Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Barney Heath
Director

PUBLIC HEARING/WORKING SESSION II MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 1, 2019

MEETING DATE: February 5, 2019

TO: Land Use Committee of the City Council

FROM: Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development
Michael Gleba, Senior Planner

CC: Petitioner

In response to questions raised at the City Council public hearing, the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming public hearing/working session. This information is supplemental to staff analysis previously provided at the Land Use Committee public hearing.

PETITION #483-18 **182-184 California St.**

Petition #483-18 for SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to allow the expansion of a nonconforming multi-family dwelling use by constructing a three-story multi-family development 32.6' in height in a manufacturing district with greater than 20,000 sq. ft. new gross floor area, allowing a nonconforming front setback, to allow a reduction of the requirement for parking to 1.25 stalls per unit, to waive maneuvering space for restricted parking stalls, to allow tandem parking and to allow retaining walls greater than four feet in height in the setback in Ward 1, Newton, at **182-184 California Street** (Section 11 Block 12 Lot 12) and **166 California Street** (Section 11 Block 12 Lot 13), containing approximately 18,121 sq. ft. of land in a district zoned MANUFACTURING. Ref: 7.3, 7.4, 4.4.1, 7.8.2.2, 4.3.2.B.1, 4.3.3, 7.8.2.C.2, 4.3.2.B.3, 5.1.4, 5.1.8.B.6, 5.1.13, 5.1.8.E.1, 5.4.2 of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2017.

The Land Use Committee (the "Committee") held a public hearing on October 19, 2018 and November 23, 2018 on this petition. This memo reflects additional information addressed to the Planning Department as of January 31, 2019.

Background

The subject property, located at the southeast corner of California and Los Angeles streets and within a Manufacturing (MAN) zoning district, is currently occupied by a four-unit dwelling and a multi-car detached garage structure. The petitioner proposes to combine the parcels, raze the existing buildings

and construct a 26,953 square foot, three-story, 20-unit multi-family dwelling with underground parking.

Update

Parking and Transportation

Pursuant to comments made prior to and at the October 19th public hearing, the petitioner made modifications to the project, including increasing the number of stalls from 25 to 28 and relocating the driveway from Los Angeles Street to California Street. These changes required the petitioner to update its traffic and parking materials. Subsequent to the November 23, 2018 hearing, the Planning Department retained the BSC Group (BSC) to provide peer review services regarding the traffic and transportation impacts of the proposed development as proposed.

On December 21, 2018, the BSC submitted its initial review (**ATTACHMENT A**) based the petitioner's submitted Transportation Evaluation dated August 16, 2018, the project's site design plans as revised through November 13, 2018, and a field visit. Its review, which generally concurred with the petitioner's methodology, also raised some questions on issues including sight distances, turning angles and the proposed relocated driveway's relationship to an existing driveway located on an adjacent property.

The petitioner responded to the questions raised by BSC's initial review in a response memorandum and revised parking and traffic evaluations all dated January 16, 2019. The petitioner's revised traffic evaluation found that the project would be expected to "generate 7 (2 entering/5 exiting) and 10 (6 entering/4 exiting) vehicle trips during the respective weekday morning and evening peak hours," which would have "a negligible impact on the California Street/Los Angeles Street intersection." Further, locating the proposed driveway on California Street rather than, as originally proposed, on Los Angeles Street would still provide adequate site lines and that the vehicles "turning to or from the Site will not create any notable delays on California Street."

Regarding the redesigned basement-level parking with 28 parking stalls (1.4 per unit), increased from 25 (1.25 per unit), the petitioner's revised parking evaluation stated that the parking needs of the property's residents will be satisfied by those 28 on-site parking spaces. Other aspects of the garage redesign (**ATTACHMENT B**) are that the width of the garage maneuvering aisle has been increased from 24 to 26 feet and that areas to allow for the maneuvering of cars in and out of tandem spaces is now provided. Regarding previous concerns about the tandem nature of many of the proposed stalls, the petitioner has modified the layout so only eight spaces are tandem and has indicated that those stalls will be assigned to single units to obviate the need for residents to move other residents' vehicles to access the spaces.

BSC's review of the petitioner's revised traffic and parking evaluations (**ATTACHMENT C**) indicated that the petitioner had addressed the questions raised in BSC's initial review and that it had no additional comments.

Housing

As indicated by the petitioner, the unit mix as currently proposed includes five 3-bedroom, fourteen 2-bedroom and one 1-bedroom units. This is a modification of the original proposal of twelve 3- bedroom

and eight 2-bedroom units. The Planning Department notes that the development would have three affordable units (one 3-bedroom, one 2-bedroom, and one 1-bedroom unit), one more than the two required. The terms of the units' affordability would be a condition of any council order in the event the petition is granted.

Other Issues

The Planning Department notes that petitioner has indicated that it is willing to provide $5,000 toward the costs of transportation improvements to California Street and that it would commit to the property becoming a member of the Watertown Transportation Management Area (TMA). Such commitments, and details defining and securing them, could be made conditions of any council order. Planning staff encourages the petitioner to be prepared to discuss these issues at Tuesday's public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: BSC Group's initial peer review (dated December 21, 2018)
Attachment B: Modified parking garage layout ("Garage Turning Movements"), dated January 2019
Attachment C: BSC Group's updated peer review (dated January 22, 2019)

ATTACHMENT A

BSC GROUP

MEMORANDUM

803 SUMMER STREET, BOSTON, MA 02127 - www.bscgroup.com
TEL 617-896-4300 - 800-288-8123

To:	Jennifer Caira, Chief Planner City of Newton	**Date:**	December 21, 2018
From:	Sam Offei-Addo, PE, PTOE Knowles Spofford, EIT	**Proj. No.**	28402.01
Re:	Transportation Peer Review		

BSC Group (BSC) has been retained by the City of Newton to provide peer review services regarding traffic and transportation impacts for the proposed residential development at 182-184 California Street. The Proponent, LA & CA LLC, proposes to construct 20 residential apartment units, to be located at California Street and Los Angeles Street in Newton, Massachusetts.

BSC has performed the peer review based on the following information:

- Transportation Evaluation, LA@CA, California Street and Los Angeles Street, Newton Massachusetts, VHB, August 16, 2018
- Preliminary Site Design Plans, La@CA December 20, 2017, Revised August 24th, 2018 and November 13th, 2018.
- Field visit performed on December 19th, 2018

BSC offers the following comments:

Existing Conditions

Study Area Roadways

1. The VHB Transportation Evaluation Memo (Memo) defines the study area as being comprised of two intersections: California Street at Los Angeles Street and Los Angeles Street at the proposed site driveway. The report describes the characteristics of each roadway. BSC finds these descriptions to be accurate.

Intersection Geometry

2. The memo describes the intersection in the project vicinity between California Street and Los Angeles Street as a four-way intersection under Stop-control operations, despite the lack of stop signs on Los Angeles Street. The intersection between Los Angeles Street and the proposed site driveway is also described. BSC finds these descriptions to be accurate.

Existing Traffic Volumes

3. Turning movement counts were collected on June 19, 2018 during the weekday morning

(7-9AM) and afternoon (4-6PM) commuter peak hours. These times are consistent with standard procedures. Daily volumes were also collected along California Street using an automatic traffic recorder. BSC concurs with these traffic volume collection methods.

Public Transportation

4. The memo notes that ample public transportation services are provided in the site vicinity by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. The nearest bus stop is one half mile from the project site. Table 2 in the VHB memo is provided to summarize the two MBTA bus route stops in the area and the peak hour frequency of the buses that stop at these locations.

Vehicular Crash History

5. The memo provides crash information from MassDOT for the most recent 5-year period (2012-2016) at the intersection of California Street and Los Angeles Street. Table 3 in the memo summarizes the data and states that the calculated crash rates at these locations are below the statewide and district-wide averages. Please review what the memo provides in the Appendix. The Intersection Crash Rate Worksheet incorrectly lists the Town of Franklin and District 3 as the study location. The sheet also specifies a "480 West Central Street Driveway" as a minor street included in the analysis. This location is in Franklin and is not a part of the study area. Please review and revise accordingly.

Trip Generation

6. Table 4 in the memo summarizes the estimated number of vehicle trips for the proposed development. Trips for the proposed development were estimated using rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation, which is the standard methodology used by traffic engineers to estimate trips. BSC agrees that LUC 221 – Multifamily Housing (Mid-Rise) is the most appropriate Land Use Code for this development.

7. Please review and resolve the incorrect reference to Table 3 in the memo in the paragraph directly following Table 4. This paragraph is referencing Table 4.

Traffic Operations and Analysis

Level-of-Service and Delay Criteria

8. The memo explains the methodology involved for analyzing the operating conditions of an unsignalized intersection. The report urges caution in interpreting the results of the capacity analysis, indicating that the software uses more conservative assumptions for the length of critical gaps for vehicles turning onto the major street from the minor street than are seen in actual field observations. BSC agrees with the methodology used to evaluate the operating conditions at the study area intersection.

Intersection Capacity Analysis

9. The memo capacity analysis results suggest that the traffic generated by the proposed development will not result in any significant delay or changes in the Level-of-Service at the intersection of Los Angeles Street and California Street. The proposed site driveway

at Los Angeles Street is expected to operate at LOS A. BSC agrees with the results of the capacity analysis.

10. Please revise the incorrect reference to Table 5 in the memo in the paragraph directly following Table 6. This paragraph is referencing Table 6.

Site Access and Circulation

11. The memo discusses the reasons behind providing access and egress to the site from Los Angeles Street and removing the existing curb cut on California Street. The memo notes that providing a driveway on California Street is ideal, but could be potentially problematic, stating that:

    "To provide an appropriate internal parking layout, the driveway would need to be located at the far easterly side of the property. However, this would place the driveway immediately next to the exit-only curb cut currently serving the adjacent office complex".

    In a site plan with a revision date 2018-11-13, the site drive is shown on California Street next to the exit-only drive for the adjacent office complex. Please explain how turning movement conflicts will be minimized at this proposed driveway on California Street.

Sight Distance

12. The memo presents findings for Stopping Sight Distances and Intersection Sight Distances in the project area. The sight distances at the proposed Site Driveway on Los Angeles Street are displayed and discussed. The site driveway design has been revised to be proposed on California Street. Therefore, the sight distance analysis for the proposed driveway on California Street should be provided.

Parking Analysis

Parking Supply

13. The memo specifies that the proposed development will include 25 parking spaces, including 2 handicapped spaces. There will be 10 tandem spaces, which will require coordination between vehicle owners. The memo states that the presence of public transit approximately one-half mile east of the site will reduce the parking requirements of residents. This section should be updated to reflect the site plan with the revision date 2018-11-13, which shows 28 parking spaces. Due to a Special Permit request, Newton's Chapter 30 Zoning Ordinance allows, at minimum, 1.25 parking spaces per unit. Therefore, a minimum of 25 spaces is permitted for this 20-unit development.

Plan Review

14. In the revised plan sheet displaying the basement parking, the site driveway appears to show that vehicles would enter and exit the garage at a skewed angle. Please provide a turning template showing that this angle can be handled by turning vehicles.

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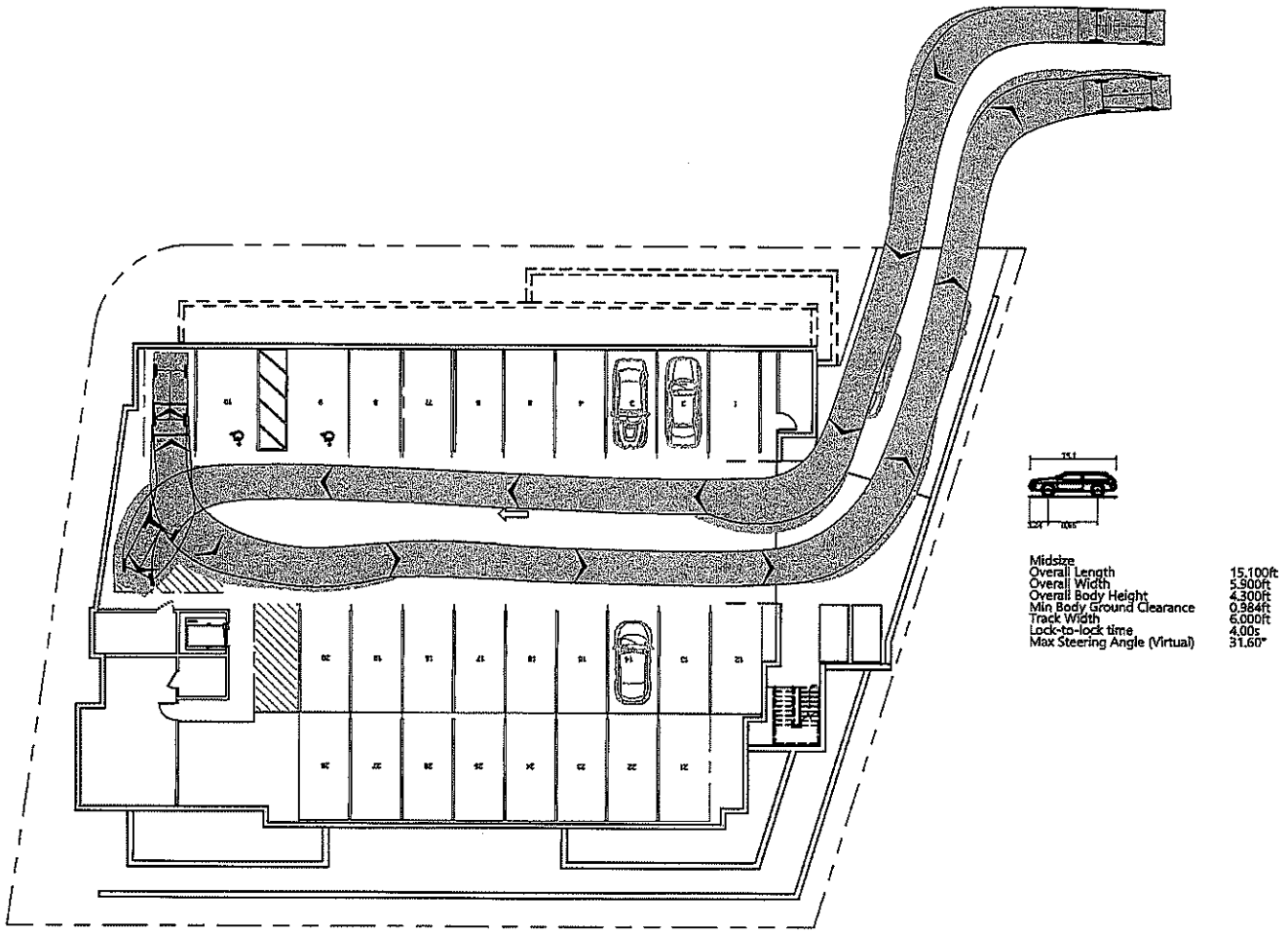

Midsize	
Overall Length	15.100ft
Overall Width	5.900ft
Overall Body Height	4.300ft
Min Body Ground Clearance	0.984ft
Track Width	6.000ft
Lock-to-lock time	4.00s
Max Steering Angle (Virtual)	31.60°

ATTACHMENT B

0 10 20 40 Feet

vhb

Garage Turning Movements
La@CA
182-184 California Street
Newton, MA

Figure 1

January 2019

ATTACHMENT C

BSC GROUP
Transportation ▪ Energy ▪ Land Development

MEMORANDUM

803 SUMMER STREET, BOSTON, MA 02127 www.bscgroup.com
TEL 617-896-4300 800-288-8123 FAX 617-896-4301

To:	Jennifer Ciara, Chief Planner City of Newton	**Date:**	January 22, 2019
From:	Sam Offei-Addo, P.E. Knowles Spofford, EIT	**Proj. No.**	28402.01
Re:	Transportation Peer Review – Response to Comments		

BSC Group (BSC) has completed a review of responses dated January 16, 2019, submitted by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) on behalf of the project Proponent relative to the proposed residential development at 182-184 California Street in Newton, Massachusetts. BSC offers the City of Newton the following comments based on our review of VHB's response letter and attached documents.

#5: The Intersection Crash Rate Worksheet has been updated and displays the correct information.

#'s 7&10: The incorrect table references in the Transportation Evaluation have been addressed.

#11: VHB's response to the comments regarding the close proximity of the proposed California Street site drive and the exit-only drive for the adjacent office complex have been noted. The Proponent states that the exit-only drive was observed to be infrequently used, and the proposed site access and egress drive is not expected to generate enough vehicle trips to create any operational issues. BSC recommends that this location be monitored after construction and appropriate measures put into place should conflicts arise between vehicles exiting the two driveways.

#12: As requested, VHB has provided sight distance analysis for the proposed California Street driveway. Analysis shows that required stopping sight distances and desired intersection site distances are met. BSC concurs with VHB's findings and analysis.

#14: As requested, VHB has provided a turning template showing that midsize vehicles entering and exiting the site will be able to handle the skewed angle of the site driveway. BSC has no additional comments.