



February 24, 2016

Ref: 52387.04

Mrs. Jean Fraser
Planning Division
389 Congress Street, 4th Floor
Portland, ME 04101

Re: Site Plan II Application Response to Traffic Comments
Proposed Taco Bell, 1363 Washington Ave, Portland, ME

Mrs. Fraser:

On behalf of the applicant, Guggenheim Retail Real Estate Partners, Inc., VHB has prepared the following responses to the traffic review comments received from the Traffic Engineering Reviewer, Thomas Errico, on February 12, 2016 for the conversion of the existing Sala Thai restaurant to a Taco Bell facility.

For reference, the original comments from your letters are included below in italics.

Traffic Engineer Peer Review

- 1. I have reviewed the trip generation analysis and find it to be acceptable. The project is expected to increase traffic by 90 trips during the AM peak hour, 50 trips during the PM peak hour, and 85 trips during the Saturday peak hour. Based upon this estimate, a Traffic Movement Permit is not required. I would note that the project will have a greater net traffic impact on the public street system given that the existing restaurant is closed.*

Comment noted; no response required.

- 2. I have significant concerns as it relates to safety conditions along Washington Avenue in the area of the project drive. MaineDOT data indicates Washington Avenue between Allen Avenue and Northport Drive is a High Crash Location with 19 crashes over the 2012-2014 three-year period with a very high Critical Rate Factor (CRF) of 2.22. Additionally, the Washington Avenue/Allen Avenue intersection is a High Crash Location with 45 crashes over the same three-year period with a CRF of 1.49. In my professional opinion, access management improvements (beyond narrowing the driveway) are required for this project. The applicant should provide detailed plans on provision of a connection to the Rite Aid driveway. I do recognize that existing grades do complicate provision of a connection, but further detailed information is warranted before this option can be deemed not feasible. I would note that if this connection is determined not to be possible, other strategies should be identified, including turn restrictions at the driveway.*

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Of the 19 crashes that occurred along the roadway segment on Washington Avenue between Allen Avenue and Northport Drive from January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2014, only 3 crashes were reported involving movements at the existing 1363 Washington Avenue site driveway. The crashes were evenly distributed throughout the study period, one per year and are described as follows.

1. In December, 2012, a vehicle driving northbound on Washington Avenue was struck by a southbound vehicle making a left-turn into the 1363 Washington Avenue site. Other drivers in the northbound middle lanes waved the left-turning driver through, however the driver making the left-turn did not yield properly to the vehicle in the outside lane. The driver headed northbound that was struck experienced a non-incapacitating injury.
2. In January, 2013, a vehicle was driving northbound on Washington Avenue in the exclusive left-turn lane when it was struck by a vehicle making a right-turn out of the 1363 Washington Avenue site driveway. The other two lanes stopped to let the right-turning vehicle out but the driver did not see the vehicle in the exclusive left-turn lane. No injuries were reported for this crash.
3. In April, 2014 a vehicle driving northbound on Washington Avenue was struck by a southbound vehicle making a left-turn into the 1363 Washington Avenue site. Other drivers in the middle lanes waved the left-turning driver through, however the driver making the left-turn did not yield properly to the vehicle in the outside lane. The driver headed northbound experienced possible injury and the vehicle was towed.

In summary, of the 3 crashes at the 1363 Washington Avenue site driveway, only 2 involved left-turns into the site. There were no crashes involving left-turns out of the site. All three crashes involved drivers relying on other drivers to wave them through and not using their own judgment to check all lanes first before proceeding with the turn. A crash rate of 1 crash per year doesn't appear to support the need for a major modification, such as restricting access, to the existing driveway.

With regard to the need for access management, these types of improvements are more productive when considered in the context of the entire roadway segment, versus one individual property. The proposed existing Sala Thai restaurant site has a single access drive to service the property. In contrast, Amato's has a full access driveway on Washington Avenue in the immediate vicinity of the Allen Avenue signalized intersection in addition to a second driveway on Allen Avenue. Dunkin Donuts has two driveways on Washington Avenue in the immediate vicinity of the Allen Avenue signalized intersection in addition to a third driveway on Allen Avenue. Portland House of Pizza has two driveways on Washington Avenue, while The Meeting House and Plummer's Insurance Agency share three driveways. While access management opportunities may exist for the corridor, restricting access to the proposed site appears to be unfairly targeting one property, while providing minimal benefit (if any). In addition, if turns at the site driveway were to be restricted to right turns only, this would likely lead to motorists using other nearby driveways and properties to facilitate a desired left-turn movement to or from the site. For example, motorists wishing to turn left into the Taco Bell site would likely utilize the Portland House of



Pizza property to conveniently change direction and turn right into the site. This type of forced routing introduces unnecessary and unwanted motor vehicle and pedestrian conflicts on an abutting private property.

In addition, a feasibility review of constructing a cross connection to the Rite Aid driveway was conducted as requested, see Connection Impact Figure. This connection is not considered feasible due to the limitations on the turning radius of a passenger vehicle to maintain the location of the existing building. A passenger car making a 180-degree right turn from the Rite Aid would encroach on the drive through lane creating an unwanted motor vehicle conflict. In addition, grades ranging from 5-9.5% would be required while limiting grading within the existing site. These grades are undesirable in tight turning scenarios. The loss of two parking spaces would also be required with this layout, which would make the site less conforming to the required parking requirement per the City's Regulations. It should also be noted that a cross connection to the Rite Aid driveway does not sufficiently address the need for left-turn access to/from the site (because of the right-turn only limitation at Washington Avenue) and will not eliminate the potential impacts to the nearby properties described above.

- 3. The applicant has conducted a capacity analysis for the driveway. The applicant should provide the SYNCRHO model files for review.*

The SYNCRHO model data has been submitted to Mr. Tom Errico and Mrs. Jean Fraser for review.

- 4. The applicant should provide bike racks on-site that meet City standards.*

The proposed site requires a bike rack for 3 bikes per City standards. A rack for 3 bikes will be added to the plans, the final location of the bike rack is to be coordinated with the Applicant.

- 5. Sidewalk improvements along the property frontage on Washington Avenue shall be included. Two utility poles are located in the sidewalk and their location obstructs pedestrian accessibility. I would suggest the sidewalk be widened toward the site to accommodate a 5-foot clearance to the face of poles.*

The sidewalk along Washington Avenue has been widened to 8-feet to provide appropriate accessibility around the two existing utility poles.

- 6. The applicant should document whether the proposed driveway meets City's driveway separation standards. If the driveway does not meet separation standards, the applicant should formally request a waiver with supporting documentation.*

The site will be utilizing an existing driveway. The driveway is located approximately 52-feet from the Dunkin Donuts across the street and approximately 59-feet from the Portland House of Pizza driveway. The applicant will formally request a waiver as needed.

- 7. The applicant should provide dimensions for all on-site parking lot elements and note whether City standards are met.*

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Dimensions have been added to the plans. Per the City's standards angled parking is shown for 45-degree and 60-degree stalls. In order to provide a 4-foot minimum landscaped island on the southeast property line, 50-degree parking stalls have been proposed with an 18-foot drive aisle.

8. *I have reviewed the Construction Management Plan and in general it appears acceptable. This is based on the assumption that all work will be performed on-site (no work within Washington Avenue) and the sidewalk will remain open.*

Site work along Washington Avenue is limited to resetting existing curb. Coordination will be provided to maintain sidewalk access during construction.

I hope the information contained herein adequately addresses the comments provided by the City's Traffic Engineering Reviewer. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. We look forward to working with the City in finalizing this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Fenstermacher'.

David Fenstermacher, PE

Project Manager

