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October 10, 2020

Robert Rosa, Chairman  
Rockland Zoning Board of Appeal

Attn: Pat Brennan, P.E., Board Peer Review Consultant

Reference: Traffic Study Peer Review of Response  
Shingle Mill Residential Development – 40B  
75 – 79 Pond Street, Rockland, MA

Dear Mr. Rosa:

At your request, we are pleased to provide this comprehensive review for a residential development on Pond Street in Rockland. The Peer Review Response to our Comments has been prepared by McMahon Transportation Engineers & Planners as Dated September 25, 2020. Their report has been prepared in support of two five story buildings with 236 residential dwelling units with a 3,129 square-foot community building and 293 surface parking spaces. In general, the response to our comments were either to dismiss our request for additional detailed quantification or to simply state that they were willing to engage in discussions with the Town about issues including parking and heavy vehicle activity during the construction.

This review provides my professional opinion as to what could be done to provide more detail at minimum effort and why I believe such information would be valuable.

#### I – Study Area

The proponent has clearly documented that their 80 vehicle trips during the morning peak hour and 101 trips during the evening peak hour would not in and of itself overload the Hingham Street signalized intersections. However, my point was not to document the incremental increase in volume and delay for Rockland residents but was intended to document the corridor volumes and signal demands so the Town is assured the corridor is operating as efficiently as possible and further, to provide a baseline condition for other developments which may be introduced beyond this project. While the actual percent increase in volume and delay may be acceptable, it would be beneficial to identify the projected best signal operating condition at the southbound ramp intersection.

After fifty years in the traffic engineering field and preparing and reviewing traffic reports for 40B projects, I fully understand these projects are given latitude in addressing documented traffic impacts. Since the proponent has already utilized the 2013 Gallery Automotive traffic study, it appears these volumes could be brought up to date generally by balancing the earlier volumes at Home Depot with those at the Pond Street intersection and not inflating the Home Depot generation. Bear in mind that it is not so important to precisely evaluate the southbound ramp intersection as it is to identify if the corridor signal system could operate most efficiently.

Therefore, I continue to encourage the proponent to add this intersection to their Study Area.

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If these traffic signals are of the newer adaptive control type where the internal mini-computer controller can adjust the timing of their green light cycles to match current traffic conditions on the ground where they are constantly collecting data about approaching vehicles and creating new timing sequences to match them, they should indicate the State is willing to maintain this system. It is therefore my opinion that the intersection of Hingham Street (Rte. 228) at the southbound Route 3 Ramp / Home Depot Driveway should be added to the Study Area.

## II – Traffic Assignment

The Proponent appears to indicate that while revising the trip assignments to reflect a Route 3 return trip via the Southbound Route 3 ramps and Union Point Commuter Rail Station is possible, a 25% change in either direction would only amount to approximately 25 trips and therefore would have no significant impact.

Again, I am not questioning the signal systems ability to process these vehicles but merely suggest the final report should reflect the expected volumes to assure the system is operating as efficiently as possible and provide a baseline network flow for other projects which may follow if we are not able to identify post covid-19 volumes for a while.

## III – Site Driveway Stopping Sight Distance

The proponent seems to acknowledge that the proposed left-turn queue from Pond Street to Longwater Drive will continue to have back-up problems but it will work much better than without this new lane and further, the design provides maximum storage. Moreover, the Proponent appears to see some merit in our suggestion about providing a "Do Not Block The Box" treatment for the site intersection, they only indicate the team is willing to engage with the Town of Rockland to establish the final design for this mitigation. While I fully understand only the Selectmen have the authority to authorize this work, the Zoning Board of Appeals should be provided a sketch of what the improvements may look like so they may have more confidence in the design's ability to work before formulating a recommendation to the Selectmen.

## IV – Site Circulation

The Proponent acknowledges that some residents of this project may walk to the MassDOT Car Pool Lot for a bus to Boston. They also indicate the Proponent is willing to discuss pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements with the Town of Rockland to see if any of the MassDOT potential improvements are appropriate for this site. Again it appears it may behoove the Proponent to provide a sketch for the Zoning Board of Appeals review so they can understand the Proponent's intent and support, both off-site and on-site, to provide connectivity between the site buildings and Hingham Street sidewalks and the public transit model stations.

It appears the Proponent has reviewed the site for a fire apparatus. Although there appears to be sufficient room, I suggest the Rockland Fire Chief or his designee should review this material since I've found many Cities and Town's now have their own design fire apparatus which they like to see utilized in evaluation prior to approval.

V – Construction Impacts

It appears there will be significant truck usage during site development prior to occupancy. The Proponent has indicated that they are willing to engage in discussions with the Town of Rockland regarding heavy vehicle activity during construction. We are somewhat concerned about the impact of heavy trucks exiting Pond Street during the morning peak hour but it would help if the Proponent would identify how many cubic yards and truckloads of hauling will be required and how he would manage this operation during the morning peak hour.

VI Conclusion

With the full understanding this is a 40B project, I continue to believe it would be helpful to the Zoning Board of Appeals and the residents of Rockland, if the Proponent show his understanding of how to minimize traffic impacts, promote pedestrian usage and safety, provide fire access with the Town's preferred design vehicle, and minimize construction impacts.



*John Thomas Gilson*