



December 6, 2016

David Traniello, Chairman  
Reading Zoning Board of Appeals  
Town Hall  
16 Lowell Street  
Reading, MA 01867

**Re: Reading Village**

Dear Chairman Traniello and ZBA Members

We first want to thank the Board for all the time and attention they have dedicated to the Reading Village application.

After the last meeting, we reviewed the draft decision in detail considering the comments and the Board's straw vote. Based upon the comments we heard, the two remaining issues were to get to a 1.25 parking ratio and have at least 1 loading zone. We have addressed both.

When we acquired the Brown Auto piece and redesigned the project we lowered the number of floors from 5 to 4 and reduced the density from 77 to 72 units. These project improvements came at a significant cost to us in the form of additional land acquisition costs. We indicated during the following public hearings that the additional land acquisition costs, in combination with the project changes we already introduced (lower height and less density), meant we were left with little room to make additional changes to the plan without compromising the financial feasibility of the development.

We looked very carefully at the project's development and operating budget after the last meeting and our position has not changed. Any additional changes or imposed conditions to the project as proposed which results in either a loss of units or leasable square footage would make the project more uneconomic.

While that remains our position, we remain committed to finding a workable compromise that can effectively address the primary concerns (parking and loading zone) the Board has communicated. As such we would like to introduce the following change(s):



## Parking Ratio

While we have consistently heard concerns expressed over the parking ratio as proposed, we remain confident that the proposed ratio of 1.0 is more than adequate to support the anticipated parking demand. We would also like to point out that four similarly sized metro-Boston suburbs, Winchester, Mansfield Newburyport, and Malden have all enacted zoning bylaws encouraging transit projects which lowered residential parking requirements at commuter stations in their downtown areas. For instance in Winchester, the parking requirements in their newly created Central Business District for residential uses is a minimum of .75 spaces/unit and a maximum of 1.5 spaces/unit (Section 7.3.20). The Mansfield Station Revitalization Overlay District requires 1 spaces per multifamily unit (Section 2.30-5.12.F.2.B). In Newburyport's Smart Growth District requirements for residential uses are 1.0 spaces for studio/1 bedroom units, 1.3 for 2 bedroom units and 1.5 for 3 bedroom units (Section XXIX-F.6.A). Finally in Malden, the general requirement for multifamily uses is 1.5 spaces/unit but within 2,000' of an MBTA station it is 1.25 spaces/unit and within 1000' of an MBTA station it is .75 spaces/unit (Section 500. 2. 8. 2). These recently enacted zoning bylaws, along with guidelines promulgated by the State of Massachusetts, clearly suggests the trend is to lower the parking requirements near public transportation station to a ratio consistent to what we have already proposed, if not even lower than 1.0

Nevertheless, we understand the Board feels strongly about a 1.25 parking ratio.

As such, the attached plan reflects a revised Parking Layout plan that adds 12 spaces using a combination of revising the layout and adding compact spaces. **This revised plan features 86 parking spaces.**

**We would also reduce the number of units to 68.** This combination of more parking spaces and fewer units results in a parking ratio of 1.26 spaces per unit. The unit breakdown would be 50 1-bedroom units, 11 2-bedroom units and 7 3-bedroom units. This revised parking layout does use a small portion of the landscaped area to accommodate some of the additional spaces. In keeping with the state guidelines for parking in a TOD, we are adding a Waiver Request for some compact spaces (8'6"x16'; it is important to note that 8'x16' Compact Spaces are allowed in other overlay zones in Reading) and revising the Waiver for drive aisle to allow 18'-21.2' drive aisles only in the areas that are now one-way.

We also remain committed to using our best efforts to identify other private and public parking spots that can be used for overflow parking in the unlikely event it is needed.

### Loading Zone

The issue of the loading zone and our need for a waiver has also received a lot of attention during the public hearing process. We want to point out that the DSGD zone doesn't require loading for residential uses. For comparison 30 Haven was required to have 5 loading zones solely based on the commercial component of that project (1 loading space for 2,000 sf of commercial space), no loading was required for the apartment component. In fact, per the decision, 30 Haven has only 1 23' long loading space so 30 Haven was given a much more significant waiver considering how many loading spaces were required by the existing bylaw.

We went to the Selectmen on November 15 to discuss the loading zone issue. We will continue to work with the Selectmen to designate this area a non-exclusive Service Zone that can be utilized by any resident or business in Reading. We strongly believe designating 2 Service Zones on-street in front of the building is the most appropriate, and most practical, place to have a loading area.

We also have the ability to create loading zones on-site in two different areas, one inside the parking garage and 1 outside. There are 6 parking spaces in the garage that can be used for dual purposes, with Loading Unloading when needed during certain hours (8am-5pm) and visitor parking at all other times. This could allow for up to 3 loading zones that are 44x10' each. In the case we would add a Waiver Request for 10' wide loading width instead of 12'. Alternatively, we do have a prior plan that includes one 30'x10' loading area in front of the building. This would require keeping the corner of Lincoln and Prescott uncurbed which is consistent with the current condition. This location was reviewed by the Town's peer review consultant who recommended against the proposed loading zone in that area. Doing so would also reduce the number of on-street spaces by at least 1.

In summary, we are willing to achieve a 1.25 parking ratio by both revising the current parking layout and reducing the number of units. We will also change our Comp Permit Waiver request for parking ratio from 1.0 to 1.25. Our waiver request from the Loading Zone requirement remains. We are open to a condition that we will use best efforts to work with the Selectmen to identify areas that can be designated for loading. We can also designate 6 parking spaces in the garage that will have dual purpose as visitor parking and up to 3 Loading Zones. We would also be open to a condition for a single 10x30 Loading Zone in front of the building, even though we and the Town's own peer review consultant believe that to be an inappropriate location.



Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
MKM Reading LLC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'MKM', is written over a thin horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Matthew Zuker, Ken Chase, Matthew Roman