TO:	Jasmin Farinacci Director of Planning & Economic Development Town of Ashland	DATE:	December 4, 2025
FROM:	Steven C. Findlen Melissa Restrepo	HSH PROJECT NO.:	2025195.00
SUBJECT:	Transportation Peer Review – Response to Comments 55 West Union Street, Ashland, Massachusetts		

Howard Stein Hudson (HSH) conducted a peer review of the materials prepared for the proposed residential development located at 55 West Union Street (the Project) in Ashland, Massachusetts. The existing 211,827-square-foot (sf) site is currently vacant and mainly consists of trees and vegetation. The proposed Project is expected to clear the site before construction and maintain as many trees as possible. The Applicant proposes the construction of a four-story building with a total of 116 residential apartment units. The Project will also provide 184 parking spaces to accommodate residents and visitors.

The purpose of this memorandum is to present a summary of our comments, or "issues," on the most recent response to the comments provided by the Project's team (Applicant) listed below as ***HSH Response***. The following is a summary timeline of the correspondence between HSH and the Applicant representatives.

- Our initial comments were included in a letter dated November 13, 2025, listed in this document as "**HSH Comment**"; and
- The Applicant submitted the following documents to the Town of Ashland as a response to HSH's comments, listed in this document as "**Applicant Response**":
  - *Response to Transportation Peer Review, Proposed Multifamily Residential Development, 55 West Union Street, Ashland, Massachusetts*, prepared by Vanasse & Associates, Inc. (VAI), November 21, 2025;
  - *Proposed Site Plan of 55 West Union Street in Ashland, MA, prepared by Connorstone Engineering Inc.,* revised November 21, 2025; and
  - *Waiver List – Approval Decision, 55 West Union Street – Comprehensive Permit Application,* revised November 24, 2025.

Parking Demand

ISSUE 1

HSH Comment: HSH acknowledges that the proposed parking ratio of 1.58 spaces per unit is within the range of the average observed peak-parking demand of 1.23 spaces per unit as reported by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual, 6th Edition. However, this proposed parking ratio includes 19 parking spaces designated for visitors, which increases the number of spaces per unit. Excluding these visitor spaces, the proposed parking ratio decreases to 1.42 spaces per unit. Based on the Town of Ashland's Zoning Bylaws, there is no specific minimum parking requirement for visitor spaces. HSH requests the Applicant revise the proposed parking ratio to exclude the proposed visitor parking spaces, or alternatively, consider revising the overall parking plan for the Project.

Applicant Response: The visitor parking spaces (19) will be shared as part of the overall parking supply and will not be defined for exclusive use by residents or guests. Consistent with HSH's comment, the 1.58 parking spaces per unit is within the range of observed peak parking demands documented by the ITE for similarly situated multifamily residential communities and includes both resident and visitor parking demands.

HSH Response: ***HSH generally agrees with the Applicant's residential and visitor parking plan. Based on the submitted Waiver List, the Board of Appeals may authorize several waivers, including the off-street parking requirements, but only if the Comprehensive Permit is approved. No further action is required.***

On-Site Planning and Parking

ISSUE 2

ON-SITE PARKING SPACE TOTAL

HSH Comment: The Applicant does not meet the Town of Ashland's parking requirements for residential spaces, as defined in the Zoning Code. The Applicant asserts that the proposed parking ratio is within the parking demand based on the ITE Parking Generation Manual, 6th Edition. HSH requests the Applicant confirm whether the Project intends to seek a waiver to the Planning Board for not meeting the Town's minimum parking requirements.

Applicant Response: A waiver from the Town's minimum parking has been requested.

HSH Response: ***HSH generally agrees with proposed parking ratio as it relates to the parking demand based on the ITE Parking Generation Manual. Based on the submitted Waiver List, the Board of Appeals may authorize a waiver for the off-street parking requirement, but only if the Comprehensive Permit is approved. No further action is required.***

ISSUE 3

ON-SITE PARKING SPACE DIMENSIONS

HSH Comment: HSH notes that the on-site spaces identified on the Plan Set do not comply with the dimensional requirements of the Town of Ashland's Zoning Code. According to the Town's code, the width of a parking space shall not be less than nine (9) feet, and the length shall be 20 feet. HSH requests the Applicant confirm whether a zoning-compliant parking lot layout has been considered. If not, the Applicant should also confirm whether the Project intends to seek a waiver to the Planning Board for the non-compliant parking space dimensions.

Applicant Response: A waiver has been requested to allow the parking dimensions as shown at 9 feet wide by 18 feet long. The proposed dimensions align with typical industry standards.

HSH Response: ***HSH generally agrees that the proposed dimensions align with typical industry standards. Based on the submitted Waiver List, the Applicant is requesting a waiver for parking spaces dimensions. No further action is required.***

ISSUE 4 AND 5

SITE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

HSH Comment: HSH generally agrees with the site access recommendations made by the Applicant. However, the Applicant does not provide sufficient information on loading and trash/recycling accommodations. HSH requests the Applicant provide a detailed plan as to where move-in/move-out activity will take place, including a comprehensive AutoTURN analysis to demonstrate that all anticipated vehicles (moving, delivery, and trash/recycling trucks) can safely circulate the site and the designated loading area.

Applicant Response: As requested, a vehicle turning analysis has been prepared and is attached to verify anticipated vehicle circulation through the site and/or access to loading area. The loading/trash area is located to the west side of the main access and has been shown to accommodate the required movements of a garbage truck (SU-40). Delivery vehicles and moving vans (SU-30), which would access near the covered entry, have also been shown to have sufficient space to circulate through the entire site.

HSH Response: ***HSH has reviewed the vehicle turning analysis that shows a garbage truck (SU-40) and delivery vehicles/moving vans (SU-30) circulating through the loading area and the site. HSH generally agrees with the Applicant's conclusion that the trucks have sufficient space to circulate through the entire site; however, the Applicant notes that the delivery vehicles/moving vans would access near the covered entry but does not specify or illustrate whether these vehicles will stop and use the designated drop-off/pick-up area. HSH requests the Applicant clarify the intended operation of these vehicles.***

Additionally, the garbage truck is shown backing into the trash room/loading area, leaving minimal space for other trucks to use this area. HSH requests the Applicant confirm whether the loading area is intended solely for garbage truck operations. If other trucks are expected to use this area, we request the Applicant illustrate that these trucks can safely access the area while another truck is parked within the loading zone.

HSH Comment: Additionally, HSH generally agrees with the submitted fire truck maneuvers; but requests that the Applicant provides the vertical clearance of the covered entry to confirm it is sufficient for all anticipated vehicles, including delivery and emergency vehicles.

Applicant Response: The vertical clearance of the covered entry is 14 feet.

HSH Response: ***HSH finds that the proposed 14-foot vertical clearance at the covered entry sufficient for all anticipated vehicles. No further action is required.***

ISSUE 6

ON-SITE SNOW STORAGE

HSH Comment: HSH notes the area of snow storage is proposed to be located in front of numerous residents and visitors parking spaces on-site. HSH requests the Applicant clarify how snow removal vehicles will access the snow storage locations when all parking spaces are occupied.

Applicant Response: Snow removal operations will be managed and coordinated by the property manager with residents and will include a staged snow removal operation where residents will be required to move vehicles to clear the parking lot. Residents will be informed of the snow removal plan upon initial occupancy and will be reminded of the procedures prior to the start of the winder season.

HSH Response: ***HSH agrees with the staged snow removal operation plan. No further action is required.***

Pedestrians/Cyclists

ISSUE 7 AND 8

HSH Comment: HSH generally agrees with the proposed on-site pedestrian and bicycle accommodations; however, at the East Project Site Driveway, a short sidewalk is provided on the west side of the driveway that terminates at the Loading Area. HSH recommends providing a crosswalk between this sidewalk and the sidewalk in front of the building, as well as installing warning signage and/or an audible alarm for vehicles exiting the Loading Area.

Applicant Response: The subject sidewalk segment will be relocated to the east side of the driveway to better align with the pedestrian entrance to the building and a crosswalk with accompanying ADA compliant wheelchair ramps will be provided to link the sidewalk to the proposed building.

HSH Response: ***HSH agrees with the relocation of the subject sidewalk segment to the east side of the driveway to better align with the pedestrian entrance to the building. No further action is required.***

HSH Comment: HSH requests the Applicant provide a plan indicating the location of the indoor bicycle parking and confirm the number of bicycle spaces to be accommodated. HSH also requests the Applicant identify on the Site Plan the proposed outdoor bicycle racks.

Applicant Response: Bicycle parking will be provided on the ground floor of the building in a bicycle room that will be accessible from the lobby area as shown on Drawing A-101 of the Architectural Drawings (attached). The bicycle room has been designed to accommodate 44 bicycles. Exterior bicycle racks have been added to the Site Plan (also attached).

HSH Response: ***HSH notes that the Applicant will provide 44 secure bicycle parking spaces within an interior bike room accessible from the lobby as well as an exterior bike parking rack next to the patio seating area. Although the number of secure bicycle parking spaces is relatively low in comparison to the proposed number of residential units, HSH finds that the proposed quantity is reasonable for this development, mainly due to the limited number of bicycle facilities and infrastructure in the vicinity of the project. No further action is required.***

Site Improvements

ISSUE 9

HSH Comment: HSH requests the Applicant provide a signage and pavement marking plan that includes all the appropriate crosswalk locations throughout the proposed Site, including the two proposed driveways.

Applicant Response: Signs and pavement markings have been added to the Site Plan.

HSH Response: ***HSH generally agrees with the sign and pavement markings that were added to the Site Plan, but recommends the Applicant consider additional signage along the designated drop-off/pick-up area that indicates to drivers that the area is for short-term operations only.***

Construction Period Issues

ISSUE 10

HSH Comment: HSH encourages the Applicant to evaluate the short-term construction impacts of the Project, and provide details of the overall construction schedule, working hours, number of construction workers, transportation and parking, number of construction vehicles, and routes to and from the Project site. To minimize transportation impacts during the construction period, HSH suggests the Project proponent provide secure spaces on-site for workers' supplies and tools as well as limit the number of construction worker parking spaces on-site and encourage workers to carpool and/or use the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Commuter Rail.

Applicant Response: Construction impacts associated with the Project will be limited in duration and in number to the extent that the overall impact of construction-related traffic will be lower than the impact of the completed Project as assessed in the June 2025 TIA. That being said, it is important that a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) be an integral part of the Project. The CTMP will include the measures that have been suggested by HSH to include the following:

- The General Contractor will encourage workers to carpool or use public transportation, including the MBTA Commuter Rail, to access the Project site to the extent practicable.
- Truck routes will be established that use regional roadways or where such vehicles cannot be accommodated due to reduced roadway width (i.e., less than 22-feet in width) or deteriorated pavement conditions to the extent practicable.
- Equipment storage areas will be provided in order to reduce trips associated with the transporting of equipment to the Project site.

- Construction worker parking will be prohibited along Memorial Drive.
- The hours of construction will be consistent with local ordinances.

<u>HSH Response:</u> HSH agrees with the measures that will be included in the CTMP. No further action is required.