May 6, 2022

James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459
Via Email

Re: Riverside Roundabout Consistency Determination

Dear Commissioner McGonagle,

We appreciate that, at Wednesday's joint meeting of the Public Facilities and Public Transportation and Safety Committees on the proposed redesign of the Riverside roundabout, you focused the Committees' attention to the relevant language from the Riverside Council Order. Namely, that you are tasked with issuing a consistency ruling on the proposed changes based on whether the new design meets the same performance objectives as the conceptually approved plan.

As explained in the document submitted by Councilor Gentile at the meeting, the roundabout re-design does not meet the performance objectives of the conceptually approved plan because it does not maintain the existing turning movements at Asheville Road. At the meeting on Wednesday, Randy Hart confirmed that this is a performance objective of the approved roundabout design when he stated that the roundabout was positioned at Asheville in order to preserve these turning movements. The roundabout re-design also fails to achieve the performance objectives of the approved design because, in contrast to the approved design, it fails to provide Lower Falls residents a safe and efficient way to take a left turn onto Grove Street. This is a vital objective because the increased traffic on Grove Street from the development will make these turns challenging. Given that the proposed roundabout redesign does not meet either of these performance objectives, it cannot be considered consistent with the conceptually approved plan.

That being said, we, and the Lower Falls neighborhood representatives, appreciate the desire to reduced speeds even further than what is accomplished by the approved roundabout design. We believe that this can be accomplished through other traffic slowing methods, while maintaining the approved roundabout design. For example, speed humps, speed tables, and/or rumble strips could be added on each Grove Street approach to the roundabout. Pursuing alternatives such as these would avoid the issues created by the fact that the re-design is not consistent with the approved design while reducing speeds (perhaps even more significantly than the re-design) and maintain the safe and efficient left turn onto Grove Street that is provided by the approved design.

Thus, we ask that you make the finding that the proposed roundabout redesign is inconsistent with the conceptually approved plan, as we believe you are required to do, and that you also

urge MassDot to consider other measures to reduce speeds on the approaches to the roundabout. This approach is a win for all interested parties.

Respectfully,

Councilor Markiwicz Councilor Krintzman Councilor Gentile