

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

From: Lou Mercuri, Planning Horizons

Re: 1081 Washington Street

Date: October 12, 2012

On behalf of the petitioner for this land use petition, I am submitting this report regarding the availability of parking and supporting customer count surveys for the proposed Sleepy's Mattress location at 1081 Washington Street in West Newton.

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David A. Cassin, CMC
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Project Overview

Sleepy's Mattress is proposing to locate a second Newton location at 1081 Washington Street in West Newton. This location on 8910 square feet of land is currently occupied by a vegetable stand and a two-family house in the rear. The mattress retail outlet will operate in a two story 4470 square foot building and will be open 7 days a week from 10AM to 9PM from Monday through Saturday and from 11AM to 7PM on Sundays. It is anticipated that there will be a maximum of two employees on site during busier weekend hours and one employee on site during slower weekday periods. As required by the Newton Zoning Ordinance, a total of 8 onsite parking spaces will be provided for both customers and employees. The expected busiest hours of operation will occur on weekend afternoons with the hours of 2PM to 4PM being the projected peak.

Even though the technical off-street requirements of 8 spaces have been met in this proposal, Planning Horizons was asked to review the current availability of on-street parking in the area and to establish the likely customer demand at the proposed location based on the experience at one existing Sleepy's location. The successful Sleepy's location at 230 Needham Street was surveyed for actual customer counts for a total of 10 hours on three different weekend afternoons.

Both the results of the area parking survey and the customer counts at the Needham Street location are described fully in this report.

Existing Conditions

The entire 8910 square foot parcel with the existing vegetable stand and two-family home in the rear will be rebuilt to accommodate the proposed retail use. Both existing buildings will be demolished and a 4470 square foot building would be built to house Sleepy's Mattress as the sole tenant. The area is along the westbound side of Washington Street between Parsons Street to the east and Cross Street to the west. There is a mix of residential and office use in the area with the largest operation being the Beacon Hill Athletic Club at 1089 Washington Street adjoining the site. The Athletic Club provides onsite parking for its clients and employees.

The mattress retailer will be able to rely on the 8 proposed parking spaces in its onsite lot. In addition, there is currently a limited amount of 9 on-street parking spaces on Washington Street (westbound side) within a most a one-minute walk of the site. These spaces also serve other businesses in the area but are generally open and available as the survey demonstrates.

Planning Horizons conducted surveys of 9 on-street public parking spaces on 6 occasions during the weekend afternoon and weeknight time periods. It was believed that these times would coincide with the potential peak hours of Sleepy's operation. In total, there were 5 surveyed locations between 1075 Washington Street and 1113 Washington Street that demonstrated 9 available spaces as follows:

1. 1075 Washington Street – site of a two story residential-styled office building, 1 on-street parking space
2. 1081 Washington Street – proposed Sleepy's site, 2 on-street parking spaces
3. 1089 Washington Street, Beacon Hill Athletic Club, 3 on-street parking spaces
4. 1105 Washington Street – office building, 2 on-street parking spaces
5. 1111-1113 Washington Street, site of a multi-tenant office building, 1 on-street parking space

All of the surveyed spaces are unmetered and do not post any time restriction. It is the experience of Sleepy's customers that typical shopping visits occur within a one-hour window. There is also open parking across Washington Street on the Massachusetts Turnpike side, however it is used last by businesses in the area as Washington Street is extremely wide at this point and crossing Washington Street in this location raises safety concerns

230 Needham Street Customer Counts – Methodology and Results

The second aspect of this report relates to projecting the potential number of customers who will frequent the proposed location and whether the onsite and nearby parking can accommodate the demand. There are numerous Sleepy's Mattress locations in the Boston area, but for consistency the location at 230 Needham Street at Industrial Place was thought to be a good representation of expected conditions at the Washington Street location. Planning Horizons conducted a customer count survey at the Needham Street location on Saturday, September 29, Saturday October 6, and Sunday October 7, 2012. A total of 10 hours of personal observations were recorded; four hours on each of the two Saturdays and two hours on Sunday October 7. Observations were conducted from a parking area across the street so as not to conflict with the operation of the store. Customers were counted individually upon entering or exiting the location and the data was recorded in 15-minute intervals to best represent changes in the number of customers in the store. Persons under 18 years of age were not counted and neither were those who entered and exited in less than one minute.

The following three charts provide the specific detail:

Sleepy's Customer Counts 230 Needham Street Saturday 9/29/2012 Time Started: 12:00 Time Ended: 4:00		
	Customers at start of interval	Customers at end of interval
12:00-12:15	0	0
12:15-12:30	0	3
12:30-12:45	3	0
12:45-1:00	0	2
1:00-1:15	2	0
1:15-1:30	0	1
1:30-1:45	1	0
1:45-2:00	0	3
2:00-2:15	3	1
2:15-2:30	1	2
2:30-2:45	2	3
2:45-3:00	3	2
3:00-3:15	2	3
3:15-3:30	3	4
3:30-3:45	4	2
3:45-4:00	2	1

Sleepy's Customer Counts 230 Needham Street Saturday 10/6/2012 Time Started: 12:15 Time Ended: 4:15		
	Customers at start of interval	Customers at end of interval
12:15-12:30	2	1
12:30-12:45	1	1
12:45-1:00	1	0
1:00-1:15	0	0
1:15-1:30	0	0
1:30-1:45	0	2
1:45-2:00	2	2
2:00-2:15	2	0
2:15-2:30	0	1
2:30-2:45	1	0
2:45-3:00	0	1
3:00-3:15	1	2
3:15-3:30	2	2
3:30-3:45	2	2
3:45-4:00	2	2
4:00-4:15	2	2

Sleepy's Customer Counts 230 Needham Street Sunday, 10/7/2012 Time Started: 1:00 Time Ended: 3:00		
	Customers at start of interval	Customers at end of interval
1:00-1:15	0	0
1:15-1:30	0	0
1:30-1:45	0	2
1:45-2:00	2	4
2:00-2:15	4	5
2:15-2:30	5	5
2:30-2:45	5	6
2:45-3:00	6	3

The actual customer data reveals several points. First, the maximum number of customers in the store at any time was 6 (arriving in 3 vehicles), of the 40 intervals counted only 5 times showed 4 or more customers in the store at one time. The mean score for all values was 1.75 customers at any time. The median (middle point) was two customers at any time.

Three additional observations marked this survey. The majority of Sleepy's customers come in pairs and from observation travel together in one vehicle. As an example, the 6 customers recorded at 2:45PM on October 7 were seen exiting 3 vehicles and entered the store. Second, Sleepy's conducted a wide marketing and advertising campaign for a large sale at all stores concluding on Columbus Day October 8. It would therefore be expected that larger than usual numbers of customers would be present. Finally, all of the counts were conducted at the week's busiest times of operation and serve as a likely predictor of activity at the proposed Washington Street site.

Parking Survey and Results

To get a complete picture of the parking supply and demand in the area, it is necessary to understand the proposed mattress retail operation and its peak periods. It is expected that the peak periods would occur near or during the mid-afternoon hours on Saturdays and Sundays. It is believed that Thursdays through Sundays best capture the conditions on the typically more crowded days.

Planning Horizons surveyed the five already-noted parking locations on six occasions between September 21 and October 7, 2012. Three counts were conducted at 7PM to capture any evening peak activity at three counts were conducted on weekend afternoons. One of the evening counts was conducted on a Saturday and the other two on Fridays during this time period. Weather conditions were fine with the exception of the evening count on October 2 when light rain was falling.

The data below reveals the following summary for each count:

Summary by Day of Week, Total of All Parking Areas

Date	Time	Weather	Spaces Used	Spaces Available
1. Friday September 21	7:00	70°, clear	3	6
2. Saturday September 29	2:30	60°, cloudy	5	4
3. Saturday September 29	7:00	55°, cloudy	2	7
4. Tuesday October 2	7:00	60°, light rain	3	6
5. Friday October 5	7:00	75°, clear	4	5
6. Sunday October 7	1:00	60°, cloudy	5	4

The results of the data reveal consistent patterns regardless of the time of day or day of the week surveyed. No more than 5 spaces were occupied at any time, leaving at least 4 spaces available. Weekend afternoon counts showed five spaces being used and this coincides with Sleepy's expected busier periods.

An individual day-by-day summary of the parking counts identifying the usage at each of the five locations is included as an appendix to this report.

Summary and Conclusion of both Customer Counts and Parking Studies

The proposed Sleepy's Mattress location at 1081 Washington Street in West Newton would bring a more active retail use to an area that has a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses. There are three critical considerations related to parking and access to the new site. These are: the adequacy and availability of on-site parking, the expected customer demand based on similar establishments, and whether on-street, offsite parking can accommodate this business and the needs of other businesses in the immediate area. We will address each of these areas based on our survey results.

Sleepy's is proposing a 4470 square foot facility with at most two employees at the busier weekend periods. The petitioner is proposing an 8-space parking lot onsite, consistent with the zoning requirements. If each employee brings his or her own vehicle to work there remains six available spaces for Sleepy's customers. Our surveys of a similar and existing Sleepy's outlet on Needham Street during the weekend afternoon peak periods reveal a maximum of 6 customers in the store at any time. Many Sleepy's customers shop in pairs so it can be concluded that if similar customer patterns occur at the proposed Washington Street location, there will not be a demand for more than 3 or 4 vehicles needing parking at any time. Therefore, the remaining 6 parking spaces in the lot will easily handle the peak customer demand.

The on-street offsite parking surveys conducted on the westbound side of Washington Street reveal an average of 5 additional parking spaces available within at most a one-minute walk of the site. The neighboring Beacon Hill Athletic Club, an active use, has its own self-contained large parking area. To conclude, the on-street parking spaces supplement the proposed onsite parking area and does not limit or hinder other businesses in the area.

The proposed Sleepy's Mattress location at 1081 Washington Street will easily be able to meet employee and customer demands for parking. Documenting customer counts at a sister location during peak periods reinforces this conclusion and is a useful planning tool.

Appendix

Day by Day Summary by Location of Parking Areas		
Date: September 21		
Day of week: Friday		
Time: 7:00 PM		
Conditions: 70°, Clear		
Location on Washington Street	Spaces Used	Spaces Vacant
1075 Offices	1	0
1081 site	2	0
1089 Beacon Hill Athletic	0	3
1105 Marketing Offices	0	2
1111 and 1113 Offices	0	1
TOTALS	3	6

Day by Day Summary by Location of Parking Areas		
Date: September 29		
Day of week: Saturday		
Time: 2:30 PM		
Conditions: 60°, Cloudy		
Location on Washington Street	Spaces Used	Spaces Vacant
1075 Offices	1	0
1081 site	1	1
1089 Beacon Hill Athletic	1	2
1105 Marketing Offices	1	1
1111 and 1113 Offices	1	0
TOTALS	5	4

Day by Day Summary by Location of Parking Areas		
Date: September 29		
Day of week: Saturday		
Time: 7:00 PM		
Conditions: 55°, Cloudy		
Location on Washington Street	Spaces Used	Spaces Vacant
1075 Offices	0	1
1081 site	1	1
1089 Beacon Hill Athletic	0	3
1105 Marketing Offices	0	2
1111 and 1113 Offices	1	0
TOTALS	2	7

Day by Day Summary by Location of Parking Areas		
Date: October 2		
Day of week: Tuesday		
Time: 7:00 PM		
Conditions: 60°, Light Rain		
Location on Washington Street	Spaces Used	Spaces Vacant
1075 Offices	1	0
1081 site	1	1
1089 Beacon Hill Athletic	1	2
1105 Marketing Offices	0	2
1111 and 1113 Offices	0	1
TOTALS	3	6

Day by Day Summary by Location of Parking Areas		
Date: October 5		
Day of week: Friday		
Time: 7:00 PM		
Conditions: 75°, Clear		
Location on Washington Street	Spaces Used	Spaces Vacant
1075 Offices	1	0
1081 site	1	1
1089 Beacon Hill Athletic	0	3
1105 Marketing Offices	2	0
1111 and 1113 Offices	0	1
TOTALS	4	5

Day by Day Summary by Location of Parking Areas		
Date: October 7		
Day of week: Sunday		
Time: 1:00 PM		
Conditions: 60°, Cloudy		
Location on Washington Street	Spaces Used	Spaces Vacant
1075 Offices	0	1
1081 site	0	2
1089 Beacon Hill Athletic	2	1
1105 Marketing Offices	2	0
1111 and 1113 Offices	1	0
TOTALS	5	4