

Memorandum



To: Ms. Marzie Galazka, Director of Community and Economic Development
Date: March 21, 2022
From: Rodney C. Emery P.E., PTOE.
RE: Additional Comments - Elm Place Development
Project Name: Winn Residential Development – Elm Place

WorldTech Engineering has prepared this memorandum to discuss additional concerns raised by the Town of Swampscott concerning the access and parking as part of the review of the proposed 40B residential housing project on Elm Place. WorldTech previously submitted several peer review letters in response to the formal TIA prepared for the project and additional design modifications provided by the applicant. There are two areas of concern that are addressed in this memo. The first concerns the proposed off-street parking along Pitman Road and the second is the access to the additional parking area leased to the project, which is adjacent to the storage warehouse behind the Cross Fit The Swamp parking lot.

Parking on Pitman Road

Several comments were made about the proposal to add on-street parking for the proposed residential development along the east side of Pitman Road. This parking would be located on private property just outside the layout of Pitman Road. Pitman Road is public street with a width of 30 feet. There is a sidewalk along both sides of the street for a major portion of the street, leaving a roadway width of approximately 20 feet. The traffic volumes are very light, and on-street parking can be found along the west side of the street in front of a series of single family houses. There are no signs prohibiting parking on either side of Pitman Road, presumably due to the fact that there is only one house located on the east side. The sidewalk on the east side of the street ends approximately 150 feet south of Essex Street. There is some informal off-street parking between where the sidewalk ends and Doherty Circle.

The proposed Elm Place Development proposes to remove the existing sidewalk and relocate it to private property, along the frontage of the proposed residential buildings. Although this would allow a continuous sidewalk along the entire east side of Pitman Road, it would be located on private property. It is not clear if an easement would be necessary for the public to use the sidewalk. The on-street parallel parking is proposed to be constructed between the proposed sidewalk/landscaped buffer and the property line for the proposed Elm Place development. This would preclude the construction of a town-owned sidewalk within the public right-of-way along the east side of Pitman Road.

If a sidewalk were to be constructed within the public right-of-way, on the east side of Pitman Road, most of or all of the parallel parking spaces would not fit in the remaining space between the new public sidewalk and the face of the proposed buildings.

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If the new sidewalk were constructed within the public right-of-way, parking should be prohibited along the east side of Pitman Road due to the narrow width of the remaining roadway. It should be noted that parking for the proposed Elm Place Development project could displace or compete with the existing parking on the west side of Pitman Road. Only prohibiting parking along both sides of Pitman Road could ensure that parking from the proposed development will not end up on Pitman Road.

If the town intends on requiring a new public sidewalk, along the east side of Pitman Road, parking should be prohibited on the east side of Pitman Road.

Additional Parking for Elm Place

Concern was also raised about the additional overflow parking located in the adjacent parking lot behind the Cross Fit The Swamp facility. An additional 21 parking spaces are to be designated as connected parking for residences at Elm Place and for visitors and staff to use. The proposed parking spaces will be located in a private parking area leased to the residences at Elm Place. The parking consists primarily of perpendicular parking adjacent to the fence at the northern edge of the property and a few parallel spaces adjacent to the storage warehouse. A long crosswalk is proposed in front of the storage warehouse and is proposed to be connected to a new sidewalk along the tumbling academy parking lot and building. A crosswalk is proposed across Elm Place at the corner where the house at 26 Elm Place is located. The proposed crosswalk would terminate in the street and not be connected to any walkway or sidewalk.

Elm Place is composed of three legs, two of which form a tee-type intersection with Essex Street. All three legs of Elm Place features, a narrow right-of-way, 26-30 feet, with two-way traffic and no restrictions on parking. Traffic volumes are low and feature only sidewalks at the corners where Elm Place intersects Essex Street. There are several existing openings along Elm Place where off-street parking is allowed, and access gained to these parking areas by driving directly from the roadway. There are no sidewalks located along these portions of Elm Place to provide a buffer between the parking and the roadway surface. One of the open areas is the existing parking area designated for the Burkes Tumbling Academy along Elm Place and a second is the condominium building across the street which has a large opening for parking. One could argue that these off-street parking areas are similar in concept to what the developers of Elm Place are proposing along Pitman Road.

The third leg of Elm Place which runs parallel to the tumbling academy, features a 30 foot right-of-way, without any pedestrian facilities on either side of the street. Parking is primarily observed along the north side of the street, which is used by the residents or for visitors to the three residential properties. Occasionally, drivers park on the south side, waiting to pick up students at the tumbling academy. Pedestrians are forced to walk in the street along this stretch of Elm Place.

There are several features of the Elm Place project which have been incorporated into the site design of the project which improve access to the site and safety for pedestrians. A sidewalk

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is proposed along the Elm Place side of the project connecting Essex Street to the front of the tumbling academy. An additional sidewalk is proposed along the front of the tumbling academy building and parking lot. The pedestrian path continues via a long crosswalk to the rear of the proposed parking spaces.

There are several design alternatives that we recommend which may improve the safety for residents of Elm Place as well as guests, staff and assigned parking in the connected parking area. Rather than stripe a long crosswalk from the connected parking area and sidewalk adjacent to the tumbling academy building, a new sidewalk could be constructed along the residential side of this leg of Elm Place. The sidewalk would provide a more direct route and better separation from moving vehicles for pedestrians, including those who parked in the overflow lot. This sidewalk would also eliminate the crosswalk to empty space across Elm Place. A new crosswalk could be provided across Elm Place at the corner of Elm Place to the front of the tumbling academy.

A second consideration to improve safety and circulation in the area would be to consider making a portion of Elm Place one way. The primary access/egress to the Elm Place site should remain from the western portion of Elm Place. The portion of Elm Place between the western portion and the eastern portion of Elm Place could be designed as one-way in the northbound direction. Drivers destined for the main parking area at Elm Place as well as the tumbling academy would continue to use the western portion of Elm Place and drivers destined for the connected parking area would use the easternmost portion of Elm Place. This would reduce the traffic on the on the one-way portion of Elm Place.