



STRATEGIC LAND VENTURES

June 17 , 2025

John F. Trefethen
Chair, Ashland Zoning Board of Appeals
101 Main Street
Ashland, MA 01721

Re: “Sanctuary at Ashland Mills” / Response to Questions Received from ZBA Counsel Brian Winner on 6/13/2025

Dear Mr. Chairman:

At the June 10th public hearing, Attorney Winner read a list of questions relating to the SLV Ashland 40B Application. Attorney Winner then provided those questions in writing via email on June 13th. We have included those questions below, as well as our answers in italicized text.

Q: We recently received a Deficiency Notification from MassDOT (see attached) regarding the Myrtle St. Bridge over the Sudbury River. How will the condition of the bridge affect this project? How would closure of the bridge affect this project? Would the applicant be willing to consider mitigation/financial contribution, particularly if the work to repair the bridge has to be accelerated or is more substantial because of this project?

A: *The condition of the Myrtle Street Bridge will not affect the proposed project any more or less than other Ashland residents that use the bridge. Were the bridge to be temporarily closed at some point, it would be an inconvenience to the construction team, or future residents, depending on when the closure occurred. However, nothing in the plans or traffic management plan has stipulated that the Myrtle Street Bridge needs to be operating, or operating at full capacity, for the project to meet established safety standards. Ironically, if the bridge were closed for any amount of time, Ashland Residents would not be traveling West on Myrtle Street and as such, there would be no sightline visibility concerns.*

We would consider a proportionate contribution to the Town’s own financial contribution to the Bridge repairs based on the total number of anticipated vehicle trips generated by the 40B project during a typical day as a proportion to the total number of vehicles using the Bridge during a typical day.

To suggest the proposed bridge repair would need to be accelerated or would be more substantial because of the 40B project is speculative and unsubstantiated, and we believe inaccurate.



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Q. The proposed flat walls and roof lines are not particularly reflective of New England or Ashland architecture. Row houses are often found in mill communities. Although 100 Chestnut Street has a similar architectural, it is not a 5 story structure like this. Even though this project is somewhat recessed into the landscape, the massing and scale of this project are substantial. We understand that the architectural are still under discussion but what can you do to mitigate for the flat walls and roof lines to reduce the massing of the project.

A. *We have worked diligently for the last several months with the Town and several Ashland residents who are career architects, to review and modify the architectural plans per their design requests. There have been substantial changes to the building facades and the overall look and feel of the proposed project. The revised architectural plans will be submitted for the record in the near future and should be considered the architectural plan set of record moving forward.*

Q. Traffic is of major concern. Does the traffic analysis include impacts related to train activity. Currently a 3-way intersection at Pleasant and Main allows for multiple opportunities to turn right from Pleasant into the intersection. This has a very positive impact on the flow. If this is somehow altered, it could potentially negatively impact the traffic flow of the entire intersection. Was the traffic study done while school was in session? Does it include days of the week that are considered higher traffic days, perhaps Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday?

A. *All of the questions/issued raised in this question have been addressed by we, our traffic engineer, and the Town's peer review consultant (MDM Transportation). I would direct your attention to the full submittal from May 5th 2024 made electronically to the Town at 11:24 am. There were two zip files transmitted to the Town that addressed all of the issues/questions raised above. Moreover, these issues were presented and discussed at multiple ZBA hearings.*

Q. What would the impact be on public safety vehicles getting through town? The new station was built to reduce time lost at the rail crossing as these vehicles would use the Fountain St bridge and then Front to Main to Pleasant. Realistically Front at Main would at various times of day be clogged with no way for public safety vehicles to get around/through them.

A. *See previous response.*

Q. What contaminants might be either added to the ecosystem, or in the case of this site, what contaminants may be brought to the surface?

A. *All soils and sub-surface materials will need to be handled and/or disposed of in accordance with a Remedial Action Plan which is regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection. We have completed all tasks required by DEP as part of our Remedial Action Plan (RAM). DEP is requiring a status update in July regarding progress on our 40B application. At that time, they may ask us to resample the groundwater to make sure everything is current. We don't expect any significant changes from previous results. As it relates to the Activity and Use Limitation (AUL)*



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currently in place. We have been in contact with DEP regarding the proposed development and some preliminary construction concepts. We anticipate that we will re-file a FINAL AUL with DEP after a new vapor barrier has been installed over the contaminated areas. The final AUL re-filing can't occur until we have installed the vapor barrier which would be during construction. We expect to file a DRAFT AUL with MassDEP for its review later this summer to confirm all current assumptions.

Q. Parking is a concern as well. Who will monitor those few spaces in the front? Parking is already an issue downtown. Those spots would be prime spots and signage would likely not be enough. Also, is the parking also intended to serve the residents, the restaurant and a public area to the north? At 340 spaces, can it even serve the residents? How would vehicle removal be handled? Would owners be given notice, would cars just be towed? Would the applicant be willing to pay all or part of an ongoing parking enforcement officer to ensure that parking for the development stays onsite and doesn't spill over into downtown parking spots?

A. *All of the questions/issued related to parking have been addressed by we, our traffic engineer, our civil engineer, the Town's peer review consultant (MDM Transportation) and the Town's Civil Engineer Peer Review Consultant (Hancock Associates). I would direct your attention to the full submittal from May 5th 2024 made electronically to the Town at 11:24 am. More specifically, within that submittal: "Exhibit C_Ashland 40B_Parking Narrative_FINAL_5.5.2025" and "Exhibit D_Ashland 40B_Preliminary Parking Plan_FINAL_5.5.2025" address these concerns..*

Q. There was mention of some kind of a transportation manager and that the developer would be responsible for the care of the public area. Would there be some kind of private security?

A. *We as the Applicant/Developer would be responsible for the care and upkeep of all property within the 40B property site boundaries including the public amenity space. We would not have a dedicated private security team as that would be excessive, but we anticipate having the area monitored by security cameras.*

Q. The applicant has requested a waivers of both the local Wetlands and Stormwater Bylaws. Hancock appears to be deferring those matters to the Zoning Board. The Zoning Board requested comment from the Conservation Commission, however, the Conservation Commission, on January 14, 2025 and May 28, 2025, reported to the Zoning Board that it had insufficient information to provide any comment or recommendation as to the waivers. We understand that, as the applicant has stated at the public hearing, there will be a separate filing under the WPA with the ConCom, but the Zoning Board will need sufficient information to deliberate on the requested waivers of the Wetlands and Stormwater bylaws. When and how do you intend to provide that information for the Zoning Board's/Conservation Commission's consideration? If you believe it has already been submitted, please direct us to those submissions so we can discuss this with the Zoning Board, ConCom and peer review.



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- A. *Over the course of the public hearing process, we have provided an exhaustive amount of detail to the Town's civil peer review consultant who has prepared and completed its peer review. The Hancock Associates final report provides enough detail and guidance for the Board to effectively review our final waiver request.*

The final waiver request was submitted to the Board on May 5th as part of the previously mentioned submittal. More specifically, as part of the Engineering Materials submitted, we submitted "Exhibit E_SLV Ashland 40B_Waiver Request List_Updated 5.5.2025". This Exhibit represents the current version of the waiver request list.

We are hopeful these answers, in combination with previously submitted materials, competently answers the questions put forth. We look forward to any future discussions on related matters.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Engler
Managing Partner of SLV Ashland, LLC