



## MEMORANDUM

Project: **Burlington Town Center**

FFF Project Number: **A1636**

Date: **Feb. 16, 2017**

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To: City of Burlington: Department of Planning and Zoning, Development Review Board

From: Jesse Robbins, FFF

Subject: **Burlington Town Center- Above Grade Parking**

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The Burlington Comprehensive Development ordinance, in the Downtown Mixed Use Core Overlay Amendment, stipulates the following regarding parking structures:

#### **4. Parking**

- i. All onsite parking shall be provided in one or more of the following:
  - a. an underground parking structure (strongly preferred);
  - b. an above ground parking structure separated from the public street by a liner building a minimum of 40-ft in depth; or,
  - c. a mixed-use building where with parking located underground, setback a minimum of 40-ft behind the façade of building at the ground level, and/or above the ground floor.

Attached is the developer's correspondence to the City in May 2016 regarding the significant costs and impacts of underground parking, showing why underground parking is not feasible for this project. In addition to the significant impacts noted in that correspondence, underground parking also is detrimental because:

1. Parking floors would have no natural day light and would have to be mechanically ventilated adding to energy costs.
2. The driver parking experience is diminished in a below grade garage and can be disorienting.
3. Underground garages cannot be easily adaptable for future uses. Above ground can be adapted for residential, office, and other uses for the future; our design includes features to simplify possible future conversion. There are precedents for garage conversions as the need for parking decreases, transit systems improve, and dependence on private autos decreases.

To clarify the attached correspondence of May, 2016, regarding the financial costs and disruptions associated with construction of underground parking, we offer the following:

#### **Below Grade Parking Garage is not feasible Under Any Scenario**

It should be clear to all reviewing the matter that the cost of placing the garage underground from just the excavation cost perspective is prohibitive and the garage cannot and will not be placed underground. The project would fail if it had to incur the expense of excavating and trucking way 234,250 cu yards of even clean material. The developer's decision regarding the infeasibility of below grade parking is firm.

If you add the possibility (and it is very likely) that the soil is contaminated then the cost of an underground garage is even more prohibitive. Removing the contaminated soil adds up to an additional \$31.6 million to the cost of the

development. However, to be very clear, even if the excavated soils at the BTC site turn out to be clean and do not require special handling the garage still cannot be placed underground because the excavation, special handling and trucking costs are prohibitive even with clean soils so the developer will not and cannot place the garage underground regardless of the quality of the excavated soils.

Attachments:

- Letter and emails dated May 29, 2016

CC:

File A1636	Art Klugo, PC	Jesse Beck, FFF	Brian Dunkiel, DSERH
John Haselbauer, PKSB	William Fellows, PKSB	Don Sinex, Devonwood	

## Jesse Robbins

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**Subject:** FW: BTC redevelopment underground garage impact/cost information  
**Attachments:** BCC Garage Cost Comparison Ltr\_16-0513.pdf

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <[elizabeth.miller@elizabethmillervt.com](mailto:elizabeth.miller@elizabethmillervt.com)>

Date: Thu, May 19, 2016 at 10:55 AM

Subject: BTC redevelopment underground garage impact/cost information

To: [brian@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:brian@burlingtonvt.gov), [DEWhite@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:DEWhite@burlingtonvt.gov), Ken Braverman <[kenneth.braverman@gmail.com](mailto:kenneth.braverman@gmail.com)>

Below is Don Sinex's letter to Brian Dunkiel, his representative in the Planning Commission and DRB processes, regarding the reasons why the underground garage is not feasible. I also attach a letter to Brian from PC confirming Don's summary. Don authorized me to send these to you for your information. The information is also reflected in the FAQ document I sent Brian Lowe yesterday. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Liz Miller

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Elizabeth Miller PLC  
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[elizabeth.miller@elizabethmillervt.com](mailto:elizabeth.miller@elizabethmillervt.com)  
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5/13/2016

Brian,

The excavation at the BTC in order to put the garage underground is uneconomical, environmentally challenging and so disruptive to the City that I decided to abandon that notion more than a year ago.

### **Excavation and Cost of an Underground Garage**

The development site for Phase I is app 127,750 sf in total area and to put the garage underground we would have to excavate to a level of 45 feet below grade. The amount of material that would have to be removed is determined as follows:  $127,750 \times 45 / 27$  to arrive at cu yards, or 234,250 cu yards.

To remove this amount of excavated material and assuming trucks can carry at least 12 yds of material per trip, it would take app 19,500 trucks.

To determine the amount of required trucking time assume a 12 hour day and that we can get a truck in the hole load it and get it out of the hole in 10 minutes. During a 12 hour day (pushing it due to nighttime and vision issues), we can load app 72 trucks a day (a 12 hour day). At that rate it would take 276 days to load and

transport all fill out of the hole working 12 hours a day 276 days straight. That amounts to 9+ months of digging and trucking which will be noisy dirty and traffic congestive for the City - a nightmare scenario!

The hard cost to put the garage underground, to dig, shore-up and reinforce the hole as you go down, trucking out the material and pouring the walls to retail the earth was estimated by PC at \$22.00 million USD on top of the garage cost of another \$23.30 million or a total of \$45.30 million.

The above ground garage that we now plan in comparison is estimated to cost \$22.10 million in total. The underground garage will cost nearly 2 x the above ground garage at a minimum.

### **Environmental Issues**

It can reasonably be assumed that some level of contamination of the soils at BTC is very likely. Sites within 75 feet of the BTC site were found to exceed statutory threshold levels for soil contamination. If the soil was contaminated it would be handled as solid waste and this will increase the cost by an estimated \$135 per yard to cover the added trucking time, protective trucking costs and the dumping fees at Coventry if Coventry could take the soil. If the soil had to be trucked out of State that could add even more costs. At 234,250 cubic yards of contaminated soil the potential cost to dispose of the material could run as high as \$31.60 million.

In total a below-grade garage will cost almost \$53.60 million more than the proposed above ground garage. This alone makes it impossible to do a below-grade garage. When you add the inconvenience, disruption, dirt and noise factor it is a impossible scenario not to mention the added cost the extra time (9 months) will add to the development project.

I have asked PC to review my calculations and cost estimates and to shoot you a note to confirm the matter.

Don Sinex  
Devonwood Investors, LLC



**CONSTRUCTION**

AT PC WE GO ABOVE AND BEYOND ON EVERY JOB, PERIOD.

May 13, 2016

Mr. Brian Dunkiel, Esq.  
Dunkiel Saunders  
91 College Street  
Burlington, VT 05402

Re: Burlington City Center Redevelopment Project  
Below-grade Parking Garage and Above-grade Parking Garage Cost Comparison  
PC Project Number 14748

Dear Brian:

At the request of Mr. Don Sinex, PC Construction has reviewed the attached memo against our previous estimates and are in agreement with the information provided.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a call anytime.

Sincerely,

Art Klugo  
Construction Executive

Attachment: Don Sinex email to Brian Dunkiel, dated May 13, 2016