

City of Newton



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

110 Crafts Street
Newton, MA 02460Setti D. Warren
Mayor

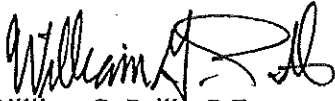
DATE: December 14, 2012
TO: Candace Havens, Director of Planning
FROM: William G. Paille, P.E., Director of Transportation
RE: Equity Office Properties – Response to Stantec Comments/Concerns

The City received a letter (Dated 9/21/2012) from Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., an engineering design firm retained by Equity Office Properties to review the City of Newton Department of Planning and Development staff report (Dated 11/16/2012) as well as a design memorandum prepared by VHB (Dated 10/15/2012) related to the Riverside MBTA Station Redevelopment Project. As a result, the City respectfully submits the following:

- **Route 128 Access:** While the City understands final approval of any option is with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), we do not prefer Option F and consider Option A and B-2 as viable solutions. The City will continue to coordinate with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), the project proponents and their design consultants to evaluate the potential for B-2 as the preferred alternative or move forward with Option A. One of the City's primary goals for this project is safety and thus will require either option to comply with State and Federal Design Guidelines and standards.
- **MBTA Driveway:** The City understands the concern related to traffic queuing along Grove Street as well as within the project site and ensures that all stakeholders will have the opportunity to review final designs including signal timing plans at the appropriate time during the design process.
- **Traffic Assignments:** Although the City concurs with FST and Stantec with respect to their findings related to volume assignments and believes a majority of traffic will continue to use Grove Street to access the site, we believe any changes to assignments and distributions will not change the basic geometry and layout of the conceptual layout presented as part of the application. The City believes the design and review process through MassDOT will result in a project that will address all of the concerns related to traffic assignments.
- **Grove Street North Access:** Duly noted. The City will be requiring VHB to re-evaluate the traffic distribution volumes assigned to Grove Street and providing a revised analysis. The City also believes the design and review process through MassDOT will address all of these concerns.
- **Option F:** Duly noted. The City will coordinate with FST to provide reasons for coming to their conclusions for not supporting Option F as a viable option. However, the City believes the primary reason for not supporting Option F is simply that it fails to provide a second access point to/from the site.
- **Roundabouts:** The City concurs with Stantec's position regarding the need for geometric improvements to the proposed roundabouts, for example incorporating a greater deflection at the southern roundabout where I-95 NB traffic exits onto Grove Street. The City met recently with MassDOT regarding this project and the state highway officials agreed that all of these issues and concerns will be addressed

during the design and review process through the State. The City will keep Stantec and Equity Properties informed throughout the design process and provide opportunities for them to participate in meetings and to review the design at the appropriate time.

- **Rear Access Connection:** Permission from the MBTA is required in order to provide access to the rear of the site. At this time, the MBTA has not agreed to any access agreements for reasons security and safety.
- **Timetable for State and Federal Approvals and City Permitting:** Although the City understands the concern raised by Stantec (and Equity) regarding the amount of time the approval process will require, the City is working closely with MassDOT, MBTA and is committed to engage all stakeholders for this project. The City will be proactive with respect to implementing any/all mitigation measures as soon as possible in order to facilitate the design and construction phases of this project.



William G. Paille, P.E.
Director of Transportation
City of Newton

Cc: Dave Turocy, DPW Commissioner, File