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Ref: 4452

February 27, 2006

Mr. Jay Szklutz
Planning and Economic Development Manager
Office of Community Development
19 Moore Street
Belmont, MA 02478

Re: The Residences at Acorn Park
Belmont, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Szklutz:

Vanasse & Associates, Inc. (VAI) is providing detailed responses to the traffic/transportation related comments raised in the February 9, 2006 letter prepared by the Town of Belmont Department of Public Works and the February 10, 2006 letter prepared by the Town of Belmont Planning Board concerning their review of the January 2006 Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS) prepared by VAI in support of The Residences at Acorn Park to be located off Acorn Park Drive in Belmont, Massachusetts. Listed below are each of the traffic/transportation related comments raised in the aforementioned letters followed by our detailed response.

Town of Belmont Department of Public Works

Comment: "I reviewed the Traffic Impact and Access Study prepared by Vanasse & Associates, Inc., dated January 23, 2006, and offer the following comments. A qualified consulting traffic engineer should be retained to thoroughly evaluate the study and related proposed improvements."

Response: VAI looks forward to the opportunity to work in a cooperative effort with the Town and the selected review consultant in evaluating the proposed project.

Comment: "The proposed changes to the intersection of Cross Street and Brighton Street should be evaluated and recommendations should be made for possible design improvements and construction alternatives. The traffic report does not recognize that Brighton Street and Cross Street, is newly reconstructed roadway."

Response: As presented in the January 2006 TIAS, the project proponent will design and implement an optimal traffic signal timing and phasing plan at the intersection of Cross Street at Brighton Street. With the implementation of the planned improvements, overall operating conditions at the intersection were shown to improve to a level-of-serve D during both peak periods with the addition of project-related traffic. No additional improvements appear to be required at this intersection in order to accommodate the project.

Comment: "The mitigation plan for the intersection of Lake Street and Cross Street should be developed."

Response: A detailed Conceptual Improvement Plan depicting the recommended geometric improvements at the intersection of Lake Street at Cross Street will be prepared and submitted under separate cover.

Comment: "The Town of Belmont in April 2006 will be constructing a round-about at the intersection of Blanchard Road/Grove Street/Washington Street. The proposed changes to the intersection of Concord Avenue and Blanchard Road should be evaluated to determine if there will be any adverse impacts at the round-about."

Response: The planned improvements to be completed at the intersection of Concord Avenue at Blanchard Road will consist of the design and implementation of an optimal traffic signal timing and phasing plan for the intersection. These improvements are not anticipated to result in residual negative impacts at the intersection of Blanchard Road/Grove Street/ Washington Street that would impact traffic patterns or intersection operations.

Comment: "The intersection of Pleasant Street and Brighton Street is identified as an intersection that will be impacted by the development however no mitigation is contemplated. This intersection should be analyzed and redesigned as needed to mitigate impacts for the development. Please note this intersection is currently scheduled for reconstruction under a MassHighway roadway project. Any proposed changes would have to be coordinated with MassHighway."

Response: Overall operating conditions at the intersection of Pleasant Street at Brighton Street were shown to remain at a level-of-service B during both peak periods with the addition of project-related traffic (no change over No-Build conditions). As such, improvements were not recommended at this intersection, nor do they appear to be required, to accommodate project-related traffic.

Town of Belmont Planning Board

Comment: "The application notes that a shuttle service will be operated to the Alewife T-station. *Details of this service including frequency and long term maintenance of the service should be provided. Additionally, the planning Board recommends that a permanent, safe barrier free pedestrian/bicycle path to the Alewife T station be provided and maintained.*"

Response: The project proponent has agreed to fund the establishment, operation and maintenance costs for a dedicated fixed-route shuttle service between the project site and the Alewife MBTA station. This service is estimated to cost approximately $100,000 per year to operate (capital costs, operations and maintenance). The frequency of service will be determined in consultation with the Town and the MBTA and will be established consistent with the schedule for

the Red Line service to Alewife station during the peak commuter periods. Off-peak service will be on an as-needed basis and coordinated through the property management office.

The proponent will work with the Town of Belmont, the City of Cambridge, the Department of Conservation and Recreation and adjacent property owners in order to establish a pedestrian and bicycle connection between Acorn Park Drive and the Alewife MBTA station.

Comment: "Access to public bus service is noted as an indication of the appropriateness of the site for housing. *The project should provide attractive waiting areas and work with public transit authorities to insure bus service is convenient to the site.*"

Response: The project proponent will work with the Town of Belmont and the MBTA to incorporate appropriate provisions for public transit access to the project site, including attractive, weather protected waiting areas.

Comment: "A complete review of Traffic Impacts and Assessment should be conducted to insure that proposed mitigations are adequate for the increased traffic resulting from this development."

Response: VAI looks forward to the opportunity to work in a cooperative effort with the Town and the selected review consultant in evaluating the proposed project.

Comment: "Accessibility to the site, both from Belmont and in general, for the residents of the proposed complex is a major concern. Given the site's isolation and the large affordable component, it is likely that many residents will be transit-dependent. *A map should be prepared showing the site within its transit context – distance to all stops and the quality of walkways connecting them to the site, pedestrian access around Little Pond and to Lake Street.*"

Response: Figure 6, *Public Transportation System*, presented in the January 2006 TIAS is attached and depicts the project site in relation to the overall context of available public transportation services in the area. A sidewalk will be constructed along the project frontage on the south side of Acorn Park Drive that will link the project to existing sidewalk facilities located along Frontage Road and the traffic signal at the intersection of Acorn Park Drive at Frontage Road and the Route 2 eastbound off-ramp. The existing traffic signal system will be modified as necessary to provide pedestrian and bicycle detection, and associated signs and pavement markings. Pedestrian access between the project site and Lake Street is provided by way of the existing sidewalk located along the south side of Frontage Road. Pedestrian access to Little Pond will be reviewed in consultation with the Town of Belmont and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

We trust that this information is responsive to the initial traffic/transportation related comments raised by the Town of Belmont Department of Public Works and the Belmont Planning Board concerning the subject 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.

Jeffrey S. Dirk, P.E., PTOE
Associate

JSD/mef

Attachment

cc: S. Corridan - O'Neill Properties
J. Ward, Esquire – Nutter, McClennen & Fish, LLP
R. Engler – Stockard Engler & Brigham
D. Albrecht, P.E. – Rizzo Associates, Inc.
RDV, BG, AJA, File