

To: Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals  
Fr: Stephanie A. Kiefer, Esq.  
Re: Narrative Report on Existing Site Condition - Thorndike Place  
Date: November 3, 2020

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The below narrative report on Existing Site Conditions supplements the Site Conditions Report (Part III) of Arlington Land Realty, LLC's Comprehensive Permit, previously filed with the Zoning Board on September 2, 2016. Under Section 3.2.6 of the Arlington Comprehensive Permit regulations, a report (together with applicable plans) is requested to describe existing site conditions, summarize conditions in the surrounding area, wetland or vernal pools, mature trees, existing street elevations, traffic patterns and character of open areas in the neighborhood.

A. Site Location

The Mugar property, approximately 17+ acres in size, is a largely forested site located in East Arlington, between Route 2/Concord Turnpike and residential neighborhoods to the north and east and Thorndike athletic fields to the south. The locus is accessed via Dorothy Road, a 40-foot public way, as well as the intersecting Parker Street and Littlejohn Street. To the east, Edith Street and Burch Street access the site.

The locus is within Arlington's PUD zoning district, which zoning district specifically contemplates use of the land for larger scale developments, including higher density apartment house residential uses. The majority of the adjacent neighborhood, including abutting properties on Dorothy Road, Burch Street and Edith Street, is located in the R2 Two-Family zoning district. The portion of the neighborhood east of Littlejohn Street and north to Lake Street is within the R1 – Single-Family zoning district. Locations of existing structures and existing public roadways in the immediate vicinity of the Site are shown on the Existing Conditions Plan. There are no existing buildings located on the Mugar property.

The location of the property is well situated to both subway, bus and bike paths, to make the project a highly transit-friendly residential project. Likewise, given the size of the property, the property can support the proposed multifamily residential use while also allowing for a large portion of the site to be protected under a conservation restriction.

The MBTA Alewife Station is approximately .5 mile from the site; the Alewife station services the Red Line subway line as well as a number of MBTA bus routes, including Route 62, Route 67, Route 76, Route 79, Route 84, Route 350 and Route 351. Directly to the south of the property is Route 2/Concord Turnpike. Route 2 is classified by the MassDOT as a Principal

Arterial under MassDOT jurisdiction. Route 2 connects various towns and major highways from the New York State line to Boston. Locally, Route 2 provides a connection between I-95/Route 128 to the west with Route 16 to the east.

B. Existing Conditions of the Site

The topography of the site is undulating with small to medium sized depressions in the northeasterly portion of the property. To the north, along Dorothy Road, site elevations range from 8 to 12 feet; and the frontage along Route 2/Concord Turnpike is generally between elevation 5 to 8 feet.

The property is largely forested, with extensive areas overrun with invasive species including Garlic Mustard, Japanese Knotweed, and Oriental Bittersweet. (*See* Wildlife Habitat and Vegetation Evaluation for a more detailed description of the existing vegetation). The soils onsite are generally decomposed organic material over loose sandy and gravelly glaciofluvial deposit. The property is presently undeveloped and overgrown, with makeshift homeless camps upon the site.

The Existing Conditions Plan (Sheet V-100) prepared by the BSC Group depicts the site location, the abutting properties, existing street elevations and other relevant information with respect to the existing condition of the property, including without limitation location of buildings on adjacent properties. Please also refer to the General Notes and Utility Note on the Existing Condition Plan for further information.

C. Character of Open Areas in Vicinity

The site is presently undeveloped. The immediate neighborhood to the north and east is densely residentially developed. To the west of the site are the Thorndike athletic fields.

As part of Applicant's proposal, only the northerly/northwesterly portion of the site is proposed for the multifamily housing project and its accessory driveway access, landscaping, play area, terraces and related infrastructure. The Applicant has proposed that the environmentally sensitive portions of the site be protected by a conservation restriction or other appropriate land conservation mechanism.

D. Locations of Wetland Resource Areas and Floodplain Features

A large portion of the site is located within floodplain area and Bordering Vegetated Wetland, located predominantly on the southerly side of the site, both of which are wetland resource areas under the State Wetlands Protection Act Regulations and the Arlington Wetlands Protection Bylaw. The 100-year floodplain is identified as elevation 6.8 and has been located on the Existing Conditions and Existing Environmental Resources Plans (Sheets V-100 and C-100 in the plan set). The wetlands were delineated by BSC Group in January 2020 and again in October 2020. The wetland resource areas are shown on the Existing Environmental Resources

Plan (Sheet C-100 in the plan set) and as further documented in a Wetland Delineation Memorandum prepared by BSC Group dated October 19, 2020.

A review of the information available through MassGIS and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species on-line data viewer determined no presence of estimated or priority habitat area, vernal pools, or any other similar jurisdictional resource area (*See Wildlife Habitat and Vegetation Evaluation* for a more detailed description of the existing wildlife).

The Existing Environmental Resources Plan (Sheet C-100) shows the locations of wetland resource areas and floodplain as surveyed and delineated by the BSC Group. The wetland resource areas are also further detailed in the BSC Group Wetlands Delineation Memorandum, dated October 19, 2020. A copy of the October 19, 2020 memorandum was previously submitted to the Board on October 22, 2020. The BSC memorandum describes both the state and locally regulated wetland resource areas and buffer zones and floodplain areas. As detailed therein, BSC delineated and flagged four Bordering Vegetated Wetland (“BVW”) mapped areas, BVW Series A-D. BVW Series A and D are predominantly forested areas; BVW Series B is primarily forested with an area of herbaceous cover and BVW Series C is largely herbaceous cover (common reed) with some forested area. According to BSC’s observations, only a small isolated area to the west of an area previously flagged as Wetland I on the north side of the site demonstrated hydric soils. The BSC memorandum also identifies the tree species located on the property as well as the shrub and sapling species, herbaceous species and vines. As documented by BSC’s field investigations, the upland areas, the tree population includes red oak, white pine, cottonwood, box elder and red maple

Further, please refer to the Wildlife Habitat and Vegetation Evaluation report submitted herewith for further detailed information on the existing vegetation, wildlife and documented conditions on the property. The Wildlife Habitat and Vegetation report documents a number of mature trees in the study areas, but has not conducted a full tree survey within the heavily wooded site.

#### E. Traffic and Parking

The Thorndike Place 40B project is designed to leverage its proximity to a major bike path (Minuteman Bike Path) as well as nearby transportation facilities to encourage multi-modal travel. Primary access to the 176-unit multifamily project will be at the corner of the Dorothy Road/Littlejohn Street. The detailed updated traffic impact report is being submitted to the Board under separate cover by Vanasse & Associates, which will detail the existing traffic patterns together with an analysis of the traffic presently existing and as impacted by the 40B project.

The Arlington Zoning Ordinance requires one parking space per studio apartment, 1.15 spaces per one-bedroom unit, 1.5 spaces per two-bedroom unit and 2.0 spaces per three-bedroom unit in an apartment house. The Project includes a total of 240 parking spaces in accordance with the zoning requirements, or an average of 1.36 spaces per unit which is a parking space per unit ratio generally consistent with projects of this nature. The Project also includes approximately 140 bicycle parking spaces.

