



LFIA Riverside Committee

Presentation to The Land Use Committee February 25, 2020

2/25/20

Land Use - Transportation

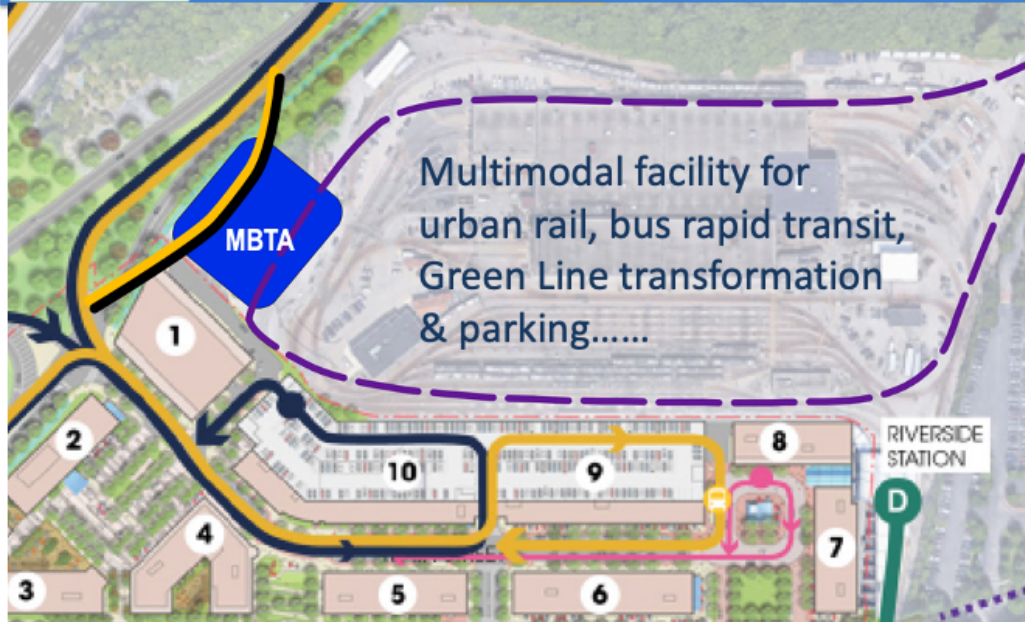
Good evening Councilors, my name is John McElduff and I am here tonight to present Riverside Station TOD transportation issues that are important to our neighborhood.

We have summarized much more, and formally submitted those comments to you and the clerk. We ask that the document be posted quickly on the City Riverside website.

After reading the Green International Peer review, we insist that a second transportation hearing should occur; there are so many critical concerns.



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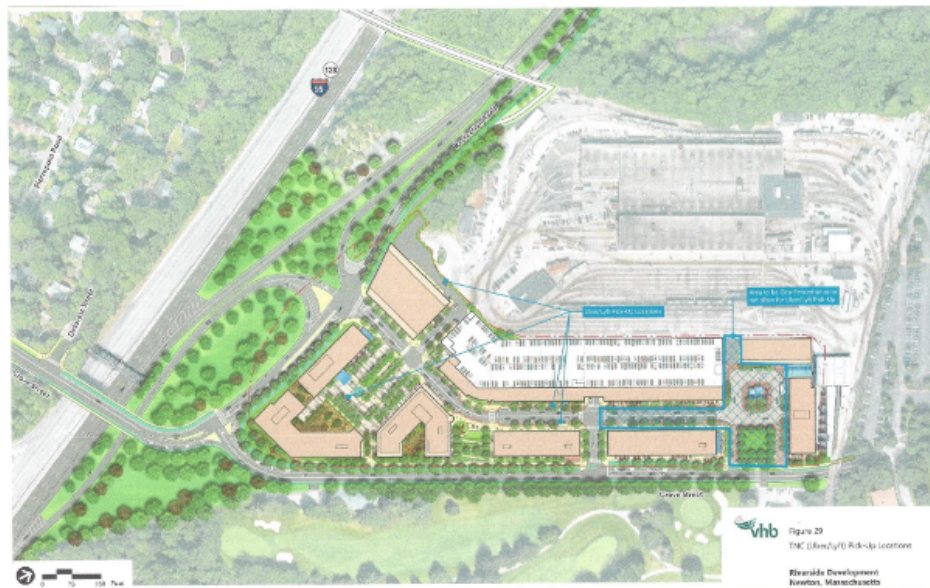
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Time for change is now! The TOD can't wall in the multimodal opportunities shown here.

Newton and DOT should each create a 5-year mid-level engineering position to coordinate the Allston Interchange, the Pike/128 interchange reconstruction, Riverside, Washington Street, Needham Street, and the Worcester-Framingham Regional Rail to assist Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollock and Mayor Fuller.

Hundreds of our cities and towns people have to travel through Newton to get to Boston... We have to do this right.



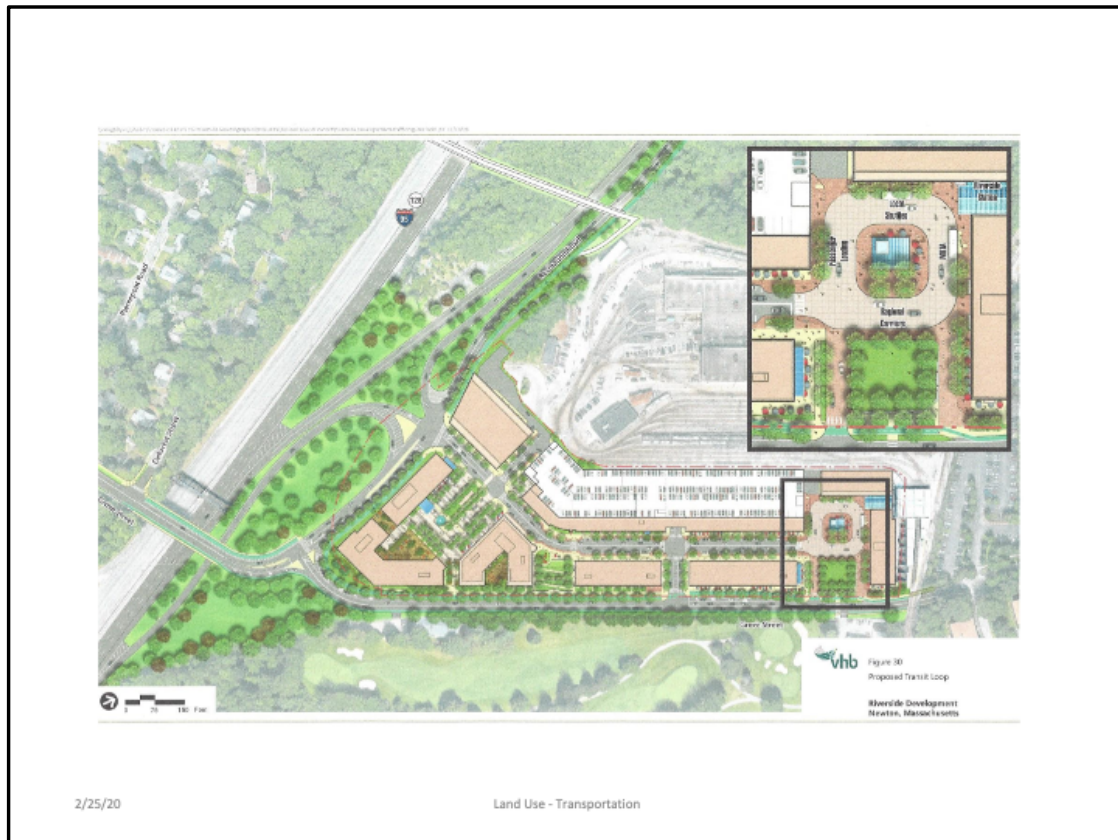
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Rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft were **not** “counted” in the traffic study. They need to be.

In 2018 Newton had 1M rideshare trips, a 23% increase from the prior year.

Studies indicate rideshare grows faster in large, wealthy towns, near public transit.



Describe the transit square and transit green. MBTA emergency route, Bldg. 7 delivery corridor (back in, drive out), access to Bldg. 8 dock and Garage 9, bike shelter in the center.

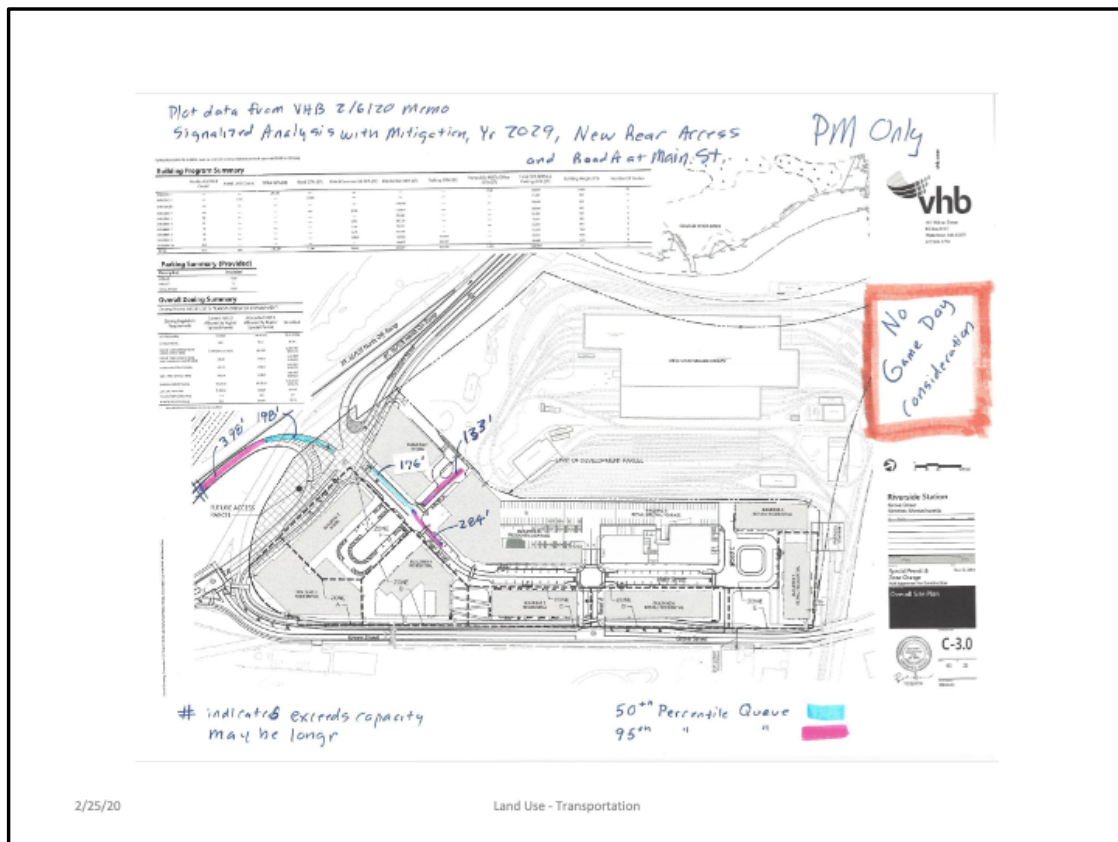
Deliveries and drop-off vehicles to Bldg. 4 will be passing through it; this was never the case at existing platform area.

I measured over 2400' of drop-off curbs at the existing site, only 500' in the transit square, but only about 200' are really usable. Almost a half mile today -- and 200' upon build-out.

Rest of the old site will now be flooded with activity and no longer available for transit use.

The bike shelter in the middle of the loop will add tension to vehicular travel. For safety reasons bikes and pedestrians should not be in the middle of the loop.

Traffic capacity analysis and simulation was not done here. MBTA and Developer need to redesign this part of the site. It is too important, it needs to be much bigger, especially for the future.



We would like the Developer to provide queue diagrams detailing the new project size so we can all have a firm understanding of queues. This was not done for the most recent updates.

This evening rush hour queue, that I plotted, is bad news.

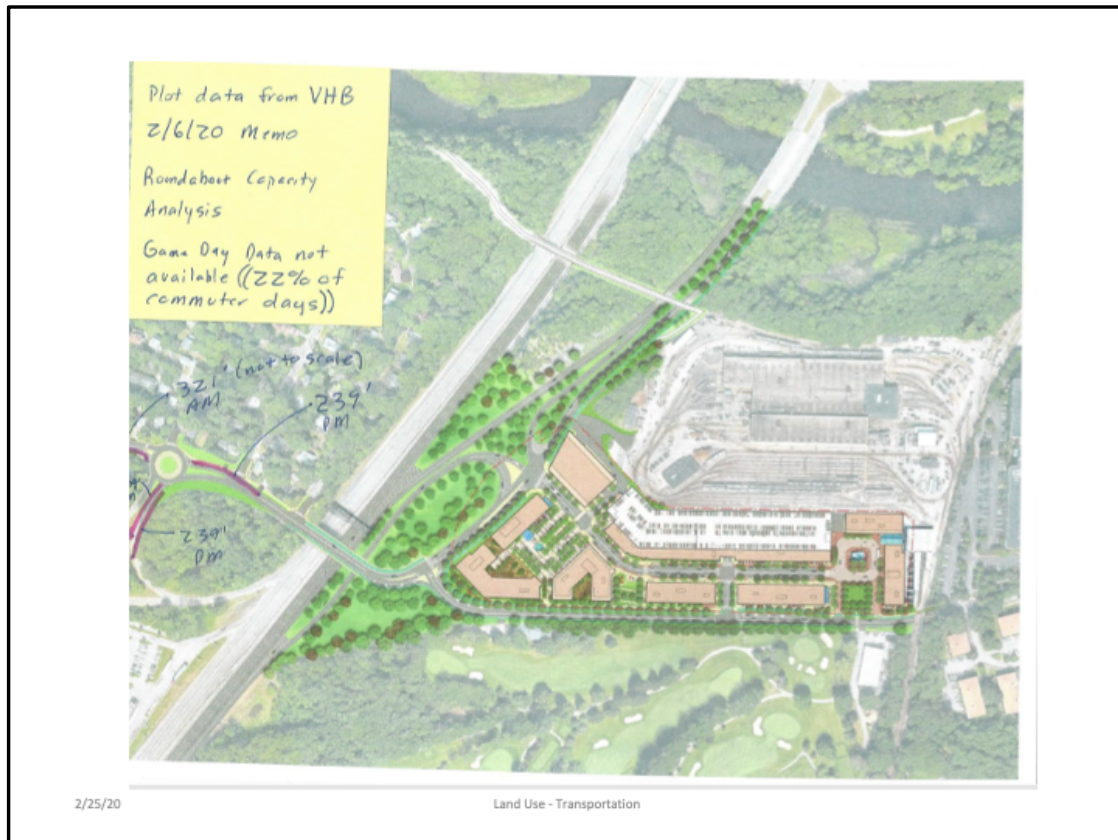
Describe slide:

Signal priority exacerbates Main Street queue.

This queue doesn't accommodate game day conditions, which adds about 15% more traffic volume.

We all worked hard for the direct access ramp, but if folks can't use it in the evening, they will instead flood Grove Street. This is not acceptable. The site plan needs to be revisited so the traffic flows through there.

We hope you have a robust conversation with the MBTA tonight.



I had to plot these queues.

Talk to slide:

Grove Street: Almost never has queues now, unless a game day.

The SB queue will likely block the Wellesley Newton split, then we are forced to sit out on the highway. The peer reviewer agrees with us on this. Developer recommends tree trimming. We want more asphalt ramp width constructed so Wellesley traffic can move through unimpeded.

Slip lane eliminated. Lane has worked great for 50 years, unimpeded; without it the roundabout will function very poorly. This can't happen. This is the most unsafe issue on the entire project.

Game day conditions will force queues onto Rt 128.

MBTA Shortfalls (Need Documentation!)

MBTA will collect for generations land lease rent. They need to contribute more.

Temporary/Construction Parking (needs and plans in writing).

Consider Green Line Transformation, Bus Rapid Transit (in writing).

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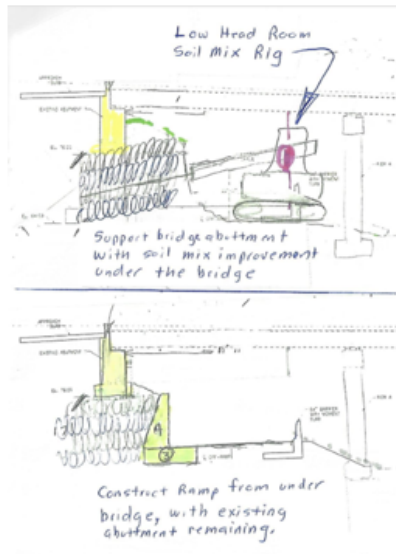
Read 2 bullets, then: Developer estimates T parking will be limited to 400 spots during the initial construction phase. They intend to construct the garage and many other building at the same time. Commuters losing 560 spots are being treated unfairly.

MBTA and Newton should stick to the Riverside 1 staging: Garage completed before anything else can happen.

Recently in Braintree and Quincy, construction of TODs disregarded commuters and neighborhoods, no advance notice, no plan. The MBTA needs to get out in front of this.

We met GL Transformation managers last summer. They were shocked at the site plan. They said no plans were made for new parking needs related to the 50% capacity increase. Is the new garage big enough? We need to see and understand the needs in the rail yard, to support the new Super trains. Is the yard big enough? If super trains are not built, by target year 2030, the Green Line capacity is overwhelmed by the RS TOD demand. Can the T guarantee this?

MASSDOT Issue Under Grove St. Bridge



- The new highway ramp needs to go under the bridge.
- LFIA hopes all work occurs from underneath by this method.
- The Developer likes this concept.
- Not using this method is irresponsible.
- MASSDOT needs to commit to this.

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We favor: New access ramp from 128 northbound that passes under the Grove Street bridge in the sloped section under the existing yellow abutment.

If we use standard construction methods (replacing half of the bridge at a time, squeezing Grove Street traffic onto the other half), it could triple the time required and cost.

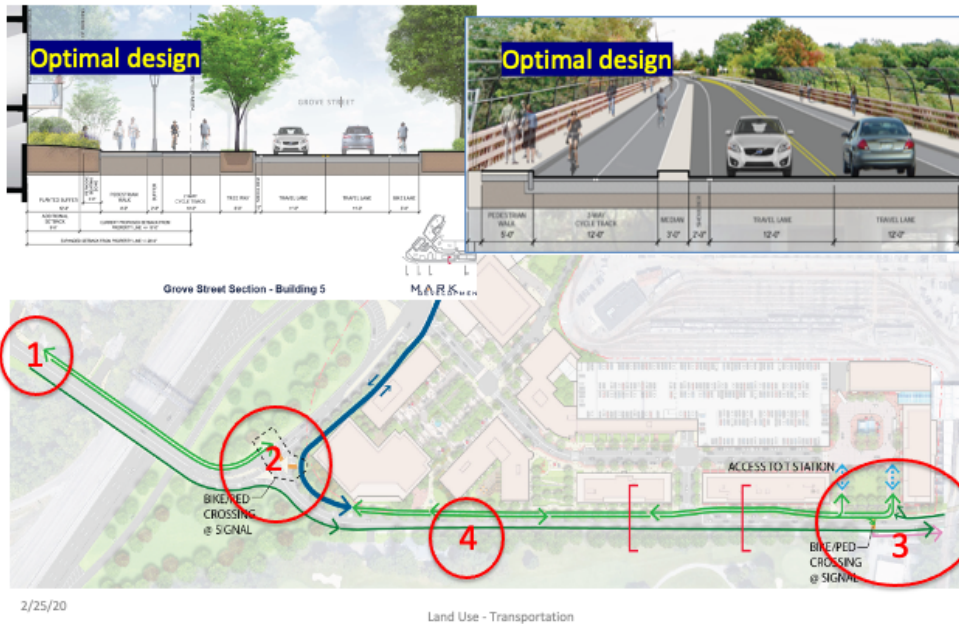
Constructing the new ramp entirely from below the Grove Street bridge is much more sustainable. It is cleaner, quicker, generates a lot less noise, and is a lot safer for workers and the public.

Newton can leverage the special permit to help the developer get this approved. Let's all work together on this.



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Grove St – Bike Pedestrian Infrastructure



We oppose the third bike lane on the east shoulder of Grove Street. [Describe cross section, no third lane adds width to vehicle lanes.]

The vehicle lanes accommodate 29x more trips than bikers and walkers. We don't need redundant bike lanes.

During rush hour, about 1245 cars traverse Grove Street, versus 42 people walking and biking.

The vehicle lanes need to stay wide, as this is an artery leading to highways.



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Bike Ped Crossing at MBTA underpass dangerous
Transition to **no bike infrastructure** beyond
underpass a concern – needs careful thought

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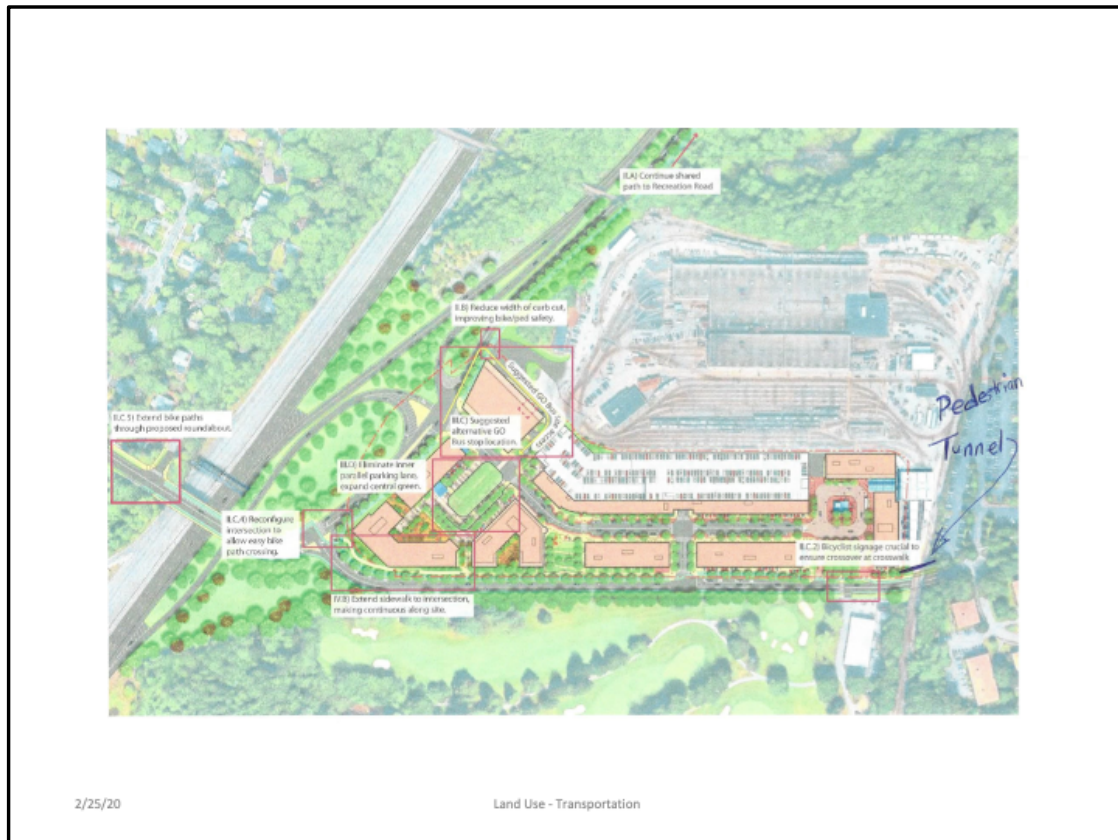
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The pedestrian crossing here has a very dangerous vehicular sight line;

Williams and Lasell students may not survive it.

Also, the geometry of the bike paths and sidewalks is funneled under the Green Line bridge. It needs to be reworked. Our ideas follow.

We recommend eliminating the pedestrian crossing, since the third bike lane is redundant, and force all bike and pedestrian crossings to occur to the north just on the other side of the MBTA bridge.



This slide shows an opportunity to connect possibly a pedestrian way through a small tunnel under the tracks, at the site grade, as required of the Riverside office Center owner, per their special permit, but only if Riverside is developed.

Pedestrians could pass through the tunnel and bikes can stay under the bridge.

The office center owner is also required under their special permit to connect a road extending to Riverside, but only if riverside is developed.

These items need to be considered with respect to the site plan.

That property also has potential for shared parking at night time.

A Few Final Issues

- Only 3 of 10 buildings have loading docks. Where will dumpsters be set?
- No plan for roadway maintenance across the site and the public roads. This should be clearly defined prior to special permit approval.
- The Transportation Demand Management (TMD) Plan has great “ideas” but limited metrics to actually deliver. Zoning language requires commitment in the special permit, not after the project is built. We addressed this in our written analysis.
- The Woodland-Grove Intersection needs a traffic signal, per the peer reviewer, the Developer wants to “add signs.” This needs agreement and study (keep Williams, Lasell and Auburndale communities safe). A dollar metric to cover the cost needs to be added to the TMD.

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Thanks for your time, and please remember, Newton **does** have tremendous power to shape regional transportation by leveraging the special permit and continuing to provide our finest resources.

We all need to work together to make this happen.

Good night all.