

Ref: 7774

October 9, 2018

Mr. Richard L. Seegel, Chair  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
Town of Wellesley  
525 Washington Street  
Wellesley, MA 02482

Re: Response to Transportation Peer Review Commentary  
Wellesley Park – 148 Weston Road  
Wellesley, Massachusetts

Dear Chairman Seegel and Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Vanasse & Associates, Inc. (VAI) is providing responses to the comments that were raised in the October 4, 2018 letter prepared by VHB on behalf of the Zoning Board of Appeals in reference to their review of the February 2018 *Transportation Impact Assessment* (the “February 2018 TIA”) prepared by VAI in support of the proposed Wellesley Park residential development to be located at 148 Weston Road in Wellesley, Massachusetts (hereafter referred to as the “Project”). Responses to the comments pertaining to the Site Plans will be provided by others under separate cover. Listed below are the comments that were identified in the subject letter pertaining to the February 2018 TIA that required a response followed by the requested information.

## 1.0 Introduction

**Comment #1 (PARKING):** *The site is located in the Single Residence 15 (SR15) zoning district.*

*The Town's Zoning By-Law Section XXI (Off-Street Parking) does not specifically state parking ratios for Apartment uses in this district. In fact, Apartment uses are not allowed in these districts. Therefore, the Applicant's claim that the Project complies with the Town's zoning By-Laws is inaccurate.*

*For apartment uses, parking is defined in the following districts in the By Laws as follows:*

- *Business A or Industrial A District: 1 space/unit for Apartment Houses.*
- *Limited Apartment District: 1.5 spaces/dwelling unit of two bedrooms or less and two parking spaces for each dwelling unit providing three bedrooms or more;*
- *Linden Street Corridor Overlay District: 2.5 spaces per one, two, or three-bedroom unit.*

*While the 1.22 space/unit ratio meets the zoning in Business A and Industrial A, it does not meet the By-Law for the other apartment-based codes.*

***It has been VHBs experience that parking ratios of about 1.4-1.5 spaces per unit are the minimum for a suburban residential apartment complex such as this one. Parking on relatively isolated sites that don't have nearby off-street parking availability needs to account for residents, visitors, and deliveries. If it is***

*the Applicants intent to use a rate as low as 1.22 spaces/unit, they should provide detailed information on their parking plan and provide justification on where such a low of a rate has been used in a suburban environment successfully. Failure to provide adequate parking on a site such as this one could have spill over impacts into the surrounding neighborhoods.*

**Response:** VAI did not state that the parking ratio that is to be provided for the Project complies with the Town Zoning By-Laws; this statement appears to be a carry-over comment from the Wellesley Square project. That being said, the Applicant is in the process of reviewing opportunities to increase the parking supply for the Project to achieve a parking ratio of 1.5 spaces per unit.

## 2.0 Existing Conditions

*Comment #2 (EXISTING CONDITIONS): Weston Road is [described] as being under Town jurisdiction within the study area; however, there is a small section of the roadway, over the MBTA tracks that is under MassDOT jurisdiction.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

*Comment #3 (EXISTING CONDITIONS): Table 2 lists the peak hours as 8:00 – 9:00 AM and 4:15 – 5:15 PM, and indicates that the volumes came from Figure 3: 2018 Existing Peak Hour Traffic Volumes. However, the morning peak hour listed in Figure 3 is 7:15 – 8:15 AM. Please confirm which hour was used for the weekday morning peak hour volumes.*

**Response:** The weekday morning peak-hour listed in Table 2 should be 7:15 – 8:15 AM.

*Comment #4 (TRAFFIC VOLUMES): Because the proposed residential development is likely to generate traffic during weekends at a similar rate as on weekdays; coupled with the fact that the area surrounding the development is heavily influenced by the retail developments along Linden Street, the applicant should provide some basic information demonstrating that the weekend conditions experience less traffic (or is comparable) to the weekday conditions.*

**Response:** The Applicant will be collecting traffic volume data along Weston Road on Thursday, October 11<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, inclusive, and will provide the requested comparative analysis of weekday and weekend traffic volume conditions in a subsequent letter.

## 3.0 Future Conditions

*Comment #5 VHB concurs with the manner in which all the above data is presented. The information is consistent with the recommended practices of the ITE and the resulting ped, bike, and automobile trips all appear to be accurately presented.*

**Response:** No response required.

#### 4.0 Intersection Capacity Analysis

**Comment #6 (TRAFFIC OPERATIONS):** *At the intersection of Weston Road and Central Street, the northbound Weston Road right-turn is under STOP control; however, in the analysis, this movement is modeled as a permissive movement under the control of the signal. Please confirm that modeling this movement as signalized instead of free does not significantly change the analysis results.*

**Response:** Given the short storage length that is available to access the right-turn movement on the Weston Road northbound approach and the predicted queuing in the adjacent left-turn/through lane, access to the right-turn lane is controlled by the operation of the traffic signal system. As such, the right-turn movement was modelled under traffic signal control. Placing the right-turn movement under “free” or stop control vs. traffic signal control would result in less delay for this movement than is actually experienced.

**Comment #7 (TRAFFIC OPERATIONS):** *The intersection of Weston Road at Linden [Street] is unsignalized with flashing lights until the pedestrian phase is activated and all vehicular movements are stopped. The intersection was analyzed as a standard unsignalized intersection. While the operational analysis appears to be reflective of the operations, it would be helpful if the Applicant could provide some insight on the impact of the project [on] additional pedestrian calls and their impact on the signal operations.*

**Response:** The Project is expected to produce three (3) transit trips and two (2) pedestrian/bicycle trips during the weekday morning peak-hour and three (3) transit trips and three (3) pedestrian/bicycle trips during the weekday evening peak-hour. Assuming that all of the transit trips begin as a pedestrian trip and that the transit users are destined to the Wellesley Square commuter rail station, the Project would produce six up to (6) new pedestrian trips crossing Weston Road at Linden Street over the course of the hour. It is unlikely that the additional pedestrian actuations that may occur as a result of the Project will materially impact traffic operations at the Weston Road/Linden Street intersection given: i) the small incremental increase in pedestrian trips that the Project represents; and ii) it is likely that a portion of the pedestrian activity that will be associated with the Project will occur coincidental with existing pedestrian activity at the intersection that is also destined to/from the Wellesley Square commuter rail station.

#### 5.0 Sight Distance Evaluation

**Comment #8 (SIGHT DISTANCE):** *We are in general agreement with the methodology that was used to develop the analysis and the findings. The applicant should illustrate sight triangle areas for the Project site driveway on the Site Plans along with a note to indicate: "Signs, landscaping and other features located within sight triangle areas shall be designed, installed and maintained so as not to exceed 2.5-feet in height. Snow windrows located within sight triangle areas that exceed 3.5-feet in height or that would otherwise inhibit sight lines shall be promptly removed."*

**Response:** The sight triangle areas and the requested note will be added to the Site Plans.

## 6.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

### Project Access

**Comment #9 (SIGNAGE):** *The Applicant should add a similar note to the site plans that all signs and [pavement] markings within the Site should conform to the MUTCD.*

**Response:** The requested note will be added to the Site Plans.

**Comment #10 (SIDEWALKS):** *Given the general pedestrian nature of a residential project such as the one being proposed; coupled with the applicant's assumption that at least 10 percent of the project's impacts will be pedestrian in nature, the Applicant should evaluate and provide a sidewalk connection from within the site to the surrounding pedestrian network. There is currently no proposed pedestrian connection from the Site to existing public pedestrian infrastructure illustrated on the site plans. The applicant should also commit to the design, permitting, and construction of the pedestrian connection to the greater existing network.*

**Response:** The Applicant has committed to the design and construction of a pedestrian connection (sidewalk) between the Project site and the existing crosswalk at the Weston Road/Linden Street intersection. This sidewalk connection will be added to the Site Plans. In addition, a connection to the Crosstown Trail which abuts the Project site to the south is also being developed.

**Comment #11 (PICK UP/DROP OFF LOCATIONS):** *The Applicant should provide an update to the Board on the discussions with the Town's School Department on the placement of a school bus and other transit services such as the RIDE, Council on Aging, and paratransit operators. Care should be given to identifying locations where a stopped vehicle will not negatively influence traffic flow along Weston Road.*

**Response:** It is expected that school buses will pick-up/discharge students curb-side along Weston Road as school buses do not typically enter private property. The Project site is designed to accommodate moving vehicles and trash/recycling trucks (as well as the Wellesley Fire Department design vehicle) and, as such, vans associated with The RIDE, the Council on Aging and paratransit operators will pick-up and discharge passengers from within the Project site.

**Comment #12 (ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION):** *The Applicant should provide an update to the Board on the number and location of any electric vehicle charging stations within the garage.*

**Response:** The number and location of the electric vehicle charging stations is being advanced as a part of the pending revisions to the Site Plans.

## **Off-Site**

***Comment #13 (WESTON ROAD and LINDEN STREET): At the conclusion of the Road Safety Audit (RSA), the Applicant should identify what, if any, identified safety issues may be impacted and/or exacerbated by the development of the proposed Project and incorporate the recommended solutions into the design of this intersections operations. Given the severity of the safety issues at this location and the fatality that occurred, the RSA should have a specific focus on the pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure at this location as well as the more traditional vehicular environment as well.***

**Response:** Pending the completion of the RSA, the Applicant will provide monies to the Town for use in implementing the short-term, low-cost safety improvements that are suggested for the intersection as a part of the RSA. The exact amount of the financial contribution will be determined in the context of the value of the overall mitigation program for the Project that will be discussed with the Town. The RSA will evaluate safety at the intersection for all roadway users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists) and will provide suggestions for improvements to address identified deficiencies.

***Comment #14 (WESTON ROAD and CENTRAL STREET SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS) : During the design of the traffic signal timing plan for the intersection of Weston Road at Central Street, the applicant should confirm that existing pedestrian and vehicular clearance times are adequate and conform to current MUTCD standards, and update if necessary.***

**Response:** The traffic signal timing improvements at the Weston Road/Central Street intersection will include an assessment of the existing “yellow” and “all-red” clearance intervals, as well as the pedestrian intervals, to ensure compliance with current standards.

## **Transportation Demand Management**

***Comment #15 (TDM RECOMMENDATIONS): There are a number of recommendations in the TDM section (and throughout the Study in general). Should the Board elect to consider applying conditions to the Project's approval, the recommendations outlined within the TDM section (and elsewhere) should be memorialized.***

**Response:** The Applicant will accept a condition requiring advancement/implementation of the recommendations that are presented in the February 2018 TIA.

***Comment #16 (BICYCLE PARKING ACCESS): The architectural plans illustrate bicycle parking in the southern corners of the parking garage. The Applicant should identify how bicyclists will access these spaces from the outside and how visitors to the facility will utilize this secured parking area. If visitors/guests cannot access these spaces, then public bike storage should be provided outside the garage area for these users.***

**Response:** The number of bicycle parking spaces that are to be provided within the parking garage is being refined as a part of the revisions to the Site Plans. An exterior bicycle rack will be provided for visitors and will be added to the Site Plans.

Mr. Richard L. Seegel, Chair  
Town of Wellesley Zoning Board of Appeals  
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We trust that this information is responsive to the comments that were raised in the October 4, 2018 letter from VHB concerning their review of the February 2018 TIA prepared in support of the Project. If you should have any questions or would like to discuss our responses in more detail, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

VANASSE & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey S. Dirk in black ink.

Jeffrey S. Dirk, P.E., PTOE, FITE  
Principal

*Professional Engineer in CT, MA, ME, NH, RI and VA*

JSD/jsd

cc: R. Nagi, P.E. – VHB (via email)  
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