



GREEN INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES, INC.

100 AMES POND DRIVE, SUITE 200 TEWKSBURY, MA 01876

T: (978) 923-0400 | WWW.GREENINTL.COM

August 18, 2022

Ms. Julie Mercier, AICP, LEED AP
Community Development Director
Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867

Subject: **Review of Responses to Comments
Proposed Mixed-Use Development
459 Main Street
Reading, Massachusetts**

Dear Ms. Mercier:

On behalf of the Town of Reading (the Town), Green International Affiliates, Inc. (Green) is submitting this letter of review of Regnante Sterio LLP's (RS) responses to the original comments submitted by Green to the Town on August 9, 2022 from our engineering peer review of the application package for the proposed mixed-use development at 459 Main Street. This review included an examination of the following documents submitted in support of the proposed project:

- Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) prepared by The Engineering Corp (TEC), dated November 17, 2021;
- Technical Memorandum, prepared by TEC, dated March 3, 2022;
- Supplemental Traffic Impact Assessment, prepared by TEC, dated June 1, 2022, which outlines turning movements into and out of the site that present concerns for the Community Planning & Development Commission (CPDC);
- Civil Engineered Plan Set, prepared by Fodera Engineering, most recently dated June 1, 2022;
- Architectural Plan Set, prepared by Olinger Architects, most recently dated June 1, 2022;

What follows are the original comments submitted by Green, followed by the corresponding RS response in italicized text, followed by Green's latest comments in bold text

November 2021 (Updated March 2022) Transportation Impact Assessment and March 2022 Supplemental Technical Memorandum

1. Green's original comment: Stopping Sight Distance and Intersection Sight Distance were measured for the proposed egress driveway on Washington Street. It was found that the ASSHTO recommended minimum sight distances are available. Green concurs with this but notes that traffic queuing at the intersection of Washington Street and Main Street regularly blocks the sight distance of drivers wishing to turn left out of the driveway. We recommend that left turns out of the Washington Street driveway be restricted to alleviate this safety concern.

RS Response: The applicant is agreeable to a condition implementing the recommendation of right-turn only control from the Washington Street driveway.

Green Response: No further information is required for the purpose of the peer review. Please continue to coordinate with the Town for implementation of the proposed turn restriction.

2. Green's original comment: Trip distribution for the retail land use was based on existing vehicle travel patterns. Green concurs with this methodology and no further information is required.

RS Response: No response is called for.

Green Response: **No further information is required.**

3. Green's original comment: Trip distribution for the residential land use was based on 2009-2013 U.S. Census Journey-to-Work/Home data for the Town. Green recommends that the residential trip distribution be performed using the most recently available Census Bureau On-the-Map data. Based on a cursory review, the distribution for the most recently available year (2019) differs from what is shown in the trip distribution model.

RS Response: TEC acknowledges that more up-to-date information from US Census Bureau may be available. However, based upon TEC's review of this data, any change in distribution would not result in any significant change in traffic volumes to/from the site. The change in traffic volumes related to this distribution change is therefore negligible and would not materially affect the conclusions of the TIA.

Green Response: **It is understood that the trip distribution change would not materially affect the TIA's conclusions; however, based on feedback from the 8/8/2022 CPDC meeting, the Applicant should revise the trip distribution per the latest census data. Abutters and CPDC board members stated that even minor changes in vehicle volume should be acknowledged.**

4. Green's original comment: Based on capacity analysis results and Green's observations during our site visit, queues on both Main Street and Washington Street regularly extend past the proposed entrance and exit driveways. As mentioned in comment #1, we recommend restricting left turns out of the garage onto Washington Street. We concur that providing an entrance driveway on Main Street and an exit driveway on Washington results in the optimal site circulation pattern.

RS Response: As noted, the applicant is agreeable to a condition implementing the recommendation of right-turn only control from the Washington Street driveway.

Green Response: **No further information is required for the purpose of the peer review. Please continue to coordinate with the Town for implementation of the proposed turn restriction.**

5. Green's original comment: The TIA states that the Applicant will work with the Town to optimize traffic signal timings post-occupancy if necessary. We recommend that traffic signal timings be optimized based on projected traffic volumes prior to the opening of the development and re-examined 6 months after opening for any further necessary adjustments.

RS Response: Understood and agreed-to.

Green Response: **No further information is required.**

6. Green's original comment: The TIA states that although 4 parking spaces are provided in the parking garage for the commercial use, the commercial space within the site is exempt from off-street parking requirements since it is within 300 feet of public off-street parking along Woburn Street; however, the site is located over 1,500 feet from Woburn Street. Based on field observations, off-site parking seems to be limited and difficult to locate in the project area. Please clarify which off-street parking lots are expected to be utilized.

RS Response: Public parking is available in multiple locations in the vicinity of the project site including twelve on-street parking along Main Street north of the site, six head-in parking spaces along Ash Street immediately opposite the site, and six on-street parking along Ash Street. Additional on-street parking is available at multiple other locations within 1,500-feet of the site as part of the Downtown parking network.

Green Response: Per discussion at the 8/8/2022 CPDC meeting, on-site parking is not required for retail nor residential use since the project is located in the Downtown Smart Growth District. Because some of the spaces in the parking garage are intended for the commercial land use, the Applicant should provide signage to indicate that commercial parking is available on-site.

7. Green's original comment: Fifteen parking spaces are required for the twelve residential units use per Town zoning bylaws. The proposed parking garage does comply with this requirement as it provides fifteen parking spaces for the residential use. One accessible parking space is required; the proposed parking garage provides two accessible spaces. The TIA states that 19 parking spaces are provided (15 for residential and 4 for commercial), but the plans show 20 spaces. Please clarify the total number of proposed parking spaces.

RS Response: Twenty (20) total spaces are proposed. The TIA's reference to 19 spaces is based on an earlier version of the project plans, which have since been amended to provide one additional parking space in response to project feedback.

Green Response: No further information is required.

June 2022 Civil Engineering Plan Set and June 2022 Architectural Plan Set

1. Green's original comment: Green reviewed the passenger car turning movements shown in the architectural plan set and found them to be acceptable. The Applicant should provide a figure showing emergency vehicle turning movements into and out of the parking garage as well as circulation through the garage for review.

RS Response: Please see attached diagram.

Green Response: The attached diagram does not show emergency vehicle turning movements out of the parking garage. Please provide turning movements out of the garage and the template that was used for the ambulance.

2. Green's original comment: Green reviewed the proposed loading zone location and believe that there is sufficient width for delivery vehicles to load/unload while allowing other vehicles to bypass. Please provide turning movements showing that parking spaces 18, 19, and 20 can be accessed while the loading area is occupied.

RS Response: It is anticipated that vehicles using these spaces would likely reverse into these when the loading zone is occupied. Please see attached diagram.

Green Response: We have reviewed the turning movement diagram and request that the Applicant provide the vehicle template that was utilized.

3. Green's original comment: The TIA states that the loading zone will be delineated with pavement markings. Please show these proposed markings on the plan. Additionally, please ensure that adequate lighting will be provided at the loading zone such that it is visible to vehicles turning into the garage.

RS Response: This detail will be added to the final civil plan, as requested.

Green Response: Green will review the final plan when available.

Recommended Off-Site Mitigation Measures

1. Green's original comment: Because most parking for commercial land uses is expected to be off-site and a portion of all trips are expected to be via transit, the Applicant should commit to enhancing pedestrian accommodations at the intersection of Main Street and Washington Street. As the Applicant plans to upgrade the curb ramp at the northeast corner of the intersection, ADA requires that the curb ramps on the other three corners be upgraded as well. Further enhancements could include upgrading pedestrian signal equipment to meet current ADA standards We recommend that existing crosswalks be replaced with textured crosswalks similar to those at the intersections along Main Street north of Washington Street to provide better contrast and a higher level of safety.

RS Response: The project will comply with any/all applicable ADA requirements. The applicant looks forward to a further discussion of this issue with GIA's reviewer.

Green Response: Green acknowledges that all ADA requirements will be met by the Applicant. We are available for continued discussion of additional upgrades with the Applicant and the Town of Reading. It is noted that any traffic signal upgrades will need to be coordinated with and approved by the Parking, Traffic, Transportation Task Force (PTTTF).

2. Green's original comment: All vehicular traffic entering and exiting the site is expected to utilize the signalized intersection of Main Street and Washington Street. The Applicant should commit to funding safety improvements at the intersection such as upgrading all signal heads to have backplates and retroreflective borders. We also recommend evaluating the option of revising traffic signal phasing such that the southbound protected left-turn movement and northbound protected left-turn movement are switched. It appears that this would allow vehicles to safely make a left turn into the parking garage after the northbound and southbound through movements if they were not able to find a sufficient gap in traffic.

RS Response: The applicant looks forward to a further discussion of this issue with GIA's reviewer.

Green Response: We are available for continued discussion of additional upgrades with the Applicant and the Town of Reading. It is noted that any traffic signal traffic signal upgrades will need to be coordinated with and approved by the PTTTF.

3. Green's original comment: As mentioned previously, traffic signal timings should be optimized before the development opens and re-examined 6 months later.

RS Response: Understood and agreed-to. No further response needed.

Green Response: **No further information is required.**

If either the Town staff or the Applicant's engineer would like to discuss any of these comments further, please feel free to contact me at 978-843-5281.

Sincerely,
Green International Affiliates, Inc.



Amy Allen, P.E., PTOE
Transportation Planning Group

cc: W. Wong, Green

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