

200-12-010 (2)

Date sent: Mon, 22 Oct 2012 01:59:10 +0000 (UTC)
From: sjmelly@comcast.net
To: lfinucane@newtonma.gov
Subject: Comments on Riverside Station Special Permit Application

As a Newton Lower Falls resident, Williams parent, MBTA commuter, and regular pedestrian, bicyclist and driver on Grove Street, I have the following comments on the Riverside Station Special Permit Application:

- I strongly support the Riverside Neighborhood Coalition's positions.

The leadership of the Riverside Station Neighborhood Coalition has worked hard to communicate with the neighborhood and have done an excellent job expressing the concerns of a large percentage of the Riverside neighbors.

- Both traffic speed and congestion on Grove Street are concerns

I share the concerns expressed by so many others about traffic on Grove Street, and potential difficulties in navigating the proposed roundabouts by cars, pedestrians and bicycles. I am not only concerned about congestion at peak times, but the speed of traffic at off peak times. Any widening of Grove Street and configurations of ramps from I-95 that encourage high speeds on the straight away between I-95 and the Grove Street entrance of Riverside should be avoided. The proposed traffic signal and medians at the Grove Street entrance are positive elements that should help slow traffic to safer speeds appropriate to a residential community.

- Accommodations must be made for bicyclists from before the first roundabout through the MBTA bridge

Proposed bike lanes or cycle tracks must be continuous from before the first roundabout in Lower Falls to the bridge for the T tracks. Where the roadway narrows at the median at Riverside Center I propose signage and striping to indicate that bikes should take full lane. A shorter segment of cycle track (e.g. from Hotel Indigo to Riverside Grove Street entrance) is not likely to be used by reasonably experienced adult cyclists.

- Earlier design of residential building with entrances on Grove Street is a more pedestrian friendly alternative

An earlier design of the residential building showed multiple entrances along Grove St. In the current design it appears that pedestrians coming from the T station will enter the residences from the interior side of the development. Pedestrians heading to the residences might cut through the garage. A design that would encourage all pedestrians heading to the residences and to Lower Falls to walk together past the retail along Grove St would provide more foot traffic to retail establishments and a livelier, more secure environment for walking between the T and Lower Falls.

- Design should encourage access to Charles River

Coming from Lower Falls I would be unlikely to walk all the way to the Grove Street entrance, then along the T maintenance facility to get to the Charles River. I would also avoid walking along the highway access road by the office. I propose creating access to the river between the Hotel Indigo and the residential building. Access from this point could have the feel of a dedicated link between Grove St and the river, while also being a way to connect the hotel, residences and office.

-At a minimum, developer should be required to plant as many trees as would have been required if the Newton Tree Preservation applied to this parcel.

Thank you for considering the comments of the Riverside Neighborhood Coalition and these additional comments.

-Steven Melly

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