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Department of Planning and Community Development
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

From: James. D. Fitzgerald, P.E., LEED AP

Date: January 26, 2018

Subject: Babcock Place, Brookline (40B) ó Response to Peer Review Comments

In general, Vanasse & Associates' responses and subsequent evaluations provided in their November 17, 2017 Memorandum adequately address Environmental Partners' comments with a few exceptions. The following outlines items that require further clarification or attention. (Comments that do not require further discussion have not been included in the below summary.)

Comment 1

EPG's Original Comment: The existing traffic volumes (collected in January) should have been increased by 13.5% to adjust volumes to the average month. The adjustment would only have a minor impact on traffic volumes throughout the report.

VAI's Response: *As directed by the peer review consultant, traffic volumes collected during the month of January were adjusted upwards by 13.5 percent to reflect average month conditions. Revised capacity analyses were conducted under the 2017 Existing, 2024 No-Build and 2024 Build conditions.*

In addition to the seasonal factor adjustment, the future 2024 Build condition analysis also reflects the reduction in the total number of apartment units from 62 units to 50 units. This reduction in units results in a decrease in the projected peak hour traffic generation from 34 total trips (7 entering and 27 exiting) to 28 total trips (6 entering and 22 exiting during the weekday morning peak hour and from 52 total trips (34 entering and 18 exiting) to 45 total trips (29 entering and 16 exiting) during the weekday evening peak hour.

The results of the capacity analyses reveal little to no change from the results of the capacity analyses presented in the February 2017 TIA, with Project-related traffic increases continuing to have only minor projected impact to traffic operations within the study area.

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Updated traffic volume networks and capacity analysis worksheets are provided as an attachment to the memorandum.

EPG's Response:

The revised trip generation calculations used to establish Existing, No-Build, and Build volumes appear to be reasonable. The minor changes continue to show that the site will have only a negligible impact on adjacent intersections. (The largest increase in delay can be found along the westbound Freeman Street approach to Babcock Street that will experience an increase in delay of 6.9 seconds during the morning peak hour only, just enough to degrade LOS along the approach from D to E. The other locations will operate with smaller increases in delay.)

Comment 2

EPG's Original Comment: Additional traffic volumes were also included in establishing the 2024 No-Build traffic volumes to reflect individual substantial developments anticipated in the area. Developments taken into consideration include: 420 Harvard Street (42 apartments); 384 Harvard Street (62 apartments); 455 Harvard Street (17 apartments and 1,735 sf of retail); 21 Crowninshield Road (8 apartments); 1299 Beacon Street (74 apartments); and 8-10 Waldo Street (320 apartments). The methodology used appears to be appropriate, however backup data was not provided for the above projects to verify the volumes. Also, the proposed apartment development at 420 Harvard Street should include the proposed retail space component.

VAI's Response:

The additional traffic volumes expected to be generated by the above referenced background development projects were obtained from the traffic impact assessments prepared for each of these projects or ITE trip generation data in instances where traffic assessments were not required by the Town of Brookline. As requested by the peer review consultant, background development traffic volume networks were developed for these projects and are included as an attachment to this memorandum.

EPG's Response:

VAI's approximate trip generation of six anticipated nearby developments used to establish future No-Build volumes appears to be reasonable. Volumes are conservatively high as they were not reduced to account for alternative modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling and transit commuters.

Comment 3

EPG's Original Comment: Minimum SSD requirements are met at the site drive approach provided the cluster of trees along the northern side of the parcel

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(behind the sidewalk) is removed and additional obstructions are not installed.

VAI's Response:

The proposed site access driveways location has shifted further south on Babcock Street as part of the site plan revisions for the project. VAI has review available sight lines at the new driveway location, which reveals that greater than 200 feet of available sight distance is provided in both directions, exceeding AASHTO sight distance requirements.

EPG's Response:

Minimum SSD requirements are met at the relocated site drive approach provided the cluster of trees along the northern side of the parcel (behind the sidewalk) is removed and additional obstructions are not installed.

Comment 4

EPG's Original Comment: It appears that the development of the project site will impact existing parking spaces along the southern side of the parcel that face and protrude onto the adjacent property. Clarification of parking space usage is requested in order to determine if there are any potential parking impacts to the abutter that could in turn have an impact to on-street or town parking demand.

VAI's Response:

As part of the site redevelopment, existing perpendicular parking spaces located on the southern edge of the site will be eliminated. It is expected that residents that currently utilize these spaces will instead use either public on-street parking or private lots post-development.

EPG's Response:

It has been noted that the proposed development will eliminate several parking spaces used by the parcel to the south; therefore residents in the adjacent parcel will be forced to pursue other parking options.

Comment 5

EPG's Original Comment: The TIA proposes a driveway opening of at least 24 feet which would conform to the zoning requirements of a minimum 20 foot width for two-way access. Verification of the wide (on the site plan) is requested.

VAI's Response:

The revised site plan provides a 20 foot wide driveway which conforms to the Town of Brookline zoning requirements. Vehicle turning templates are provided as an attachment to this documents which depicts travel paths for both entering and exiting traffic.

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EPG's Response:

Despite our request for stamped engineered plans with dimensions, revised site plans have not been provided to reflect the latest design iteration that has changed since vehicle templates were last provided in November. Regardless, based on VAI's response, it is assumed that a 20 foot driveway with a 20 foot garage door opening will be provided and labeled on plan; verification is required.

Although a driveway width of 20 feet meets the Town's minimum requirement, considerations should be made for the sharp zig-zag configuration for vehicles entering or exiting the garage. As a result, vehicles cannot enter and exit simultaneously. During such an occurrence, vehicles will have to wait for opposing vehicles to clear. Given limited visibility around the corners of the garage door opening and the turning templates provided by the Applicant in November (showing an entering vehicle requiring the full driveway width), it is likely that there will be occurrences when one vehicle may have to back up to allow an opposing vehicle to pass.

Although it is preferred that two-way circulation be provided, if not feasible, it may be considered a condition of an urban environment given the low volume and slow speeds. However consideration should be made to make the maneuver easier. It is requested that AutoTurn templates be provided on the latest design plan. It is recommended that warning devices be considered at the garage door opening to notify vehicles if a vehicle is approaching in the opposing direction.

EPG's Updated Response: Revised plans (dated January 18, 2018) were provided showing an altered driveway design with entering and exiting vehicle templates. A 21 foot driveway width is provided on the updated plans and the previously proposed series of 90 degree bends in driveway alignment has been altered to provide less severe angle points, improving circulation and sight lines. The change resulted in a loss of parking (to be addressed by Walker Parking Consultants).

Comment 7

EPG's Original Comment: Driveway apron details have not been provided. It is recommended that the sidewalk elevation be maintained to prevent inconvenience to pedestrians.

VAI's Response:

The proposed site driveway has been designed to maintain the sidewalk elevation.

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EPG's Response: Driveway apron details have not been provided to show that the proposed site driveway has been designed to maintain the sidewalk elevation.

Comment 10

EPG's Original Comment: A loading zone and trash pick-up area is proposed on-site along the north side of the building and off of the roadway.

VAI's Response: *The updated trash pick-up area is proposed on-site along the north side of the building and off of the roadway.*

EPG's Response: Revised site plans have not been provided to show the new location of the loading zone and trash pick-up area.

EPG's Updated Response: Based on supplemental information provided by the Applicant, trash bins will be wheeled from the trash/recycling collection room from within the building to the trash/recycle truck and then back into the building. It is anticipated that the trash/recycle truck will impact the stream of southbound Babcock Street vehicular and bicycle traffic while the bin is being retrieved, emptied and then returned. (The Town is currently considering altering the southbound side of Babcock Street to include a 5-foot bike lane and a 9-foot vehicular travel lane.)

The Applicant intends loading to take place at the entry drive located at the side of the building but it is anticipated that the stopped vehicle will impact circulation of the entering and exiting traffic that was shown in the provided drawings.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.