

Memo to DRB members from Wayne Senville
re: suggestions for surface parking reduction at Cambrian Rise

Jan. 27, 2017

A growing number of cities across the country have allowed for "parking reserves," especially where the future parking needs of large, phased developments are uncertain. This allows the land to be kept as open space until such time as it is shown that additional parking spaces are needed by the development. At that point, the open space can be converted into parking (again, if needed for parking).

In this application, the applicant's comprehensive approach to using a range of TDM strategies (see part 4.3 of applicant's "Transportation Impact Assessment" -- prepared by RSG, and dated 12/21/2016) to reduce traffic may well also lead to a reduced need for parking. Indeed one of the goals of CATMA (which the applicant has now joined) has been to enable the Hill institutions' growing needs to be met with limited parking available. The Cambrian Rise proposal also exceeds the minimum parking required by the CDO (which does not factor in TDM measures).

In my view, it is best -- at this point -- to keep as much open space on the site as is realistic, while meeting residents' and business' parking needs -- with the important caveat that space should be available for conversion into parking spaces if future demand demonstrates the need for additional parking (something that the many TDM strategies being employed may well eliminate the need for).

It may well be that ultimately the 1093 parking spaces being proposed will be needed. That can be accomplished, down the road, by the applicant (or its successor) coming before the DRB and showing that there is a need for the reserve areas to be converted into parking spaces. In the meantime (and perhaps permanently) there will be more open space, with its visual and environmental benefits.

As a result, I propose the following change to the staff recommendations. If you have a chance, please review before the Monday deliberative, and refer to the applicant's "Exhibit - Surface Parking - EX5A" (dated 1/20/2017):

Insert on page 20 of 33, before the paragraph "South Road continues ... " the following:

A weakness of this plan is the amount and visibility of surface parking. One area of particular concern is the surface parking proposed within, or impinging on, the project's east-west "green" corridor that stretches from behind Building A (the former Orphanage) and runs west through the Cambrian Rise project towards Lake Champlain.

Given the extensive array of TDM measures the applicant proposes, which we have found will substantially reduce the amount of vehicular traffic generated by this project (see our findings for Section 3.5.6(a)4 of the conditional review standards), we also believe the amount of surface parking being proposed (205 spaces) can be reduced while allowing sufficient parking to service the proposed residential, commercial, office, and other uses. However, given the applicant's concerns, we also believe that additional parking should be potentially available if future parking demand warrants it.

As a result, the following three areas identified in applicant's plans for surface parking (consisting of a total of 76 surface parking spaces currently proposed) shall remain undeveloped until such time after the project is built out that the applicant (or its successor) demonstrates to the DRB that there is a need for additional parking spaces in any or all of these locations to service the development.

-- Area 1: consisting of the two rows of surface parking proposed for the rooftop of Building D, and comprising 36 parking spaces as identified in the applicant's "Exhibit - Surface Parking - EX5A" (dated 1/20/2017).

-- Area 2: consisting of the two rows of surface parking proposed immediately to the east of Area 1, and comprising 31 parking spaces as identified in applicant's "Exhibit - Surface Parking - EX5A" (dated 1/20/2017) (note: this is the northerly portion of the area identified in EX5A as having 55 spaces). Furthermore, Area 2 shall be maintained as grassed and/or landscaped until such time as the applicant (as outlined above) shall demonstrate the need for it to be converted into parking.

-- Area 3: consisting of the northerly row of spaces proposed in the parking area immediately east of Building E, and comprising 9 parking spaces as identified in applicant's "Exhibit - Surface Parking - EX5A" (dated 1/20/2017) (note: this is the northerly row of spaces in the area identified in EX5A as having 34 spaces). Furthermore, Area 3 shall be maintained as grassed and/or landscaped until such time as the applicant (as outlined above) shall demonstrate the need for it to be converted into parking.

[note, some rewording of the subsequent paragraphs in the staff report will also need to be reworded for consistency with the language I am proposing]