



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TOWN HALL, 730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476
TELEPHONE 781-316-3090

MEMORANDUM

To: Zoning Board of Appeals
From: Kelly Lynema, Assistant Director, Department of Planning and Community Development
cc: Applicant, 10 Sunnyside Avenue
Date: April 23, 2023
RE: 1021-1027 Massachusetts Avenue Comments from Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments

To aid the Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in their review of the Arlington Land Realty, LLC Application for a Comprehensive Permit to develop Thorndike Place, the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) invited Town departments, boards, and commissions to provide comments and questions on the application materials.

At the ZBA's request, the DPCD solicited comments from the following: Affordable Housing Trust (Trust), Arlington Fire Department (AFD), Arlington Police Department (APD), Clean Energy Future Committee, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent, Health Department/Board of Health, Redevelopment Board (ARB), Senior Transportation Planner, Town Engineer, Town Manager, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Tree Committee, Tree Warden. Comments were received from all except AFD and APD. The Conservation Commission noted that the property is not under their jurisdiction, therefore they have no comments to provide. Comments from the Senior Transportation Planner and Affordable Housing Trust are forthcoming.

Below and attached to this memo are the collected comments. A summary of responses is indicated by topic below:

- 1. Design:** The applicant is proposing a five-story building with commercial space and parking on the ground level, and four floors of apartments above. Members of the ARB noted their support for this type of project in Arlington, both for its provision of necessary affordable housing and for revitalizing a former automotive site. The ARB felt that the massing was well-considered; the provision of the roof deck amenity above the parking garage in particular serves to break down the scale of the building.

The Board added that the overall size and scale are appropriate for the B4 zoning district and this particular location near Broadway.

Façade

- Consider repeating the windows on the front of the building along the front of the garage, or some other way of punching out the screening of the garage area to provide additional fenestration on the ground floor.
- The rear of the building lacks sufficient articulation. The ARB encouraged the architect to provide relief through façade differentiation, some applied element, change in materials (e.g., vertical paneling vs. monolithic elements), or carrying through the use of color such as applied on the front of the building.
- While the ARB appreciates that the building is light in color, they are interested in the use of color in a few areas (e.g., the stair), and would be interested in seeing that type of relief applied elsewhere to break down some of the more monolithic elements. The applicant may want to consider introducing color changes where cladding changes from horizontal to vertical and adjust the depth of the cornice to add a shadow line and add depth to the building.
- The ARB is concerned about the appearance of some of the screening on the garage between the brick bays and on the second floor guard rail, which reads like chain link on the renderings. The applicant is encouraged to consider a screening element that has more opacity and visibility to the interior space.

Commercial Space

- The ARB noted that 600 square feet is very small for a commercial space; if the space can't viably be leased as a commercial space or made larger to provide a more viable commercial space, the ARB recommended dedicating it as a programmable common area for residents. The ARB noted that 1,000 square feet is likely the minimum floor plate necessary to create a usable and rentable commercial space in this location.
- Another alternative would be relocating the common area to the first floor and moving meeting rooms and office spaces to the second floor and enlarge the commercial office space.
- If there is a tenant identified for the commercial space, the ARB noted that additional clarification on a sign band and/or recommended sign types should be requested.
- Additional differentiation between the lobby entrance and the entry to the commercial space should be provided, whether through lighting, sign treatment, or façade differentiation.

General Design Comments

- The ARB recommended adding lighting to the perimeter of the parking garage, as Sunnyside Ave is currently not well lit, noting that additional lighting would make this project a more family-friendly development.
- The ARB noted multiple areas dedicated to back of house, and questioned whether some could be removed or added back to the apartments for more living area.

2. **Affordable Housing:** Comments from the Affordable Housing Trust are anticipated the week of 4/24/2023.

- 3. Conservation and Environmental Amenities:** As noted above, the Conservation Commission commented that the property is not under their jurisdiction. The Tree Warden responded that he did not have any comments on the application. The Tree Committee noted the plans for some native trees to be planted along the sidewalk, and encouraged the applicant to specify shade trees for these locations and provide quantities sufficient to help mitigate the urban heat island effect in the project area.

The ARB noted that this street floods quickly and has a high water table. While this site is at a higher elevation than other areas of Sunnyside Avenue, the ARB asked whether the high water table was a factor considered in the design of the project.

Additionally, ARB noted the following:

- The Zoning Bylaw requires one public shade tree shall be provided every 25 linear feet of lot frontage along a public way. This should be required per Section 6.3.
- While the proposal has very little open space, the development's proximity to the Alewife Greenway, Waldo Park, and the second floor roof deck compensate for the lack of open space.

- 4. Parking, Circulation, Access, and Connections:** The TAC and the ARB provided a review of traffic, parking, and circulation and provided the following comments. Please also refer to the attached memorandum from TAC and the Town Engineer. As noted above, comments from the DPCD Sr. Transportation Planner, who begins employment with the Town on 4/24/2023, are forthcoming.

TAC provided recommendations for bus stop accessibility improvements at Broadway and Sunnyside. TAC also noted numerical discrepancies between the TIS and the site plan, provided clarification on span of service for bus route 87, and recommended factoring this project into corridor improvements.

The Town Engineer provided feedback on sidewalks and sewer via notes on the attached site plans and as summarized below:

Sidewalks

- A 5' minimum sidewalk width between the tree well and the building is required.
- Ensure that street tree plantings are in accordance with Town regulations and approved by the Tree Warden.
- The applicant should consider reducing impervious surface at the sidewalk by providing a continuous grass strip along the curb line.
- Consider providing some sort of pedestrian warning or notification where the sidewalk crosses the garage entrance.
- There may be a conflict between the proposed street trees and overhead wires.
- There may be some redundancy between the proposed hydrant on the plan right of the proposed building and adjacent services; a hydrant located across the street from the building and a fire connection located on the façade of the building less than 20 feet away from the proposed hydrant.

Sewer/Infrastructure

- Sewer line cleanout should be 10 feet from the building.
- Identify manholes on the site plan.
- Identify sump elevation.
- Identify the outlet for the foundation drain and elevations of the foundation drain.
- Call out DMH #4 and CB#3 on the site plan.
- At least one inspection port will be needed for the infiltration area.

Garage

- The ARB recommended specifying a quieter rolling grill used for the garage door to avoid disruptive noise during garage door operation.

Vehicular Parking

- The ARB noted that the application materials provide two different required parking amounts to be waived, and both figures are incorreced. For 43 units, under Section 8.2.4 there should be 43 minus 4 spaces required, as the applicant is entitled to a 10% reduction in parking for affordable housing. Under this calculation, the HCA would be requesting a 16 space parking reduction.

Bicycle Parking

- The ARB noted that the proposal includes much less bicycle parking than required and feels that this is a mistake, as the location is ideal for cyclists. The ARB recommended reducing the parking by one or two spaces in order to meet the bicycle parking requirements and provide additional space for stroller parking.

Traffic Impact Analysis

- The ARB noted that there was not a mode adjustment in the Traffic Impact Study due to the proximity of transit access in the area, and questioned whether this was an oversight or a conscious decision by the project team.

5. **Utilities:** Please refer to the attached comments and recommendations from the Town Engineer.
6. **Stormwater:** Please refer to the attached comments and recommendations from the Town Engineer.
7. **Public Health:** The Board of Health provided specific comments on trash storage and disposal, the project's HVAC system, and noise impact on future tenants from surrounding businesses. Please refer to the attached comments and recommendations for future details.

One ARB member noted that there was a release on the site reported to the Department of Environmental Protection around 20 years ago; while this was likely cleaned up in the intervening years, it is important that the HCA understand the status of the issue.

8. Sustainability: The CEFC will vote on 4/28 to approve the following statement from the CEFC Chair: The HCA project's plan to pursue Passive House standards aligns with the Town's Net Zero Action Plan. Pursuit of Passive House would also fulfill the requirement of the State's new Specialized Stretch Code, which the Select Board has recommended that Town Meeting adopt this spring. The addition of solar PV to the HCA project further supports the Town's goals of maximizing local renewable energy production. Furthermore, the Stretch Code—automatically effective for Arlington's commercial buildings as of July 1, 2023—requires that 20% of parking spaces have wiring to support electric vehicle charging. HCA could clarify what electrical capacity there might be for future EV charging station expansion at 10 Sunnyside. Finally, HCA could clarify the fuel sources for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), water heating, and appliances. These systems ideally should be all electric to align with the Town's net zero goals or, if the systems are not all electric, pre-wiring should be provided for future electrification of these systems per the Specialized Stretch Code.

Overall, the provision of a 100% affordable housing development along a bus line and within walking/biking distance of multiple amenities is supported by the boards, commissions, and departments. The project fits well with the Master Plan goals of encouraging mixed-use development along Arlington's main commercial corridors and providing a variety of housing options for a range of incomes, ages, and needs.

As noted by several commenters, the service, time, and consideration of the ZBA is sincerely appreciated. Boards and departments were pleased to be asked to provide comments on what was seen as a positive addition to Arlington's housing supply. I am happy to coordinate with boards, commissions, and Town staff should the ZBA wish to ask additional questions pertaining to their respective areas of expertise.

Attachments:

- TAC Comments on 10 Sunnyside Comprehensive Permit Application, dated April 10, 2023
- Town Engineer comments as provided on site plans
- 10 Sunnyside Avenue Board of Health Comments, dated April 13, 2023



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Arlington Planning Department, 730 Mass Ave,
Arlington MA

Date: April 10, 2023
To: The Department of Planning and Community Development
From: The Transportation Advisory Committee
Subject: Comments on 10 Sunnyside Ave Comprehensive Permit Application (40B)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Make the bus stops at Broadway / Sunnyside handicap accessible. This will include installation of landing pads and a curb cut ramp to facilitate potential future installation of a marked crosswalk on the south side of Broadway, across from Sunnyside. (The nearest existing curb cut is the driveway to the cemetery, more than 200 feet away.)
2. Share the study with Somerville. DCR/Somerville recently received a State earmark to study improvements to the Broadway / Route 16 intersection.

COMMENTS:

3. From the standpoint of transit access, this is not a bad location for multi-family housing.
4. Section 1.2 of the TIS, it notes that there is a requirement for 9 parking spaces for 40 units, but does not mention parking for the commercial space, or if the commercial space will require handicap accessible parking. The TIS says there are 22 spaces and the site plan shows 21 spaces.
5. Section 3.3 of the TIS, two comments on transit
 - a. Span of service for bus 87 is less than that for the MBTA as a whole. Bus 87 does not have late evening or Sunday service in Arlington.
 - b. The Clarendon Hill busway is approximately 1000' (5 minute walk) from the project site. It offers several additional bus routes, including late evening and Sunday service
6. Both Somerville and Arlington are looking at the Broadway corridor; this project should be factored into proposed corridor improvements.

Below is a Google street view picture, facing east, of the Broadway/Sunnyside bus stop. This lightly used stop has several deficiencies: no nearby pedestrian crossing, no landing pad, and often not cleared of snow in the winter.



10 SUNNYSIDE AVE.

PROJECT
10 SUNNYSIDE AVE.
ARLINGTON, MA 02474

OWNER
Housing Corporation of
Arlington

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BLW ENGINEERS

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MEPFP

MEPFP

STAMP

DATE: 03/09/2023
ISSUE/REVISION: COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT

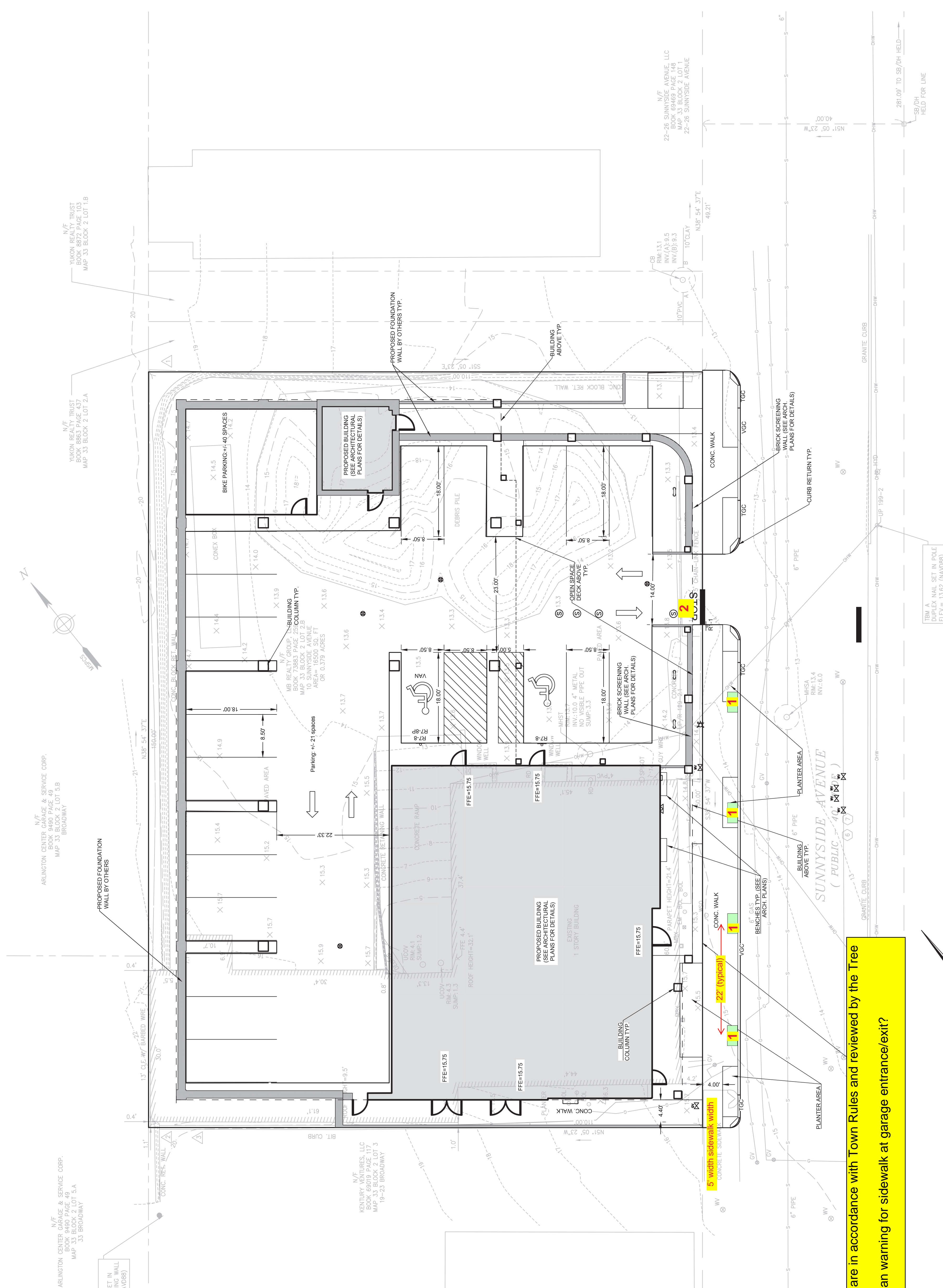
REVISIONS ON SHEET

SCALE: 1" = 10'
UTILE PROJECT NUMBER: Arlington, MA

SITE LAYOUT PLAN

C2.00

- LEGEND:**
- FGC PROPOSED FLUSH GRANITE CURB
 - VGC PROPOSED VERTICAL GRANITE CURB
 - LIMIT OF WORK
 - PROPOSED SIGN
 - OVERHEAD BUILDING LOCATION



1) Ensure Street Tree Plantings are in accordance with Town Rules and reviewed by the Tree Warden
2) Provide some form of pedestrian warning for sidewalk at garage entrance/exit?

1 inch = 10 feet

10 SUNNYSIDE AVE.

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ARLINGTON, MA 02474

Housing Corporation of
Arlington

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ME/PPP

STAMP

DATE
03/09/2023

ISSUE/REVISION
COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT

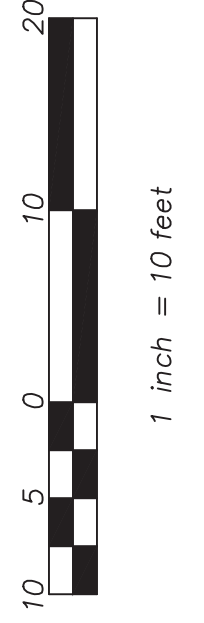
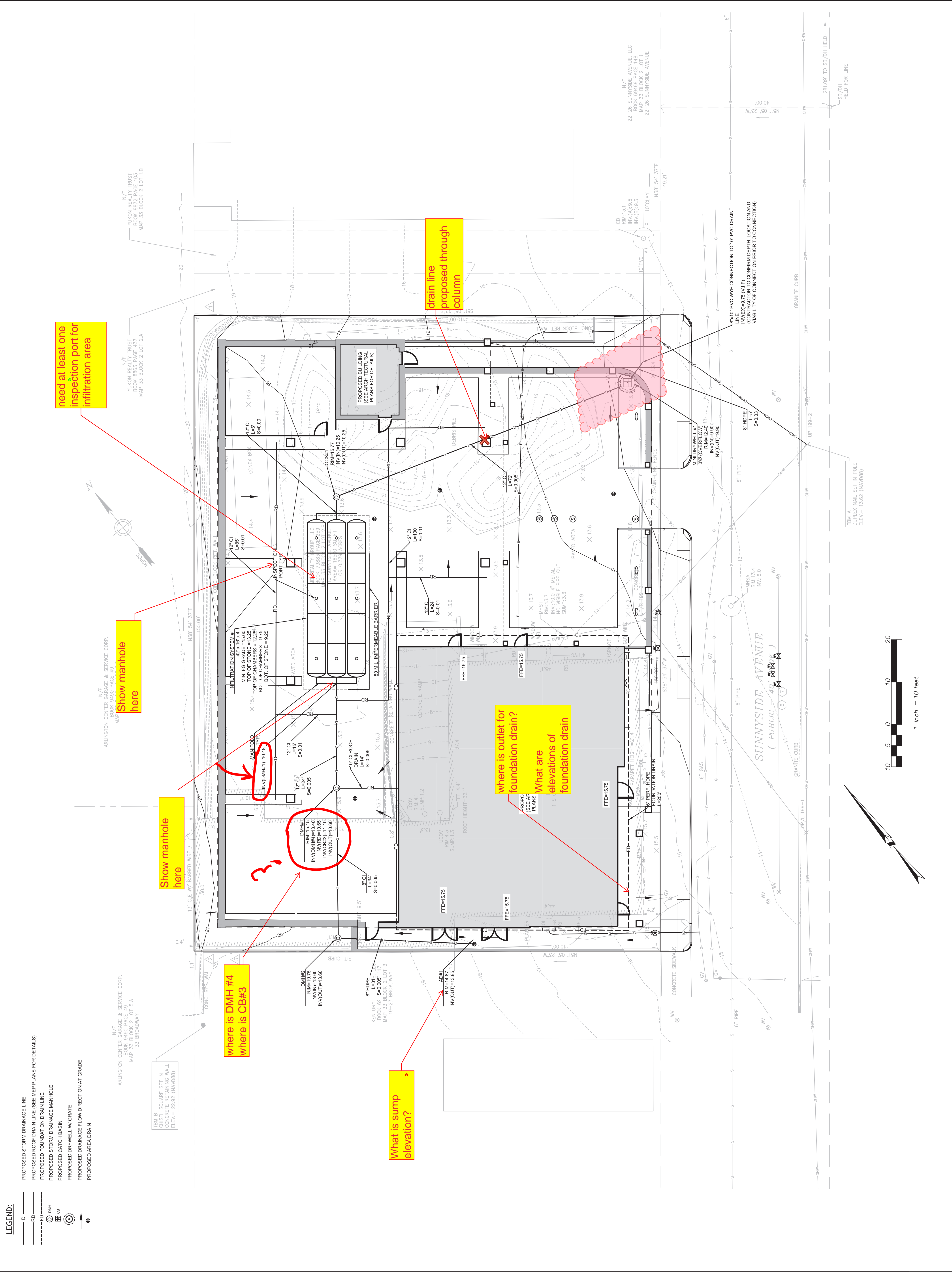
REVISIONS ON SHEET

SCALE
1" = 10'

UTILITE PROJECT NUMBER
Arlington, MA

STORMWATER
MANAGEMENT
PLAN

C5.00





Town of Arlington
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Board of Health

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Arlington, MA 02476

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MEMORANDUM

To: Zoning Board of Appeals
From: Pdraig Martin, Lead Health Compliance Officer
Date: April 13, 2023
RE: 10 Sunnyside Avenue

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the materials provided for the 10 Sunnyside Avenue development project in East Arlington. After a thorough review, the Board of Health has the following comments.

Trash Storage and Disposal:

The submitted plans show a designated trash room of approximately 293 square feet on the first floor of the structure, with no other space allocated for trash storage. In accordance with 105 CMR 410.000: MINIMUM STANDARDS OF FITNESS FOR HUMAN HABITATION (STATE SANITARY CODE, CHAPTER II), the property owner must provide adequate receptacles for garbage and rubbish accumulation, ensure accessibility for building occupants, and prevent objectionable odors from entering any dwelling units. Considering the proposed 43 dwelling units and commercial space, the Board is concerned that the single designated space on the main floor may be insufficient for trash storage and disposal.

HVAC System:

HVAC System: The project documents do not provide information on the type and location of the HVAC system to be installed at the site. In recent years, our department has received several complaints related to noise generated by certain HVAC systems. To ensure compliance with the Town's Noise Abatement Bylaw and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's 310 CMR 7.00: Air Pollution Control regulation, the Board requests information on the proposed HVAC system's location and specifications.

Noise Impact from Surrounding Businesses:

Noise Impact from Surrounding Businesses: The proposed mixed-use building will be situated in a B4 zoned area and will be immediately adjacent to B2A zoned property. This location may expose occupants of the residential units to noise from surrounding businesses. The project proposal does not indicate if there are any considerations or mitigation measures in place to reduce sound transmission to the dwelling units. The Board recommends addressing potential noise impacts and incorporating appropriate mitigation strategies into the project plans.