GLA
A DIVISION OF BETA

MEMORANDUM

Date:	April 9, 2013		
To:	University Station Development Team	Project #: 4410	USW 1217 University Station
From:	Don Leighton		
Subject:	University Station – Peer Review		

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide and update to our Urban Design and landscape comments based on the Proponents March 22, 2013 Plan Submission. As the plans near completion the following items are noted.

General:

G-1) Please provide written responses to our January 2, 2013 comments.

G-2) Continue to advance plans to construction level documents. This includes but not is not limited to finalization and coordination of the overall urban design layout with other streetscape design elements including but not limited to signage, signal equipment, street furniture, plantings and lighting . We note that the plan also needs updating in accordance with the latest curbline geometry, most notably the additional cross walks along University Avenue. Ensure that all Plans reflect the various Architectural renderings presented during the course of the design development.

G-3) Locations of other site equipment such as Transformers are not indicated. The proponent should define these locations and screen transformer boxes and all other multi-utility cabinets from view from sidewalks and project roadways.

G-4) The buffer plan for adjacent Whitewood Road Neighborhood should consider further adjustments to understory planting plan and consider an additional planting berm on the neighborhood side of the existing sound attenuation fence.

G-5) Provide signage design submission for Gateway, Directional, Wayfinding and Directory signs.

G-6) As requested by the Town, please provide memorandum summarizing overall LEED commitments of the project.

G-7) One proposed rain garden is noted near Restaurant A. We recommend that further opportunities for rain gardens and other Low Impact Development techniques be identified and integrated to the extent possible.

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G-8) Consistent with the project LEED initiatives the proponent should provide alternative lighting design which evaluates the feasibility of LED lighting along public roadways.

G-9) Provide final details and material selection of retaining walls. As indicated in the architectural review comments, site walls materials, textures and overall appearance should be coordinated throughout the site, both in terms of adjacent walls and buildings. Taller walls (over six feet) should have larger block dimensions.

G-10) For future project phases, note that the building designated for Assisted Living is located right next to the train tracks. To what extent has noise impact on these residences been considered and how might that affect the urban design plans.

G-11) Clarify that Section 9.8.5.2.5 of the by-law has been met.

G-12) Provide construction plan level of detail for all exposed storage areas, exposed machinery of electric installations, loading dock, dumpsters etc in accordance with the requirement of Section 9.8.11.2

G-13) Provide elevation, plans and details of proposed sound barriers indicating proposed materials and construction. Final Design Plans should include Structural Calculations demonstrating the stability of the wall shall be stamped by a Structural Engineer Licensed in the State of Massachusetts.

Landscape Design and Plantings:

L-1) Consider including a Legend or Symbols Key on the first few sheets, on an initial General Notes sheet, or on the first sheet of each section for ease of use.

L-2) Consider using a callout label with a detail key for each item on the layout plans, keying that item to a detail sheet, for ease and clarity.

L-3) The one-inch bar in bottom right of each sheet should be checked for accuracy.

L-4) **Sheet C-130:** A more detailed set of notes on the first sheet of the Erosion and Sediment Control plans, or a note that says, “See Detailed Notes on Sheet C-501,” would be appropriate here and would help direct the contractor.

L-5) **Sheet C-132:** Consider running silt fence around the northwest side of the Bordering Vegetated Wetland.

L-6) **Sheet C-501:** Add a detail for Rain Garden construction in accordance with state Storm Water Guidelines.

L-7) **Sheets C-510 & C-511:** Locations and limits of these basins should be shown more clearly on appropriate the layout plans. Repeating contours to indicate basic slope limits is suggested. (use a locus plan).

L-8) **Sheet L101:** See streetscape comments regarding adjustment of pole heights of all pole lighting more in keeping with a pedestrian and village-scale experience.

L-9) **Sheet L101:** Study more carefully the location of trees in relation to the light poles, some interfere with each other.

L-10) **Sheet L101:** Suggest adding a loop of tall evergreen buffer immediately to the west of the walkway that is west of the water feature, behind the ornamental tree on the west side of the walkway, to screen a view from the house to the northwest.

L-11) **Sheets L-102 & L-103:** Adjust light/tree heights and locations as mentioned above.

L-12) **Sheets L-102 & L-103:** Where trees and lightpoles occur close together in parking lot islands, more columnar deciduous trees are suggested. See suggestions on Plant Schedule. Otherwise for parking lot trees a spreading habit is good for adding shade.

L-13) **Sheet L-105:** At Restaurant Building C, depending on how high the buffering wall between the dining patio and the busy intersection is, add more planted buffer at the corner curve for noise and sight screening. If the wall is less than 3-4 feet, trees would be appropriate.

L-14) **Sheet L-301:** On locus plan, make Site Section "M" label larger and clearer for clarity/ease.

L-15) **Sheet L-400:** General Landscape/Open Space: Would like to see more variety of native trees that will work well in open space/buffer areas. Suggest Siverbell, Redbud, Yellow and Sweet Birch, Yellowwood, Beech, Sugar Maple. For non-natives, Katsura. For these larger open spaces, add the option of some larger evergreens: White Pine, Junipers, Spruce, and Fir. Add the option of some native grasses.

L-16) **Sheet L-400:** Wetland Areas: Would like to see more variety. Take out sycamore. Add Hammamelis, Tupelo, even a willow or two. Substitute Juniperus Virginiana for Thuja. We suggest consideration of some Typha (cattails); in our area invasive Phragmites is outstripping cattails, which are seed sources for many birds, so badly that we recommend every opportunity to re-introduce them.

L-17) **Sheet L-400:** Streetscapes & Parking Lot Islands: Would like to see more variety. Use mixed natural groupings of different trees, and vary the sizes. Suggestions for more fastigiate trees: Tilia Americana "McKSentry," Quercus Palustris "Emerald Pillar," Sophora Japonica "Fastigiata," Gingko "Princeton Sentry," Amelanchier Alnifolia "Obelisk."

L-18) **Sheet L-400:** Ornamental grasses: Recommend use of more, such as Little Bluestem and Helichtotrichon "Sapphire."

L-19) **Sheet L-400:** Parks and plazas: Recommend consideration of specimen evergreens such as Hinoki, Weeping Alaska Cedar, or Japanese White Pine.

L-20) **Sheet L-1 & L-2:** Plant Schedules: We suggest addition of White Fir, Foxtail Spruce. Populus is not ideal, use maple, Oak and Beech instead. Other Birch varieties can be added--- "Heritage" is very good choice for a forested screening area. Fagus Grandiflora is not an appropriate understory planting; it is a tree that will get huge Suggest for understory fillers: Arrowwood, Rhododendron Maximum, Ilex Opaca, Spicebush, Blueberry, Bayberry.

L-21) **Sheet L-1 & L-2:** Sections: If possible a planted berm between the houses and the sound wall will add to the visual and sound screening. Could be immediately behind the wall at top. We recommend that an extended warranty be provided for a min 2 year period for all underplantings.

Urban Design Comments:

U- 1) L-101 Noted improvements

A. More green space along southern parking area improves gateway feeling
B. Pedestrian Flow is improved.

Opportunity areas

1. Is the overlook planted? If so what is the access to the benches. is there?
2. Drop–off area puts vehicles entering from University Avenue on the opposite side of the entry. May want to consider one way entry
3. Light pole type F is in the visual corridor of residential entry to kinetic sculpture
4. Consider clustering benches along walks in areas with views of focal features (Vertical water feature and Kinetic sculpture) instead of even spacing, perhaps even reducing quantity in non–significant areas
5. As vegetated storm water basin develops consider placement of boulders, boulder weirs, log vanes and other bio-engineering mechanisms to create a natural feeling and ecosystem diversity as warranted from water depth, flow rate and flooding frequency.

U- 2) L-102 Noted improvements

A. Improved buffer along residential building A2

Opportunity areas

1. As requested by the Board, increase the planting strips to every other parking sleeve. This will also help provide conformity with the lighting layout
2. Consider moving crosswalk to intersection
3. Consider carrying paving band along entry to anchor building
4. Consider moving one of the two kiosks to outside building M
5. Sheet keyplan does not accurately reflect drawing, drawing cuts off some of the plan

U- 3) L-103 Noted improvements

A. Pedestrian Flow is improved

Opportunity areas

1. As requested by the Board, increase the planting strips to every other parking sleeve. This will also provide conformity with the lighting layout
2. Sheet keyplan does not accurately reflect drawing, drawing cuts off some of the plan

U- 4) L -104 Noted improvements of sidewalk connections.
Opportunity areas

U- 5) L -105 Noted improvements
Opportunity areas
1. Consider increasing width of sidewalk and use of enhanced pavements connecting mixed-use to MBTA for better wayfindings

U- 6) L -106 Noted improvements
A. Improved pedestrian connection
B. Better screening of the DWWD pump station

Opportunity areas
1. Consider connection between the upper and lower walks of University Avenue
2. Consider berming the park along the train tracks

U- 7) L -107 Noted improvements
Opportunity areas
1. Consider connection between the upper and lower walks of University Avenue

Street Lighting Design Comments:

SL-1) Finalize Project lighting level design criteria in accordance with Peer Review Comments prepared by Power Engineers.

SL-2) Lighting selection should be refined so that all fixtures relate to one another. There is a large height disparity between lighting types E and G along University Avenue. We recommend that slightly shorter pole be used for Type E and slightly taller pole for Type G be evaluated. Fixture type 'A-D' does not have the same design features as other fixtures We anticipate this will also improve the overall street aesthetic, particularly in the early life of the project until tree plantings fill in. In particular

SL-3) A design option using lower wattage should be evaluated. 200 W to 250 W fixtures are commonly used for streets of this type.

SL-4) We anticipate that uniformity at the intersections will require placement of a pole on each corner of the intersection. The benefits of this condition should be evaluated.

SL-5) The lighting plan shall also include the following illumination information in a table format: Minimum, Maximum, Average to Minimum, and Maximum to minimum light levels for **each individual** roadway or parking field. Individual tables should be provided for each roadway and each parking area.

SL-6) At the northerly limit of University Avenue, beyond the median, it is unlikely that the required uniformity will be met lighting from one side. We recommend the use of the Type F

on both sides of the roadway. We anticipate this will also improve the overall street aesthetic, particularly in the early life of the project until tree plantings fill in.

SL-7) As with the northerly section of University Avenue, South of Harvard Street lighting should be placed on either side of the roadway and diagonally spaced to achieve the required uniformity. We anticipate this will also improve the overall street aesthetic, particularly in the early life of the project until tree plantings fill in. improve the overall street aesthetic. Continuation of this arrangement to a point just north of Harvard Street may also be appropriate for consistency in the overall corridor.

SL-8) The lighting at the southerly driveway will be overpowered by the parking lot lighting. We suggest that the parking lot lighting be moved back from the sidewalk at least one bay into the lot. We anticipate this will also improve the driveway aesthetic.

SL-9) Use of the smaller median fixture in the median of the northerly driveway should also be evaluated in an effort to create similar characteristics at both main driveways. As with the southerly driveway, moving the parking lot lighting back from the driveway sidewalk will assist with this. The location of the parking lot lighting where currently shown may all be a nuisance to residents.

SL-10) Table of light levels indicates lighting will be provided in the Meadow Area. Plans should be updated to show proposed lighting concepts.

Additional Comments:

A-1) The dumpster located adjacent to building "O" should be relocated outside zone 1 into the parking lot or placed within the building.

A-2) South of Harvard Street, consider use of "Sharrows" on the roadway.

A-3) Verify that the Fire Department will accept a curbed single lane access on the northerly driveway. An alternative design that reduces the median width and expands the lane width to allow for provision for a stalled car or emergency by-pass could be considered. Min lane width for this condition would be 18 feet.

A-4) Signage indicating shared use for pedestrian and bicycles should be provided for the mixed use trail on University Avenue.

A-5) A raised walk should be incorporated to emphasize continuation of the walk through the parking lot at Restaurant A.

A-6) Show Dumpster location for Restaurant A

A-7) Adjust walk layout in the Meadow and around the assisted living facility to improve continuity and connections. See attachment 1 for additional comments.

A-8) L-402 -Bike rack standard shown on detail sheet is not acceptable to the Town and should be deleted. Per By-law, Town to provide standard to be used.

A-9) L-402 -Ash urn should not be used on the project. Delete detail.

A-10) L-402 – Trash receptacle should be larger, and incorporate both trash removal and recycling receptor

A-11) Since the westerly elevation of Building E is exposed to both Harvard and NStar Way, as is part of the rear portion of building E-I, ensure that the exposed elevations have the reasonable level of aesthetic.

A-12) Provide a raised walk at the driveway crosswalk linking buildings C and E.

A-13) Per attachment add planting island in vicinity of retail building C.

A-14) Examine crosswalk location at corner of Harvard and Nstar way to ensure optimal visibility for both directions.

A-15) Ensure that all walks shown exiting the residential building are aligned with the current door locations. See attachment 3 for typical example.

RETAIL BUILDING P
2,530 S.F.

ENTRANCE

10' WIDE CONCRETE WALK
6' WIDE GRASS STRIP

PROPERTY LINE

HYDRANT (TYP.)

32 Spaces

RETAIL BUILDING O
10,940 S.F.

45' SECTION OF MOUNTABLE CURB FOR FIRE TRUCK ACCESS

LANDSCAPED ISLAND (TYP.)

UNIVERSITY AVENUE

RESTAURANT A
8,000 S.F.

increase fan.

RAISED X-WALK

RESTAURANT
8,000 S.F.

SCORED CONCRETE

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING B
188 UNITS

adjust location

NO DISTURB BUFFER

provide connectivity around building.

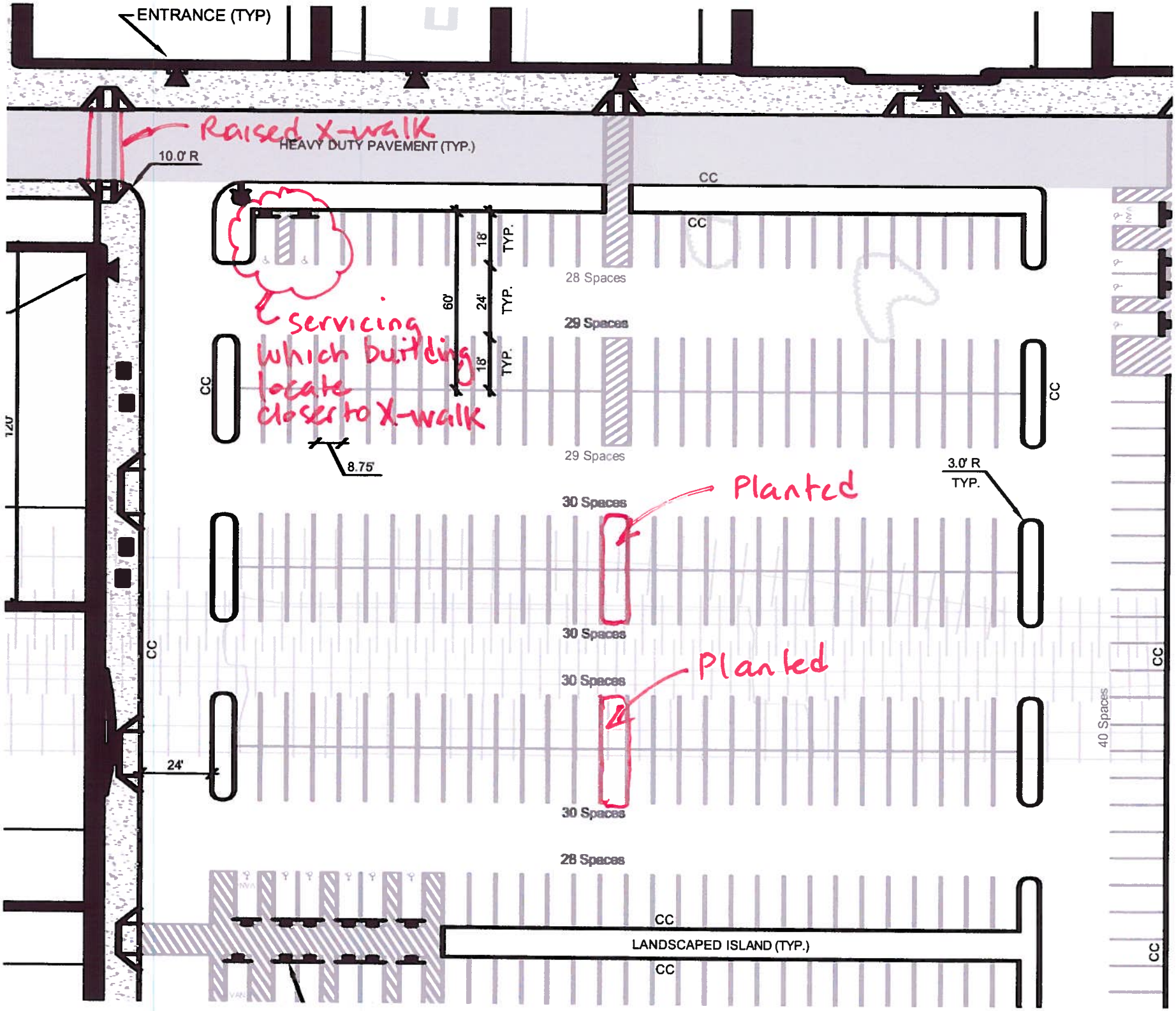
400' RADIUS MUNICIPAL

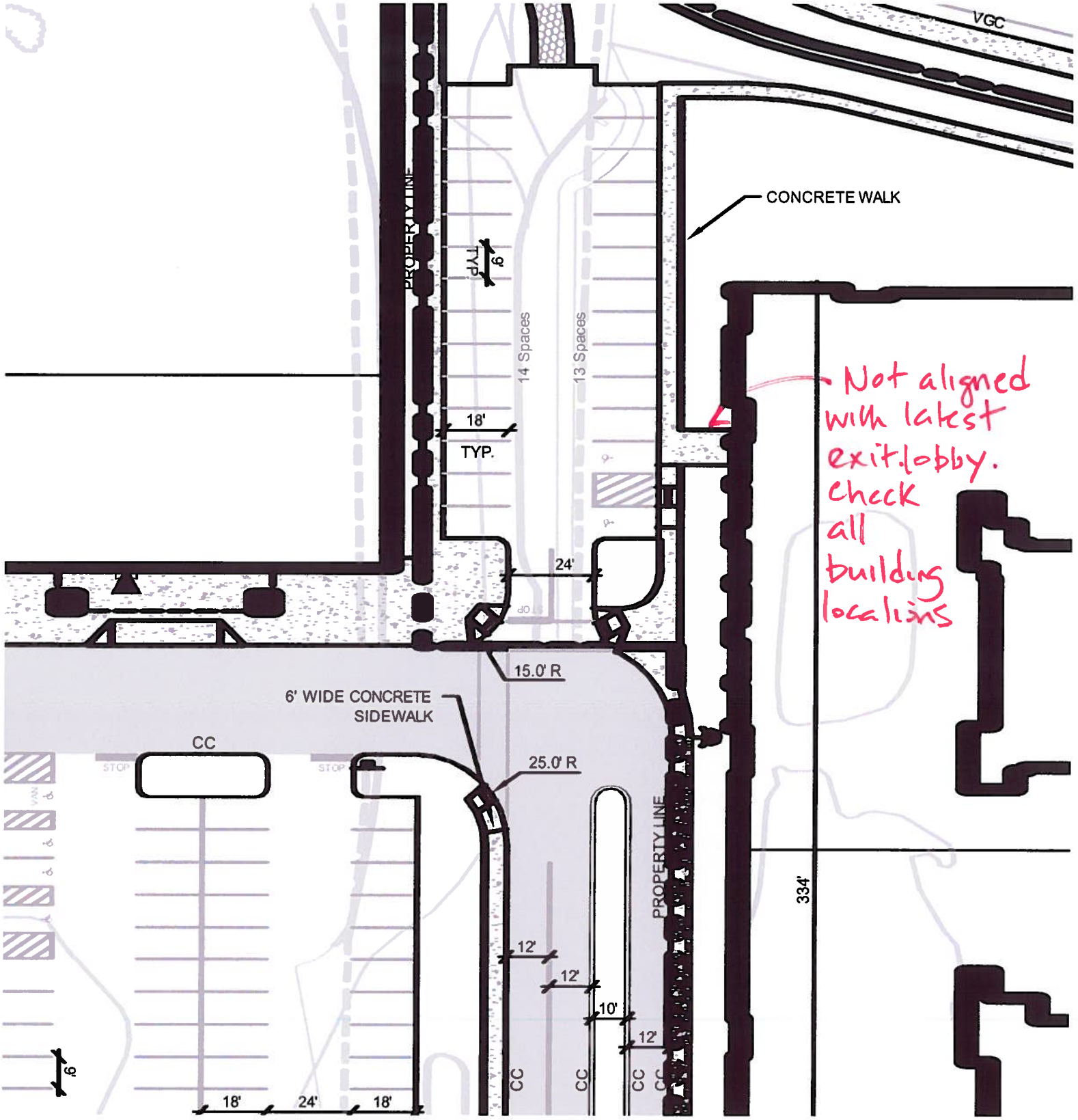
BUILDING X
OFFICE

improve direction of connectivity.

Planting this area should allow for future connection of walk to rail trail.

x-walk.


ENTRANCE (TYP)
Raised X-walk
HEAVY DUTY PAVEMENT (TYP.)
10.0' R
CC
CC
18' TYP.
60'
24' TYP.
18' TYP.
28 Spaces
29 Spaces
servicing
which building
locate
closer to X-walk
CC
CC
8.75'
29 Spaces
3.0' R
TYP.
30 Spaces
Planted
30 Spaces
30 Spaces
Planted
24'
30 Spaces
28 Spaces
CC
LANDSCAPED ISLAND (TYP.)
CC
40 Spaces
CC
CC


VGC
CONCRETE WALK
PROPERTY LINE
9' TYP.
14 Spaces
13 Spaces
18' TYP.
24'
15.0' R
6' WIDE CONCRETE SIDEWALK
CC
STOP
25.0' R
PROPERTY LINE
334'
12'
12'
10'
12'
CC
CC
CC
CC
9'
18'
24'
18'
Not aligned with latest exit lobby. check all building locations