



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TOWN HALL, 730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476
TELEPHONE 781-316-3090

To: Arlington Select Board
From: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development
Kelly Lynema, Assistant Director, Department of Planning and Community Development
Date: May 24, 2022
RE: Site Approval Application for 1021-1025 Mass Ave

This memo contains collected comments from staff, Boards, and Commissions in reference to the application for project eligibility/suite approval submitted to MassHousing by the Maggiore Companies (the Applicant) for a development of 50 homeownership units and approximately 1,000 square feet of commercial space on an approximately 1-acre parcel off of Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington, Massachusetts (the Development). This project would be located in Brattle Square in the B2 Neighborhood Business Zoning District, which is situated between Arlington Center and Arlington Heights. The plans are preliminary in nature, and additional detail will be required for a thorough review should MassHousing issue a Project Eligibility Letter and the applicant submit a comprehensive permit application to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Those providing comments noted the many positives of the proposal as presently understood, based on the information provided by the Applicant in their application to MassHousing, personal knowledge of the locus, and understanding of MassHousing's criteria for Smart Growth¹. The Applicant has previously met with the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Conservation Commission, and the Select Board for presentations and working sessions prior to submitting the Site Approval Application and appears prepared to collaborate with the Town to work toward a mutually agreeable project.

DPCD received comments from staff, the Conservation Commission, and members of the Arlington Redevelopment Board on this proposal and notes this feedback below:

Long Term Planning, Smart Growth, and Affordability

The Arlington Master Plan highlights the Mass Ave corridor as a key development and redevelopment area. The redevelopment of this project site provides the opportunity to create a mix of residential and commercial activity, remediate and improve connections to the Mill Brook, and connect to both the Bikeway and transit options while increasing the Town's supply of affordable housing.

Arlington is committed to providing and maintaining affordable housing for people making low- and moderate-incomes. As stated in the Housing Production Plan, adopted by the ARB and Select Board, and awaiting approval by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, the town has a significant shortage of affordable homes, especially for households who make extremely low and very-low incomes. Additionally, the town has few viable options for first-time home buyers to find a

¹ MassHousing Smart Growth Criteria Scorecard, accessed at https://www.masshousingrental.com/portal/server.pt/document/384/smart_growth_criteria_scorecard

home they can afford.² Two goals of the plan are to “increase safe, decent, suitable rental and homeownership housing options in Arlington for extremely low- to middle-income households” and to “provide equitable access to affordable homeownership and rental homes suitable for a variety of household types” to address the town’s significant housing shortage, including for first-time homebuyers.³ A strategy identified for advancing these goals is to improve development opportunities along major corridors to include a greater mix of housing options. To best meet these goals, the Applicant is encouraged to consider deepening the level of affordability for at least half of the 13 affordable units to provide homeownership opportunities for households who make at or below 50% of area median income (AMI) and at an allowed sale price affordable to households who make at or below 50% AMI.

Among MassHousing’s Smart Growth Criteria, the project as designed aims to concentrate development and mix uses, contribute to revitalization of a neighborhood, expand housing opportunities, provide transportation choice, and plan regionally. Of the 1,301 homes on the Town’s subsidized housing inventory, only 15 are ownership units.⁴ This project would create 13 affordable homeownership units—nearly doubling the Town’s current number of affordable homeownership opportunities—within walking distance of transit, retail, restaurants, a grocery store, and parks and recreational locations. The location of the proposed development affords public transportation and bicycling options alongside personal vehicle transportation along one of Arlington’s main thoroughfares.

Site and Building Design

- Overall, the massing, scale, and materials shown in the Site Approval Application would create an attractive development for the Brattle Square area. Staff are available to coordinate feedback on behalf of the ZBA on finish palette samples as the project advances.
- The project proposes a small amount of commercial space. Providing additional retail space on the ground floor would be preferable, possibly through the removal of parking spaces adjacent to the front sidewalk. Plans for a black iron hood exhaust should be incorporated into the project in its early stages, so that options for small café or takeaway restaurant uses are viable in the future. The Applicant should also consider integrating a retail sign band into the façade design.
- The integration of the second-floor courtyard and rear wooded area are appreciated. Additional improvements could be considered to better connect residents in the building with access to the rear as the connection to the “urban garden” area is not intuitive and requires walking through the parking garage. Additionally, the proposed walkway around the west side of the building should be accessible, although it is currently shown to have stairs.
- Additional storage may be necessary for the housing units. A larger trash and recycling room may be necessary for 50 households.
- Future drawings should identify the fresh air intake and CO exhaust locations. The exhaust should vent to the roof instead of to the shared open space in the rear of the site.

² Arlington Housing Plan, page 67, 2022. Accessed at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/59622/637789029261100000>

³ Arlington Housing Plan, page 67, 2022. Accessed at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/59622/637789029261100000>

⁴ Department of Housing and Community Development CH40B Subsidized Housing Inventory for Arlington, 2022. Accessed at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/60915/637866711498370000>.

- Regarding the connection between the building and the public realm, the Applicant could consider relocating the tenant gym to the front of the building so that the windows to the right of the garage door look into something other than a parking garage. In addition, the plaza in front of the building could be improved with seating and amenities to better connect the commercial storefront with the sidewalk.
- The Applicant should consider minimizing light pollution and cut off fixtures and glare.

Stormwater, Conservation, and Environmental Impacts

The project site is within the outer 100- to 200-foot Riverfront Area to Mill Brook and would make the following impacts within the area: construction of a building partly within the resource area; removal of 22 trees; and creation of the “urban park” in the rear of the site with native plantings. The robust native planting plan is appreciated and will generate more biodiversity and be more climate resilient than the mainly Norway Maple tree monoculture and invasive vegetation currently present on the site.

Additionally, the urban park area enhances wildlife corridors and improves the connection to the Mill Brook. Should the project advance, the following concerns should be addressed:

- The footprint and design of the proposed building including unit layout and building height should be reconsidered to evaluate whether the large sycamore tree can in any way be preserved or incorporated into the project design.
- Offsite restoration should ideally be completed within the first 50 feet of riverfront, which is owned by the neighboring Millbrook Condominium Association.
- The area proposed for the urban park currently appears to have construction debris and fill. These conditions should be cleaned up, and the fill should be tested for contaminants and soil suitability for the native plantings.
- While the urban park is currently presented as a private park, it would be preferable to provide public access and appropriate signage indicating as much.
- Additional landscaped buffers should be provided along the side yard property lines.
- A robust invasive management plan will need to be developed and implemented for the site.
- A comparison of pre- and post-development impervious areas should be provided along with a hydrological report detailing the stormwater runoff calculations in order to more accurately review the stormwater mitigation provided. All necessary calculations should be submitted in order to evaluate the hydrologic and stormwater runoff conditions for pre-development and post-development conditions. Furthermore, additional information should be provided to review the stormwater collection system for runoff requirements from the building roof, and stormwater collection pipes and related infrastructure should be indicated on future plans.
- It is noted that there is an observation test hole indicated on the plan. Additional data should be provided indicating the subsurface conditions in the area proposed to be utilized for stormwater infiltration including soil horizons, soil type and classification and groundwater information.
- Calculations should be included detailing the effects of groundwater mounding in the vicinity of the proposed subsurface infiltration system.
- Regarding energy efficiency and climate infrastructure, the Applicant could consider providing air source heat pumps, rooftop solar, not connecting to natural gas, providing greater descriptions of the green roof elements, and indicating whether LEED certification will be pursued.

Traffic and Public Safety

Overall, as the project advances, a thorough review and documentation of the Mass Ave level of service ratings should be provided along with the anticipated traffic generation and effects resulting from the

proposed development, particularly as they related to the project's proximity to the Mass Ave and Brattle Street signalized intersection and the entrance to the Highland Fire Station.

With 50 housing units, the project as proposed would require a waiver on the amount of parking required. As part of the waiver request, the Applicant should demonstrate ways that the project can encourage use of multimodal transportation by occupants and visitors, notably by providing adequate short- and long-term bicycle parking. To take advantage of the proposed project's proximity to the Minuteman Bikeway and Mass Ave bike lanes, both indoor and outdoor bicycle parking should be provided for residential owners, the commercial tenant, and visitors. Additional comments include:

- Pavement markings and signage should be provided on future plans, including markings for EV charging, HP parking spaces, and ingress/egress locations.
- Street trees or trees in the front yard setback should be provided to improve pedestrian safety and reduce heat island effects. Suitable details should be provided indicating that ADA accessibility requirements for sidewalks, ramps, and any other pedestrian accommodations in the right of way are being met.
- Properly designed fire lanes or access areas should be identified.
- Turning radii should be included for the parking plan, identifying compliance with required radii for all vehicles in the parking structure, and areas where delivery and larger vehicles will frequent.
- The provision of the garage door should be explained, as its operation may create undue noise for the occupant of the unit directly above garage access and could lead to delays with ingress and egress to the garage and drivers blocking the sidewalk.
- Time of use restrictions are requested for deliveries, trash pickup, etc. to reduce impacts on the adjacent neighborhood and future occupants.

Water, Sewer, and Utilities

Please refer to the detailed comments provided in the attached letter from the Department of Public Works.

In summary, while additional details regarding the site, building design, utilities, environmental remediation and impacts, and traffic and public safety will be discussed should this project advance to a comprehensive permit application, the project in its early stages is consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Arlington Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the Mill Brook Corridor Report.

Attachments:

- Conservation Commission, 1021-1205 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington MA Comprehensive Permit Site Approval Application, dated May 20, 2022
- Department of Public Works, Plan review for 1021-1025 Mass Ave. Comprehensive Permit, dated May 18, 2022



Engineering Division

TOWN OF ARLINGTON
Department of Public Works
51 Grove Street
Arlington, Massachusetts 02476
Telephone (781) 316-3320 Fax (781) 316-3281

1021 – 1025 Mass Ave. Review Comments

Date: May 18, 2022
To: Kelly Lynema; Planning & Community Development
From: Wayne Chouinard, Town Engineer
RE: Plan review for 1021-1025 Mass Ave. Comprehensive Permit

The Town of Arlington Engineering Division is in receipt of the Comprehensive Permit information provided by email on May 3, 2022. It should be noted that the submitted plans appear to be preliminary in nature and do not include suitable detail to fully and satisfactorily evaluate the submission. These comments will respond specifically to the content related to stormwater, site utilities and accessibility. It is expected that a final review will be required for final construction level documentation.

The comments provided are based on the documents provided by the Department of Planning and Community Development. Comments are as follows:

- **Stormwater:**
 - It is noted that storm water control details are included on the Site Details Sheet. However, a comparison of pre and post development impervious areas should be provided along with a hydrological report detailing the stormwater runoff calculations in order to more accurately review the stormwater mitigation provided.
 - All necessary calculations should be submitted in order to evaluate the hydrologic and stormwater runoff conditions for pre-development and post-development conditions.
 - There is no information provided to review the stormwater collection system for runoff requirements from the building roof.
 - No stormwater collection pipes or infrastructure – roof drain, leaders, pipes etc. are indicated.
 - It is noted that there is an observation test hole indicated on the plan. Additional data should be provided indicating the subsurface conditions in the area proposed to be utilized for stormwater infiltration including soil horizons, soil type and classification and groundwater information.
 - Calculations should be included detailing the effects of groundwater mounding in the vicinity of the proposed subsurface infiltration system.
- **Traffic:**
 - Review and documentation of the Mass Ave. LOS ratings should be provided along with anticipated traffic generation and effects resulting from the proposed project.
 - Due to proximity to the Mass Ave. and Brattle Street signalized intersection and the entrance to the Highland Fire Station, it is recommended that an analysis be provided indicating the anticipated impacts of increased traffic volume and use at these locations.
- **Lighting:**
 - A photometric plan should be provided to evaluate site lighting and light spillage at property lines. Night sky reduction, light pollution, cut off fixtures and glare should be considered, carefully evaluated and documented with respect to impacts on abutting properties.



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- **Water :**
 - The site plan does not indicate separate water connections for domestic and fire protection services. A suitable connection for both services should be sized and indicated.
 - Calculations should be provided to ensure the distribution system for the area has capacity for increased demand for fire flow and domestic water supply without impacting the existing system or abutter's water volume and pressure.
 - All connections to the Town water system require a triple gated connection to provide maximum shut-off and distribution control.
 - Connections to the Town water main require a tee connection.

- **Sewer:**
 - The proposed sewer connection indicates a tie-in along the existing sewer main. It is recommended that the connection be made directly to the existing and adjacent sewer manhole. All existing utilities are required to be cut and capped at the existing main connections.
 - New sewer service lines from multi-family buildings should be a minimum of 8" diameter.
 - Up-gradient sewer flow analysis, with peaking factor should be determined and provided to document suitable capacity for proposed additional flow. Evaluation should include the downstream sewer main to determine whether it will provide sufficient capacity for the intended increase in flow and address any added exfiltration potential.
 - Floor drain and sewer connection details should be provided for all garage facilities serving more than five (5) vehicles including oil/gas separators. These should be designed and located properly within the parking structure or on-site.
 - Hydraulic calculations should be provided for utilities to confirm suitable capacity. It is recommended that any upgrades or improvements necessary to maintain capacity with proposed additional flow should be included in this project.
 - Details and offset dimensions are required to ensure proper spacing between water/sewer service connections.
 - It is recommended during permitting and approval, to discuss whether an Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) mitigation fee be assessed to be used to reduce I/I of the Town sewer system in the amount equal to four(4) times the design flow of the project.

- **Utilities: Other**
 - What are the off-site upgrade requirements necessary for the CATV requirements for proposed development? Will current utility pole and cable configurations accommodate the required cable electric and telephone wires without the need for additional utility poles or improvements outside of the project locus? Any installation of utility poles or underground conduit in the public right of way will require a Grant of Location from the Board of Selectmen. This information should be provided as part of the application process to evaluate the entirety of impacts and effects.

- **Pavement, parking and sidewalks:**
 - Proposed pavement markings and signage should be indicated.
 - Pavement markings and signage required for handicap spaces if required should be added, along with delineation of required ADA accessible routes to the structure.
 - Information should be provided detailing the entrance/egress location and the impacts on pedestrian accessibility along the sidewalk located within the public right of way.



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- Properly designed fire lanes or access areas should be provided for access around the structure or a suitable alternative satisfactory to the Fire Department.
- Turning radius should be included detailing required radii for all vehicles within the parking structure.
- Suitable details should be provided indicating ADA accessibility requirements for sidewalks, ramps and any other pedestrian accommodations along the right of way.
- Site plan should identify areas where delivery and other larger vehicles will frequent and address suitable turning radius requirements.
- Time of use restrictions for deliveries, trash pickup etc. to reduce impacts on adjacent neighborhood.
- **Landscaping:**
 - Project should provide properly placed screening to minimize impacts on abutting properties.
 - If possible, street tree plantings should be provided along Mass Ave. to reduce heat island effects.



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

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ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

May 20, 2022

Kelly Lynema, AICP
Assistant Director
Department of Planning and Community Development
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

RE: 1021-1025 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington MA
Comprehensive Permit Site Approval Application

Dear Ms. Lynema,

The Conservation Commission provides this comment letter and information regarding the proposed development at 1021-1025 Massachusetts Avenue for Maggiore Company's (the Applicant) proposed 50-unit multi-family homeownership development on 1.08 acres of land in Arlington (the "Project"). The Commission hopes this letter assists the Town in formulating its comments to MassHousing on the Comprehensive Permit Site Approval Application (the "Application").¹

Maggiore submitted its Application to MassHousing to receive Site Approval (also called Project Eligibility Approval) under the Commonwealth's comprehensive permit statute, G.L. c. 40B. As you know, Site Approval is required before Maggiore can file a Comprehensive Permit Application with the Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). One of the criteria for MassHousing's approval is that "the conceptual project design is generally appropriate for the site on which it is located, taking into consideration factors that may include topography, [and] environmental resources, ..." 760CMR 56.04(4)(c).

The Conservation Commission takes no position as to whether the Project is "generally appropriate" for the Property. After a Comprehensive Permit Application is filed with the ZBA, the Conservation Commission will evaluate whether the Project complies with standards in the State's Wetlands Protection Act and the Arlington Bylaw for Wetlands Protection and its regulations.

Environmental Resource Area

The resource area present on the property is the 200-foot riverfront to Mill Brook. The Project includes work within the outer 100-200 foot Riverfront Area.

¹ The Commission reviewed the 196 page comprehensive permit site approval application submitted to the Select Board and Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine, prepared by Maggiore, dated May 2022. The Commission also held two Working Sessions earlier this year and a separate meeting with Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent David Morgan and Assistant Commissioner Cathy Garnett about project updates to the proposed urban park summarized at the Commission's May 19, 2022 meeting.

Proposed Project Impacts to Resource Area

The Conservation Commission notes that the Project proposes the following impacts within the outer 100-foot Riverfront Area: construction of a building partly within the resource area; removal of 22 trees; and creation of an urban park with native plantings.

Conservation Commission Comments on Proposed Plan

The Conservation Commission appreciates that the Applicant has proposed a robust native planting plan within the 100-200 foot riverfront, that includes a diversity of plantings and increase in vegetative biomass greater than the sum of the trees being removed. This type of planting should generate more biodiversity and be more climate resilient than the mainly Norway maple tree monoculture and invasive vegetation that are present on the site currently. In addition, this urban park area enhances connectivity of wildlife corridors and patches along Mill Brook.

The Commission has several concerns with the Project as proposed.

- The area proposed for the urban park currently appears to have construction debris and fill. The Commission is concerned that these conditions get cleaned up and that the fill is tested for contaminants and soil suitability for the native plantings.
- The Project proposes a private urban park. The Commission would like the park to be an example of native urban revegetation; as such, we request that signage about the park be posted and some access to the public provided.
- Since there are a substantial number of invasive plants in the area proposed for the urban park, a robust invasive management plan would need to be developed and implemented. We recommend, for the success of the native plantings, that such a plan be required in perpetuity.
- The Commission had recommended to the Applicant to reach out to the neighboring Millbrook Condominium association to find out if they could get an agreement to do restoration closer to Mill Brook – within the first 50 feet of riverfront (owned by the condo association). Such restoration would be more advantageous to resource area improvements. We have not learned of the outcome of this request.

Please contact the Conservation Commission should you have questions.

Sincerely,



Susan Chapnick, Chair

Arlington Conservation Commission

s.chapnick@comcast.net