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MEMORANDUM

Date:	May 1, 2013		
To:	Nora Loughnane, Town Planner		
From:	Don Leighton, ALSA	BETA Project #:	4410
Subject:	University Station – Landscape and Urban Design Review		

We are pleased to provide the Planning Board with our closing remarks on the Peer Review Process for the Landscape and Urban Design components of the Peer Review. The comment responses recently provided by Shadley Associates in their memorandum entitled "Response to University April 9th,2013 Peer Review Comments", dated April 19, 2013., have satisfactorily answered the outstanding comments raised during the review process.

In general we have found that documentation provided in the course of the review process to be professionally prepared and responsive to our comments. Consistent with the By law, the proposed project provides for a development with an interconnected system of circulation for a variety of transportation modes and will create an extensive pedestrian network throughout the site. The landscaping scope is comprehensive and anchored by notable open space areas at the northern gateway entry to the project site, behind Dedham Westwood Water District and in the future Village Retail area. The landscaping is also now a critical link for the entire site running along the west side of University Avenue as a linear park with a wider sidewalk.

As indicated in the comment response letter noted, there are details that will require coordination beyond Town Meeting. We anticipate that these requirements will be resolved as part of the preparation of construction documents and we recommend a submission of those plans be made to the Town to confirm the required coordination has been satisfactorily completed.

As discussed at the April 29th Planning Board meeting, the Board accepts as a minimum standard the use and location of 9' planting islands indicated for the Core Retail parking field included in the master plan submission. However, the Board's acceptance of this minimum standard is based upon the proponents' firm commitment to diligently explore alternative parking lot configurations that increase the amount of landscaping and frequency of planting islands, most desirably to every two bays of parking. This should include consideration of 6' planting islands with structural soil, reduction of the landscape buffer immediately adjacent to the Hanover residential property and all other reasonable methodologies to create space for additional plantings. With regard to coordination of parking and store frontage, while the Board notes the importance of this issue, it is the Board's opinion there must be clear detriment to retail operations resulting from a revised parking layout to render an alternate plan unacceptable.

As the project moves forward, we recommend that the Proponent pay particular attention to the following issues as they prepare construction Plans:

- In combination with the alternative layouts for the Core Retail parking area, we recommend that an increased caliper size of selected deciduous trees be considered for the parking lot planting islands.
- Some planting areas will need to be adjusted and coordinated with sign placement along University Avenue. Detailed Planting Plans should complement & enhance key sign elements.
- Careful and thoughtful considerations should be given to final coordination regarding placement of lights, traffic signal equipment and signage and overall planting plan.
- Lighting of the signs and surrounding landscaping should also be considered and coordinated for readability of the signage.
- Wall details for both the sign base and where natural stone interfaces with concrete unit walls will need to be further defined and contribute to the unification of the Development.
- As tenants are identified for buildings along University Avenue sidewalks should be given consideration for areas that connect commercial activities with public walkways (i.e. outdoor cafes)
- Details for wall construction for walls in excess of 5’ high, specifically the wall between Target and the office building, should implement a larger block dimension appropriate to the scale and height of the wall.