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James Freas
Acting Director

PUBLIC HEARING/WORKING SESSION MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 19, 2015
MEETING DATE: June 23, 2015
TO: Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen
FROM: James Freas, Acting Director of Planning and Development
Alexandra Ananth, Chief Planner for Current Planning
Stephen Pantalone, Senior Planner
CC: Petitioner

In response to questions raised at the Land Use Committee public hearing, and/or staff technical reviews, the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming public hearing/working session. This information is supplemental to staff analysis previously provided at the public hearing.

PETITION #91-15

180 Needham Street

Request for Special Permit/Site Plan Approval to convert existing retail space to a restaurant use, to allow parking requirements to be met off-site (at 188-210 Needham Street), to allow parking within a setback in a parking facility with 5 or less parking stalls, to waive off-street loading requirements, and to waive lighting and screening requirements in a parking facility, and to amend special permit #182-09 in order to expand parking within a setback in a facility with more than 5 parking stalls, to increase the number of parking stalls accessed by a nonconforming aisle width, to waive requirements for vegetative screening and lighting for a parking facility with 5 or more parking stalls.

The Land Use Committee (the "Committee") held a public hearing on May 12, 2015, which was held open so that the petitioner could respond to questions/concerns that were raised in the Planning Department's memorandum and at the public hearing by the Committee. This memo reflects additional information submitted by the petitioner.

Revised Plans

The petitioner submitted revised plans that reflect comments made at the Conservation Commission Hearing on May 21, 2015 and the Land Use Committee Hearing on May 12, 2015. The modifications to the site plan decrease the amount of work proposed within the wetland resource area. The revised plans include the following modifications:

- The removal of 17 of the additional parking stalls previously proposed at the rear of the site (See **ATTACHMENT A**),
- Modification of the three parking stalls on the site to “Employee Only”.

The Planning Department does not have any concerns with the reduction in the number of parking stalls on the site, as the petitioner’s parking survey (**ATTACHMENT B**) indicates adequate parking during peak times, as discussed further below. The City’s Transportation Director of the Public Works Department continues to recommend limited access to the small parking area located on the site, however the implementation of employee-only parking is an improvement from the previous plans.

Traffic Impacts and Pedestrian Access

The City’s Transportation Director submitted a memorandum (**ATTACHMENT C**) outlining his concerns regarding the proposed access points to the site and 188-210 Needham Street, and pedestrian movements within the parking lot at 188-210 Needham Street. In particular, the Transportation Director is concerned with the conversion of the one-way exit at the 188-210 Needham Street site to a two-way entrance/exit because of its proximity to the southern entrance of the recently approved Newton Nexus site. The Transportation Director is concerned that the queuing of cars making lefts into the respective entrances will create traffic issues under the existing conditions and if a center left turn lane were implemented. As discussed in the Transportation Director’s memorandum, the petitioner should submit additional analysis that clearly explains how the conversion to a two-way travel lane will impact the intersection and vehicles turning left into the Newton Nexus site, and until then, the Transportation Director recommends the one-way exit is maintained. The memorandum also recommends the petitioner create pedestrian walkways within the site to connect the parking stalls at the rear of the site with the restaurant and other uses at 188-210 Needham Street.

Parking Survey

The petitioner submitted a parking survey which indicates the peak parking demand during the weekday under conservative measures is approximately 206 stalls, where 251 stalls are proposed (82% occupancy). The Planning Department believes that paving over open space to create excess parking is unnecessary, especially considering that the site is adjacent to a wetland resource area. The Planning Department recommends the petitioner revise the site plan to remove all of the new stalls (12 stalls) proposed along the northern property line of #188-210 Needham Street, as this would still maintain a peak utilization of only 86% of the available stalls. Eliminating these stalls may also create an opportunity to create a walkway from the rear portion of the site to the restaurant entrance.

Conservation Commission Hearing

The petitioner presented revised plans to the Conservation Commission on June 11, 2015 and was granted a continuance until the next hearing on July 2, in order to provide additional details on stormwater management, slope stabilization, and mitigation landscaping efforts. The City’s Environmental Planner does not expect that there will be any significant changes to the site plan as a result of working through these details. If the special permit is approved, the Planning Department recommends that a condition for final approval by the Conservation Commission prior to building permit be included in the Board Order.

Pathway

The potential for providing a pathway over the former railroad beds was discussed at the previous public hearing, however at this point the petitioner has indicated that they would not provide this improvement.

Dumpster

The petitioner should confirm that the trash from the subject property will be disposed of in the dumpster on the #188-210 Needham Street site.

Additional Information Required

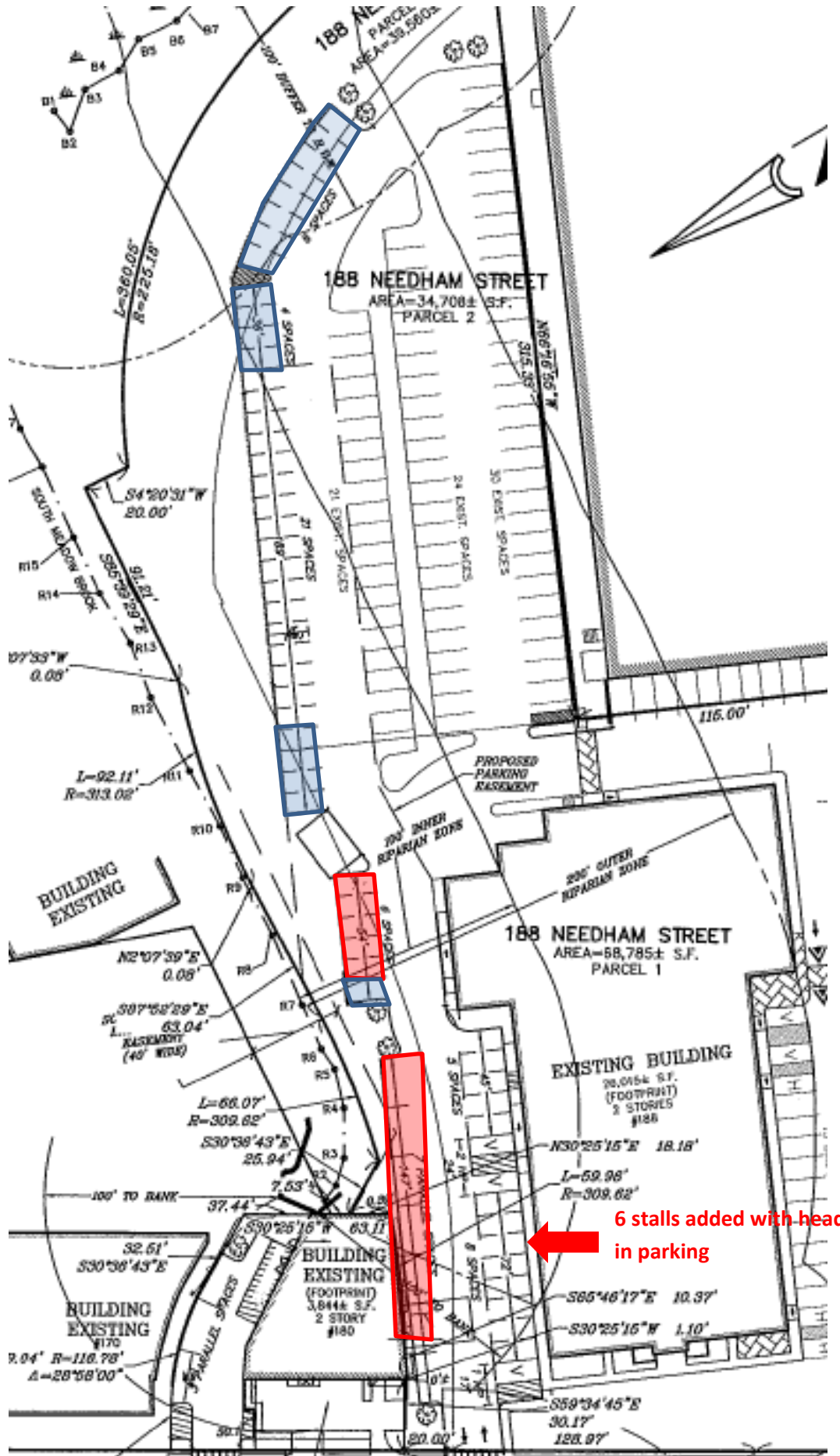
The petitioner should consider the Planning Department's comments in this memo and the concerns raised by the Transportation Division. The Planning Department also recommends that the petitioner note the materials of the façade on the proposed elevations, and include/identify shrubs or trees in the proposed landscaped islands adjacent to the proposed planter boxes, which appear as grass in the rendering.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A:** Modifications to the Proposed Parking Stalls
- Attachment B:** Parking Survey
- Attachment C:** Transportation Division Memorandum

Modifications to previous site plan and illustration of new stalls added

Blue = previously proposed stalls removed, Red = proposed stalls maintained





Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
55 Green Mountain Drive, South Burlington VT 05403-7824

June 11, 2015
File: 195311058

Attention: Mr. Kerry A. McCormack, PE
Crosspoint Associates, Inc.
300 Third Avenue, Suite 2
Waltham, MA 02451

Dear Mr. McCormack,

Reference: Parking, 180 Needham Street, Newton, MA

Per your request we have completed a parking investigation for your proposed redevelopment project at 180 Needham Street in Newton, Massachusetts. Based on our investigation we conclude that the proposed project will provide adequate parking supply for the proposed uses at the site. This conclusion is based upon measurement of existing site parking demands and estimates of future parking demands associated with the proposed new restaurant use at the site. Details of our parking investigation are provided below.

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is the redevelopment of an existing commercial building located at 180 Needham Street in Newton, Massachusetts. The existing two-story building has an approximate 3800 square foot footprint with retail use on the first floor and office use on the second floor. The existing first floor retail space will be remodeled to accommodate a restaurant with seating for approximately 105 people under the redevelopment plan.

At the same time parking conditions on the site and on adjacent parcels will be reconfigured to support the restaurant use. Under existing conditions eight "head in" parking spaces are provided along the Needham Street face of the 180 Needham Street building. A driveway on the north side of the building provides dead-end access to another five spaces. The proposed plan retains three parking spaces on the north side of the building and removes all of the parking fronting on Needham Street. The "reclaimed" space along Needham Street will be used as an outdoor seating area for the proposed restaurant and will include a sidewalk along Needham Street. Replacement parking is proposed at 188 and 210 Needham Street, an existing commercial development located immediately south of the subject site. Uses at this site include approximately 12,000 square feet of office space, 61,700 square feet of retail space and 2300 square feet of restaurant space. Parking at 188 and 210 Needham Street will be increased from 231 spaces to 248 spaces under the plan. Overall, the parking supply for the three combined parcels will be increased from 244 to 251 spaces.



Reference: Parking, 180 Needham Street, Newton, MA

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Surveys were conducted at the three properties on Friday, June 5 and Saturday, June 6, 2015 to quantify existing parking demands. At the time of the surveys all available space at the three properties was fully leased and occupied. The number of vehicles parked was recorded at one-hour intervals from 11 AM to 6 PM. The results of the survey are presented in Figure 1. As shown, existing parking demands are well below the existing parking supply of 244 spaces. A peak number of 127 vehicles were parked on Friday at noon. This represents only 52 percent of the available capacity. The Saturday peak reached only 95 vehicles reflecting the fact that office space on the site is generally vacant on Saturdays. Parking demands taper off to only 60 to 65 vehicles by 6 PM on both days.

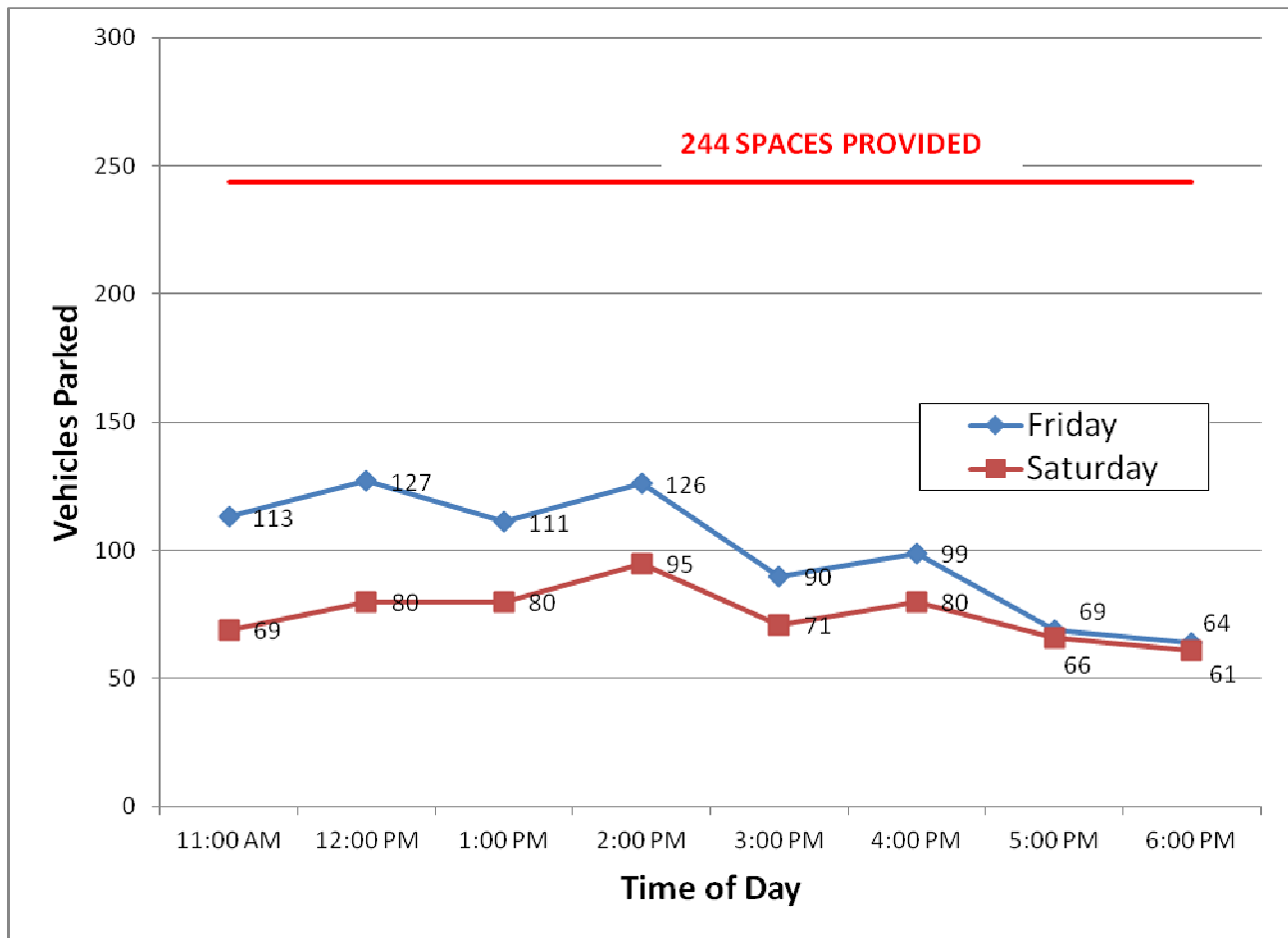


Figure 1 Existing Parking Demands



Reference: Parking, 180 Needham Street, Newton, MA

As noted, the observed parking demands reflect June 2015 conditions. Whereas approximately 78 percent of the floor space in the buildings served by the parking lots is retail space and whereas retail uses are subject to significant seasonal variation in parking demand, peak season parking demands at the site were estimated. Retail parking peaks during the Christmas shopping season. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) publication *Parking Generation (4th Edition, 2010)* suggests that parking demands at shopping centers are 34 percent higher in December relative to June. Applying this adjustment factor to the June data collected indicates a peak December parking demand of 170 vehicles on a Friday and 127 vehicles on a Saturday. These figures are well below the existing supply of 244 spaces.

3.0 Future Parking Demand

Future changes in parking demand were determined by examining industry standard parking rates provided in *Parking Generation*. Parking ratios for High-Turnover (Sit-Down) Restaurants (ITE Land Use Code 932) were applied. The peak parking ratio for High-Turnover restaurants located in suburban areas is 13.3 spaces per 1000 square feet of floor area on a weekday and 16.30 spaces per 1000 square feet of floor area on a Saturday. Peak occupancy occurs between 6 and 9 PM. Applying these rates to the proposed 3800 square feet of new restaurant space indicates a peak parking demand of 51 spaces on a weekday and 62 spaces on a Saturday. Likewise, parking demand estimates were developed for the retail space that will be vacated to make room for the restaurant. Based on ITE rates for Land Use Code 820- Shopping Center, 3800 square feet of retail space would generate weekday and Saturday peak parking demands of 15 and 18, vehicles, respectively. Consequently, as shown in Table 1, the net increase in parking demand would be 36 weekday vehicles and 44 Saturday vehicles.

Land Use	Parking Demand	
	Weekday	Saturday
Proposed 3800 SF Restaurant	51	62
Existing 3800 SF Retail	15	18
Net Change	36	44

SF=Square Feet of floor area

Table 1 Net Change in Parking Demands Due to Project

The above parking demand increases are likely conservative (high) as the ITE parking rates applied are based on data collected at suburban sites where virtually all access is by private automobile. The subject site is located in a corridor developed with a mix of uses connected by sidewalks and served by public transportation. Consequently, some use of alternative travel modes can be expected at this site resulting in lower parking demand forecasts than noted in Table 1.



Reference: Parking, 180 Needham Street, Newton, MA

4.0 Parking Adequacy

The above estimates of future increases in parking demand were combined with estimates of existing, peak season parking demands to assess parking adequacy at the site. These calculations are summarized in Table 2. As shown, future parking demands will be well below the proposed future parking supply of 251 spaces. The worst case, weekday condition, indicates a peak parking demand of 206 vehicles or only 82 percent of the proposed parking supply. This analysis is again conservative as it assumes that the peak restaurant parking demand coincides with the existing peak parking demands on the site. The existing parking demands generally peak at midday times while restaurant parking demands peak during the evening.

Item	Weekday	Saturday
Existing Peak Demand (vehicles) ¹	170	127
Added Demand Due to Project (vehicles)	36	44
Future Parking Demand (vehicles)	206	171
Proposed Parking Supply (spaces)	251	251
Peak Utilization (Percent)	82%	68%

¹Observed June 2015 parking demands increased by 34 percent to reflect December, peak season, conditions.

Table 2 Future Parking Adequacy



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Reference: Parking, 180 Needham Street, Newton, MA

5.0 Conclusion

The proposed project will reconfigure parking shared by land uses at 180, 188 and 210 Needham Street to better serve a proposed new restaurant tenant at 180 Needham Street. The proposed parking supply will be adequate to support the combined sites operating at 82 percent of capacity during peak times. Also, the proposed changes to parking conditions at 188 Needham Street (eliminating the “head in” parking along Needham Street) will create a safer condition for motorists and pedestrians traveling along Needham Street.

If you have any questions regarding the above investigation please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

Stantec Consulting

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Senior Project Manager
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Richard.Bryant@stantec.com

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City of Newton



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

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

DATE: June 17, 2015
TO: Stephen Pantalone, Senior Planner
FROM: William G. Paille, P.E., Director of Transportation
RE: **180 Needham Street**

The Transportation Division reviewed the site plan for 180 Needham Street. While the removal of back-out parking onto Needham Street has significant safety and aesthetic benefits, the Division has several access-related concerns about the proposed project, as follows:

1. **Traffic Impacts** – The Transportation Division is concerned that the number of seats in the proposed restaurant will increase traffic and turning movements on Needham Street. The TIAS indicates the use will create an additional 65 site generated vehicle trips during pm peak hours and 320 trips per day.
2. **Vehicle Access** – The petitioner is proposing to alter the current one-way exit driveway at the northern edge of the 188 Needham Street property so to create a two-way access drive, thereby adding additional left turn movements to and from Needham Street at this location. This is counter to the vision to reduce the number of curb cuts into sites along Needham Street, and to encourage the use and creation of internal roads between sites on Needham Street.

The Transportation Division is concerned about the potential for conflicts among motorists traveling northbound on Needham Street, who are turning left from the center double-left turn lane into the southerly Newton Nexus site driveway.

Vehicles would be competing for the same space with motorists traveling southbound on Needham Street, who are turning left from the center double-left turn lane into the new entrance driveway at the northern edge of 188 Needham Street. These two driveways are in close proximity, on either side of Needham Street, but are not directly aligned – potentially leading to conflicts.

Transportation Division staff requests that the petitioner provide additional detail regarding the vehicular volume and safety of left-turn access into these two driveways from Needham Street, including all vehicles expected to make left turn movements into and out of the southerly Newton Nexus Site Driveway, and all vehicles expected to make left turn movements into and out of the proposed 188 Needham Street Driveway under the build scenario, including all vehicles which would choose to use the new 188 driveway entrance to access 188 Needham Street building as well as to access 180 Needham Street. Until such additional information is provided, showing that access to and from both driveways would be provided in a safe and clear manner at all times, the Transportation Division recommends that the existing one-way exit be maintained, and that patrons of the proposed restaurant be directed to enter through the existing 188 Needham Street entrance driveway, located further to the south. As noted by the Transportation Division in for the Newton Nexus project, it may be preferable to request that MassDOT maintain two wide travel lanes through this section of Needham Street, rather than converting it into a three-lane cross section with a double-left center turn lane.

3. **On-site Parking** – The petitioner is proposing three employee-only parking stalls in the small parking area on the site. The Transportation Division is concerned that there may be insufficient space for vehicles to turn into the proposed parking stalls, and would prefer that the curb cut be eliminated or restricted to loading vehicles and trash pickup. If the parking is retained, it should be available only to employees of 180 Needham Street.
4. **Pedestrian Impacts** – The petitioner has removed the portion of the additional parking stalls that were to be located towards the rear of the 188 Needham Street site. However, the Transportation Division remains concerned about the lack of a sidewalk between the rear of 188 Needham Street and the proposed restaurant entrance, especially with the introduction of two-way traffic along the length of the Driveway. The Transportation Division suggests that the petitioner create improved pedestrian accommodations, such as a curbed pedestrian walkway.

Cc: Dave Turocy, DPW Commissioner, James Freas, Acting Planning Director, File