

St. John Street Garage Site Plan Application Responses to Public Comments

August 2018

Introduction:

Maine Medical Center has received several written public comments from members of the neighborhoods surrounding the Bramhall campus and from members of the public. MMC considers these a reflection of the successful public review process and provides the answers below. Additional questions or requests for clarification are welcome.

The public comments and questions have been organized below by topic. Full copies of the public comments received as of the date of this letter are attached.

Congress St Detour:

Jenny MacKenzie (3/27/2018)

“I have concerns about the closing of Congress Street during [the] Phase I expansion of MMC and have the following suggestions -

- Traffic be alerted by flashing signage on 295, in the vicinity of Exit 4 or 5 that an alternate route should be sought (suggest taking Exit 4 or Exit 6).
- Traffic coming off the Veteran's Bridge should be directed towards St. John Street or Fore River Parkway (concern about increased traffic on Valley). Another flashing sign would be helpful here.
- Traffic coming in-town via outer Congress and Exit 5 should be diverted to Park Street via St. John Street. I would like to see "Local Traffic Only" signs at the corner of Valley/Congress and Gilman/Congress to prevent excessive traffic from filtering down Forest and Boynton Streets.
- Increased monitoring of on-street parking violations during Sea Dogs games.
- Suspension of the weekly overnight parking restrictions in the surrounding streets (St. John, Valley, A, C, D, Gilman, Boynton, Weymouth, Forest, Park, etc.)”

Response: The initial plan was to close Congress St for a period of 8 weeks in May and June. Congress St. was reopened in Mid-June of 2018, three weeks ahead of schedule.

Home Inspections:

Jenny MacKenzie (3/27/2018)

"I would like an update from MMC on the plans for baseline inspections of the home owner's and business foundation walls in the surrounding neighborhoods. I am especially concerned about the construction of the employee garage on St. John [street], the new entrance on Congress and demolition of the old garage which could adversely impact properties."

Response: Baseline inspections will be completed for properties immediately adjacent to significant project work of the St John Street garage and the Congress St clinical building.

St John St / Garage Intersection Design:

Emma Holder (6/7/2018)

"I'd like to follow up on the idea I presented about the St. John St. X D Street "complete streets" striping near the proposed MMC garage. If the bike lane can be striped to merge with through-traffic at that intersection, it will get the bikes out of the right turn lane and avoid possible "right hook" injuries while allowing for smoother flow of motorists into the facility from St John St.

Would it be possible to ask the MMC-folk for another street-striping proposal with this in mind? As someone who rides 100% of the time, I can guarantee that cyclists would prefer not to be edged to the side of the road into the way of turning traffic.

Please also consider a timed pedestrian walk light that gives pedestrians a 3-second head start before the traffic is allowed to move (as on St John X Park Ave. under the trestle - it works really well.)"

Response: This suggestion is being considered. The City of Portland Planning Department engaged TY Lin, a traffic consultant, to identify best practices for bike/pedestrian/intersection design. MMC is awaiting a recommendation from the City.

On-Street Parking:

Laura Noddin (6/26/2018)

"I'm writing in regard to the recent proposal to build MMC's new parking garage on St John Street. I have been a resident at 205 St John Street for the last two years (and hoping to stay for a third), and myself and my roommates rely on having on-street parking. My apartment building is 3 units, with 3 people per unit. Removing 13 parking spots from in front of our building would be incredibly inconvenient - as there are many other apartment buildings in this vicinity as well. Not to mention that these spots are nearly always filled -- if you drive around looking for a spot (say, during street cleaning) you will clearly see that the adjacent roads are filled with bumper to bumper parking as well.

I also believe that having on street parking available here is better for our local businesses. Take for example the Sea Dogs - many families opt for parking on this street to avoid the hassle of traffic. If we remove these street parking spots, we are essentially cutting off this part of Portland (and it's local businesses) to the public. From what I know about our city's values - I do not at all believe this is the right choice.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I hope you carefully consider the cons before making a decision."

Beth Prosser (6/26/2018)

"Eliminating 13 parking spaces used by tenants, homeowners and businesses just isn't nice or neighborly. Unless I'm mistaken, it has not been reported in the newspaper that this new plan eliminates parking spaces and adds a street light at the D Street intersection with St. John Street.

I can appreciate Matt Wickenheiser's statement: "the goal is to consolidate parking into one spot, where employees can quickly and easily find a parking space, grab a shuttle and get to work." What about people who live and work directly across from this proposed private garage? What about landlords who have rentals and don't have off-street parking? Many of these people work late into the evening or early morning. Can they not easily find a parking space and go to work or home safely and easily?

I'm a landlord and own a business directly across the street. Employees park on St. John Street as do tenants and homeowners. Valley Street parking spots are usually always full and D Street is limited to 3 spaces on one side and 2-3 on the other side with limited one hour parking. With a proposed sidewalk and a street light at this intersection, parking may certainly become even more limited or possibly eliminated.

Jeff Sanders stated "This new plan meets the needs of our employees and addresses our neighbors' concerns." Taking away these parking spots do not mesh with this neighborhood as part of Portland's "institutional overlay zone." How will he meet MMC's neighbors' concerns by taking away much needed street parking?

It seems to me that for MMC's 2,450 spaced proposed parking garage, current street parking should not be eliminated. Will MMC give up 13 first floor spots in their garage in exchange for the ones they want to take away from the city residents in this neighborhood?"

Deborah Heald (6/26/2018)

"Last night MMC held a neighborhood meeting at MMC's Dana Center to share the plans for the new Employee Parking Garage on St. John St.

This was the first time property owners adjacent to and near the D Street and St. John Street intersection learned of the addition of a traffic light there and the elimination of 13 on-street parking spaces (northbound side of St. John just before and after where D Street intersects with St. John).

When property owners asked about the 13 parking space eliminations, MMC, and others said they assessed/studied that area of the neighborhood and concluded that the elimination of the on-street parking would not have any negative impact.

As it turns out, this assumption by MMC and others, is incorrect. It does have a negative impact. Property owners have asked MMC to revisit this concern and to work with them to find a way or ways to remediate the impact of this decrease in on-street parking in front of their properties.”

Dana Flexon (6/27/2018)

“I am writing to you to express my concern over Maine Med’s proposed plan for a new 2,450-space parking garage to be built on Saint John Street in Portland. I currently reside on Saint John Street with my husband and 18 month old. Street parking is currently extremely limited. With the construction of the new garage, there will be a loss of at least thirteen parking places. Does the city have plans to replace the parking spots with safe and convenient spaces for the residents? I totally understand the need for safe and convenient parking for Maine Med employees but as a resident, I also need safe and convenient parking. What are the plans?”

Gregory Durgin (6/28/2018)

“I have recently learned that there are plans to eliminate 13 street parking spaces on St. John St as a part of the Maine Medical Center employee parking garage construction. Many of these spaces are currently used by myself and other residents of Portland as a part of daily life, and their loss would be a massive one. As I’m sure you are aware, parking within Portland particularly during the winter, is difficult enough with the scant spaces that exist and further removing parking is not going to help this issue for locals. Eliminating these parking spaces is also damaging to local business as it limits accessibility to those businesses. This is, for obvious reasons, undesirable.

I hope that if the parking garage proposal is approved, it can go forward without eliminating these crucial parking spaces. As residents of Portland, we also require parking and if no other alternative is afforded it will cause undue hardship and difficulty. Please take into consideration the needs of the residents and businesses of Portland that are not Maine Medical Center.”

Dan Chase (7/16/2018)

“In the afterglow of the Planning Board workshop, I am concerned that the loss of on-street parking spaces on St. John St. is not considered a serious issue.

I find it ironic that this project is being driven by MMC’s parking needs, and the other participants in the plan, the Railroad Building and the Eagles Club, are having their parking needs addressed, but the parking needs of the neighborhood at ground zero are just being blown off. They get their brand new parking while we get our existing parking taken away.

On the stretch of St. John St. from D Street to the Railroad Building parking lot, a distance of 200 ft., there are seven residential buildings, comprising 17 units of housing and one professional office, and Alan Auto Volvo Service. These buildings have existed in their current usage for a long time, since long before modern building codes, parking requirements, zoning rules, planning boards, and planning departments, but always in harmony with the amount of parking and traffic on St. John St. Now that harmony is to be destroyed. These buildings have always relied on having a certain amount of on-street parking to function.

I also find it ironic that the City of Portland considers housing such an important issue that building owners are fined \$50,000 if they do something to their own property that results in the loss of a housing

unit, and the City seems happy enough to accept our property taxes (something which MMC and the Eagles Club don't pay, I can't help but mention), but apparently feels no obligation to support the building owners in return.

Not long ago, the City approved the remodeling of 212-214 St. John St. from a two unit residential building into a four unit. But 212-214 does not even have a curb cut or driveway, let alone parking for four units. How could the City approve this remodeling unless the assumption was that the units would utilize on-street parking? And now the City is proposing to take that parking away?

With all the planning, architectural, engineering, landscaping, construction, financing, management, and other professional firepower involved in this project, I realize I don't know all the issues involved. However, I do agree with the comment made at the workshop (the speaker took the thought right out of my own head, actually) that it doesn't seem to make sense to make allowances for bicycling to the new garage. Anyone who bicycles will just go straight to the hospital to avoid walking or waiting for a shuttle. My suggestion is to minimize the bicycle lanes and use the roadway width saved to keep the on-street parking. However, if this suggestion is unsatisfactory, I'm sure all the professionals involved can come up with another way to keep the on-street parking."

Deborah Heald (7/27/2018)

"It seemed to me that there was an assumption on either the city's part and/or MMC's part that the loss of those 13 spaces on St John would be "recovered" up on Valley Street once MMC employees who park there started using the new garage. This would be great if MMC could ensure that employees would not park on Valley. But how do you enforce this? Is there a plan being worked on to help those most impacted by this loss of parking?"

Response: MMC employees utilize on-street parking in the St John Valley neighborhood. With construction of the new garage and the new supply of safe, convenient and accessible parking it will bring, we expect these employees to park in the garage in the future, making additional on-street parking available.

MMC's right-of-way improvement plan includes new curbs and a sidewalk on D St. Existing on-street parking on D St is undefined. New curbs and sidewalks will define on-street parking and likely increase the number of spaces available to the neighborhood and visitors.

A neighborhood parking permit system exists in the neighborhood. MMC encourages members of the neighborhood to explore ways to implement the program with the City of Portland to reduce non-resident parking. MMC would support this system as it would further encourage MMC employees to use the new garage, rather than park in the neighborhood.

Eagles Walking Path:

Zach Barowitz (7/10/2018)

"I noticed on one of the renderings of the front of the proposed MMC garage that there is a large open grassy space to the right of the driveway but only a narrow strip of paved sidewalk on the left side (when facing the garage). I'd like to see those spaces evened out a little bit, a wider sidewalk with a row

of trees on the side would make a great difference. The sidewalk as rendered does not look pleasant for pedestrians.”

Zach Barowitz (7/11/2018)

“When I brought up the possibility and efficacy of a wider sidewalk today at the meeting it was met with general perplexity. Yet undeterred here are a few sketches to demonstrate the idea as well as a work around so that the driveway will still line up with D Street (are a lot of people expected to use D Street).”

Response: The pathway along the driveway referenced in this comment will only be used by the Eagles Club members and their patrons.

The alignment of the driveway with D St was identified as an important component of the intersection design by the City of Portland plan reviewers. As such, the garage design team has made efforts to align the driveway with D St and with structural elements of the garage. The suggested changes would create an offset between the driveway and D St and require relocation of the entire building.

Design (Scale of the Building):

Dan & Pat Chase (7/18/2018)

“Beside the potential loss of on-street parking, I have other concerns about the parking garage project. The before and after architectural projections of how the building will look from various locations don’t ring true to me. It’s such a huge building, but the projections show it as hardly visible. In some cases, the building is shown as obscured by trees which happen to be in the way from that location. Trees are hardly permanent shielding, and don’t even have their leaves for half the year to begin with.

Lots of sunlight, views of the Fore River estuary behind Veterans Bridge, and open skies to the west for nice sunsets have been some of the benefits of living in our little neighborhood. These will all be impacted by construction of the garage. I’d like request that before and after sun/shadow studies of the building be completed. I think these might give a more accurate idea of its size and effects. I’d also like to request architectural projections done from the top floor back corner of the Railroad Building looking toward the Fore River estuary.”

Dan & Pat Chase (7/19/2018)

“I think further discussion of the renderings would also be helpful. I see from the site plan that the elevation of the parking lot is around El. 26. The building is to be just under 100 ft. tall, putting the top of the building somewhere around El. 125. Also from the site plan, the elevation of the yard at 210 St. John St. is around El. 42 and the building is about 33 ft. tall, putting the ridge of the roof at around elevation 75. This means that the parking garage exceeds the height of the top of 210 St. John St. roof by 50 ft. – five stories! I don’t know the height of the Railroad Building, but say it’s 50 ft. This means the top of the Railroad Building is around El. 90 and parking garage exceeds it by 35 ft. – approximately as if 210 St. John St. were put on top of the Railroad Building. I just don’t think the renderings reflect how high the garage is proposed to be.”

Response: The photomontage views of the parking garage were developed using a multi-step process using the base model, City of Portland .dwg files, and Google Earth. This commonly used and accepted process results in a good representation of the relative sight lines. The views that have been presented were specifically requested to coordinate with current and future MMC projects, to understand how the building's design integrates with the context of existing buildings, and to provide a realistic perspective of the building once it is built.

The building was designed to fit within the building envelope defined in the Institutional Overlay Zone (See attachment 1, Section 4, Map 4.1 of the IDP). Removing street trees from all views would not change the perspective of the garage and its relationship to the surrounding buildings.

Shadow Studies:

Dan & Pat Chase (7/19/2018)

"I looked at the shadow studies in the Institutional Development Plan and notice that the location and size of the garage is now changed. I realize MMC was limited to static images in the printed document, but a static image does not convey the changes in sunlight and shadow through different day lengths, sun angles, seasons, etc. I would like to see continuous motion studies of full days on all four solstice dates at least."

Response: The garage design was not complete when the IDP was finalized. The dimensions of the building used in the shadow study are different than what is proposed. There is a footnote in the IDP Fig 5.18 and 5.20 that states "Note: exact garage locations and footprint to be determined during detailed design." See attachment 2 for updated shadow studies.

Transportation Demand Management:

Karen Snyder (7/20/2018)

"There [were] concerns from Planning Board members regarding the fact there is no clear TDM plan for this garage to hold 2,400 parking spaces. One of the Planners (Nell) said something to the affect, that it would basically be okay to continue and once a TDM person is hired by MMC at that time there will be clarification. That is not suffice to approve a development without getting commitment and clarification of concerns over the TDM. That is like putting the cart before the horse." ...

"1) Clarification of the TDM Plan that MMC will use with this new garage on St. Johns street."

Response: MMC recently hired a full-time, highly experienced TDM coordinator – the only one in the City employed by a non-governmental organization to our knowledge. MMC will submit a level III site plan application for the Congress Building in the fall of 2018. TDM is anticipated to be a large part of that discussion.

Snow Ban Parking:

Karen Snyder (7/20/2018)

“2) Commitment from MMC that the neighborhood can use the garage during snow bans. Note: When asked this specific question, there was lack of clarification and evasiveness.”

Response: As stated at the workshop, MMC’s policy allowing snow ban parking for the public in its parking garages will continue. MMC is exploring ways to improve access to this neighborhood benefit. For example, in the July newsletter sent to all neighborhood representatives, MMC requested feedback regarding MMC’s proposed parking garage and asked specific questions about utilization, frequency of use, and preferred location in the future.

Bicycle Parking:

Karen Snyder (7/20/2018)

“3) There [were] concerns of the neighborhood that MMC taking 13 parking spaces on St. John St for bike stations. These bike stations should NOT replace neighborhood parking but should instead be moved into the large green turn expanse field between side walk and the garage. So, instead of maintaining a turf field, a part of it should be replaced with these biking stations so that crucial parking for the neighborhood is NOT taken away. Even Planning Board member, Maggie Stanley, indicated that as a cyclist, the bike parking should be near the hospital and not at the garage.”

Response: There are no bike parking stations proposed street-side that will reduce the amount of on-street vehicle parking.

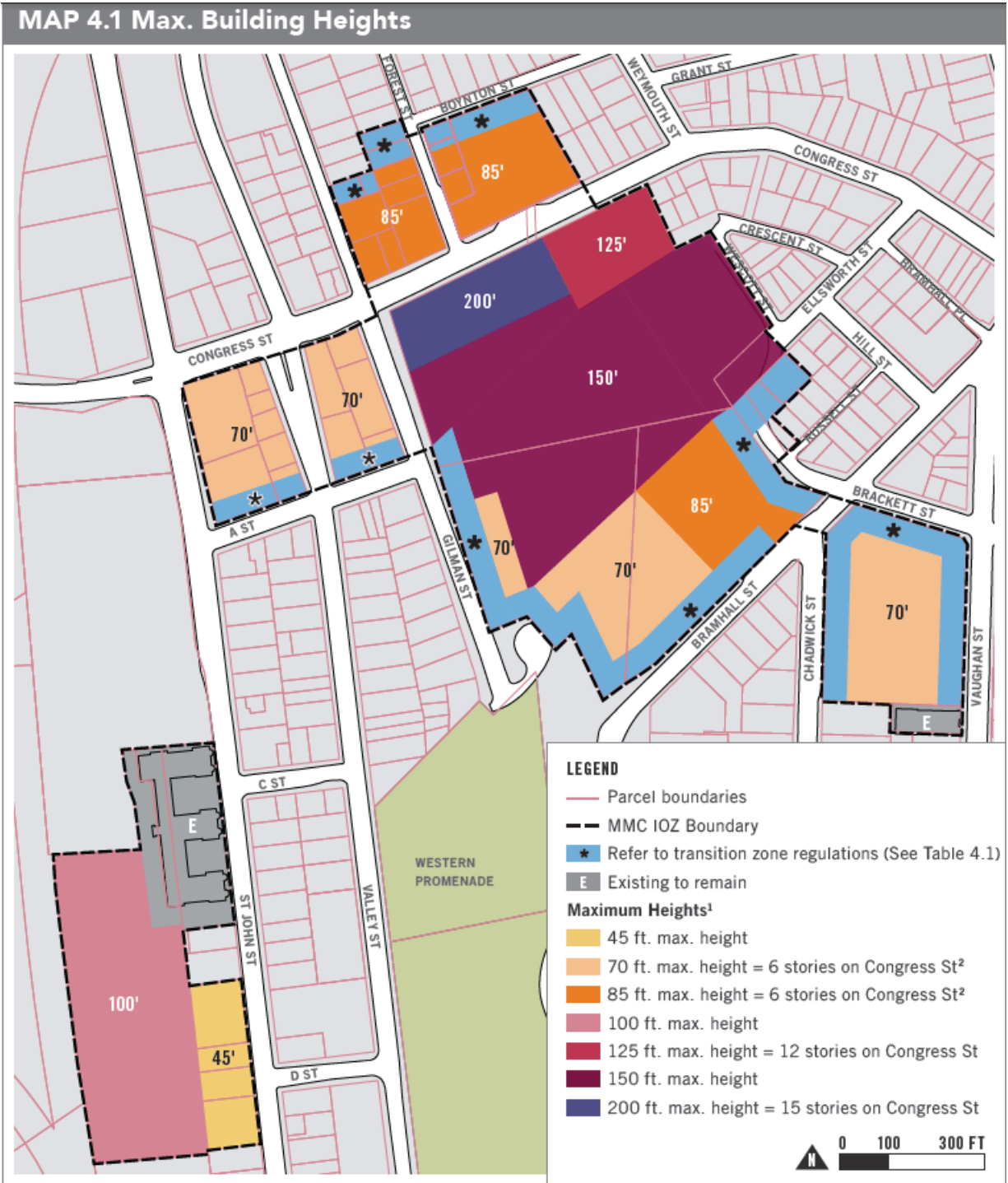
Construction:

Deborah Heald (7/27/2018)

Because MMC ran out of time at the Planning Board Workshop on July 10th to present info on the construction phase of their project, I have some questions and concerns about how all that construction traffic will impact not only those of us who live within close proximity of the temporary entrance to the site, but also the flow of traffic in general on the street. Most of my concerns are with noise, construction vehicles gearing up and down while turning into and leaving the construction site, traffic back ups, etc. I realize that we can't eliminate the traffic and noise, but what has MMC planned to help mitigate these concerns as much as possible during the construction phase?

Response: Construction of the garage will require careful planning and management of the daily occurrences within the site limits. The logistical plan that is currently outlined is intended to keep all construction staging, laydown and temporary storage within the project limits and secured by temporary fencing. With designated areas delegated to subcontractors the site will remain accessible by incoming trucks without causing a queuing affect outside of the fence. A

secondary storage yard is anticipated near the project site to store precast material not accommodated on site. The usage of this area will help to better control and manage the truck traffic to and from the site during the day, as nighttime truck use is prohibited by State of Maine. Precast trailers will only transport loads between the staging yard and the job site outside of peak traffic hours as defined by Gorrill Palmer as 7:30am – 8:30am and 4:00pm – 5:00pm.



- Notes:**
1. Minimum building heights also apply. Refer to Table 4.1.
 2. For buildings with residential use above the ground floor, the following height maximums apply:
70 ft. maximum height = 7 stories, and 85 ft. maximum height = 8 stories.

Attachment 2: Updated Shadow Studies

