

**Washington Place**  
**Petitioner's Responses to Questions from Councilors and the**  
**Planning Department During and Following**  
**June 7 and July 12 Public Hearings**

**I. Building/Architecture**

**Q - Wants to hear more about the design; design seems homogenous at present. (Councilor Baker)**

*A - The design is inspired by the historic buildings of Newtonville Square, which were comparable in height to the buildings proposed. The project has evolved from a single building to two buildings to three distinctive buildings. The architect's vision is to design three buildings that have some common characteristics of massing and scale that help create a sense of place. At the same time, the buildings would differ in the use of materials: different texture and color brick, siding, trim, cornices, bandings, overhangs, paint colors, window sizes and spacing, balconies and decks. A good result would be that the buildings fit together but not necessarily appear to have been constructed at the same time. Design revisions (which the petitioner anticipates presenting to the Committee in October) will include increasing the step back of the building along the majority of Walnut Street, varying to a great degree the color and type of materials from building to building, and breaking up the massing of the west building. These design characteristics will be reflected in additional renderings that will be submitted to the Committee.*

**Q - A lot has been done to break up the massing of the project. However the massing on the Walnut Street side and the Washington Terrace side could still use some mitigation. What design effects could be brought to bear to make these two parts of the building less monolithic-looking? (Councilor Albright)**

*A - See above.*

**Q - Provide a description of how to meet the site plan criteria in terms of natural energy (Councilor Crossley)**

*A - The City of Newton Zoning Ordinance requires the City Council to consider any application for Site Plan Review in the light of several criteria. One of these criteria, as described in Section 7.4.5.B.8 of the Zoning Ordinance, asks Councilors to consider if the application reflects a "significant contribution to the efficient use of natural resources and energy" for projects involving proposed buildings that contain over 20,000 square feet in gross floor area. The proposed project meets this criteria as it has been designed and will be constructed at a LEED Silver certification level, based on LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot Version 2010.*

**Q - Can we increase LEED from silver to gold or platinum? (Councilor Brousal-Glaser)**

*A – The petitioner notes that the US Green Building Council’s (USGBC) LEED Silver Certifiable is the standard used for mixed use residential buildings of this project’s size in the Greater Boston Area. The silver performance level standards, which are a significant step above the baseline level of “certifiable,” are the result of collaboration between USGBC and the New Buildings Institute (NBI). According to NBI’s performance guide, “These measures represent state of the art technologies and practices that are broadly available in the building industry and have been demonstrated to be cost effective.” While the petitioner will strive to exceed the silver performance level, it cannot commit to attaining the number of additional points necessary to attain a gold certifiable level.*

**Q - How will shadow impact the Foster Street neighborhood and the interior plaza in summer? In winter? (Councilor Albright)**

*A – In response to the input received from the Council as well as the Planning Department, the petitioner anticipates making a number of changes to the plans and the building massing. In light of these proposed changes, it is prudent to wait to make a final assessment of shadows until the redesign is complete. Once the revised design is completed, the petitioner will submit a shadow study to the Council.*

**Q - Regarding Foster Street – what are we doing to assure that the neighborhood is not bothered by light trespass? (Councilor Albright)**

**Q -The Planning Department is concerned that site is over lit and requests clarification on height of light poles.**

*A – The site as currently developed includes a variety of floodlights and cobra-head style street lights that are generating large amounts of spillover and nighttime glare. Although there are several large trees on abutting properties that mitigate some of this light spill, the tree buffer is not consistent, and many of the trees are deciduous and provide no screening in the winter.*

*The proposed light fixtures at the property have been designed to include sharp cutoffs and shields that direct light to the ground to prevent light trespass. The maximum light pole height will be 16 feet. The petitioner has modified the proposed lighting design to reduce the light levels while making the overall light level more uniform across the site. The lighting plan is designed to result in no light trespass for the neighbors on Foster Street. Additionally, an augmented landscape buffer, including evergreen shrubs, is proposed to further mitigate any light trespass.*

**Q - What is the transparency requirement? (Councilor Fuller)**

*A - The Mixed Use 4 zoning district includes a requirement in Section 4.2.5.A.6 of the City of Newton Zoning Ordinance that "a minimum of 60 percent of the street facing building façade between 2 feet and 8 feet in height above the street-level floor must consist of clear windows that allow views of indoor space or display areas." In the event that the window shows a display area, there is a further requirement that the displays be changed and maintained to create an*

*active window display. Additionally, any illumination of a display must be internal to the façade of the building.*

*The intent of this requirement is to promote a lively pedestrian environment. The design will strive to meet this requirement and it is hoped that a waiver will not be required. That said, a particular tenant may require somewhat less visual transparency, so the petitioner needs some flexibility on this issue.*

**Q - Waiver of façade transparency requirements: (Planning Department)**

*A - Section 4.2.5.A.6 of the Zoning Ordinances establishes requirements for façade transparency and entrance locations for buildings in a MU-4 Zoning District. Although the petitioner does not think it will need the waiver for the transparency requirement, it needs to reserve its rights based on potential tenant needs at the site. The petitioner will continue to seek a waiver from the requirement for one entrance every fifty feet.*

**Q - Re: façade relative transparency, some possible uses (medical) may not be great for the first floor. Consider uses on first floor that allow for an active streetscape and transparency. (Councilor Crossley)**

*A – See above.*

**Q - Most perspectives are of Washington Street, please articulate Walnut Street side. (Councilor Fuller)**

*A - The architect will provide additional renderings of the proposed project on Walnut Street. These renderings will reflect design changes from the original presentation.*

**Q - Suggests roof gardens and decks. Adding roof decks might obviate need for waivers on setbacks? (Councilor Crossley)**

*A - The proposed project has been designed to incorporate roof gardens and outdoor decks. There are two roof deck/garden areas on the second floor and two on the fifth floor. These spaces are highlighted on the attached Exhibit A. As the buildings are redesigned to address comments from the Council and the Planning Department, additional small roof terrace areas are likely to be incorporated.*

**Q - Suggests orienting dumpsters for internal access and screen from Washington Terrace abutters (Planning Department)**

*A - The petitioner understands this concern and will take it into account as it looks at overall design changes to the project. It should be noted that although the dumpsters are unloaded from the exterior in the current design, they are located under the building to provide for better screening than can be provided if they are relocated to the internal area of the site.*

**Q- Requests clarification that all utilities will be located underground. (Planning Department)**

*A - All existing utilities within the project site and in Washington Terrace will be either removed or relocated underground. All proposed utility services to the new building will be located underground.*

**Q - Please submit a construction timeline before further public hearings. (Planning Department)**

*A - It is expected that construction will take approximately 20-24 months from groundbreaking until occupancy*

**Q -Wants perspective drawings of the public space and proposed buildings in the neighborhood context. (Planning Department)**

*A - The petitioner will provide additional perspective drawings as requested by Land Use Committee*

**Q - Show mechanical equipment in future drawings. (Planning Department)**

*A - The previously submitted roof plan shows the location of the mechanical equipment. Mechanical equipment is being placed away from the perimeter of the building so as not to be visible from the street, as noted on the perspective views.*

**Q -Wants minimum of 5% of units to be built accessible in the initial construction. (Planning Department)**

*A - Per the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, 5% of the dwelling units will be built as "Group 2A" accessible units.*

**Q: Suggests a pedestrian walkway connecting Walnut Street to internal plaza, which would also break up massing of Walnut St façade. (Planning Department)**

*A - The petitioner is reviewing this option as it considers overall design changes to the project.*

## **II. Building Space and Uses**

**Q - Suggests adding 3 bedroom units to the mix (Councilor Crossley)**

**Q - Many would like to see some 3 bedroom apartments – can some be added? (Councilor Albright)**

*A - Based on discussions with the community, it appears that there is no mandate for 3 bedroom units. That said, the petitioner anticipates that adding approximately six to eight 3 bedroom*

units to the proposed unit mix (5%) would be feasible, if the City Council so desires. (see next question).

**Q - Is this a good site for 3 bedrooms or not? Wants a discussion; this is not Avalon. (Councilor Fuller)**

*A - The petitioner believes that a limited number of 3-bedroom units (5% of the total unit mix) would be appropriate for the project. The petitioner believes that the demand for these units would largely come from empty nesters looking to remain in close proximity to family and friends, while living in a home that requires less upkeep, benefits from the convenience of onsite and neighborhood amenities provided by a village center, and provides access to public transportation.*

*There has been some push back from the community about including 3-bedroom units. The primary concern is that these larger units will be attractive to families with school-aged children. While this is certainly a possibility, it is likely that the mixed use nature of Washington Place, coupled with its proximity to a village center, will not generate the same demand as would be the case in a more traditional neighborhood setting.*

**Q - What is the total square footage of space in existing buildings broken down by residential and commercial space? (Councilor Laredo)**

*A – Below are the breakdown of the existing uses in terms of square footage:*

<i>Residential</i>	<i>17,248</i>
<i>Educational</i>	<i>16,030</i>
<i><u>Commercial</u></i>	<i><u>41,677</u></i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>74,955</i>

**Q - Has the amount of commercial space decreased? (Councilor Laredo)**

*A – The amount of commercial space will decrease by approximately 2,000 square feet.*

**Q - Current proposal is for 40,000 SF of commercial and 200,000 SF of residential. What would be the fiscal benefit if the property were 1/3 commercial and 2/3 residential (assumes this is based on GSF). (Councilor Laredo)**

**Q - What if we changed mix to less residential – such as 70/30 or 50/50? (Planning Department)**

*A - (See chart)*

**Current Proposal**

	<b>GSF</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>RSF</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>
Commercial	39,745	17%	39,745	21%	-
Residential	198,330	83%	153,900	79%	171
<b>Total</b>	<b>238,075</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>193,645</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>171</b>

  

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Municipal Cost</b>	<b>Education Cost</b>	<b>Net Annual Benefit</b>
Commercial	\$11,924,000	\$261,602	(\$52,320)	\$0	\$209,281
Residential	\$50,440,000	\$599,656	(\$98,475)	(\$355,200)	\$145,981
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$62,364,000</b>	<b>\$861,257</b>	<b>(\$150,795)</b>	<b>(\$355,200)</b>	<b>\$355,262</b>

**1/3 Commercial GSF and 2/3 Residential**

	<b>GSF</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>RSF</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>
Commercial	79,358	33%	79,358	39%	-
Residential	158,717	67%	123,161	61%	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>238,075</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>202,519</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>137</b>

  

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Municipal Cost</b>	<b>Education Cost</b>	<b>Net Annual Benefit</b>
Commercial	\$23,808,000	\$522,337	(\$104,467)	\$0	\$417,869
Residential	\$40,508,000	\$481,507	(\$78,806)	(\$296,000)	\$106,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$64,316,000</b>	<b>\$1,003,843</b>	<b>(\$183,274)</b>	<b>(\$296,000)</b>	<b>\$524,570</b>

**1/2 Commercial GSF and 1/2 Residential**

	<b>GSF</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>RSF</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>
Commercial	119,038	50%	119,038	56%	-
Residential	119,038	50%	92,373	44%	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>238,075</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>211,411</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>103</b>

  

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Municipal Cost</b>	<b>Education Cost</b>	<b>Net Annual Benefit</b>
Commercial	\$35,711,250	\$783,505	(\$156,701)	\$0	\$626,804
Residential	\$30,563,759	\$347,816	(\$59,106)	(\$222,000)	\$82,105
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$66,275,009</b>	<b>\$1,131,320</b>	<b>(\$215,807)</b>	<b>(\$222,000)</b>	<b>\$708,909</b>

**Q - Given concerns about school capacity and other impacts of increase in residents, would developer consider converting one floor to office/commercial space? (Councilor Brousal-Glaser)**

**Q - A fiscal benefit of \$200K a year in a budget of \$442M is a rounding error, literally .05% of our budget. Would the petitioner be willing to add office space in place of some market rate housing so that this project can be more of a fiscal benefit to the City? (Councilor Norton)**

*A – The petitioner spent significant time analyzing the demand for office space in Newton and specifically our site. Based on market research and conversations with the brokerage community, it is the petitioner’s position that office space is not feasible for a multitude of reasons:*

- *New construction demands a rent that is much higher than what the current market supports.*
- *Distance from I-90 exit and I-95/I28 makes our location less desirable*
- *Office floor to floor heights are 3 -4’ higher than residential heights, so incorporating a small office component will require that the overall height of the project increase in order to accommodate the same number of stories.*
- *Office space requires separate entrances, amenity space, vertical transportation and parking, all of which create a number of costly inefficiencies that make it unfeasible.*
- *Class A office buildings are typically built with steel vs. the wood frame methodology proposed for Washington Place. Transitioning to steel would only further increase the rents necessary to achieve reasonable returns.*

*The petitioner intends to address this issue in our presentation at the September 13<sup>th</sup> public hearing.*

**Q - Is medical office good for this site? May be too intense.(Councilor Fuller)**

*A – To clarify, the petitioner does not think that a high-intensity medical office use would be appropriate for the site. However, it believes that a small urgent care facility could provide a nice onsite service amenity to residents and neighbors that would not interfere with the vibrancy of the other commercial users.*

**Q - Would we agree on voluntary restriction on types of users (i.e. no nail salons or banks) Councilor Auchincloss)**

**Q - Are you familiar with the Beautiful Newton survey of 2012- no more banks or nail salons? Would you be willing to voluntarily restrict users (i.e., will the petitioner commit to no banks or nail salons)? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - The petitioner would agree to a voluntary restriction on nail salons and would agree to allow not more than one (1) bank as a tenant at any one time.*

**Q - Wants to quantify what types of stores would need 5,000 SF retail space. Examples in Newton of 5,000 or 10,000 SF retail spaces? (Councilor Brousal-Glaser)**

*A - In order to better understand what types of tenants could use the proposed commercial space on-site, please see the following list which identifies existing businesses with spaces of similar size to those proposed (most of these examples are located in Newton):*

*Commercial 1 (13,075 SF):*

*Walgreens  
Pottery Barn  
Anthropologie  
Trader Joes*

*Commercial 2 (1,250 SF):*

*Starbucks  
Pinkberry  
Polka Dog Bakery*

*Commercial 3 (4,905 SF):*

*Sephora  
Aveda (Lynnfield)*

*Commercial 4 (3,890 SF):*

*Panera  
Douzo  
White House|Black Market*

*Commercial 5 (5,095 SF):*

*Aquitaine  
The Cottage*

*Commercial 6 (1,280 SF):*

*Otto  
Godiva  
J McLaughlin*

*Commercial 7 (2,415 SF):*

*Brewer's Coalition  
Cabot  
Soul Cycle (Lynnfield)*



*Commercial 8 (7,835 SF):  
The Tannery (First Floor only)  
Legal C Bar (Lynnfield)  
FuGaKyu (Lynnfield)*

**Q - The petitioner suggested he is looking at a pet store; a bike shop; a bookstore. Yet Newtonville Pet closed; there are bike shops in West Newton and Newton Corner; Newtonville Books moved to Newton Center. What is the real expectation for the commercial space? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - The petitioner has suggested a variety of possible commercial uses at the site, but is not seeking a pet store, bike shop, or bookstore in particular. The petitioner feels that the project's location and residential component will make Washington Place very attractive to a wide variety of retailers and service establishments. The petitioner anticipates interest from both national retailers as well as local, small businesses. Various food establishments, such as a small gourmet food store, quick casual dining, a coffee shop/bakery, or finer dining are highly likely candidates for the commercial spaces.*

*The petitioner also believes that existing commercial tenants in Newtonville that are looking for new, more efficient and/or larger space(s) would be attracted to this location.*

**Q - Community space – 2,000 ft- How was this amount arrived at? Was there any consideration given to better access off the plaza? (Councilor Schwartz)**

*A – The petitioner arrived at the 2,000 square foot number by assuming an average use per event or activity of 50 people, or 40 square feet per person. Ongoing conversations with local community groups interested in using the space gave further confirmation that 2,000 square feet would be more than adequate for their needs. In order to provide this space to the community the petitioner has removed two (2) income producing apartments from the second floor. If the City Council prefers space on the first floor rather than the second floor, the space would have to be smaller in order to accommodate this request. The petitioner feels that the dedicated entrance and elevator exclusive to the community space as proposed provides excellent access to any group that may wish to use the space.*

**Q - Wants all eligible for inclusion in the city's subsidized housing inventory. (Planning Department)**

*A - In order for all of the affordable units to count towards the City's SHI, 20% of the units would need to be at a 50% AMI level or 25% at an 80% AMI level. Per the Newton Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance, Washington Place will have 15% of the total units at a blended 65% AMI. In addition, the project will include a second tier of housing that would be available to residents earning between 80 – 120% of AMI, or "middle income renters." The petitioner feels that it is critical to provide qualified affordable housing to these "middle income" renters because 1) the number of qualified households falling within these income levels in Newton is significant and 2) there is currently no program in the City of Newton of which the petitioner is aware that provides protected housing for these households.*

**Q - Suggests a Local Preference for affordable units, and requests clarification on unit mix and unit location for affordable units. (Planning Department)**

*A - Included in the “Preliminary Inclusionary Housing Plan,” dated June 7<sup>th</sup>, are floor plans which highlight the suggested locations of the affordable units as well as the unit mix. Also included in that Plan is a commitment to provide “local preference” starting with those who live at the site.*

### **III. Streetscape/Plaza**

**Q - Create larger plan showing sidewalks in detail. (Councilor Crossley)**

*A - The petitioner intends to widen the sidewalks at certain areas on the site to create a more active streetscape. The petitioner will provide revised plans that show these proposed improvements in more detail.*

**Q - Pedestrian plaza- It does not appear that the scale of the plans and the renderings agree for the 40’ plaza space. Please confirm that they are consistent and the arrangement of the space in the renderings actually works in a 40 foot space. (Councilor Schwartz)**

*A – The renderings are true displays of what will fit in a 40 foot space. The furniture shown in the plans may not be to correct scale. To confirm that the space is adequate, the petitioner’s architect has looked into similar spaces. At “The Street”, the plaza at Shake Shack & Pinkberry, which is very similar to what is proposed here is approximately 32 feet in width. The proposed plaza accommodates café seating, plaza seating, and pedestrian movement without feeling crowded. The plaza area could be comfortably reduced to 30 feet in width and still allow for the activity shown in the renderings.*

**Q - Discrepancies - you show big bump outs in renderings vs. site plan, which shows none. (Councilor Schwartz)**

*A - The bump-out shown in the rendering at the residential entrance is not part of the proposal. While the petitioner initially considered including this bump out, it became clear that including it would cause vehicles to stop in the travel lane of Washington Street and impede traffic.*

*The petitioner’s proposal includes a loading/drop-off zone at this location without a bump-out. The petitioner apologizes for this inconsistency and will submit revised architectural renderings that match what is shown on the site plan when the proposed site plan revisions are submitted.*

**Q - Please don’t have ATMs on street. (Councilor Leary)**

*A - The petitioner will not build a free-standing, exterior ATM on Washington Street, Walnut Street, or Washington Terrace. To the extent that the petitioner does include an ATM on-site, it will be located in a covered area, such as an interior vestibule or the interior of the pedestrian plaza.*

**Q - Will you have street vendors on sidewalk during summer? (Councilor Albright)**

*A - The petitioner intends to have the street vendors/ kiosks throughout the public plaza and the parking area as appropriate. It is also open to expanding this program to the sidewalks as part of the overall activation of the site.*

**Q - What kind of interior landscaping will there be in the interior court yard- can it be “greened-up”? Will there be enough sunlight in the plaza for green lawn? Plants? Trees? (Councilor Albright)**

*A - The plaza includes a balance of pavers, benches, ornamental trees, and low plantings. Approximately half of the plaza area as proposed includes plantings. Additional planted areas will reduce the programming flexibility of the space. The interior plaza will receive daily sunshine during the growing season.*

#### **IV. Parking/Parking Lot**

**Q - Transportation study did not talk about off-street parking. What if site is maxed out with worst case tenants and overflow parking is needed? (Councilor Fuller)**

*A - In the event that site is maxed out with the “worst case” residential and commercial mix, an off-site valet program would be implemented to manage the excess parking demand*

**Q - This is being billed as a transit-oriented development, yet the petitioner wants to provide 236 parking spaces. Is the petitioner willing to provide a housing experience for the car-free (i.e., no parking spaces or only Zipcar)? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - The development’s proximity to transportation allows the petitioner to provide parking for residents at a reduced amount (i.e., 1.25 parking stalls per unit as opposed to 2 parking stalls per unit). In addition to providing a reduced amount of residential parking, the petitioner will decouple parking from rent to encourage living a car-free life. The petitioner has also discussed the project with the Zipcar locations team. Zipcar has tentatively agreed to provide two dedicated Zipcar spaces on-site.*

**Q - Is the petitioner willing to provide solar canopies in the parking lot? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - While the development team’s engineers are evaluating this request, the petitioner’s initial concern is that any solar canopies on the north side of the building would be in shadow during certain periods. Thus, solar canopies in the parking lot may not generate sufficient electricity in relation to the installation cost.*

**Q - Add dimensions to parking lot plan. (Councilor Crossley)**

*A - The petitioner’s revised plans will include the requested dimensions.*

**Q - How do the parking waivers requested for Washington Place compare to the waivers granted for Chestnut Hill Square. Parking in that development can be tight. Did we grant proportionally similar waivers for that project? I understand that project has a supermarket – leaving that aside – please give us some point of comparison. I’m particular worried about medical offices in the Newtonville project. (Councilor Albright)**

*A – The proposed project at Washington Place and Chestnut Hill Square are significantly different. Washington Place is located in a dense village center and has a very substantial residential component. Washington Place is walkable for residents in both the project’s residential units and the dense village center that surrounds it. It has access to multiple transportation options including several bus lines and the commuter rail station. Chestnut Hill Square is a mall located on Route 9. It is difficult to walk to and has limited transportation options. Therefore, a reduction in parking is more appropriate at Washington Place than at Chestnut Hill Square.*

*Phase I of Chestnut Hill Square includes 231,588 SF of Retail, Grocery, Restaurant, Health Club and Medical office space. For the 231,588 SF of commercial space, 699 parking spaces were provided for a ratio of 3.02 spaces per 1000 SF. Washington Place includes 39,465 SF of commercial space and is providing 132 parking spaces for a ratio of 3.34 spaces per 1000 SF. Proportionally, a greater waiver was provided for the commercial space at Chestnut Hill Square.*

*Additionally, to clear up any confusion, the petitioner is not proposing the type of medical office use that is located in Chestnut Hill Square at Washington Place. The petitioner may potentially include a small urgent care space and not a true medical office building.*

**Q - Petitioner to clarify how access to residential parking will be restricted. Suggests designating some parking spaces for car sharing. (Planning Department)**

*A - Residential Parking will be located within the garage. A set of gates will restrict access to the spaces designated for residents. The spaces most immediately adjacent to the access ramp and public elevator will be designated for commercial overflow parking and car sharing. Two parking spaces will be designated for car sharing.*

**Q - Wants more attention to internal landscaping of parking lot (shade trees). (Councilor Crossley)**

**Q - Wants more interior landscaping in outdoor parking lot. (Councilor Leary)**

**Q - Concerned with lack of interior landscaping and pedestrian amenities in parking lot. (Planning Department)**

*A – The project design team is reviewing the overall landscaping and streetscaping plan for the entire project. Ideas that are currently being considered include increasing the width of sidewalks to further improve the pedestrian experience and bike lanes along the perimeter of the property. Changes of this nature will have an impact on the surface parking lot and therefore*

*will limit our ability to add additional landscaping by further reducing the number of parking spaces. In addition, given that the majority of the surface parking lot sits above a below-grade parking garage, the ability to install trees and other landscaping is already limited.*

**V. Traffic**

**Q - Please provide more detail regarding the proposed traffic signal improvements at Washington and Walnut Streets. (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - As part of the proposed project, the traffic signal at Washington and Walnut Streets will be replaced in its entirety to meet modern standards. Additionally, corresponding improvements to the intersection at the surface level will be made to improve operations for both pedestrians and vehicles. Improvements will include:*

- *Modern Traffic Signal capable of multiple timing and phasing plans to adjust operations through the day as conditions change. The current signal maintains the same operational programming regardless of traffic conditions.*
- *Curb-bump outs on corners of the intersection to shorten crossings for pedestrians. The approximate existing and proposed pedestrian crossing widths are shown below.*

<u>Crosswalk</u>	<u>Existing Crossing Width</u>	<u>Proposed Crossing Width</u>
<i>Washington Street eastbound approach</i>	<i>80 feet</i>	<i>58 feet</i>
<i>Washington Street westbound approach</i>	<i>74 feet</i>	<i>56 feet</i>
<i>Walnut Street northbound approach</i>	<i>98 feet</i>	<i>65 feet</i>
<i>Walnut Street southbound approach</i>	<i>66 feet</i>	<i>47 feet</i>

- *Install ADA compliant cross-walks with audible and visual countdown indicators to enhance the safety and accessibility for pedestrians and those with disabilities.*
- *Update pavement striping to include either:*
  - *A second lane along the Walnut Street southbound approach to the intersection and right-turn lane to the Washington Street eastbound approach.*
  - *5 foot bike lanes along Walnut Street between Washington Street and the site driveway on both northbound and southbound lanes, and a right-turn lane along the Washington Street eastbound approach.*
- *Implement coordination to adjacent traffic signal if there is benefit to doing so.*

- *Increase the vehicular and pedestrian clearance phases to be MUTCD compliant.*
- *Provide overlapping phases for Washington Street eastbound right-turn during the Walnut Street bridge left-turn phase, and for the Walnut Street bridge right-turn during the Washington Street eastbound left-turn phase.*

**Q - How will traffic change at the intersection? (Councilor Baker)**

*A - As outlined in the May 2016 Washington Place Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS), traffic associated with the redevelopment project is expected to increase during the weekday morning peak hour (approximately 89 new trips). During the weekday evening peak hour, traffic will remain similar to existing conditions. With the change in traffic from the site, and the traffic signal improvements outlined above, the overall peak period operations at the Washington Street and Walnut Street intersection is expected to improve. This is particularly true assuming the additional lane is provided along the Walnut Street southbound approach to the intersection. With the addition of this lane, peak period queues along this approach would be substantially reduced. As shown in the May 2016 TIAS (page 35), with the proposed improvements in place, the intersection is expected to improve from LOS E under No-Build conditions to LOS C under Build with Improvements conditions during the weekday morning peak hour. It would also improve from LOS F under No-Build conditions, to LOS C under Build with Improvements conditions during the weekday evening peak hour.*

**Q - Please add some direct access to Walnut Street the way we have it from Bram Way to Walnut Street (Councilor Albright)**

*A - The petitioner is analyzing this suggestion as part of the re-evaluation of the overall streetscape and landscaping plan for the project.*

**Q - Have you reviewed the Austin Street traffic study? Please do so. (Councilor Norton)**

*A - Yes. Traffic projected from the Austin Street development is included in the future conditions analyses provided in the May 2016 traffic study.*

**Q - How many accidents happened in the corridor? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - Table 2 on page 11 of the traffic study summarizes the accidents at each of the study area intersections.*

**Q - How much additional capacity is being created at the Washington Street/Walnut Street intersection with the project in place? (Councilor Schwartz)**

*A – The development team completed a “sensitivity analysis” at the key intersections to assess the additional capacity that would remain with the improvements in place and the project traffic on the roadway. The sensitivity analysis added traffic to the intersection, based on the distribution of traffic per movement until the LOS reached a LOS F. This was conducted for the weekday morning and weekday evening peak hour periods at both the Washington Street at*

*Walnut Street and Washington Street at Lowell Avenue intersections. Based on this assessment, the additional capacity is outlined below and demonstrated in the volume graphics attached to the full report:*

- *Washington Street at Walnut Street – with the proposed improvements in place, the intersection is expected to be able to accommodate 49-percent more volume during the weekday morning peak hour and 39-percent more volume during the weekday evening peak hour over proposed Build conditions.*
- *Washington Street at Lowell Avenue – with the proposed improvements in place, the intersection is expected to be able to accommodate 57-percent more volume during the weekday morning peak hour and 34-percent more volume during the weekday evening peak hour over proposed Build conditions.*

**Q - What will a crosswalk at the post office do to traffic flow? Doesn't think it is safe. (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - As stated by the Peer Consultant at the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, the introduction of an unprotected crosswalk across Washington Street in front of the Post Office is not recommended due to the width of the roadway in this area (four lanes). Should the improvements consistent with the CTPS Washington Street study be implemented along this section of Washington Street in the future, a potential crosswalk could be appropriate.*

**Q - What changes are being proposed at this intersection without the project pursuant to 2018 Newton (Councilor Laredo)**

*A – The petitioner's traffic engineering consultant reached out to the City of Newton Planning Department to inquire about any planned improvements for the Washington Street and Walnut Street intersection in the future. At this time, the Planning Department is not aware of any specific plans for improvements at this location. However, based on a citywide traffic signal inventory assessment that has been conducted, the intersection of Washington Street and Walnut Street has been identified for both "Immediate" and "Longer Term" improvements as outlined below:*

*Phase I Improvements (Immediate)*

- *Pedestrian Flashing Don't Walk time is in violation of the current MUTCD requirements and needs to be corrected.*
- *Implement concurrent pedestrian crossings. (Operational Improvement)*
  - o *Rewire pedestrian push buttons*
- *Modify cycle length from 142 seconds to 100 seconds*
- *Replace missing visors for signal head E*

- *Re-align pedestrian signal head P4 to appropriate crosswalk*
- *Replace all 8" displays and housings with 12" displays and housings*
- *Troubleshoot/repair broken vehicle detection for the Washington Street approaches and the Walnut Street SB approach.*
- *Re-grout mast arm foundation*
- *Re-stripe all crosswalk and stop lines.*

*Phase II Improvements (Long Term)*

- *Reconstruct all non-compliant wheelchair ramps to current ADA standards*
- *Up-grade controller and cabinet assembly*
- *Repave the west leg of Washington Street*
- *Install new Type 2 mast arms with overhead signals that within the cone of vision.*

*This list represents the improvements needed as part of the 2012 citywide traffic signal inventory. We don't believe that any of the improvements have been completed to date, and after discussions with the city we are not aware of any plans or funding to implement said improvements. As part of the redevelopment project, all of said improvements and more are being proposed to completely update/upgrade this intersections and add bump-outs to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians.*

**Q - Wants more attention paid to traffic impact of Washington Terrace intersection with Washington Street. (Councilor Lennon)**

*A - The petitioner's traffic engineering consultant has paid particular attention to this intersection and considered its expected operations. The traffic volumes at this intersection are low enough that a traffic signal is not warranted and the physical configuration allows for turning movements into and out of Washington Terrace to occur safely and efficiently. More detail is available regarding the review of the operations at Washington Terrace in pages 22-27 of the May 2016 TIAS.*

*Since traffic signal warrants are not met, the installation of a traffic signal is not appropriate at this intersection. The current plan is to close the existing 4 curb cuts along Washington Street between Walnut Street and Washington Terrace. This results in less conflict points along Washington Street between Walnut Street and Washington Terrace, which improves existing conditions. Site lines at the Washington Terrace intersection have been evaluated and the results are provided in Table 5 of the TIAS (page 22). These results indicate that stopping sight distance (SSD) is more than adequate at this intersection under the proposed configuration.*



*Traffic operational analyses prepared for future conditions with the redevelopment in place indicate that the intersection of Washington Street and Washington Terrace will operate at a LOS D or better during the critical peak hour periods. This places it within the “acceptable” range.*

**Q - Suggests pedestrian bump outs on all 4 corners of the intersection as well as bike lanes. (Planning Department)**

*A - As shown in Exhibit B, the sidewalk will be widened or bumped-out on all four corners to varying degrees. The petitioner is committed to providing substantial pedestrian bump outs on the northwest, northeast, and southwest corners of the intersection.*

*Currently, shared vehicular/bicycle lane markings are proposed on all four approaches to the intersection; however, the proponent has provided an alternative conceptual plan that provides bicycle lanes on Walnut Street north of Washington Street instead of the proposed additional southbound lane. While this option provides a dedicated bicycle lane for the Walnut Street southbound approach, it does compromise the improvements to vehicular delay and queuing that the additional lane would provide.*

**Q - Can't all loading occur on site? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - Through the closure of curb cuts and driveway reconfiguration, the project will result in an additional 170 linear feet of curblines available for either additional on-street parking, on street loading, or the creation of sidewalk “bump-outs”. The proposed design allocated this additional space for all three purposes by creating two additional on-street parking spaces, two loading/pickup/drop-off zones, and a sidewalk bump-out at the location of the proposed plaza area. The petitioner feels that it is appropriate to create these on-street loading zones. Small delivery vehicles such as FedEx and small vendors are expected for both the residential and retail space. Additionally, pick-ups and drop-offs of residential tenants are expected to occur. The proposed loading spaces should provide greater flexibility for both retail delivery and residential pick-up and drop-off without impacting overall traffic flow.*

**Q - You would be more credible if you acknowledge that there will be a parking impact from new businesses. (Councilor Norton)**

*A - The proposed parking impacts have been described in the traffic report.*

**Q - Suggests decoupling parking from units. (Councilor Leary)**

**Q - Will we decouple rent from parking and subsidize T-pass? How will we do this? (Councilor Auchincloss)**

*A – The petitioner agrees to decouple the parking from the unit rents. The petitioner is also willing to provide a T-pass subsidy for future tenants. The T-pass subsidy will be provided through a rent discount once a tenant verifies the purchase of a T-pass.*

**Q - Is the petitioner willing to provide free MBTA (commuter rail) passes for all residents as a way to encourage non-vehicle travel? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - Yes, the petitioner is willing to provide some sort of subsidized commuter rail passes to encourage fewer cars to the site.*

## **VI. Public Transit and Proposed Bridge Improvements**

**Q - Can you make these improvements to the bridge based on the arc? (Councilor Laredo)**

**Q - Is the pitch of the bridge going to impact the proposed improvements? (Councilor Cote)**

*A - The petitioner does not believe that the change in elevation and/or pitch will impact the improvements as currently proposed. However, the initial feedback from the community has been that the improvements, given the significant cost associated with the structural work required to be undertaken as part of the proposal, might not be worth the expense. The petitioner is currently exploring other options, which might include more limited improvements to the bridge while redirecting the balance of the funds committed to the bridge for other mitigation purposes.*

**Q - Would like to see a cross section of the bridge, also a wider simulation of traffic with variety of options. (Councilor Crossley)**

*A - The bridge improvements are a work in progress and the petitioner's traffic engineering consultant is currently working on a schematic design for further discussions with MassDOT.*

**Q - How did we come up with the proposals and the dimensions? (Councilor Crossley)**

*A - The proposal has evolved based on discussion with MassDOT, assessment of transportation needs, and a thorough review of the current bridge design and condition. The goal of the process and effort to date was to expand the pedestrian environment as much as possible while still providing what is needed from a traffic perspective and providing bicycle accommodation. Those were the guiding principles during design development.*

**Q - Artwork on bridge sounds interesting but what will it mean to go from 6 lanes to 4 lanes? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - To get additional width for pedestrian and bicycle accommodation on the bridge, the existing 6 lane cross-section must be reduced. The existing and future traffic operations have been carefully considered and with the proposed traffic signal and intersection improvements at Washington Street and Walnut Street in place, operations of traffic movements on the bridge can be maintained at similar or better levels than the existing conditions, even with the reduced cross-section. It should be noted that the two lanes to be removed will only be removed in the middle portion of the bridge. The lanes will still be provided as right turn lanes on either side of the bridge at the intersections.*

**Q - Points out that the left turn from Walnut looks like it would be very difficult. What kinds of traffic delays would that cause? ((Councilor Schwartz)**

**Q - Will the proposed left hand turn create bottlenecks? (Councilor Cote)**

*A - As outlined in Table 10 of the May TIAS, the left turns from Walnut Street into the site are projected to operate at LOS A during the weekday morning and weekday evening peak hour periods. The projected queues are minimal as well. To ensure that operations for this movement are maintained, "do not block" intersection striping and signage is proposed at this driveway. Additionally, because the driveway to 277 Walnut Street is close to the site driveway, we are recommending that the "do not block" intersection striping and signage include that driveway as well*

**Q - Concerned about traffic queuing heading south on Walnut – wants more discussion of this (Councilor Albright)**

*A - With the proposed traffic signal upgrade and associated intersection improvements, traffic operations will improve at the Washington Street and Walnut Street intersection. This is particularly true under the option that includes an additional vehicle storage lane along the Walnut Street southbound approach. With the additional lane the projected vehicle queue will be reduced from approximately 648 feet to approximately 172 feet during the weekday morning peak hour and from approximately 693 feet to approximately 165 feet during the weekday evening peak hour period. Queues of 165-172 feet will fall short of the proposed site driveway by approximately 3 car lengths, while queues of 648-693 feet would extend to Page Road.*

**Q - Should the bike lane be an additional traffic lane instead? (Councilor Albright)  
Will you be adding bicycle lane? (Councilor Norton)**

**Q - Can you look at a true dedicated bike lane with physical separation? (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - The Peer Consultant and City Planning Department have suggested that a bike lane northbound and southbound along Walnut Street may be more appropriate than the addition of a vehicle storage lane in this area. This is something that certainly can be considered in lieu of the additional lane to balance the needs of the roadway. With that change in place, as well as other enhancements at the intersection, the queue along the Walnut Street southbound approach would be improved slightly but not to the same level as the addition of a vehicle storage lane would provide. With the bike lanes and other intersection improvements, the queues would be reduced from approximately 648 feet to 462 feet during the weekday morning peak hour and from approximately 693 feet to approximately 424 feet during the weekday evening peak hour period. A queue of 424-feet would extend to just south of Foster Street, while a queue of 462-feet would extend to just north of Foster Street.*

*Adding a physical separation to any bike lane improvements is something that could be considered, but will require additional width that would have to be absorbed somehow in the existing cross-section of the roadway.*

**Q - What improvements, if any, are proposed to make public transit more accessible in the area? (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - Accessibility to the commuter rail station is limited by the condition of its access stairways from Walnut and Harvard Streets and its platform, which are all substandard in terms of condition and ADA compliance. In order to improve these deficiencies, the station must be made fully accessible by either providing redundant elevators or an extended ADA-compliant ramp from both streets to the platform. Additionally, the platform must be reconstructed from its current low-level configuration to an ADA-compliant high-level configuration for a length of 800 feet to accommodate a full train set. The cost of this work is in the range of 20 million dollars.*

*The petitioner has proposed improvements to the sidewalk access to the station including shortening crossings at the intersection of Walnut and Washington Streets and repairing sidewalks to bring them into ADA compliance.*

**Q - Will you contribute to a mitigation fund to enhance the T station? (Councilor Albright)**

*A - If the initial proposal for improvements to the bridge are revised to address cosmetic issues only (as noted in our prior response, above), the petitioner is willing to redirect a portion of the funds originally earmarked for bridge improvements as initial funding for an evaluation of possible improvements to the commuter rail station.*

**Q - Is the petitioner willing to provide bicycles and bicycle maintenance for residents as a way to encourage non-vehicle travel? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - The petitioner is willing to provide a bicycle maintenance facility both in the garage for tenants and at grade for the general public. The petitioner has committed to provide bicycle parking on site including 30 spaces for retail tenants and 180 spaces for residents located in the below-grade garage. The petitioner is not willing, however, to provide bicycles or bicycle maintenance.*

**Q - DOT is reducing stops in Newtonville – what help can you provide to make sure that DOT will bring back service if this project is approved? (Councilor Albright)**

*A - The petitioner's understanding is that the MBTA does not have any plan to reduce service to Newtonville. Below is a summary table showing the number of trains scheduled to stop at Newtonville Station, by direction and day of week, based on the schedules which the petitioner has reviewed. In the case of weekday Outbound service, 14 trains are currently scheduled to stop at Newtonville Station. This is a reduction of service as compared to the 2014 and 2015 schedules, which had 16 weekday Outbound trains stopping at Newtonville (the service reduction occurs in the morning and early afternoon, prior to the PM peak). In all other cases, current service is equivalent or greater than the service provided in the historic schedules.*

**Daily Trains Scheduled To Stop At Newtonville Station**

		Schedule Effective January 1, 2007	Schedule Effective October 27, 2008	Schedule Effective May 18, 2009	Schedule Effective July 1, 2012	Schedule Effective April 29, 2013	Schedule Effective July 1, 2014	Schedule Effective June 8, 2015	Current Schedule (Effective May 23, 2016)
Inbound	Weekdays	10	9	9	9	8	10	10	13
	Saturdays	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	Sundays	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	9
Outbound	Weekdays	12	12	12	11	11	16	16	14
	Saturdays	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	Sundays	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	9

**VII. Fiscal Impacts**

**Q - What is the current assessed value of existing space (residential and commercial broken out)? (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - Commercial Space Assessed Value: Approx. \$9,231,000  
 Residential Space Assessed Value: Approx. \$4,099,000  
 Total: \$13,330,000*

**Q - Please explain why the highest figure (.2) was used to estimate costs for commercial space? How does the fiscal impact analysis change if a different ratio is used? (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - The petitioner chose the highest figure, because it was the most conservative approach for the site. In other words, it was the figure that showed the most impact on net revenue. In the event that a lower ratio is ultimately utilized for the site, it would ultimately increase the net fiscal benefits.*

**VIII. Tenants and Rents**

**Q - What does the petitioner expect the market rate units to rent for? (Councilor Norton)**

*A – The rents are currently estimated to range from \$3.10 to \$3.40 per square foot in today’s dollars.*

**Q - Is the petitioner willing to reduce the size of the units or take other steps to reduce the rent in the market rate units? (Councilor Norton)**

*A - If you compare Washington Place to other projects in the area that have been built, you will see that its units are 10 -20% smaller. As currently proposed, Washington Place does not include 3-bedroom units, which allow for more affordable studio and 1-bedroom units. Additionally, the Petitioner has agreed to decouple the parking which provides renters with the opportunity to pay less rent for market rate units.*

**Q - Concerned that residents being displaced by the project are paying rent at a level below what is considered “affordable” (Councilor Brousal-Glaser)**

*A - There are tenants who are paying rent below what would be deemed as affordable rents. There are also tenants who, due to their higher income levels, would not qualify for affordable housing if the apartments were monitored per the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. Given that all the existing units are market rate units, no protections are in place to keep rents low.*

**Q - Will evict existing tenants? Or provide at current rents to existing tenants? (Councilor Brousal-Glaser)**

*The petitioner is currently working with each tenant to develop individualized plans to address their needs. In terms of the residential tenants, the petitioner has already provided, and will continue to provide, informational materials and in-person meetings with those tenants who qualify for affordable housing so they are aware of their options in the proposed development. The petitioner will be able to make priority units available to any existing households that qualify under the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.*

*For the existing commercial tenants, when requested and where appropriate, the petitioner has provided tenants with brokerage services and investigated potential new sites for relocation.*

**IX. Greater Newton Context**

**Q - Please provide us with data showing the City’s population, the number of residential units in the City, and the amount of commercial space in the City for each of the past ten years. Please then add in estimates for increases due to recently approved but not built projects such as Riverside, Austin Street, and Turtle Lane. (Councilor Laredo)**

*A – Alexandra Ananth and the Planning Department are working on getting this information and. anticipate having the answer to this question sometime in late August.*

**Q - Please provide some examples of other recent mixed use developments (excluding Austin Street) with similar residential/commercial ratios to what is proposed for this project. (Councilor Laredo)**

*A – Please see the following table:*

<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b># of Units</b>	<b>Residential GSF</b>	<b>Commercial SF</b>	<b>Commercial % of Total SF</b>
<b>Washington Place</b>	<b>Newton</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>198,330</b>	<b>39,745</b>	<b>17%</b>
Assembly Square	Somerville	450	495,000	500,000	50%
Westwood Station	Westwood	300	330,000	750,000	69%
Market Street	Lynnfield	300	330,000	395,000	54%
Merc on Main	Waltham	269	295,900	28,000	9%
Cronin's Landing	Waltham	225	247,500	29,000	10%

Brookside Square	W. Concord	74	60,000	11,000	15%
30 Haven Street	Reading	53	50,000	20,000	29%
<b>*Data from Costar</b>					

**Q - Please expand on the uses of the proposed public space and compare it to what was approved for the Austin Street project. (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - The Austin Street project includes 5,000 SF of outdoor public space (including Bram Way). Washington Place will have approximately 10,000 SF of outdoor public space.*

*Washington Place envisions a public area with outdoor seating where people can come to eat, read, and socialize. The petitioner anticipates working with local artists to provide ongoing art displays for users to enjoy while visiting the space. The petitioner also intends to partner with local community organizations to provide ongoing programming for the area such as concerts and local artisanal markets.*

**Q - Please expand on how this project will be linked with other proposed improvements to Newtonville Village. In particular, how will this project be connected to improvements on the other side of the Turnpike? (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - Washington Place, through various improvements, will enhance the connectivity of the north and south sides of the village. The petitioner believes that newly constructed commercial space, built in line with today’s standards for class A commercial space, coupled with the demand generated from the residential users living above, will attract a wide variety of commercial tenants that will be attractive to patrons who currently don’t have a reason to cross the bridge. The 10,000 SF of outdoor public space will be an attractive amenity for those who would like somewhere to sit, read, and socialize with friends and colleagues- something which does not currently exist in the north village.*

*The key to increasing an individual’s willingness to cross the bridge is improving the pedestrian experience. Through significant improvements to the signalization, cross walks and sidewalks, we believe that the pedestrian experience will be significantly improved. The petitioner has also proposed aesthetic improvements to the bridge, which will increase an individual’s willingness to venture from one side of the village to the other.*

**Q - Please discuss how proposal fits in with Comprehensive plan goals for increased commercial space, especially in Newtonville. (Councilor Laredo)**

*A - The Comprehensive Plan calls for “enhancing village centers [and] supporting their vitality” by providing “services to nearby neighborhoods,” “housing alternatives,” and “focal areas” to create a “sense of place”. The proposed development meets these goals. The existing commercial uses on the site include a restaurant, a ballet school, and several offices and retail stores that do not create much pedestrian activity. While the square footage of the proposed commercial space represents an overall decrease from what currently exists, the proposed commercial uses are designed to provide more vitality and activity to the village center.*

**Q - Please address concerns about school placements of residents of project in terms of school capacity not just dollars. (Councilor Brousal-Glaser)**

*A – The School Department is probably best suited to answer any question determining capacity at its schools. That said, as presented in our Fiscal Impact Report, the petitioner anticipates 24 school aged children generated by the project. Based on historical averages, the petitioner believes that 16 of those students will be elementary school age, 4 will be middle school age, and the remainder will be high school age. Based on the data the development team has received regarding a decline in enrollment at Cabot School of 15 students in school year 2018/2019, it appears that there will be adequate capacity between Cabot and Horace Mann Schools to house the elementary aged children generated by the project. The number of middle school and high school aged children will be too small to impact the capacity at those respective schools.*

**Q - How will Court Street and Austin Street traffic increases impact the project? (Planning Board)**

*A - Traffic projected for both the Court Street and Austin Street projects are included in the future condition traffic analyses presented in the May 2016 TIAS. Both projects would only have minor influences on traffic operations at study area intersections. Improvements proposed at the Washington Street and Walnut Street intersection will offset the marginal impacts that each project would have at that location.*