

Ref: 9026

April 19, 2022

Ms. Lori Clark, Chair
Planning Board
Town of Stow
380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775

Re: Response to Planning Department Comments
Athens Street Development
Stow, Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Clark:

Vanasse & Associates, Inc. (VAI) is providing responses to the comments that were raised in the March 11, 2022 letter concerning the Planning Boards initial review of the December 2021 *Transportation Impact Assessment* (the “December 2021 TIA”) that was prepared by VAI in support of the Athens Street residential community (hereafter referred to as the “Project”). In response to these comments, VAI has revised and reissued the TIA to incorporate the comments that were provided in the subject letter. Listed below are the comments that were identified in the March 11, 2022 letter followed by a summary of how the comment has been addressed in the revised TIA.

Proposed Road Safety Audit

Comment: *The Planning Board noted that the completion of a Road Safety Audit or other identification of safety and capacity improvements would be best performed during the permitting phase, rather than prior to construction, as stated in the study. This would allow for improvements to be considered during the permitting process.*

Response: The Applicant has contracted with Toole Design Group to conduct a Road Safety Audit (RSA) at the Route 117/Hudson Road intersection during the Project approval phase in order to provide the Town and the Planning Board with the benefit of the RSA to facilitate discussions concerning the advancement of the suggested improvements that will be an outcome of the RSA.

Pedestrian and Bike Improvements

Comment: *The study does not contemplate any improvements to pedestrian and bike safety along Hudson Road, despite the addition of 794 vehicles per day and the existence of several Hudson Road projects listed on the Town’s Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. Projects 30, 31, 32, and 33 on the attached Prioritization Plan regard the potential creation of a shared-use path along Hudson Road, installation of sidewalks and completion of road striping upgrades to improve pedestrian and bike environment. The Planning Board finds that Hudson Road is within the Study Area for Large Projects and could be considered for*

pedestrian and bicycle improvements in accordance with the mitigation options noted in Section 4.15 of the Special Permit Rules and Regulations.

Response: The Town's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan¹ has been reviewed as it relates to the recommendations that were provided for the study area roadways and intersections, including the construction of a shared-use path, sidewalks and bicycle accommodations along Hudson Road. The Applicant has committed to providing a financial contribution to the Town to advance these improvements.

Masters Academy at Former Bose Site

Comment: *The Planning Board is expecting an application for the creation of a sports focused academic facility at 688 Great Road, which is expected to include 385 dormitory beds and nearly 700 students at full capacity. The Planning Board has been keeping an updated webpage on the proposal at <https://www.stow-ma.gov/planning-board/pages/masters-academy-proposal-former-bose-site>. The Traffic Study should demonstrate at least an acknowledgement of how the two projects could create combined effects, particularly in regard to the Hudson Road/Route 117 intersection.*

Response: The TIA has been updated to acknowledge the planned Masters Academy at the former Bose site, including the additional impacts on the transportation infrastructure that may result from the project.

Traffic Counts may be Skewed due to COVID

Comment: *It would be helpful for the consultant to provide comment on whether work from home trends may have provided traffic counts that do not reflect future trends. Similarly, the consultant could provide a better understanding of how or whether the traffic count methodology could be amended to reflect any pandemic trends that may have been present.*

Response: The TIA has been updated to provide an expanded discussion on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on traffic volumes and travel patterns within the Town and the study area. As a result of this review, an adjustment (increase) was applied to the baseline traffic volumes to reflect the identified reduction in traffic volumes over pre-COVID levels that has been evidenced in the area.

Route 2 as a Benchmark for Summer Traffic

Comment: *Several Planning Board members were surprised that traffic on Route 2 would have been found to be greater during the summer months, as the opposite observation has been made by several members over the years.*

Response: Additional data has been research through MassDOT in order to validate the seasonal adjustment (none required) that was used and is documented in the revised TIA.

¹Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, Stow, Massachusetts; Howard Stein Hudson; April 2018.



Basis for Trip Generation

Comment: *The study focuses its trip generation statistics on the “Senior Adult Housing – Single Family” definition to establish traffic characteristics. However, given that the overlay district’s zoning no longer requires an age restriction, Planning Board members felt that a factor should be added to the calculations that reasonably estimates the percentage of units that are likely to be occupied by younger adults, and/or parents with children.*

Response: In order to account for the possibility that a portion of the proposed units may be occupied by households that have children and working family members, the trip-generation calculations have been revised to reflect 50 percent of the residential units (70 units) consisting of traditional single-family homes and the remaining 50 percent (71 units) consisting of senior housing units.

Walcott Street/Randall Road Intersection

Comment: *Given the anticipation of 189 units of mixed income housing (25 senior apartments; 40 cottage rental units and 124 single family detached) at Stow Acres golf course, the Planning Board noted the absence of focus on the Walcott Street/Randall Road intersection. This intersection is of particular interest to the Board, given its offset to Walcott Street, existing sight line issues, and its likelihood as the preferred east – west route between Hudson Road and Route 62. The consultant should consider whether any mitigation measures at this intersection could be warranted.*

Response: Recommendations have been provided to enhance safety and improve sight lines at the Walcott Street/Randall Road intersection that will be advanced as a part of the Project, subject to receipt of all necessary rights, permits and approvals.

Hudson Road/Edson Street

Comment: *The Hudson/Edson intersection is currently served by a yield sign for vehicles entering onto Hudson Road. The consultant should review whether or not this intersection should be serviced by a stop sign or whether there are opportunities for reconfiguration to improve safety.*

Response: It is recommended that a STOP-sign and marked STOP-line be installed on the Edson Street approach to Hudson Road in order to regulate the assignment of the vehicular right-of-way at the intersection and to define the desired stopping point for vehicles on the Edson Street approach. These improvements will be implemented in conjunction with the Project, subject to receipt of all necessary rights, permits and approvals.

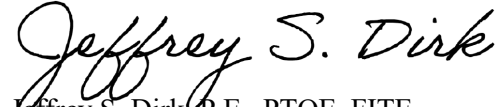


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We trust that this information is responsive to the comments that were raised in the March 11, 2022 letter concerning the Planning Boards preliminary review of the December 2021 TIA. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

VANASSE & ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey S. Dirk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeffrey S. Dirk, P.E., PTOE, FITE
Managing Partner

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

DCL/jsd

