

Ref: 7490

July 6, 2017

Ms. Noreen Stockman
Zoning Board of Appeals
11 Town House Road
Weston, MA 02493

Dear Ms. Stockman:

On behalf of our client, Stony Brook LLC, Vanasse & Associates, Inc. (VAI) is pleased to submit VAI's responses to comments submitted by MDM on June 12, 2017. Responses to comments are as follows:

Comment 1: *“RSA Documented Safety Issues Along Route 20. Safety issues along Route 20 in the Project vicinity including Sibley Road and the adjoining Mobil gas station property are documented in a recently completed RSA¹. The Route 20/Sibley Road intersection is integral to and influenced by the I-95 Interchange which is a high crash cluster. The nature of incidents along this section of Route 20 as documented in the RSA include angle collisions and sideswipe collisions associated with limited roadway capacity (as evidenced by aggressive driver behavior and acceptance of small than usual gaps in traffic), insufficient stopping sight distances for left-turning vehicles into the Mobil station, and illegal left-turning maneuvers. One recommendation of the RSA to address these documented safety issues is extension of the Route 20 median to the Biogen-Idec/Monster signal. MDM recommends that the Applicant review the RSA and associated data/recommendations and factor these data/recommendations into its proposed access improvements at Sibley Road.”*

Response: At the time of the original traffic assessment (March 2017) the MassDOT RSA was not completed as the initial meeting was April 2017. Contained in the RSA Appendix C is the detailed crash data for a three-year period between 2012 and 2014. During this period, seven (7) accidents were reported along Route 20 between Sibley Road and the Mobil Station. No accidents were reported exiting Sibley Road and this immediate area is not a high crash cluster.

The RSA identified suggestions which could be considered for the area. These include:

- Consider extending the median to the adjacent traffic signal at the Biogen entrance and allowing U-turns at the signal to eliminate left-turn movements at both Mobil Station driveways and at Sibley Road.
- Consider reducing lanes on Boston Post Road (Route 20) and rotary access/egress segments to one lane in each direct and add a left-turn lane to the Mobile Station driveway and Sibley Road.

¹ Road Safety Audit, Weston Street (Route 20) at I-95 Ramps/Weston Street (Route 20), Prepared for MassDOT by McMahon Associates, Inc. dated May 2017.

- Consider reduced lane widths to create a more constrained feeling for motorists in an effort to reduce speeds.
- Consider changing lane guidance pavement markings on Route 20 to route shields for I-95 and Route 20.
- Modify the alignment of the Mobil Station entrance driveways to better accommodate left turns.

The median option could be pursued by the state, but would require land takings and U-turns at the signal would have severe negative operational impacts. It is our opinion this option would not be constructed. The second option is reduced lanes and a left-turn lane for the Mobile Station and Sibley Road. The left-turn lane is consistent with VAI's option which has been presented to MassDOT. The recommended options of lane widths, signage, and the Mobil Station driveway will be reviewed during the permitting process with MassDOT.

Comment 2: *Study Area. The study area used in the preliminary evaluation should include the signalized intersection at 133 Boston Post Road. The analysis results including queues will have a direct bearing on and are integral to design for access improvements at Sibley Road.*

Response: The traffic study has been updated to reflect this comment.

Comment 3: *Baseline Conditions Data. Existing conditions traffic data cited as being collected in January 2017 appear to be based in part on prior November 2016 data reported in other studies. There are also discrepancies between the November 2016 count sheets and the existing traffic volume networks; for instance, 68 PM peak hour right-turns onto Sibley Road are noted on the count sheets versus 15 right-turns on Figure 2 of the study. A revised TIA should clarify count data used to develop existing conditions networks as well as any growth factors/seasonal correction factors that are applied to establish baseline traffic conditions. Discrepancies between count data and volumes used in the existing conditions traffic networks should be rectified.*

Response: The traffic study has been updated to reflect this comment. The correct volume is 15 vehicles as a count was incorrectly recorded.

Comment 4: *Pedestrian and Bicycle Volumes. Pedestrian and bicycle volumes for study intersections should be quantified in volume networks as these modes of transportation will factor in to proposed mitigation actions. MDM notes that the Route 20 corridor is a well utilized corridor for bicycle travel; likewise, pedestrian activity is noted in the Site vicinity based on field observation.*

Response: At the intersection of Sibley Road only one (1) pedestrian was observed during the morning and evening periods. No bicycles were observed. At 133 Boston Post Road, two (2) bicycles were observed in the morning period and one (1) bicycle was observed in the evening period. No pedestrians were observed during the count period.

Comment 5: *Public Transportation.* No documentation of existing or proposed transportation routes or services is provided in the preliminary assessment. *The revised TIA should document these services and consider means of integrating the Project into existing public transportation routes/services as part of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan.*

Response: The traffic study has been updated to reflect this comment.

Comment 6: *Crash/Incident Data.* Motor vehicle accident data are inconsistent with data developed during the RSA process for the I-95 Interchange; for instance, no crashes are reported for the Route 20 and Mobil station driveways. The RSA also documents collision diagrams that facilitate and understanding of crash locations and trends that serve to inform safety improvements along Route 20, but only contain data through 2014. Given the importance of travel safety at this principal gateway serving Weston, *MDM advises that the revised TIA be expanded to include local police records through May 2017 and associated collision diagrams that will provide an important and necessary basis for designing access improvements at Sibley Road.*

Response: Police accident records will be provided as a supplement when received.

Comment 7: *Future Year Conditions.* *Supporting data/traffic volume networks for background growth and projects should be provided; inclusion of the recently submitted 133 Boston Post Road project as a background project should also be considered as this project is being evaluated concurrently with the 104 Boston Post Road project.*

Response: The traffic study has been updated to reflect this comment.

Comment 8: *Traffic Operations Analysis.* *Operational analysis of the Sibley Road intersection assumes separate turn lanes on Sibley Road (right-turn lane and left-turn lane) at Route 20 which should be corrected (Sibley Road is a single lane approach). This has a direct bearing on actual queue lengths that will form on Sibley Road during peak hours. These vehicle queues will directly influence operations at the proposed Site driveways.*

Response: The traffic study has been updated to reflect this comment. The driveway closest to Route 20 will be an entrance only.

Comment 9: *A sensitivity analysis should also be provided that indicates operational impacts that the 133 BPR project has under proposed access improvements scenario at Sibley Road.*

Response: The 133 BPR traffic has been included in the analysis. The proposed mitigation will be implemented independent of the BPR project.

Proposed Access Improvements. *Comments relative to Site access improvements are identified in more detail below.*

The preliminary TIA offers conceptual improvements at Sibley Road along Route 20 with a conclusion that “safe and efficient access will be provided at the Project site and that the Project can be accommodated within the confines of the existing and improved transportation system”. Based on

submitted material to date, MDM finds no support for this statement for several reasons which should be addressed by the Applicant for each of the following points:

Comment 10: *There are numerous existing operational and safety deficiencies that are not factored including U-turns, pedestrian activity and illegal turns at or in immediate proximity to the intersection that are in direct conflict with increased Project traffic exiting Sibley Road. Applicant should address how these deficiencies will be addressed as part of an updated improvement plan.*

Response: The proposed plan incorporates a left-turn lane which can be utilized by Sibley Road and the Mobil Station and is consistent with the RSA recommendation and our discussions with MassDOT. With cooperation from the City of Cambridge, the proposed sidewalk and signalized crosswalk can be implemented and will improve safety conditions.

Comment 11: *Observed signal operations at 133 Boston Post Road directly influence left-turn egress from Sibley Road during peak hours, precluding efficient operation; likewise, observed operations indicate motorists attempt to force gaps for left-turns under these conditions that raise safety concerns, particularly angle type collisions with eastbound traffic. Applicant should consider means of addressing the lack of capacity for left-turns from Sibley Road including extension of the median island to 133 Boston Post Road, consistent with RSA recommendations issued by MassDOT.*

Response: The applicant is not proposing a median island. Discussions with MassDOT indicates that left turns out of Sibley Road will be allowed, although left-turning traffic has the option of turning right and reversing direction through the rotary.

Comment 12: *The proposed left-turn lane on Route 20 does not appear to comply with MassDOT design criteria for approaching sight line, deceleration length, taper length and storage length. Refer to Massachusetts Highway Department Project Development & Design Guide Section 6.7.3.1. This left-turn lane is also in direct conflict with illegal left-turn movements from the Mobil station that must be physically precluded to avoid impacting the left-turn lane.*

Response: The left-turn lane is consistent with the RSA recommendation to accommodate turning traffic to Sibley Road and the Mobil Station. Design details will be reviewed with MassDOT who has the final decision on appropriate design conditions and any necessary work needed. MassDOT has indicated that left turns into the Mobil Station will be allowed from the proposed left-turn lane.

Comment 13: *The northerly Site driveway is within 90 feet of Route 20; vehicles attempting to exit this driveway would be blocked by queues on Sibley Road and the short distance is insufficient to meet applicable sight lines from Route 20 for high speed turning traffic. Accordingly, the northerly Site driveway should be eliminated or restricted to enter-only operation.*

Response: This driveway will be an entrance only drive.

Comment 14: *The layout of Sibley Road is unclear on the Conceptual Layout Plan; the Route 20 Conceptual Improvement Plan by VAI shows a portion of the curb to be on private*

property. Applicant should clarify whether a minimum 24-foot wide curb-to-curb roadway dimension can be achieved within the Sibley Road layout without encroachment on adjoining properties.

Response: Sibley Road has adequate right-of-way for the 24-foot section.

Comment 15: *Parking is observed to regularly occur along the entire west edge of Sibley Road during weekdays. Most of this curbside parking will be displaced by Project driveways. The Applicant should confirm where parking will be displaced along Sibley Road and any regulatory restrictions that may be appropriate restricting parking so that adequate sight lines are provided at Project driveways and sufficient (minimum 24-foot wide) roadway width is available to accommodate 2-way traffic flow on Sibley Road within public layout.*

Response: The applicant will work with the Town with respect to on-street parking and appropriate signage. The existing businesses along Sibley Road have sufficient parking and existing parking along Sibley Road is for convenience and is not due to lack of parking. Ultimately, this is a Town enforcement issue.

Comment 16: ***Pedestrian Improvements.** Implementation of a pedestrian crossing at the 133 Boston Post Road signal and sidewalk connection to the Site is identified in a conceptual improvement plan; MDM advises that this represents an important commitment to address pedestrian needs, mobility and safety for the Project and will address the uncontrolled crossings that currently occur across Route 20. The Applicant should make a clear commitment to implementing identified pedestrian improvements including a sidewalk connecting the building entrance to Route 20, a new sidewalk along the Route 20 Site frontage to 133 Boston Post Road, an ADA compliant crosswalk on Sibley Road and a pedestrian crossing of Route 20 at 133 Boston Post Road.*

Response: The applicant is committed to implementing the proposed pedestrian improvements, but this will require cooperation from the City of Cambridge with respect to land dedication or easements to accommodate the plan.

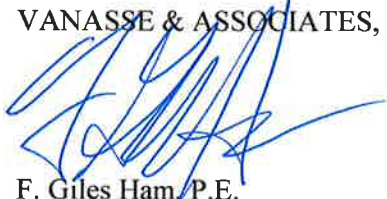
VAI will continue to work with the Town to address issues, but it is important to note the final jurisdiction of Route 20 and improvements is MassDOT. MassDOT has been provided with the proposed plan and the applicant has met with the District to review the proposals. Only once local approvals are secured will final design be prepared and submitted to MassDOT for review and approval.

Ms. Noreen Stockman
July 6, 2017
Page 6 of 6

If you should have any questions, please do hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

VANASSE & ASSOCIATES, INC.



F. Giles Ham, P.E.
Managing Principal

FGH/mef

cc: File