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PUBLIC HEARING MEMORANDUM

Public Hearing Date: June 25, 2019
Land Use Action Date: September 10, 2019
City Council Action Date: September 16, 2019
90-Day Expiration Date: September 24, 2019

DATE: June 21, 2019

TO: City Council

FROM: Barney S. Heath, Director of Planning and Development
Jennifer Caira, Chief Planner for Current Planning
Neil Cronin, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Petition #140-19 for a change of zone to Mixed Use 3/Transit Oriented District for portions of land located at 355 Grove Street (currently zoned BU-2) and 399 Grove Street (currently zoned BU-5), also identified as Section 42, Block 11, Lots 3 and 4

Petition #140-19(2) for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to construct a 10 building, mixed use, transit-oriented development of not more than 1,520,000 sq. ft. and more than 20,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area including; up to 650,000 sq. ft. of office use, up to 750 residential units containing no more than 750,000 sq. ft., retail space of not more than 200,000 sq. ft., buildings up to 18 stories in height, building height of up to 230 feet, Floor Area Ratio up to 2.7, no more than 10% beneficial open space; to permit retail and personal establishments of more than 5,000 sq. ft., for-profit educational uses, restaurants with more than 50 seats, places of amusement, open air businesses, animal services, ground floor health club establishments, hotel, banks up to and over 5,000 square feet, theatre/hall, laboratory/research facility, multi-level accessory parking facility, multi-level non-accessory parking facility, single level accessory parking facility, single level non-accessory parking facility, reduction of the residential parking requirement to 1.25 stalls per unit, reduction of the overall commercial parking requirement by 1/3, a waiver of parking stalls not to exceed 750 stalls, waivers to parking facility design standards including: waiver of off-street loading facilities requirements, waiver of the number, size location or design requirements relative to signs at 355 and 399 GROVE STREET on land known as Section 42 Block 11 Lots 3 and 4, containing approximately 14.4 acres of land in a districts zoned Mixed Use 3 Transit Oriented (MU3), BU2 (a portion to be rezoned to MU3), BU5 (to be rezoned to MU3). Ref: Sec. 7.3.3, 7.4, 4.2.2A.2, 4.2.2.B.1, 4.2.2.B.3, 4.2.2.B.3, 4.2.3, 4.2.4.A, 4.2.4.F.b, 4.2.4.F.1.b, 4.2.4.G, 4.2.4.G.1, 4.2.4.G.2, 4.2.4.G.3, 4.4.1, 5.1.4, 5.1.4.A, 5.1.4.C, 5.1.8.B.1, 5.1.8.B.2, 5.1.8.B.4, 5.1.8.B.6, 5.1.8.D.1, 5.1.8.D.2, 5.1.8.E.1, 5.1.9.B, 5.1.9.B.1, 5.1.9.B.2, 5.1.9.B.3, 5.1.9.B.4, 5.1.10.A.1, 5.1.10.B.3, 5.1.10.B.5, 5.1.12, 5.1.13, 5.2, 5.2.13, 5.4.2.B, of the City of Newton Revised Zoning Ord, 2017. Subject to approval of proposed zoning ordinance amendments in Sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

CC: Planning Board

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council and the public with technical information and planning analysis conducted by the Planning Department. The Planning Department's intention is to provide a balanced review of the proposed project based on information it has at the time of the public hearing. Additional information about the project may be presented at or after the public hearing that the Land Use Committee of the City Council can consider at a subsequent working session.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The subject property consists of two parcels of land located at 355 and 399 Grove Street. 355 Grove Street is the terminus of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (the "MBTA") Green Line D Branch ("Riverside"), encompassing 22 acres. This parcel is partially located within the Mixed Use 3/Transit Oriented Development (the "MU-3/TOD") zone and partially within the Business Use 5 district (the "BU-5") zone. 399 Grove Street is improved with a six-story hotel use, totaling 121,700 square feet of land and is located entirely within the BU-5 zone.

The petitioners are proposing to construct a ten-building mixed use development incorporating 675 dwelling units, 611,437 gross square feet of office space, 103,852 square feet of hotel space (194 rooms), and 64,655 square feet of retail, personal service, and restaurant space (together, the "Project"). The Project includes 2,922 parking stalls, both structured and on-street, a new exit ramp from Interstate 95 ("I-95"), three new traffic signals, and other site improvements. To construct the Project, the petitioners are seeking to: rezone a portion of 355 Grove Street and all of 399 Grove Street from the BU-5 zone to the MU-3/TOD zone; amend certain dimensional standards of the MU-3/TOD zone; and obtain a special permit.

Riverside remains an important site for the City due to its access to the MBTA Green Line, to I-95 and to Interstate 90 and due to its potential to connect the villages of Lower Falls and Auburndale. The Project will transform the site's relationships to Lower Falls, I-95, Grove Street, and to Auburndale. These relationships are measured by, among other things, physical presence, by vehicle trips, and by increased density and they must be reviewed with consideration of City-produced reports and strategies such as the Riverside Vision, the *Comprehensive Plan*, the Housing, Transportation, and Economic Development Strategies, and the Climate Action Plan. The Planning Department will be tasking a team of peer-reviewers to review the Project and the associated reports to ensure a comprehensive and cohesive review. The Planning Department will prepare memoranda in advance of future public hearings analyzing certain aspects of the Project, with the help of specialized peer reviewers.

I. BACKGROUND

In 2009, the MBTA issued a Request for Proposals to develop the Riverside site in the form of an 88-year lease. BH Normandy Riverside LLC ("Normandy") was selected as the winning bidder and secured a lease for Riverside. In 2012, the City Council approved the MU-3/TOD text amendment to the Newton Zoning Ordinance (the "Ordinance") to "encourage

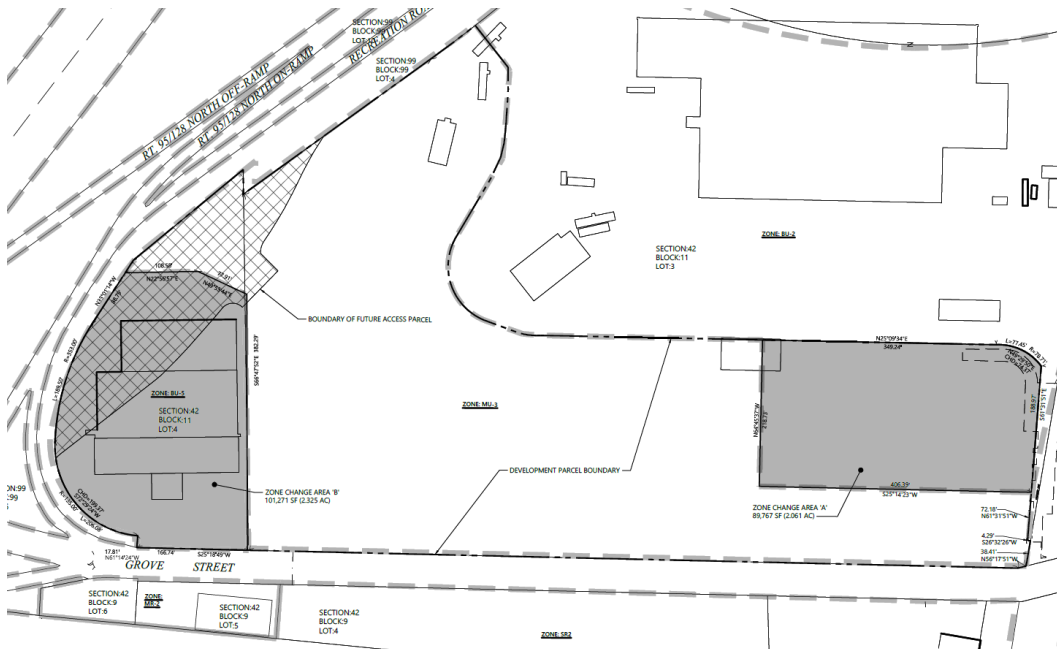
comprehensive design within the site and its surroundings, integrate complementary uses, provide enhancements to public infrastructure, provide beneficial open spaces, protect neighborhoods from impacts of development, allow sufficient density to make development economically feasible, foster use of alternative modes of transportation, and create a vibrant destination where people can live, work, and play.”

In 2013, Normandy obtained a special permit and a change of zone from the then Board of Aldermen to construct a mixed use development consisting of three buildings containing 290 dwelling units, 225,000 square feet of office space, 20,000 square feet of retail space, and an 8,000 square foot community center. However, Riverside was never developed.

II. REZONING REQUEST

The current request incorporates two parcels that were not part of the first special permit petition and were therefore not rezoned. The first parcel is 399 Grove Street that consists of 101,271 square feet of land in the BU-5 zone. The parcel is improved with a six-story hotel use and an associated surface parking facility. The second parcel is an 89,767 square foot portion of 355 Grove Street, currently zoned BU-5. This parcel was intended for the MBTA’s mobility hub and was therefore was exempt from zoning. This parcel is currently a drive aisle for pick-up and drop-off associated with the transit station. The petitioner seeks to rezone these parcels to the MU-3/TOD zone to incorporate them into the Project.

Zone Change Plan



III. ZONING AMENDMENT REQUEST

In addition to requesting a change of zone, the petitioners are also seeking to amend certain dimensional standards of the MU-3/TOD zone to allow the Project. The MU-3/TOD zone was drafted with attention to a mixed use development that had been presented by Normandy. As such, the text states the maximum square footage of each use allowed on site i.e. residential, office, and retail. Increases in each use are allowable, up to ten percent, via a special permit. However, in no case may the size of the development exceed 580,000 square feet. Among the amendments, the petitioners are seeking the following:

- Increase in the development size from 580,000 square feet to 1,520,000 square feet;
- Increase in the number of dwelling units from 290 to 675 dwelling units;
- Increase in the maximum number of stories to 18 stories;
- Increase in the maximum building height from 135 feet to 230 feet; and
- Adjust the setback requirements from Grove Street and from I-95.

For a complete list of the amendments sought to the MU-3/TOD zone and for a complete analysis of this petition concerning zoning, please see the Zoning Review Memorandum, dated March 28, 2019 (**Attachment A**).

Given the importance of Riverside to several City goals, the Planning Department, with the help of residents and stakeholders, participated in a visioning process that resulted in the Riverside Vision (the "Vision"). The Vision includes a number of principles to guide the City Council's review of the Project. The principles are grouped under five topics identified as *Community Connections, Housing, Sustainability, Design, Economic Impact, and Transportation*. Subsequent memos will include an analysis of how the Project compares with each topic of the Vision. The Vision can be found at the below link:

http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/current/riverside_vision_plan.asp

IV. SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- The site is an appropriate location for the proposed mixed-use development (§7.3.3.1).
- The mixed use development as developed will not adversely affect the neighborhood (§7.3.3.2).
- There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians (§7.3.3.3).
- Access to the site is appropriate for the types and numbers of vehicles involved (§7.3.3.4).
- The site planning, building design, construction, maintenance and/or long-term

- operation of the premises will contribute significantly to the efficient use and conservation of natural resources and energy (§7.3.3.5).
- Literal compliance with the parking requirements of the Newton Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance) is impracticable due to the nature of the use, or the location, size, width, depth, shape, or grade of the lot, or that such exceptions would be in the public interest or in the interest of safety or protection of environmental features. (§5.1.13.)

As stated above, the administrative determinations and the relief requested by this petition assume that the entire site is zoned MU-3/TOD. The MU-3/TOD zone requires criteria above and beyond the special permit criteria above, additionally, the Council should consider whether:

- The proposal is not inconsistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* (§7.3.5.B.1).
- The mixed-use development offers long-term public benefits to the City and nearby areas including:
 - a. improved access and enhancements to public transportation.
 - b. improvements to parking, traffic, and roadways.
 - c. on- and off-site improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, particularly as they facilitate access to the site by foot or by bicycle.
 - d. public safety improvements.
 - e. on-site affordable housing opportunities.
 - f. water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure improvements that increase capacity and lower impacts on the surroundings.

- (§7.3.5.B.2)
- The proposed mixed-use development has a positive fiscal impact on the City after accounting for all new tax revenue and expenses related to, but not limited to, school capacity, public safety services, and public infrastructure maintenance (§7.3.5.B.3).
 - Pedestrian and vehicular access routes and driveway widths are appropriately designed between the proposed mixed-use development and abutting parcels and streets, with consideration given to streetscape continuity and an intent to avoid adverse impacts on nearby neighborhoods from such traffic and other activities generated by the mixed-use development, as well as to improve traffic and access in nearby neighborhoods (§7.3.5.B.4).
 - Appropriate setbacks, buffering, and screening are provided from nearby residential properties and the quality and access of beneficial open space and on-site recreation opportunities is appropriate for the number of residents, employees, and customers of the proposed mixed-use development; and meaningful bicycle and pedestrian connections to open spaces, recreational areas, trails, and natural resources, including the banks of the Charles River and adjacent public property, whether or not currently available for public use, are provided and take full advantage of the unique

- opportunities of the site and its nearby natural features for use and enjoyment by the community at large (§7.3.5.B.5).
- The proposed mixed-use development provides high quality architectural design and site planning that enhances the visual and civic quality of the site and overall experience for residents of and visitors to both the mixed-use development and its surroundings (§7.3.5.B.6).
 - Proposed signage is in keeping with the scale and needs for wayfinding in and around the site and is complementary to the architectural quality of the mixed-use development and the character of the streetscape (§7.3.5.B.7).
 - The proposed mixed-use development provides building footprints and articulations scaled to encourage outdoor pedestrian circulation; features buildings with appropriately-spaced street-level windows and entrances; includes appropriate crossings at all driveway entrances and internal roadways; and allows pedestrian access appropriately placed to encourage walking to and through the development parcel (§7.3.5.B.8).
 - The proposed mixed-use development creates public spaces as pedestrian-oriented destinations that accommodate a variety of uses, promote a vibrant street life, make connections to the surrounding neighborhood, as well as to the commercial and residential components of the mixed-use development, to other commercial activity and to each other (§7.3.5.B.9).
 - Whether the proposed mixed use development at least meets the energy and sustainability provisions of §7.3.3.5 regarding development in excess of 20,000 square feet (§7.3.5.B.10).
 - Parking for the site is appropriate to the intensity of development, types of uses, hours of operation, availability of alternative modes of travel and the encouragement of alternative transportation modes without over-supplying parking (§7.3.5.B.11).
 - Suitable mitigation measures have been included to eliminate negative impacts on surrounding neighborhoods with the installation of a traffic signal, roundabouts, and other alternations to the roadway (§7.3.5.B.12).
 - Consideration has been given to accessibility, adaptability, visitability, and universal design in development of the site plan (§7.3.5.B.13).

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

A. Neighborhood and Zoning

The subject property is located on Grove Street in Auburndale. Immediately south is a Public Use district, while to the southwest lies a Single Residence 3 district. To the north lies a Business Use 4 zone and to the northeast lies a Multi-Residence 2 zone. Lastly to the southeast is a Single Residence 2 zone, containing a golf course

(Attachment B). This diversity of zones includes a commercial park to the north, while farther north and to the east lies single- and multi-family uses that comprise the village of Auburndale. To the southwest lies the Village of Lower Falls, predominantly comprised of single-family uses **(Attachment C)**.

B. Site

The site is improved with a 958-stall surface parking facility and several small structures accessory to the transit station, as well as a six-story hotel use with an accessory parking facility. The site is generally flat in the interior, but portions of the southeastern boundary lie above the grade of Grove Street. Additionally, at the northwestern portion of the site, the slope drops down towards the banks of the Charles River.

VI. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

A. Land Use

In order to ensure a vital mix of complementary uses that create a place in accordance with the purpose statement of the MU3/TOD zone, the Ordinance requires that the development have a community space and at least one use from each of the following three categories listed below.

- Category A: Office
- Category B: Retail, personal services, restaurants, banking services, health clubs, places of assembly, and lodging; and
- Category C: Multifamily, live/work space, home businesses, single-room occupancy dwellings, single-person occupancy dwellings, assisted living, and nursing homes.

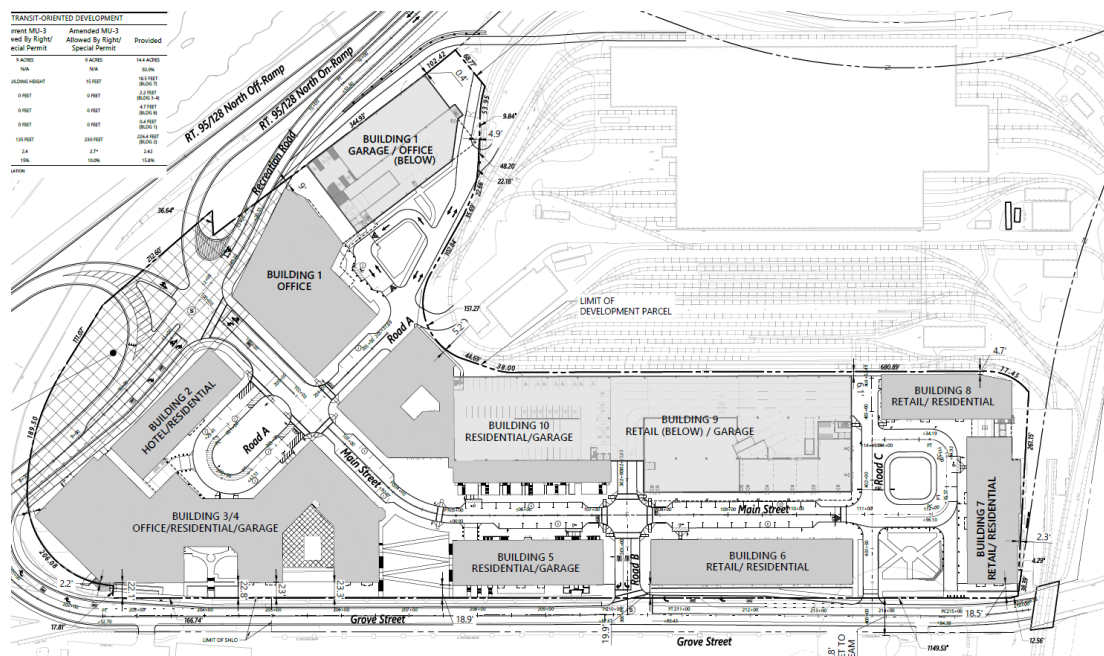
Category B includes a range of services that support residential and office uses, while Category C is a variety of residential uses.

The principal use of the site would be, pursuant to a change of zone, the text amendments, and a special permit, a ten-building mixed use development incorporating 675 dwelling units, 611,437 gross square feet of office space, 103,852 square feet of hotel space (194 rooms), and 64,655 square feet retail, personal service, restaurants space, and other space. The petitioners are not currently proposing any community space.

B. Site Design

The petitioners propose to create a general south-north path of travel through the site beginning with a new exit ramp from I-95 northbound. The exit ramp would terminate at the approximate location of the current hotel use at 399 Grove Street at a new traffic signal. Shortly after entering the development, driveways at the western and eastern boundaries of a new road ("Main Street") would provide access to a garage associated with the office building, and to the hotel and residential building, respectively. Farther north, a western driveway provides access to a structured parking garage, containing dedicated stalls for commuters and stalls for residents, employees, and patrons. The existing driveway to the east with access to Grove Street is maintained, with a new signal at the intersection of the site driveway and Grove Street. Main Street terminates at the transit station at a large area referred to as the "transit plaza". Throughout its length, Main Street would be flanked on the east and west sides by buildings of varying heights, by open spaces, and by on-street parallel parking stalls. Buildings 6 through 10 contain ground floor commercial uses with dwelling units above.

Proposed Site Plan



The Planning Department will be tasking a peer reviewer to analyze the site design and to provide recommendations. In particular, staff is interested in how the buildings related to Grove Street and I-95 and how the entrance to the MBTA Green Line is treated.

C. Building Design

The structures contain a range of stories due to the topography of the site, due to the intended uses within the structures, and to the structures’ locations within the site. At the southern and southwestern portions of the site, closest to Interstate 95, the petitioners propose to construct two high-rise structures of 18 and 14 stories containing office space as well as hotel and residential space, respectively. Traveling north, the buildings in the middle of the site contain a range of six to eight stories, while the structures at the easternmost portion of the site contain six to seven stories.

Table I: Building Descriptions

Building Number	Height (Feet)	Number of Stories	Use	Dwelling Units
1	217	14	Office	N/A
*	101.5	8	Parking Garage	N/A
2	226.4	18	Hotel/Residential	57
3/4	121.2	8	Residential	140
5	63.9	6	Residential	56
6	78.6	6	**G.F. Commercial/Residential	89
7	78.3	6	G.F. Commercial/Residential	62
8	87.7	7	G.F. Commercial/Residential	95
9/10***	95.8	8	G.F. Commercial/Parking Garage/Residential	176

* Building 1 is associated with a detached parking garage

**G.F. is ground floor commercial space

*** Buildings 9 and 10 are considered one building. Building 9 contains ground floor commercial space and structured parking, while Building 10 contains dwelling units and structured parking.

As stated above, the petitioners are proposing to amend certain dimensional standards of the MU-3/TOD zone pertaining to building height, number of stories, floor area ratio (“FAR”), and setbacks from Grove Street to allow the Project. These amendments are currently under consideration by the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council.

The architecture of the buildings has not been fully developed. Given the scale of the project and that construction will be phased, the petitioners submitted design guidelines that seek to break the Project’s urban design down into essential elements such as streets, primary and secondary frontages, façades, materials, and styles. Should this petition be approved, the principles stated in the design guidelines will be incorporated into the Council Order to guide the design of the buildings. Creating

design guidelines will provide predictability for the community and flexibility for the designers over time. The Planning Department will be tasking a peer reviewer, specializing in urban design, to review the project and the petitioners' design guidelines for the Council Order.

D. Circulation

As stated above, the petitioners are proposing to create a new entrance to the site via a new exit ramp from I-95 northbound. The exit ramp would terminate at the current location of the hotel use at 399 Grove Street at a new traffic signal. The intersection would allow vehicles to continue straight (north) into the development, or to turn left (west) onto Recreation Road. For vehicles traveling to Auburndale or to Lower Falls, an exit from the off ramp, before reaching the new signal, would be created and would terminate at a different new traffic signal at the intersection of Grove Street and the bridge over I-95. From there, vehicles would turn left (north) to proceed onto Grove Street, while turning right (south) would provide access to Lower Falls. Grove Street will remain a two-lane street, but vehicles traveling northbound on Grove Street will be prohibited from taking a left turn into the site.

The Planning Department will be tasking the Site Design and Transportation peer reviewers to analyze the circulation for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. These reviews will cover both internal circulation and off-site connections.

E. Traffic

The petitioners submitted a Traffic Impact and Access Study (the "TIAS") to model the number of trips generated by the Project. The TIAS indicates that the site currently generates 465 trips during weekday morning peak hour and generates 470 trips during the weekday evening peak hour. Using the Institute of Transportation Engineers ("ITE") handbook, the analysis assumes total new trip ("Total New Trips") generation numbers for the peak weekday morning and evening based on the number of dwellings units, and the square footages of the different commercial uses. The TIAS then implements different methods of trip generation such as pass-by trips, internal capture trips, and methods of travel to "adjust" the Total New Trips. Inherent in this adjustment is that the mixed use nature of the site will allow uses to share trips, i.e. an office employee may take the green line to the site or a resident may shop at a retail use. The chart below summarizes the trips generated by the Project.

Table II: Trip Summary

	Existing Trips	Total New Trips	Adjusted New Trips
Peak Weekday Morning	465	962	749
Peak Weekday Evening	470	1,258	830

The Planning Department will be tasking a peer reviewer to review the petitioners' TIAS, including the assumptions used to calculate the Total New Trips and the Adjusted New Trips figures. The peer reviewer will also examine proposed mitigation measures, including the new exit ramp, the proposed traffic signals, and all off-site measures too. The Planning Department suggests that the petitioners be prepared to detail the change to the Saturday afternoon peak after full buildout due to the change in use from a commuter lot to a mixed use deployment.

F. Parking

The petitioners are proposing to construct 2,922 parking stalls within the development. 958 of these stalls will be dedicated to commuters using the transit station and will be located within Building 9/10. The remaining 1,966 parking stalls will be available to residents, employees, and patrons. Most of these stalls will be in structures dispersed throughout the Project, but 56 stalls will be on-street, parallel stalls lining both sides of Main street.

The MU-3/TOD zone requires that the petitioner submit a shared parking analysis to illustrate that the site has enough parking to support the different uses on site, considering that each use category has a peak parking demand. In turn, these different uses are peaking at different times throughout the day, and the site is well used by commuters. Lastly, the site is used heavily during events in Boston, such as Red Sox games.

The petitioner's analysis uses data from the Urban Land Institute's *Shared Parking Manual* to estimate the parking demand in mixed use developments. Using this tool, the petitioner's analysis indicates that the site's peak parking demand occurs at 2:00 p.m. on a weekday with a total demand of 2,719 stalls, resulting in a surplus of 200 stalls on site.

The shared parking analysis is critical to harnessing the mix of uses to create a development that promotes transit and relies less on vehicles and parking; therefore, sharing parking stalls is paramount to the Project's ability to be a true Transit Oriented Development ("TOD"). The peer reviewer will analyze the shared parking analysis along with the petitioners' TIAS with attention to TOD principles to ensure that the site, as designed, has the capacity to accommodate the number of trips generated, the number of parking stalls required throughout the day, and aligns with TOD principles.

G. Affordable and Fair Housing Policy

The petitioners submitted a Preliminary Inclusionary Housing Plan detailing the overall unit mix and the units that will be designated as inclusionary units. The

Ordinance requires 15% of all units in the project to be inclusionary units at an average rate of 65% of the Area Median Income (“AMI”). This Project is required to provide 94 inclusionary units. This Project is unique in that for-sale and for-rent units will be created in the project and inclusionary units will be created for both types of ownership. The Planning Department will be working with a peer reviewer to ensure that the units are not only evenly dispersed between the floors within a building, but also evenly dispersed throughout the site. Please see below for the overall unit mix as well as the number and the type of inclusionary units to be included with in the Project.

Table III: Unit Summary

For Rent:			
Unit Type	Total Count	Amount at 50% AMI	Amount at 80% AMI
Studio	57	4	4
One-Bedroom	350	27	26
Two-Bedroom	189	14	14
Three-Bedroom	22	2	3
Total	618	47	47
For Sale			
Unit Type	Total Count	Amount at 50%	Amount at 80%
One-Bedroom	32	3	2
Two-Bedroom	25	1	2
Total	57	4	4

H. Fiscal Impact

The petitioners submitted a fiscal impact analysis that models the net annual revenues to the City after full buildout. The report provides two scenarios that use two different methods to predict the number of school-aged children (“SAC”) who may reside in the development because the SAC is likely to be the largest annual cost to the City. Scenario A is based on the Newton Public Schools’ Method 1 that predicts the SAC by weighing the unit types in a development, while Scenario B is based on Method 3 of the Newton Public Schools’ which also weighs the different unit types, but provides a greater weight for two-bedroom units. The report suggests that Scenario A would provide the City with \$2.9 million annually, while Scenario B would

provide the City with \$3.9 million annually.

The Planning Department will be tasking peer reviewer to analyze the petitioners' fiscal impact analysis which will include a market analysis, to determine whether the proposed mix of uses within the project is appropriate, given the market, along with the net fiscal benefit to the City.

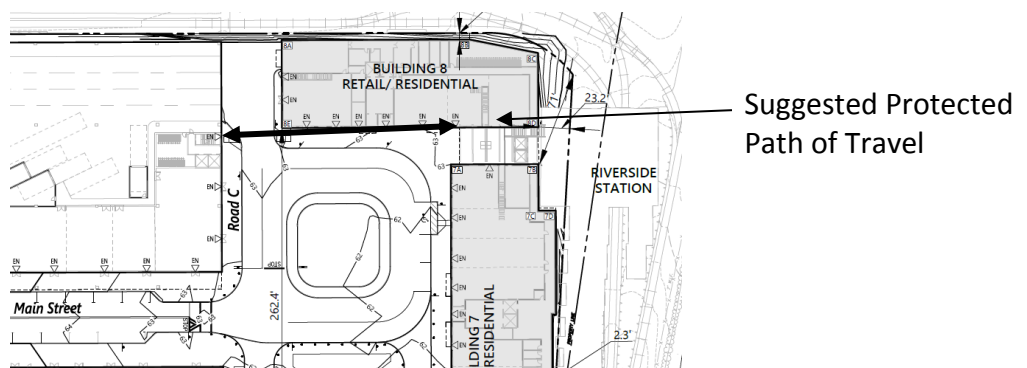
I. Open Space and Landscaping

The MU-3/TOD zone requires that 15% of the site be Beneficial Open Space that is defined as areas that are not covered by buildings that are available for active or passive recreation. Additionally, the MU-3/TOD zone requires that 50% of the Beneficial Open Space be open to the public, to which the petitioners state 100% is open to the public.

The Beneficial Open Space plan includes street trees along Main street, a large lawn area at the southwestern portion of the site near the hotel, an amphitheater, a transit square as well as a transit green, and other defined areas throughout the development. Rather than larger open areas, the petitioners are seeking to create defined, well programmed open spaces to encourage interaction. The Planning Department understands the petitioners' vision but suggests that the petitioners provide examples of the types of programming or examples of management structures in similar developments that in charge of programming. The Planning Department will also be tasking a peer reviewer to examine the amount and type of Beneficial Open Space in accordance with the Riverside Vision and TOD principles.

J. Accessibility

The Project is required to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board ("MAAB") regulations. As such, all units will be accessible and visitable to those with disabilities and a certain percentage of the total units will be fully accessible. The petitioners appeared before the City's Commission on Disability (the "Commission") on May 27th to discuss the Project and the Commission suggested that the petitioners consider installing accessible ramps to the transit station, and that a protected path of travel from Building 9/10 to the transit station be provided along Building 8. The petitioners plan to appear before the Commission again.



K. Sustainability and Conservation of Natural Resources

The Project will trigger the fifth special permit criteria that requires that the *“site planning, building design, construction, maintenance or long-term operation of the premises will contribute significantly to the efficient use and conservation of natural resources and energy”*. The petitioner provided a summary that outlines the strategies to be used in designing and constructing the Project, but the summary does not state specific certifications or goals for the Project. The petitioners should provide specific benchmarks for the project and for the individual buildings as the design is further refined.

L. Project Phasing and Construction Management

The petitioners submitted a construction phasing plan in accordance with the MU-3/TOD zone criterion. The Plan indicates that the Project will be constructed from the north to the south and that construction will be completed in five years. Should this project be approved, a Construction Management Plan (CMP) will be required prior to the issuance of any building permits and will be reviewed by the Commissioners of Inspectional Services, the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Planning and Development.

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH CITY PLANS, STRATEGIES, AND GOALS

The Planning Department will be tasking the peer reviewers to analyze certain aspects of the Project not only for alignment with the Riverside Vision but also for alignment with City-wide goals. The peer reviewers will be drawing from the *Comprehensive Plan*, the Housing and Transportation Strategies, the Economic Development Strategy, and the Climate Action Plan. Each memorandum will include analysis from the Planning Department and from the peer reviewer regarding how the Project aligns with or fails to align with each of the above plans.

VIII. TECHNICAL REVIEW

A. Technical Considerations (Chapter 30, Newton Zoning Ordinance)

The Zoning Review Memorandum provides an analysis of the proposal regarding zoning.

B. Engineering Review

The Engineering Division of Public Works has met with the petitioners regarding utilities and stormwater. Associate City Engineer, John Daghljan, will provide a memorandum under separate cover at a later date.

C. Newton Historical Commission Review

The petitioners are proposing to raze the hotel use which is greater than fifty years old and is therefore subject to the City's Demolition Review Ordinance. As such, the petitioners are required to apply to the Newton Historical Commission to obtain approval to raze the hotel.

D. Fire Department Review

The petitioner met with the City of Newton Fire Department to review the plans. It is expected that all structures will be equipped with a fire suppression system. The Fire Department will review the plans again prior to the issuance of any building permits, should this project be approved.

E. Urban Design Commission

The petitioner appeared before the Urban Design Commission (the "UDC") on May 20, 2019 to review the Project (**Attachment D**). The petitioners will appear before the UDC again to discuss the submitted design guidelines, and to review the additional elevations/views suggested by the Riverside Vision such as ground level perspectives from Grove Street and from Lower Falls.

IX. PETITIONER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The petitioner should respond to the issues raised in this memorandum and other questions raised at the public hearing as necessary. Written responses to all significant issues should be provided for analysis by the Planning Department prior to being scheduled for additional public hearings. The Planning Department will prepare an updated memo prior to any future public hearings.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A:** Zoning Review Memorandum, dated March 28, 2019
Attachment B: Zoning Map
Attachment C: Land Use Map
Attachment D: Urban Design Commission Memorandum, dated June 20, 2019



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

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Barney S. Heath
Director

ZONING REVIEW MEMORANDUM

Date: March 28, 2019

To: John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services

From: Jane Santosuosso, Chief Zoning Code Official
Jennifer Caira, Chief Planner for Current Planning

Cc: Stephen J Buchbinder, Attorney
BH Normandy Riverside LLC, Applicant
Barney S. Heath, Director of Planning and Development
Jonah Temple, City Solicitor

RE: Request to amend sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 of the NZO, rezone 4.5 acres to MU3 to construct a mixed-use development consisting of 675 residential units, mixed commercial, parking and public open space.

Applicants: BH Normandy Riverside LLC	
Site: 355 and 399 Grove Street	SBL: 42011 0004 and 42011 0003
Zoning: MU3	Lot Area: 14.4 acres
Current use: Hotel and MBTA site	Proposed use: Mixed use with commercial, residential, parking and public open space

BACKGROUND:

The development site known as "Riverside" is comprised of land on two lots: 355 Grove Street and 399 Grove Street. 355 Grove Street is an approximately 22-acre lot owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and is the current site of the Riverside T station. 399 Grove Street is a 121,700 square foot parcel in the BU-5 and MU3 zoning districts and is the current site of the Hotel Indigo. The development parcel would encompass a portion of the 355 Grove Street parcel and 399 Grove Street, a total of 14.4 acres.

The MBTA Board of Directors authorized an 88-year lease of a 9.4 acre portion of 355 Grove Street to BH Normandy Riverside LLC ("Normandy") in 2009. In 2013, the then Board of Aldermen granted Normandy a special permit to construct a mixed use development on that site consisting of office space, residential, retail and community space. A portion of the MBTA parcel was rezoned from Public Use to MU3 in connection with the 2013 special permit. A portion of the Hotel Indigo parcel at 399 Grove street was also rezoned to MU3 at that time. The remainder of the Hotel Indigo parcel is

currently zoned BU5, and the remaining portion of the MBTA parcel is zoned BU2. The petitioners propose a rezoning of the balance of the 399 Grove Street parcel and an additional portion of the MBTA parcel to MU3. For the purposes of this memo, the MU3 provisions will be applied.

The Petitioners are proposing to construct a ten-building mixed use development incorporating 675 residential units and 611,437 square feet of office space, 64,655 square feet of retail, personal service and restaurants, and a hotel with up to 225 keys (i.e. sleeping rooms). The proposal includes 2924 on-site parking stalls within garages and surface parking, as well as accommodations for bicycles. The petitioners intend to construct this project by seeking a zone change for the remaining portion of 399 Grove Street, and another portion of the MBTA site not previously rezoned by the last special permit. The new development parcel incorporates that land and the land previously changed to MU3, for a total of 14.4 acres.

The following review is based on plans and materials submitted to date as noted below.

- Zoning Review Application, prepared by Stephen J. Buchbinder, attorney, dated 1/9/2019
- Project Narrative, submitted 1/9/2019, revised 3/18/2019, 3/20/2019
- List of Required Special Permit Relief and Proposed Waivers, submitted 1/9/2019, revised 3/18/2019, 3/20/2019
- Parking Calculation, submitted 1/9/2019, revised 3/18/2019, 3/20/2019
- Site Plans, prepared by VHB, engineer; David M. Schwarz Architects; Speck and Associates, LLC, urban designer, dated 1/9/2019

ADMINISTRATIVE DETERMINATIONS:

1. A portion of the MBTA parcel was rezoned from Public Use to MU3 in connection with the 2013 special permit. A portion of the Hotel Indigo parcel at 399 Grove street was also rezoned to MU3 at that time. The remainder of the Hotel Indigo parcel is currently zoned BU5, and the remaining portion of the MBTA parcel is zoned BU2. The petitioners propose a rezoning of the balance of the 399 Grove Street parcel and an additional portion of the MBTA parcel to MU3. For the purposes of this memo, the MU3 provisions will be applied.

2. As proposed, the project does not meet the current requirements for the MU3 zoning district. The petitioners seek the following amendments to section 4.2:
 - Section 4.2.2.A.2 – decrease the lot area per unit requirements from 1,200 square feet to 850 square feet;
 - Section 4.2.4.F.b – add or replace language to include “place of amusement, indoor or outdoor”;
 - Section 4.2.4.G – increase the maximum development size from 580,000 square feet to 1,520,000 square feet, which includes 51,600 square feet of unoccupied mechanical space, but excludes parking structures;
 - Section 4.2.4.G – add language to include non-accessory parking from uses excluded from the total gross floor area;
 - Section 4.2.4.G.1 – increase the maximum square footage for Category A uses (office) from 225,000 square feet to 650,000 square feet;
 - Section 4.2.4.G.2 – increase the maximum square footage for Category B uses (retail and personal service, restaurants, entertainment, hotel etc) from 20,000 square feet to 200,000 square feet;
 - Section 4.2.4.G.3 – increase the maximum square footage for Category C uses (residential) from 335,000 square feet to 750,000 square feet and increase the maximum number of dwelling units from 290 to 675.
 - Section 4.2.3 – exclude parking structures from the FAR requirements;
 - Section 4.2.3 – increase the maximum FAR from 2.4 to 2.7 (excluding parking structures);
 - Section 4.2.4.A – eliminate the ½ building height front, side and rear yard setback requirements; and establish a 15-foot setback requirement (excluding balconies) along Grove Street;
 - Section 4.2.3 – Increase the maximum building height allowed by special permit from 135 feet to 230 feet;
 - Section 4.2.3 and 4.2.2.B.3 – increase the allowed maximum number of stories to 4 from 18;
 - Section 4.2.3 – decrease the minimum required beneficial open space from 15% to 10%;
 - Section 4.2.4.F.1.b – amend the allowable uses for Category B to include “animal services”;
 - Section 4.4.1 – amend the Allowable Uses table to allow “animal service” in the MU3 district by right or by special permit;
 - Section 4.4.1 – amend the Allowable Uses table to allow “Parking facility, accessory, single-level” in the MU3 district by right or by special permit
 - Section 4.4.1 – amend the Allowable Uses table to allow “Parking facility, accessory, multi-level” in the MU3 district by right or by special permit

- Section 4.4.1 – amend the Allowable Uses table to permit “Parking facility, non-accessory, single-level” in the MU3 zoning district by right or by special permit
 - Section 4.4.1 – amend the Allowable Uses table to permit “Parking facility, non-accessory, multi-level” in the MU3 zoning district by right or by special permit
3. The petitioners are proposing approximately 2,519,460 square feet of gross floor area (including parking garages) within ten proposed structures. Section 4.2.2.B.1 requires a special permit for any development in a mixed use district of 20,000 square feet or more of gross floor area.
 4. The petitioners propose to amend section 4.2.2.A.2 to allow a minimum lot area per unit of 850 square feet. The project proposes 675 dwelling units on the 14.4 acre parcel, creating a lot area per unit of 929 square feet, which meets the proposed zoning.
 5. The ten proposed buildings range in height from 63.6 feet to a maximum of 226.4 feet. The petitioners propose an amendment to section 4.2.3 to allow the maximum height by special permit to be increased from 135 feet to 230 feet. All ten of the proposed buildings require a special permit per section 4.2.3.
 6. The existing zoning regulations regarding the number of allowed stories in the MU3 zoning district are inconsistent with each other. Section 4.2.2.B.3 implies that the regulation of the number of stories is not applicable in the MU3 district. However, section 4.2.3 limits the number of stories to 4. The petitioners propose to amend the two sections to allow for a maximum of 18 stories.
 7. Section 4.2.3 limits the maximum FAR in the MU3 zoning district to 2.4 for a building up to 135 feet. The petitioners propose buildings up to 230 feet, and an FAR of 2.7 (excluding parking structures). An amendment to section 4.2.3 is required to allow for a maximum FAR of 2.7 for a 230 foot/18 story building. As written, the Ordinance does not require a special permit specifically for FAR; however FAR is connected to the number of stories and height, which may require a special permit. To the extent necessary, the petitioners seek a special permit for an FAR that, relative to a height or number of stories which require special permit, exceeds that which is permitted by right.
 8. The petitioners propose an amendment to section 4.2.3 to decrease the minimum beneficial open space allowed by special permit to 10%, from 15%. The current design reflects 15.8% open space. However, to allow for flexibility through the permitting process, the petitioners seek an amendment and subsequent special permit.
 9. The petitioner has requested an amendment to the NZO eliminating the ½ building height front, side and rear yard setback requirements found in section 4.2.3, and to establish a 15 foot setback requirement (excluding balconies) along Grove Street. Section 4.2.4.A states that the City Council may grant a special permit to allow for a reduction in the minimum required setback if it determines that the proposed setback is adequate to protect abutting uses. To the extent necessary, the petitioner seeks a special permit per sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.A to waive setback requirements.

For the purposes of zoning, the project site has two fronts; along the State highway and Recreation Road, and along Grove Street. The rear property line is opposite Grove Street along the MBTA property, and the side property boundaries are to the north of Building 1 and to the north of Building 7. The petitioner proposes a 15-foot setback from Grove Street, a 2.2 foot setback from the State highway layout, a 4.7 foot rear setback and a 0 foot side setback. To the extent necessary, the petitioners seek to eliminate the setback requirements found in section 4.2.3, or seek a special permit to reduce the required setbacks per section 4.2.4.A.

10. The project site is proposed as one locus, with internal driveways. This review uses the perimeter lot lines of the whole site to determine setback requirements. To the extent that any later division of the site takes place, utilizing the internal drives as accepted or private roadways, the proposed structures will require further review for compliance with all of the dimensional requirements for the district.
11. Section 5.4.2.B requires a special permit to allow a retaining wall four feet or higher within the setback. To the extent that any retaining walls locate within any setback, the petitioners seek a special permit.
12. Multiple uses are allowed in the district by right and by special permit. The petitioners propose several by right uses, including office, residential, health club etc. Per section 4.4.1, the following special permit uses are requested:
 - For-profit educational use;
 - Retail sales use over 5,000 square feet;
 - Restaurant with over 50 seats;
 - Personal service use over 5,000 square feet;
 - Place of amusement;
 - Open air business;
 - Hotel;
 - Bank, up to and over 5,000 square feet;
 - Theater/hall;
 - Laboratory/research facility;
 - Office;
 - Health club on ground floor;
13. The petitioner also proposes to allow animal services, single level accessory parking facilities, multi-level accessory parking facilities, single level non-accessory parking facilities and multi-level non-accessory parking facilities. These uses are currently prohibited in the district per section 4.4.1. The petitioner seeks to amend section 4.4.1 to allow animal services, single level accessory parking facilities, multi-level accessory parking facilities, single level non-accessory parking facilities and multi-level non-accessory parking facilities by right or by special permit. The petitioners seek such amendment, and a subsequent special permit if deemed required by the amendment.
14. The project proposes a mix of uses on the site, including 675 residential units, office, retail, restaurant etc. The exact mix of commercial tenants and the space each tenant will occupy is not

yet established. To ensure that an adequate parking demand is established per section 5.1.4, the parking calculation for the commercial uses at the site is based on a projection of a mix of uses designed to provide a high intensity use of the site (with regard to parking demand). The petitioners contemplate the following uses and projected square footages of spaces for each:

Proposed Use	Parking Requirement	Stall Required
Commercial Uses		
Office – 611,437 sf	1/250 sf for 20,000 sf plus 1/333 sf remaining	1,856
Retail and Personal Service 15,000 sf 30 employees	1/300 sf 1/3 employees	60
Restaurant – 1,200 seats 120 employees	1/3 seats 1/3 employees	440
Health Club – 20,000 sf 40 employees	1/150 sf 1/3 employees	148
Hotel – up to 225 sleeping rooms 27 employees	1/sleeping room 1/3 employees	234
Residential Uses		
675 units	2/unit by right	1,350
TOTAL REQUIRED BY RIGHT		4,088
BY SPECIAL PERMIT		
Commercial Uses	1/3 reduction	1,825
Residential Uses	1.25/dwelling unit	844
TOTAL REQUIRED BY SPECIAL PERMIT		2,669

While the petitioners propose to construct 2,922 parking stalls (2,866 within parking garages and 58 at surface), 958 of those stalls are reserved for MBTA use, leaving 1,964 available for the proposed commercial and residential uses. The by right parking requirement is 4,088 stalls per section 5.1.4. This same section allows, by special permit, a one-third reduction in the required parking for mixed use commercial, and a reduction to 1.25 stalls per unit for residential uses. By special permit, the reduced parking requirement is 2,669 stalls. With 1,964 stalls available (excluding the 958 MBTA stalls), there is a deficit of 705 stalls. The petitioner seeks a waiver of 750 stalls to allow for flexibility on the tenant mix, per section 5.1.13.

- The minimum dimensional requirement for parking stalls is 9 feet wide by 19 feet deep for angle parking and 21 feet long for parallel parking per Sections 5.1.8.B.1 and 5.1.8.B.2. To the extent that any of the proposed parking stalls are deficient in width or depth, a waiver per section 5.1.13 is required.

16. Section 5.1.8.B.4 requires a minimum depth of 19 feet for a handicapped parking stall. To the extent that any of the proposed handicapped parking stalls are deficient in depth, a waiver per section 5.1.13 is required.
17. Section 5.1.8.B.6 states that end stalls restricted on one or both sides by curbs, walls, fences or other obstructions require maneuvering space at the aisle end of at least five feet in depth and nine feet in width. The petitioners seek a waiver from this provision per Section 5.1.13.
18. Section 5.1.8.D.2 requires that entrance and exit driveways may have a maximum width of 25 feet, except in conjunction with loading facilities. The central drive within the parcel, Main Street, is not an accepted public or private way, and is thus an internal driveway. There are two entrances to the property with widths greater than 25 feet (the entrance to Main Street at the Route 95/128 ramp and Recreation Road, and Main Street off of Grove Street). Additionally, a third access drive is available for construction at the Transportation Plaza intended for emergency access. To the extent that these entrance and exit driveways exceed 25 feet, a special permit per section 5.1.8.D.2 is required.
19. Section 5.1.8.E.1 requires that parking facilities be designed so that each vehicle may proceed to and from parking stalls without requiring that another vehicle be moved. The petitioners propose a small number of tandem parking stalls in Building 3/4, requiring a waiver.
20. Section 5.1.9.B requires interior landscaping for surface parking containing at least twenty stalls. This section requires planting areas within outdoor parking facilities, and landscaped bumper overhangs. All of the surface parking is located along the internal drives. To the extent necessary, the petitioners request a waiver from this section in its entirety pursuant to Section 5.1.13.
21. All outdoor parking facilities which are used at night are required to have security lighting maintaining a minimum intensity of one-foot candle on the entire surface of the parking facility per Section 5.1.10.A.1. The petitioners request a waiver from this provision per Section 5.1.13.
22. Section 5.1.10.B.3 requires that paved surfaces be marked with four inch painted lines or some other marking system. To the extent necessary, the petitioners request a waiver from this section.
23. Section 5.1.10.B.5 requires curbing, wheel stops, guard rails, or bollards be placed at the edges of surfaced areas, except driveways, to protect landscaped areas. The bulk of the surface parking is located along the Main Street and other internal drives. To the extent necessary, the petitioners seek a waiver from section 5.1.10.B.5.
24. Section 5.1.11 requires one bicycle parking space per each ten parking stalls up to 30 bicycle spaces. The petitioners intend to provide adequate bicycle parking spaces to meet the requirements of section 5.1.11.
25. Section 5.1.12 provides the requirements for off-street loading facilities. The petitioners have not provided information on off-street loading procedures or number of loading bays. To the extent necessary, a waiver from section 5.1.12 in its entirety is required.

26. The petitioners have planned for way-finding signs throughout the site, but have not finalized tenant signage. A comprehensive sign package for the entire site will be submitted at a later date. To the extent that any proposed signage does not meet the by-right requirements of section 5.2 relative to number, size, location or design, a special permit is requested.
27. Section 5.11.4 requires that a project requiring a special permit for residential or mixed use development including residential development beyond that allowable as of right or totaling more than two new additional units be subject to the inclusionary housing provisions. The ordinance requires that the project provide no fewer than 15% inclusionary units of the total number of dwelling units proposed to be added by the development. The petitioners must provide 101 affordable units out of the 675 units, which is 15% of the total, in accordance with the Ordinance.

Zoning Relief Required		
<i>Ordinance</i>	<i>Proposed Amendment</i>	
	Rezone parcels to MU3	
§4.2.2.A.2	Amend section to decrease lot area per unit to 850 square feet per unit	
§4.2.4.F.b	Amend section to add or replace language to include “place of amusement, indoor or outdoor”	
§4.2.2.B.3, §4.2.3	Amend section to increase the maximum allowed number of stories from 4 to 18	
§4.2.3	Amend section to exclude parking structures from FAR requirements	
§4.2.3	Amend section to increase the maximum FAR from 2.4 to 2.7	
§4.2.3	Amend section to decrease the minimum required beneficial open space allowed by special permit from 15 to 10%	
§4.2.3	Amend section to increase the maximum building height allowed by special permit from 135 to 230 feet	
§4.2.4.A	Amend section to eliminate ½ building height front, side and rear yard setback requirements; and establish a 15 foot setback requirement (excluding balconies) from Grove Street	
§4.2.4.F.1.b	Amend section to include “Animal services”	
§4.2.4.G	Amend section to increase the maximum development size from 580,000 to 1,520,000 square feet	
§4.2.4.G	Amend section to add non-accessory parking to the uses excluded from the total gross floor area	
§4.2.4.G.1	Amend section to increase the maximum square footage for Category A uses from 225,000 to 650,000 square feet	
§4.2.4.G.2	Amend section to increase the maximum square footage for Category B uses from 20,000 to 200,000 square feet	
§4.2.4.G.3	Amend section to increase the maximum square footage for Category C uses from 335,000 to 750,000 square feet, and to increase the maximum number of dwelling units from 290 to 675	
§4.4.1	Amend table to allow “Animal services” by right or by special permit	
§4.4.1	Amend table to allow “Parking facility, accessory, single-level” by right or by special permit	
§4.4.1	Amend table to allow “Parking facility, accessory, multi-level” by right or by special permit	
§4.4.1	Amend table to allow “Parking facility, non-accessory, single-level” by right or by special permit	
§4.4.1	Amend table to allow “Parking facility, non-accessory,	

<i>Ordinance</i>	<i>Required Relief</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
	multi-level” by right or by special permit	
§4.2.2.B.1	To allow a building in excess of 20,000 square feet of gross floor area	S.P. per §7.3.3
§4.2.3	To allow building height of 230 feet and 18 stories	S.P. per §7.3.3
§4.2.3	To allow an FAR of 2.7	S.P. per §7.3.3
§4.2.3	To allow not less than 10% beneficial open space	S.P. per §7.3.3
§4.2.4.A §4.2.3	To allow a reduction in required setbacks	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.4.2.B	To allow a retaining wall in excess of 4 feet within the setback	S.P. per §7.3.3
§4.4.1	To allow retail sales over 5,000 square feet, personal service use over 5,000 square feet, restaurants with more than 50 seats, for-profit schools and educational uses, place of amusement, open air business, hotel, bank up to and over 5,000 square feet, theater/hall, laboratory/research facility, animal services, offices, health club on the ground floor, accessory single-level parking facilities, accessory multi-level parking facilities, non-accessory single-level parking facilities and non-accessory multi-level parking facilities.	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.4, §5.1.13	To allow a one-third reduction in required parking for commercial uses, and to allow 1.25 stalls per each residential dwelling unit	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.4, §5.1.13	To allow a waiver of 750 parking stalls	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.8.B.1, §5.1.8.B.2, §5.1.13	To waive the dimensional requirements for parking stalls	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.8.B.4 §5.1.13	To waive the minimum depth requirement for handicapped parking stalls	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.8.B.6, §5.1.13	To waive end stall maneuvering space requirements	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.8.D.2 §5.1.13	To allow driveway entrances and exits in excess of 25 feet	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.8.E.1 §5.1.13	To allow tandem parking	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.9.B, §5.1.13	To waive the interior landscaping requirements	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.10.A.1, §5.1.13	To waive the lighting requirements for parking lots	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.10.B.3 §5.1.13	Waive the parking stall striping requirements	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.10.B.5	Waive the curbing, wheel stop, guard rail or bollard	S.P. per §7.3.3

§5.1.13	requirements	
§5.1.12	To waive the off-street loading facilities requirements	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.1.13		
§5.2	To waive sign requirements relative to number, size,	S.P. per §7.3.3
§5.2.13	location or design	













Attachment B

Zoning Map

Riverside

City of Newton,
Massachusetts

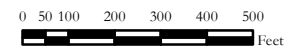
Legend

-  Single Residence 1
-  Single Residence 2
-  Single Residence 3
-  Multi-Residence 2
-  Business 2
-  Business 4
-  Business 5
-  Mixed Use 3
-  Public Use
-  Building Outlines
-  Surface Water
-  Property Boundaries



The information on this map is from the Newton Geographic Information System (GIS). The City of Newton cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability for his or her intended purpose. City departments will not necessarily approve applications based solely on GIS data.

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Mayor - Ruthanne Fuller



Map Date: June 21, 2019














Attachment C Land Use Map Riverside

*City of Newton,
Massachusetts*

Legend

Land Use

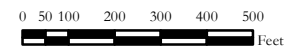
Land Use

-  Single Family Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Commercial
-  Mixed Use
-  Golf Course
-  Open Space
-  Nonprofit Organizations
-  Vacant Land
-  Building Outlines
-  Surface Water
-  Property Boundaries

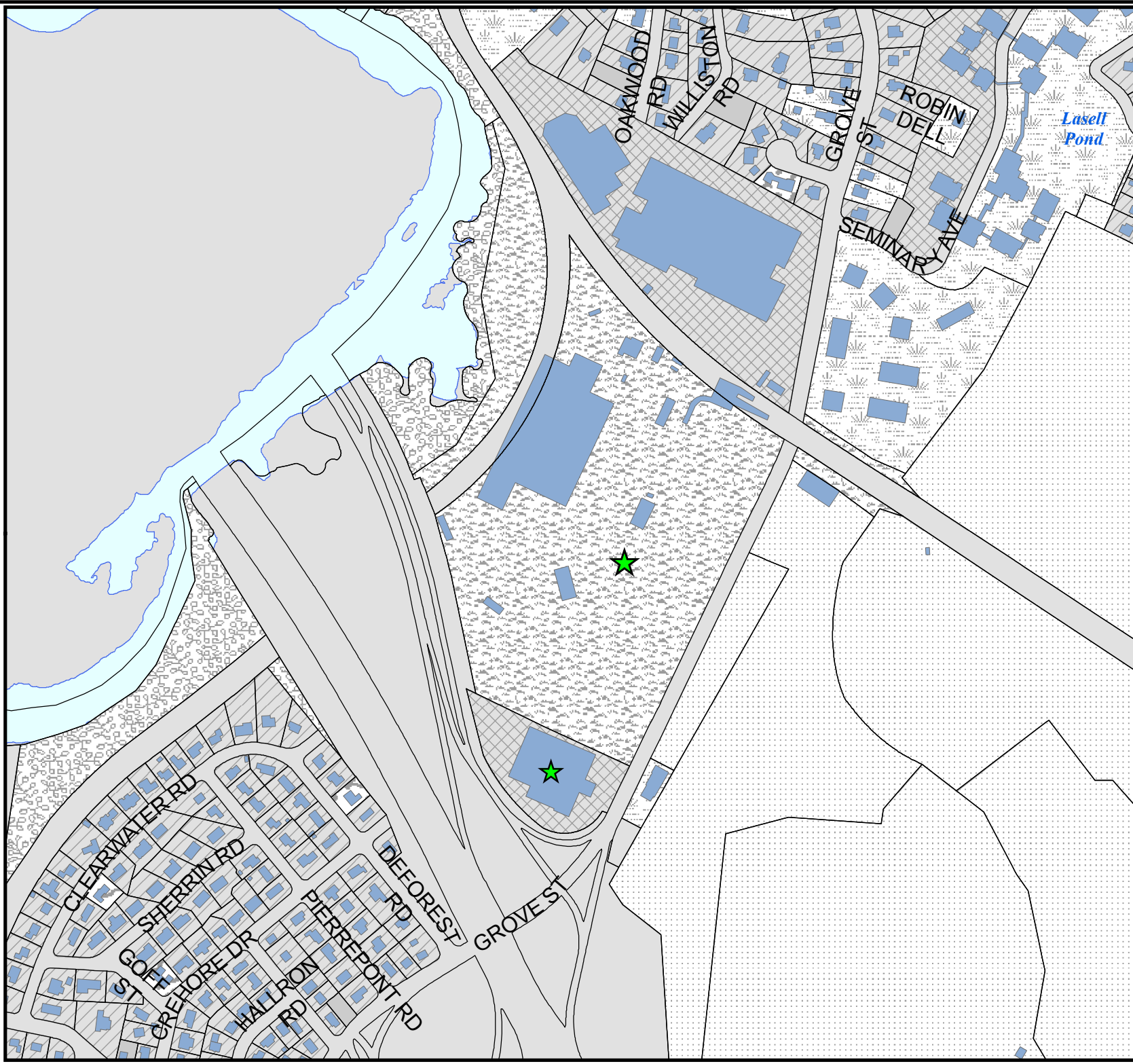


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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Mayor - Ruthanne Fuller



Map Date: June 21, 2019



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY OF NEWTON

Massachusetts

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE – DESIGN REVIEW

DATE: June 20, 2019
TO: Jennifer Caira, Chief Planner
Neil Cronin, Senior Land Use Planner
CC: Land Use Committee of the City Council
Petitioner
FROM: Urban Design Commission
RE: 355 Grove Street - Riverside Design Review

At the request of the Department of Planning and Development, the Urban Design Commission has reviewed and provides the following comments to the Department of Planning and Development regarding the proposed special permit project at 355 Grove Street. The following information is intended to give advice on specific matters affecting urban design for the project.

355 GROVE STREET

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) held a meeting on May 20, 2019 to review the proposed project at 355 Grove Street. The applicants presented their project to the Urban Design Commission (UDC). Based on the plans submitted and the presentation by the applicant's design team, the Urban Design Commission offers the following commentary.

As of now, the Urban Design Commission supports the general idea and the approach of the design but would like to continue the dialogue about design topics as the project moves through the special permit process. Overall, the UDC said that this is a very well thought through plan and that it is a good piece of urban design. The UDC is comfortable with the heights shown but would like to continue discussions about how scale and massing of individual buildings are shaped through design guidelines. At this stage there is a lot of good design in the massing.

Several important recommendations that were made during the discussion on May 20, 2019:

Site Design, Scale and Massing

- There was a discussion regarding the buildings along Grove Street. The UDC had questions about the setback from Grove Street and the applicant mentioned it is proposed to be set

back about 30 feet from the street. Some of the UDC members said that the buildings placement along Grove Street with a 30 ft. set back is appropriate, but that more detailed discussion is merited.

- It was noted that the handling of the setback at the adjacent office building creating a landscaped setting has been viewed positively in the neighborhood. Looking from that example to the Riverside site, the detailed design of the space between Grove Street and the building façades was of interest to the Commission. The Commission would like to see further discussion on the relationship between the sidewalk, bikeway, building entrances, and landscaped areas. Ensuring safe walking and biking is a consideration and there was interest in possibilities to integrate existing mature trees along Grove Street into the setback area design.
- The UDC had concerns regarding buildings 5, 6, and 7. There was discussion about the scale of these buildings: the combination of height and long building length creating a wall like effect along Grove Street (a scenic roadway). The UDC suggested that one component to address this concern was to ensure these buildings will step down towards Grove Street. Design guidelines that specifically address breaking down the scale vertically and horizontally (including consideration of breaks / pass-throughs) will be critically important to guide the evolution of the design of these buildings.
- The UDC did not have significant concerns about height of other buildings in the portion of the site next to the interstate highway. The Commission discussed the comparable height at Chestnut Hill Towers, which are 16 stories tall and were considered to not affect the neighborhoods nearby. The UDC also mentioned that if there is a site for height, this is a very good site, right next to the highway finding height here to be appropriate for City's tax base and proximity to the highway.
 - When specifically asked by the development team, the UDC said that they would be willing consider adding more height near the highway in exchange for more public open space or other program elements important to the City.
- The UDC was concerned that overall there is not enough public green space and this needed to be addressed in the next concept design iteration. There was concern that the green space in front of the hotel, while shown to be well landscaped, would not be clearly public. The Commission considered the conceptual designs for some of the other public open spaces/plazas to be appropriate at this stage. The Commission also commented on the plaza space near the T Station – there will be lots of bus / vehicular traffic and that should be taken into consideration. It was noted that the hillside open space connecting between Grove Street and Main Street has potential and that programming for that space will be very important.
 - The UDC encouraged the applicant to develop a programmatic statement for the spaces, including a range of activities that are intended in the spaces, how they would be organized in the space , and how the spaces would be activated at different times

of the week: weekday, weeknight, and weekend. Developing a programmatic plan for the spaces would allow the design team the opportunity to ensure that the outdoor spaces are designed for future needs. The UDC would generally encourage flexibility, simplicity, and utility in the space design so that a wide range of programs can be organized.

Connections

- While the UDC was very supportive of the off-site financial and design commitments, the UDC had questions about how the site will connect to the regional system of trails and facilitate public access to the trail network. Among their questions were about creating a clear route (including appropriate signs) from public parking at Riverside through to the trail network. There was interest in creating public parking for trailhead access close to the entrance to the trails.
- The UDC wanted to see the design of the new “Main Street” discussed and considered further. The applicant explained that Main Street will be designed as a shared street since there will be bike lanes on Grove Street. The UDC had concerns about Main Street truly being a shared street and ensuring that cyclist comfort is considered as the street design continues. The UDC recommended to build in flexibility into the street edge: allowing an option to have bike lanes on Main Street instead of parking on one side of the street when there may not be a need for as much parking along the streets in the future, the key being to establish the appropriate curb to curb dimension.
- The Commission felt that the proposed design for T-station does not sufficiently announce the presence of the station to guide riders quickly to the station entrance.

Built Form

- The UDC appreciated the design team’s explanation on the architecture and found it helpful to understand the reasoning behind the architecture of the buildings.
- There was a lengthy discussion about the stoops that are proposed. The applicant talked about the role stoops play in helping form a community between public sidewalks and private homes. The UDC did not think that 6 stoops were enough for this to play out. The Commission noted that stoops will help form community if the residents would use the stoops as the main entrance into their homes but were concerned that this may not be the case. The Commission also commented on the different treatment proposed across Main Street from the stoops and considerable more clarification was needed as to the design proposal. The UDC did not consider stoops to be a design feature common to Newton architecture and suggested looking to local examples for articulating the residential entrances.

- The UDC felt positively about the arcade feature, mentioning that it provides sheltered walk from the office building to the T stop.
- The UDC also discussed at some length about coming to agreement on the Design Guidelines (which were not available at the meeting) as being critically important and that the UDC supported incorporating them into the Council Special Permit conditions.