitoring from 2 years to **5 years**
    - Will require 3 consecutive years of confirmation
3. Monitoring will start once all buildings have been constructed

213. *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.

214. *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.

215. *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.

Update

An expanded proposal defining how the MBTA traffic will be parsed out from the data has been submitted to the Planning Department and peer reviewer for review.

216. 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.

217. 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.

Update

See updated response to question #117. (If traffic specific to the development project is 110% or more of adjusted projections made in the TIA, funds up to **$1,000,000** for post construction mitigation would be available.)

218. 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.

219. 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 installed.

Update

See updated response to question #117.

220. 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.

221. 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.

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

Response

Peer Reviewer to respond.

223. 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 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.

224. 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.

225. 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.

226. 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.

227. 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.

228. 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.

229. 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.

230. 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.

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

Response

Peer Reviewer to respond.

232. 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.

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

Response

Currently, 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.

234. 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.

235. 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.

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

Response

The team is striving to provide at least one protected means of access along a majority of Grove Street in both directions.

237. 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. Regarding 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.

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

Response

Comment Noted.

Responses to Comments Related to Sustainability

239. 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 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.

240. 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.

241. *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 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.

242. *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.

Update

The proponent has committed to solar PV installation for 25% of common area load for the three Passive House Buildings.

243. Pursue negotiations with the T for using the parking garage roof for solar installation.

Response

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.

Update

The MBTA committed to soliciting proposals for a solar canopy over the garage. A memorandum to this effect from the MBTA has been submitted to the Council.

244. 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.

245. Reduce the amount of untreated stormwater runoff that will be directed without treatment to water bodies (e.g. 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.

246. 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.

247. *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.

248. *Suggests that Petitioner provide LEED checklist for review by Peer Reviewer*

Response

The petitioner has prepared LEED checklists and they will be submitted for review.

249. *Suggests roof of the garage should be a candidate for solar installation*

Response

This is something we are exploring; however, we do not own the garage and therefore the decision will ultimately be with the MBTA as to whether they would like to include solar panels. It is expected that regardless of the MBTA's decision to include solar at the time of initial construction, the garage will be designed and engineered to accommodate solar panels.

Update

The MBTA committed to soliciting proposals for a solar canopy over the garage. A memorandum to this effect from the MBTA has been submitted to the Council.

250. *Suggests MBTA consider allowing solar installations on its portion of the garage*

Response

See above.

251. *Peer Reviewer suggests petitioner consider implementing green infrastructure and Planning Department suggests revised plans showing type and location of this infrastructure*

Response

VHB has described more fully these proposed measures in the March 5th hearing and its most recent response to the peer reviewer.

252. Has the roof of the garage been considered for solar?

Response

Yes, we are discussing solar on the roof of the garage with the MBTA who will retain ownership of the entire garage once it is built.

Update

The MBTA committed to soliciting proposals for a solar canopy over the garage. A memorandum to this effect from the MBTA has been submitted to the Council.

Responses to Comments Related to Construction and Construction Management

253. What is the updated building permit fee for Riverside? Please include the cost of construction that the fee is based on.

Response

Based on current estimates, the petitioner anticipates a building permit fee of $3.5 - $4.0M. This calculation is based upon an assumption of $175M - $200M of construction costs.

Update

It should be noted that the ultimate fee is determined by the Inspectional Services Department. The proponent will submit actual costs from the GMP contract as part of the building permit application. Upon application for a Certificate of Occupancy, the proponent will submit a final cost affidavit reflecting any changes to the final cost from the original contract.

254. 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 enough 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.

255. 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.

256. Can the proponent construct the Two Bridges Trail?

Response

No, but the proponent is committed to funding the costs of the 100% design for improvements to the bridges and funding the construction of the access route on the northern approach.

257. 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 enough 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.

258. Has the NHC approved the demolition of the hotel?

Response

The demolition was approved by the NHC on 2/27/2020.

259. Peer Reviewer suggests additional soil testing in the exact locations of the proposed infiltration chambers.

Response

Additional soil testing has been completed in the exact location of the infiltration chambers to confirm infiltration and permeability rates.

260. Planning Department suggests the Release Abatement Measure Plan be included in the revised construction management plan.

Response

The RAM plan will be filed shortly before the start of construction. The MCP requires response actions outlined in the RAM plan to be initiated within one year of filing the RAM [310 CMR 40.0443(5)].

The Release Abatement Measures (RAM) Plan is a document prepared in according with the MCP [310 CMR 0.0440] outlining the additional response actions supporting redevelopment at the site associated with RTN 3-10565 which has achieved a Permanent Solution. The RAM plan will be filed with DEP prior to the start of construction once the design has been completed. As part of preparing the RAM plan an evaluation per 310 CMR 40.0442(3) will be completed to ensure that the new structures would not prevent or impede the implementation of other potential future response actions which will include a site assessment, risk characterization and feasibility evaluation.

261. Do you have a solid waste master plan?

Response

A solid waste master plan was included in the special permit filing. It has been updated for the revised plans and is attached.

Responses to Comments Related to Mitigation

262. *Here the petitioner is offering $500K in subsidies for transit but it ends; I don't want it to end. I don't think we can assume people will take the Green Line. The petitioner has offered $750K related to ideas of what the petitioner would do if certain traffic mitigation is not met. I think we should see what they propose up front.*

Response

The petitioner is not willing to have an open-ended financial commitment. If there is an interest in spreading out payments over time, versus a lump sum payment, that is something that we are more than willing to discuss. In terms of the $750K, the petitioner has proposed using these funds for further public transit subsidy or a shuttle service to the Commuter Rail.

Update

See updated response to question #117.

263. *Can the petitioner construct all commitments rather than providing design funds for bike and pedestrian improvements?*

Response

The petitioner has committed to fund all improvements which are either in its sole control or can be approved as part of the City Council process. The petitioner will use best efforts to construct the Charles River Park Improvements but has come to an agreement with the Greenway Trails Group that if not, these funds will be made available.

264. *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.

Responses to Comments on Miscellaneous Matters

265. *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.

266. *Petitioner should appear before the Fair Housing Committee and reappear before UDC and the Commission on Disability.*

Response

The proponent reappeared before UDC on 3/11/2020 and will be going back to the UDC to review Design Guidelines and signage on 4/15/2020. The proponent is also scheduled to meet with Fair Housing Committee on April 1st. The proponent will schedule a follow-up meeting with the Commission on Disability once the Proponent and the MBTA have agreed on an accessible design for the station entrance.

Update

The entrance to the MBTA station will include elevators and an accessible ramp.

267. *Last sentence of Planning memo, there is a word missing. It should read: "The Planning Department finds the Project to comply with this criterion".*

Response

Response not required.

268. *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.