



## **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

Arlington Planning Department, 730 Mass Ave,  
Arlington MA, c/o Daniel Amstutz.

Date: August 6, 2020.  
To: Jenny Raitt, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development.  
From: TAC 1207-1211 Massachusetts Avenue Working Group.  
Subject: Traffic Impact and Access Study Review.

### **Memorandum.**

The TAC working group for 1207-1211 Massachusetts Avenue (proposed hotel development) has reviewed the proponent's Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS), dated June 2020. The working group includes Jeff Maxtutis (TAC Vice Chair), Tycho Nightingale, Dan Amstutz (Planning and Community Development Department), Scott Smith and Howard Muise (TAC Chair), and offers the following comments on the TIAS and site plan documents. The review did not include the proposed Traffic Reduction Plan for the project.

1. The TIAS concludes "that the vehicle trips generated by the Project can be accommodated at study area intersections and roadways without the need for further mitigation. Further investigation of safety issues throughout the area should be considered by the Town of Arlington." Although the proposed project's traffic impacts are not substantial, the impacts on traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists are also not negligible. The working group recommends the following:

✎ In its summary, the report also concludes that "There are safety issues at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue at Appleton Street and Appleton Place based on MassDOT crash data. A fatal collision involving a bicyclist recently occurred at this location." This conclusion appears to contradict the overall conclusion of the report cited above. It is standard practice in traffic impact reports for the applicant's traffic engineer to identify potential mitigation measures for deficient locations impacted by a proposed project. Since the project will add vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian travel through the Massachusetts Avenue/Appleton Street/Appleton Place intersection, which is a high crash location, the ARB should ask the applicant to identify potential improvements at the intersection and should consider asking the applicant to contribute to mitigation improvements at that location.

✎ The applicant should submit a parking supply/demand analysis to show that the project is providing sufficient on-site, off-site and on-street parking to accommodate the parking needs of hotel and restaurant patrons and employees (see more detailed discussion of parking below). This analysis should include demonstrating that an additional eight tandem spaces can be accommodated on-site and should be based on the peak time of combined hotel and restaurant demand. In addition, the analysis should include consideration of the possible loss of on-street parking with potential improvements at the Massachusetts Avenue/Appleton Street/Appleton Place intersection.

✎ Clark Street sidewalk, roadway, and curb adjacent to the site appears to be in poor condition. The Applicant should repair the sidewalk curb between Massachusetts Avenue and the project driveway along the site frontage of Clark Street. The existing pedestrian ramp on the southeast corner of Massachusetts Avenue/Clark Street is not ADA compliant. There is no ramp on the opposite

corner. The Applicant should provide ADA-compliant ramps and detectable warning panels on both corners.

✎ The site concept shows two trees on the Mass Ave frontage. There is one existing street tree which is not shown. The applicant should explore if the existing street tree can be retained and whether additional street trees can be provided to improve the walking environment along Massachusetts Avenue.

✎ As shown in the renderings of the front of the building, there will be a sidewalk along the west side of the semi-circular driveway but not on the east side, which is depicted to have plantings. A sidewalk should be added on the east side to allow pedestrians to walk safely to the hotel front door coming from the east along Massachusetts Avenue or the bike rack.

✎ The Proponent should be required to provide handicap ramps on all sidewalk approaches to the three driveways. No ramps are depicted on the Landscape and Grading plans. Where the front driveways cross the sidewalk, the detail on the Grading Plan shows a 1.5 percent cross slope for three feet starting from the back of sidewalk and up to 15 percent for the remainder of the distance to the street. The driveway slopes should be reanalyzed to make sure they are ADA compliant.

1. The TAC working group has the following questions and comments about the study methodology:

✎ The report does not include a parking supply/demand analysis. The proposed parking supply consists of 24 tandem spaces in below-grade parking, accessed via Clark Street at the back of the building. Vehicle parking will be controlled by valet service that will pick-up and drop-off vehicles in the circular driveway in front of the building. The letter, dated June 24, 2020, from Jennifer Raitt, Director of the Department of Community Development, states that an additional 10 off-site spaces will be provided at the Ottoson School and 1289 Massachusetts Avenue. This information should be included in the TIAS. The report indicates that there is on-street parking in the area and that the hotel will not reduce the number of one-street spaces and that an additional eight tandem spaces could be added. The site plan does not appear to show enough space to accommodate additional parking. The report should show that there is sufficient on-site, off-site and on-street parking to accommodate hotel and restaurant parking for patrons and employees. This should include demonstrating that an additional eight tandem parking spaces can be accommodated on-site and should be based on the peak time of combined hotel and restaurant demand. In addition, the analysis should include consideration of the possible loss of on-street parking with potential improvements at the Massachusetts Avenue/Appleton Street/Appleton Pace intersection.

✎ Pedestrian/bicycle volumes were only gathered for AM and PM commuter peak periods on one day in February (February 4, a day with cloudy weather and temperature in the 40s). The pedestrian/bicycle volumes were listed in the Appendix but were not analyzed in the report. The study did not capture the school-related mid-afternoon peak period. Understanding existing and future pedestrian/bicycle activity will help to identify any existing or prospective safety issues in the area. Since counts cannot be taken at this time due to the Covid pandemic, the applicant should identify any existing or prospective safety issues for pedestrians and bicycles

**Transportation Advisory Committee Members:**

Daniel Amstutz (Planning), Ky Bertoli, Aravind Basavapathruni, Wayne Chouinard (Public Works), Lenard Diggins, Charles Giroux, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise (Chair), Tycho Nightingale, Officer Corey Rateau (Police), Scott Smith, Laura Swan

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↘ Section 3.4 of the TIAS discusses the various factors (walking, bicycling, and using transit) that could reduce the share of trips that would be made by motor vehicle but never states what vehicle mode share was used. The report should provide that information. This would help to determine if the 24 proposed parking spaces are adequate for the project's parking demand (see comment above).

↘ There were no traffic counts performed at existing site driveways to identify existing site trip generation. The consultant used Institute of Transportation Engineer (ITE) trip generation rates to estimate the existing volume of traffic generated by the current uses on the site. This included using High Turnover Sit Down Restaurant trip generation rates to estimate the existing trip generation of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Club. It is our understanding that the DAV closed in 2014 and, therefore, has not been generating site trips since then. It seems contrived to consider future trips from the restaurant being offset by "existing" trips from the DAV. If the existing number of trips from the site was reduced by the 28 vehicle trips in the AM peak hour and 27 in the PM peak hour estimated for the DAV, the net increase in new project trips would be about double the trip generation presented in the report.

↘ The study erroneously refers to this part of Massachusetts Avenue as Route 2A. Summer Street is Route 2A in this area.

↘ It should be noted that the crash rate at Massachusetts Avenue/Forest Street/Burton Street of 0.54 nearly meets the threshold rate of 0.57, which is indicative of a high accident location.

↘ The future analysis year was 2025 (5 years). Typically a 7-year horizon is used.

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