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To: Planning Board, Town of Lexington
From: Kevin Sheehan, Managing Partner
Date: December 19, 2019
Re: 1050 Waltham Street
Planned Development District PD-5
Preliminary Site Development and Use Plan (PSDUP)
Response to Planning Board Comments on Sketch Plan and Draft PSDUP

Greatland Realty Partners has submitted a Preliminary Site Development and Use Plan (PSDUP) and supporting materials in support of our proposal to create a Planned Development District PD-5 for 1050 Waltham Street, pursuant to Section 7.3 of the Lexington Zoning Bylaw and Section 8.0 of the Planning Board Zoning Regulations.

This memo is meant to be a responsive and helpful summary of analysis completed and modifications made in response to comments received on prior submissions to and meetings with the Planning Board. Many of these comments have resulted in plan changes and other revisions to the PSDUP, which are referenced in this memo.

The prior submissions consisted of a sketch plan, which was submitted in September and reviewed with the Board on October 30, and a draft PSDUP (including revisions to the project), which was submitted in November and reviewed with the Board on December 4. Additional revisions are reflected in the final PSDUP as a result of comments received, as described in more detail below.

A. Planning Board Written Recommendation dated November 12, 2019, based on Sketch PSDUP submitted on September 26, 2019, and presentation to Planning Board on October 30, 2019.

On October 30, a sketch plan for a proposed lab/office building consisting of approximately 170,000 square feet was presented to the Planning Board. Board members provided comments at the meeting, including discussion about sustainable design, visual impacts and façade materials. The Board also expressed the desire for connections to public transit and bicycle amenities.

Members of the public in attendance also commented on the sketch plan, with concerns about the front setback, the parking garage and the uses in the building, with a preference for life science uses as opposed to active retail. Several Board members suggested a step back in the façade. The Board also encouraged continued coordination and outreach with the community.

Subsequent to the meeting, the Board issued its written recommendation on November 12, in support of the concept plan. The written recommendation encouraged the petitioner to continue to develop its

proposal, working with the Board and the community, and to consider the following issues (comments are numbered below for ease of reference):

Circulation and Parking

1. Access to and from the site should be better defined. It might be more efficient if the access points from Waltham Street were to align with existing driveways on the west side of Waltham Street.

RESPONSE: We asked our transportation engineer, MDM Transportation Consultants, to study this issue. MDM has considered different alternatives for the driveway alignment and circulation. A full analysis of each alternative was conducted as part of the traffic study for the PSDUP. MDM has concluded that the proposed offset alignment results in the best level of service for the site and the surrounding driveways.

2. Interior circulation either through a one-way loop driveway or other means must be appropriate for the likely traffic generated by the proposed use, but should also be designed to be sensitive to adjacent wetlands and abutting residential uses.

RESPONSE: We have studied internal vehicular circulation with our civil engineer, VHB. As a result of this analysis, the revised plan included with the PSDUP proposes to separate loading at the north driveway, with shuttle drop off and visitor parking at the south driveway. Both driveways would provide access to the parking garage, but the driveway between the garage and building has been eliminated in favor of a multi-use pedestrian zone with pervious pavers that allows emergency vehicle access.

In addition, the PSDUP plan relocates emergency vehicle access from the east to the west side of the parking garage, away from the wetland area at the eastern edge of the property and creates an environmentally sensitive amenity terrace adjacent to the northern wetland area. Thanks in part to these changes, the redevelopment of the site will reduce the amount of impervious area within the 100-foot buffer zone by approximately 10,000 square feet. The project team expects to continue to coordinate this approach with the Board, as well as the Conservation Commission.

3. The proposed parking garage is designed to accommodate more than 550 vehicles. Are all of these parking spaces expected to actually be used? If not, could you explore whether the capacity of the garage, and as a direct result the size of the parking structure, could be reduced to accurately reflect actual parking demands.

RESPONSE: In response to this concern, the size of the garage has been reduced from 600 to 475 spaces. This is a significant reduction of approximately 20% (at the same time, the size of the building was reduced from 174,000 to 157,000 square feet, by approximately 10%). This parking allocation is based on parking allocations for similar buildings in the Town of Lexington.

The size of the building and the parking ratio is important to ensure the marketability of the proposed project to growing life science and technology companies.

4. A robust Transportation Demand Management plan for the site is encouraged. In particular, it should embrace the use of alternative modes of transportation to access the site, including but not limited to, bicycle accommodations along Waltham Street, use of the Lexpress and the Route 128 bus systems and, provision of a private, shared shuttle service between the Alewife MBTA station and site and/or the surrounding residential neighborhoods (Avalon and Brookhaven).

RESPONSE: Working with MDM, the project has proposed a robust Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) plan as part of the PSDUP. In particular, bicycle and pedestrian access to and from property is promoted through the design of the project, including bike storage and locker/shower facilities and a bike share program. The project will also promote bicycle enhancements along Waltham Street by making a contribution to the Town's transportation fund. In addition, the project proposes to relocate and replace the pedestrian crossing at Waltham Street, with new equipment for increased usability and safety. The proponent understands the importance of access to public transit and is actively working with abutters to establish an enhanced shuttle service that could serve the new development as well as the surrounding properties.

5. The proposed pedestrian pass-through from Brookhaven to Waltham Street and from the site to existing nature trails is a welcomed public benefit.

RESPONSE: The PSDUP plan includes this connection, which has been further developed to provide an accessible connection from Brookhaven through the site to the crosswalk at Waltham Street, as well as the opportunity to connect from the property through Brookhaven to the Western Greenway nature trails. We will work with Brookhaven to provide a public access easement to these trails.

Environmental Issues and Open Space

6. Sustainability is a crucial consideration in any new development in Lexington. This proposal should include information on how the project will contribute towards the Town's sustainability goals with respect to the following:
 - Net-zero fossil fuels;
 - Green roofs and/or rooftop solar panels;
 - Stormwater management;
 - Green infrastructure;
 - Snow storage and;
 - LEED certification, including long-term monitoring procedures.

RESPONSE: We and the members of our project design team strongly support sustainable development practices. Accordingly, we have begun the process of LEED certification with the development of a preliminary LEED checklist, which was provided to the Planning Board. The project will commit to study the feasibility of reduced fossil fuel usage, and will commit to solar canopies on the parking garage, to the extent financially feasible. Furthermore, the project will seek to include green roof areas, which have been included in the revised building plans. Also, the project will require sustainable stormwater management and snow storage practices. The project will be designed with a target of LEED silver. We expect that these commitments will be documented in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Lexington.

7. Landscaping on the site should include only native plants.

RESPONSE: The planting plan included in the PSDUP will include only species that are native to Middlesex county.

8. Several Board members also encourage the provision of more usable open space on site without increasing the building height.

RESPONSE: We have developed the PSDUP plan with IBI Placemaking, our landscape architect, to create more usable open space areas. In addition, the revised landscape plan included in the PSDUP promotes the “renaturalization” of sensitive inner wetland buffer zone areas that are currently improved with parking areas. Specifically, the landscape plan has developed a multi-use pedestrian zone between the building and garage, an amenity terrace with table seating at the west building entrance, and an environmentally sensitive passive recreation area adjacent to the northern wetland. In addition, the proposed trail connection through Brookhaven will offer additional access to outdoor recreational opportunities.

Uses

9. Although the PSDUP will be written specifically for the subject site, the language should include some flexibility on use and dimensional standards to ensure that these regulations do not hamper future and/or unintended, but still appropriate use, of the property.

RESPONSE: The project is focused on a commercial lab/office use that will provide the highest level of economic development benefits to the Town. Accordingly, the PSDUP includes office and manufacturing uses, along with institutional and service uses but not retail or restaurant uses, unless accessory to the principal use. Shared parking is also included as a use, which could be beneficial as overflow parking to adjacent properties.

Compatibility with the Surrounding Neighborhoods

10. In general, the Planning Board was impressed with the level of outreach to surrounding property owners and residents that you have done to date. However, several members encouraged more coordination among abutters (particularly with the owners of 1060 Waltham Street, the former

Friendly's Ice Cream site) and outreach to the wider community to ensure the project is designed to be compatible with the neighborhoods.

RESPONSE: The project team will continue to work closely with the community to further develop the project. In particular, we will seek to leverage shared transportation connections, pedestrian connectivity, and will support and develop appropriate visual and acoustic screening between properties.

11. Several Board members requested additional building elevations and/or plan sections that show how the development will be seen from abutting properties – in particular from the windows of the Brookhaven residences.

RESPONSE: In order to attract one or more life science companies, the building will require appropriate floor heights, as well as a significant mechanical penthouse, however, we will work with our design team to provide assurances that visual and acoustic impacts to neighbors will be minimized. The ultimate goal of the development is to blend in with the neighborhood and compliment the surrounding uses. To that end, the design team will further develop perspective views of the proposed building and garage to be presented to the Board as requested.

Building Massing and Streetscape

12. The front façade of the building should be activated with more uses and amenities.

RESPONSE: The revised design submitted with the PSDUP creates active accessory uses at the ground floor southwest corner of the building adjacent to Waltham Street. In addition, a new pedestrian/bike access point has been created on Waltham Street. However, these ground floor uses, such as including café or cafeteria, and fitness and wellness, are intended to support the main lab/office use in the building, as opposed to stand alone uses that might generate additional site traffic.

In addition, the design of the building and landscape will encourage pedestrian activity. The new design includes a building setback to introduce a pedestrian scale along Waltham Street, and a landscape path to allow pedestrians into the property. In addition, upper level balconies will provide an active tenant amenity on Waltham Street. Overall, the revised building architecture and landscape plan included in the PSDUP will present a first-class design that creates a welcoming gateway to Lexington.

B. Planning Board Member Comments on draft PSDUP submitted on November 26, 2019, and presentation to Planning Board on December 4, 2019.

At the meeting on October 30, the Planning Board requested to review a draft PSDUP in early December. Accordingly, on December 4, the petitioner presented a draft PSDUP along with a further

advanced design for the project, including further development of the building design and massing, as well as transportation and landscape design.

Board member comments are summarized below, along with petitioner responses. Since the Board did not provide consolidated written comments, the petitioner has included individual member comments, and grouped similar comments together as appropriate. Some comments expressed by members of the public are also included.

Notably, the project has been reduced in size as described below (both building and garage) in response to the Board's concerns and the concerns of the public. We hope that this approach is responsive to comments and concerns, but at the same time we seek to maintain a balance of the necessary scale and functionality to serve a lab/office building end user.

Site Context

1. A member of the Board questioned whether PD-2 (Hayden Avenue) is the most appropriate template for the proposed rezoning, considering the size of the site and surroundings, or the PD District for 186 Bedford Street is a better example.

RESPONSE: The five-acre size of the site and use of the property is more similar to Hayden Avenue/PD-2. The surrounding uses include a large retail plaza, a multifamily housing development, and a senior living complex (not single-family residences). The context of the 186 Bedford Street PD District is different as the site is much less than five acres and abuts a neighborhood of single-family dwellings. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the proposed goal of the project to redevelop the property as a life science building is the same as Hayden Avenue/PD-2. The proposed uses associated with 186 Bedford Street are retail and residential, which have very different usage characteristics and dimensional parameters.

Building Height and Massing

2. A Board member noted that the buildings are too large, and that the proponent needs to establish setbacks and create transition zones.

RESPONSE: As described above, the revised design includes a smaller building size, which is the result of a smaller floor plate, and a 20-foot setback is now provided from the garage to the adjacent property. In addition, the design of the building and the landscape has evolved to create a pedestrian scale massing along Waltham Street and a better pedestrian experience at the front entrance area. The smaller building floor plate allows for more pedestrian areas and more planting buffers and serves as an appropriate transition between the commercial district to the south and the more institutional residential properties to the north.

3. Confirmation was requested that the height of the building was stepped back at a 45-degree angle.

RESPONSE: Confirmed, the new building design maintains a roof height that steps back at a 45 degree angle from the curb line at Waltham Street.

4. A member of the Board commented on the proposed height definition in the draft PSDUP.

RESPONSE: As noted above, we believe that it is important to achieve a balance between appropriate dimensional restrictions, given the context of the site, and the functionality of the building, which requires sufficient scale and height to maintain marketability to life science users. Therefore, we think it is appropriate to use the same definition of height that was approved for the proposed lab/office building under the Hayden Avenue/PD-2. This definition allows taller rooftop structures, subject to height and area limits that are realistic for a technical life science building. We note that all rooftop structures and equipment will be subject to appropriate visual and acoustic screening.

Parking Garage Size and Location

5. Several Board members expressed views that the proposed 600 space garage was too large and that closer to 400 spaces would be more appropriate. In addition, the siting and size of parking garage was questioned, and the lack of side yard setback was a concern as well as the siting partially within the wetland buffer zone.

RESPONSE: The maximum size of the garage has been reduced to 475 spaces; see comment #A.3 above. Overall, the location of the garage in the southeast portion of the site is preferred because of the depth of setback from Waltham Street and the adjacency to other parking uses (both Brookhaven employee parking and the proposed Chase Bank parking lot). However, in response to these Board member concerns, a 20-foot setback has been provided to the abutting property, and the emergency vehicle access has been relocated to the other side of the garage away from the wetland area. In general, the project seeks to minimize impacts on wetland areas, and it is notable that the redevelopment of this site as proposed represents an improvement over existing conditions, with a reduction of paved parking areas in the buffer zones that exist today, and the introduction of an upgraded stormwater management system.

PTDM Program

6. A request was made for stronger commitments in the PTDM program to discourage commuting by single occupancy vehicles and to incentivize bike, pedestrian and public transit.

RESPONSE: As described above in comment #A.4, MDM has recommended an appropriate PTDM program that is customized to this project, including a special focus on bike and pedestrian accommodations, such as bike facilities, a bike share program, crosswalk improvements, and a trail connection. We will also pursue a shuttle connection to public transit through Lexpress, 128 Business Council shuttle routes, and/or neighborhood shared shuttle services with Brookhaven or Avalon at Lexington. In addition, the project MOU is expected to

include appropriate funding and commitments for transportation related mitigation measures, including a payment of \$2,000 per new parking space, and funding subsidies for transit passes.

7. Board members commended the concept for the pedestrian path connection via Brookhaven, encouraged cooperation with Brookhaven to make this path accessible, and expressed a desire to see an easement in place to give the public a legal right to pass through the development.

RESPONSE: The current design included with the PSDUP proposes an accessible path. We have discussed this connection with Brookhaven’s representative who has expressed a willingness to work with us to accomplish the connection, which we envision will be mutually beneficial to residents, workers and members of the public. We are amenable to granting an easement to allow for pedestrian access through a portion of the property to the Brookhaven property and the trail network. The framework of any such easements is expected to be provided in the project MOU.

Building Uses

8. A Board member was opposed to certain uses in the draft zoning text, including fast food, dry cleaning, wireless communication, and commercial parking.

RESPONSE: We intend to design and build a life science building; however, we want to preserve flexibility for other uses that are consistent with this goal. Therefore, the PSDUP has been revised accordingly to eliminate primary retail and restaurant uses, and other uses that are not contemplated, such as onsite dry cleaning, or drive through services. Any wireless communication equipment must be architecturally concealed. Commercial parking is proposed to be an allowed use, in order to maintain future flexibility for shared infrastructure with abutting properties.

Building Design

9. A Board member questioned the industrial aesthetic and emphasized the importance of good design due to the prominence of the site as a gateway.

RESPONSE: We will work with SGA, our design architect, to address this concern. The design intent is not “industrial” but rather a modern aesthetic that will function to serve the building end user and be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. We will work with the Planning Board to achieve a first-class design that is a welcoming gateway to Lexington.

10. A Board member commented that the roof terrace and green roof appear to have been shrunk from the prior design.

RESPONSE: This statement is not correct. The roof terrace and green roof are important elements of the building design in order to attract customers and provide a better user

experience at the building. In fact, these elements have expanded, not shrunk. The proposed size of the roof terrace at the southwest corner of the building will allow usable space for smaller tenant functions; larger functions and events will be hosted in one of the outdoor amenity areas at grade. The proposed green roof is located along the remainder of the western façade above the ground floor step back and will provide visual green space for the benefit of building occupants.

11. A Board member expressed concern about the proposed signage.

RESPONSE: Project signage is anticipated to be comparable to similar projects in Lexington. Signage rules are proposed in the PSDUP. We expect to work with the Planning Board to establish an acceptable framework for future reviews of tenant signage. Notably, we have eliminated retail or restaurant as a principal use, so we expect that any associated signage would be minimized. However, we expect that the proposed signage rules would allow branding and identity for a corporate lab/office user at the project.

Site Design

12. A Board member suggested consolidating drive aisles.

RESPONSE: See answer to comment #A.2 above. Internal circulation has been studied by VHB to make pedestrian and vehicular movements most efficient. Appropriate emergency vehicle access is provided at both the building and garage. Where practical, pervious pavement is proposed. Also, in many areas, the existing impervious surface will be removed, especially near the wetlands (see next comment).

13. A board member expressed concern about environmental design within the wetland buffer zones; and concern about building impacts and impervious areas within the buffer zones.

RESPONSE: See answer to comment #A.8 above. Project impacts within the buffer zones will result in a reduction of impervious area within the buffer zones. Furthermore, the proposed stormwater management and landscape design are intended to promote environmental interests by improving existing stormwater conditions, and/or use pervious paving and boardwalk materials adjacent to the wetlands. We have reviewed our initial concept plans with the Conservation Commission, and we will continue to work with the Conservation Commission in the course of project approvals. As described above, plan changes have relocated the parking garage emergency vehicle access away from the eastern wetland area.

14. A board member indicated a desire for the landscape plan to reflect 100% native plant species (Middlesex County).

RESPONSE: Comment acknowledged. See comment #A.7 above.

Sustainability/Environmental Impacts

15. A Board member expressed the desire to include a requirement for PV solar canopies on the garage. Another member of the Board requested study of the potential conflict between parking spaces and solar canopies.

RESPONSE: The garage will be designed with structural and electrical infrastructure to be solar ready. As part of this commitment, designs will be developed to coordinate parking dimensions with solar equipment. We will commit to install solar panels subject to financial feasibility based, in part, on available financial incentives. Concerns regarding height of roof structures will be balanced with the goals of sustainability and reduced fossil fuel consumption. The petitioner anticipates that sustainable design requirements will be established as the project design is further advanced and all mitigation requirements are sufficiently understood through the finalization of the project MOU.

16. A member of the Board raised concerns about potential noise from building equipment.

RESPONSE: The building will be designed and operated to minimize noise concerns to neighboring uses. We have engaged Acentech as our acoustical design expert who is familiar with the Town of Lexington in general, as well as this particular neighborhood through prior work. Acentech has produced a scope memo, which is included in the environmental impact study submitted with the PSDUP application. Pursuant to this memo, baseline sound levels will be measured and established early in the design process, which will allow for the development of acoustical design standards for the project. It should be noted that appropriate acoustical design strategies may include the construction of a larger and/or taller mechanical penthouse.

Neighbor Concerns

17. At the meeting on December 4, there was a large number of people in attendance from Brookhaven, who were represented by a single spokesperson. His comments were positive about communication process and outreach, and generally supportive of the site development; however, he expressed concerns about the height of the building and traffic flow on Waltham Street.

RESPONSE: These concerns will be studied and addressed by the project team. Photos will be taken from surrounding properties (including photos from Brookhaven unit perspectives) to help visualize the proposed development from different angles. It is notable that the grades on the project site are approximately 20 feet lower than the grades at Brookhaven, and as a result it is expected that visual impacts will be minimized. In addition, plantings will be provided to add additional visual screening.

Related to traffic concerns, ideas to improve traffic flow on Waltham Street will be considered and discussed, in conjunction with the Town Engineering Department. Also, we anticipate that

the potential benefits from enhanced pedestrian amenities and shared transportation options present opportunities to collaborate directly with Brookhaven and other abutting property owners. In particular, we will seek to leverage the proximity of Brookhaven, Avalon at Lexington and the proposed development to enhance public transit shuttle connections.

18. In addition, a representative of The Grossman Companies expressed concerns about the siting of the parking structure adjacent to their property.

RESPONSE: The revised design provides a 20-foot setback as an offset from the intended commercial redevelopment of the neighboring property as a Chase Bank branch. Furthermore, petitioner has offered to work with The Grossman Companies, their prospective tenant, and other abutting property owners to create appropriate buffer zones and landscape screening.

We hope this serves as a helpful summary of the many comments that have been addressed through the review process with the Planning Board. We are appreciative of the feedback received from the Board members, and other community members, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Board and the community to achieve a successful project.