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April 9, 2020

**VIA EMAIL**

Ms. Laura Trivison  
Albany County Planning Board  
449 New Salem Road  
Vorheesville, NY 12186

Re: Western Avenue/Crossgates  
DEIS Traffic Study  
Albany County Planning Board Comments  
MC Project No. 19002502A

Dear Ms. Trivison:

As you are aware, we have been working with the Town of Guilderland Planning Board and its traffic consultant GPI. The following items are in response to the memorandum received from your office dated March 13, 2020. The items are numbered according to their review comments.

**Concept Plan**

1. The following comments apply to the driveways on Crossgates Mall Road:
  - a. There is a substantial crest vertical curve about halfway between the Mall Road/Rapp Road intersection and the main driveway. Has sight distance been evaluated?

***Response: Based on the Town's (and other) comments, the northerly driveway will be modified to a right turn in/out. The southerly driveway will be a right turn in only driveway for the fueling station. Thus, the issue of sight distance due to left turns has been eliminated.***

- b. Unless the raised median is extended to the main driveway, violations of the left turn prohibition will be common. Drivers headed west or south may be unwilling to go around the block to make the turn.

***Response: The proposed northerly (main) driveway (right in/out) will have geometric components incorporated to prevent left turns.***



- c. Has moving the main entrance to the ring road been considered, perhaps at the Gabriel Terrace location? With the center turn lane, left turns out of the site could be provided.

**Response:** *This has been analyzed by Costco on several occasions. Due to site constraints, i.e., building location, grades, etc., the main driveway cannot be moved.*

- d. Care needs to be taken to make sure the right-in driveway is far enough from the Western Avenue intersection to prevent conflicts.

**Response:** *The final design will locate the driveway to prevent conflict with Western Avenue.*

2. Since 4-to-3 lane conversions result in crash reductions from 19 to 47%, this treatment should be investigated for all four-lane segments of Crossgates Mall Road, not just the area proposed.

**Response:** *Comment Noted. The Applicant will monitor the proposed changes to determine the appropriateness of similar conversion along the ring road. Note that the conversion will not require the addition of impervious surfaces.*

3. Low-cost interim improvements should be prepared for the mall road/flyover ramps intersection in case the BusPlus Purple Line project is delayed. Possibilities include signal retiming and skew reduction of the channelized right turn lanes (see Figure 9-19, 2018 Green Book).

**Response:** *Depending on the timings of the proposed CDTA project, the Applicant will explore low cost interim improvements with the Town and the NYSDOT, including retiming of the traffic signal.*

4. If available, Costco should provide actual parking utilization rates from comparable stores rather than relying on parking minimums. This may allow impervious surface reduction.

**Response:** *The parking design meets the needs for the prototypical Costco site criteria and is consistent with the Town's zoning code.*



### Traffic Impact Study

Page 11: The discussion of the 1700 Designer Residences states the Town could prohibit left turns. NYSDOT has that authority, not the Town. Is there an acceptable alternate access for left turns?

**Response:** *The NYSDOT (not the Town) has the authority to prohibit turns into and off of State highways. The Town's prohibition of left turns into/from Gabriel Terrace would need approval of the State. The document did not recommend restricting turns into or out of 1700 Designer Residences.*

Page 13-14: At the Rapp Road/Mall Road intersection, was conversion to a single-lane roundabout considered? There is plenty of room, and a 78% crash reduction can be expected (Highway Safety Manual Table 14-4, suburban one-lane roundabout).

The discussion of removing the channelized right turns should include the intent and expected effectiveness.

**Response:** *In lieu of a single lane roundabout the Applicant has elected to implement several items included in the VHB Safety Evaluation Memorandum. The current design of this location is to eliminate the high speed channelized right turns and "tighten up" the intersection. Lane continuity, new signal installation, and intersection lighting will have a greater benefit to the motorist as well as bicyclists and pedestrians.*

Page 18: The Washington Avenue Extension frontage road should be realigned to the south at Springsteen Rd, providing more separation from the W.A.E. mainline.

**Response:** *This location is somewhat distant and minimally impacted by the proposed development. Its geometrics have been in place for many years and therefore any comments should be directed to the City of Albany.*

Page 29: According to Highway Safety Manual Table 14-2, aligning Gabriel Terrace to the east to provide two three-leg intersections can reduce injury crashes by one third compared to the proposed four-leg intersection. This assumes the Gabriel Terrace and the Crossgates driveway AADTs will be over 30% of the Crossgates Mall Road driveway. The projected peak hour volumes support this assumption.



***Response: The four-legged intersection calls for a future traffic signal based on traffic signal warrant criteria. Projected traffic for the Gabriel Terrace Driveway is anticipated to meet traffic signal warrants. This intersection can be monitored after the opening on Costco (Site 2) and prior to the Site 3 application to determine actual traffic volumes and if Traffic signal warrant will be met. If a traffic signal is not warranted, the Applicant will discuss with the Town the possibility of moving the Gabriel Terrace Driveway further to the east to provide two “T” intersections.***

#### VHB Safety Evaluation Memorandum

The memo from Albany County comments on the scope/content of the VHB memorandum.

The DEIS included for informational purposes the VHB Safety Evaluation Memorandum received in January 2020. In addition, since we (Maser Consulting) did not author the memorandum, we cannot comment on the information. We have analyzed traffic in and around Crossgates for over 35 years.

That said, we have adopted many of the recommendations enclosed therein, namely:

- **Elimination of the channelized right turns. These turns will now be made at lower speeds and under signal control.**
- **Installation of a state-of-the-art traffic signal with advance warning, protected left turn phases, and signal head alignment.**
- **Provision of sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks as part of a new updated traffic signal. This will enhance pedestrian safety as called for with the Westmere Corridor Study.**
- **Intersection lighting to assist motorists and bicyclists during hours of darkness. Note since this intersection is used in off hours by the public, the lighting should be independent of Costco or mall lighting.**
- **Provision of bicycle lanes traveling through the intersection.**
- **The modification to the ring road approaching Rapp Road to three lanes.**

#### Pedestrian Access Plan

1. This should have been included in the Traffic Impact Study since the Vehicle and Traffic Law says pedestrians and bicyclists are traffic, too.

***Response: Pedestrians and bicyclists considerations are included within the DEIS (Section 2 – Description of the Proposed Action, Section 3.5.1.4 Pedestrian Transportation System, and Trail Map Enlargement 1 – Figure 2) relative***



*to the provision of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and location of bike racks. The proposal for a “tighter” intersection at Rapp Road/ring road also considered these elements as part of the overall design.*

2. The crosswalk at the end of the northbound to eastbound channelized right turn could cause problems. Crosswalks of channelized right turn roadways should be near the beginning of the roadway, to maximize visibility of the crossing. Make sure that adequate stopping sight distance is provided to the crosswalk. Better yet, eliminate the channelization, as discussed in the traffic impact study.

***Response:*** *As noted previously, the channelized right turns have been eliminated. Appropriate pedestrian crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and intersection lighting have been incorporated into the design.*

3. The multi-use path termini should connect bicycle parking near mall entrances to signalized crosswalks where people on bicycles can safely cross Western Avenue and Crossgates Mall Road. Attention to getting bicyclists riding in the contraflow direction back to the right side of the roadway is needed.

***Response:*** *This has been incorporated into the design of the project.*

4. A multi-use connection from the Washington Avenue south frontage road to the mall entrance by Uno’s would be useful.

***Response:*** *Comment noted.*

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

MASER CONSULTING P.A.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John T. Collins', is written over the typed name.

John T. Collins, Ph.D., P.E.  
Executive Principal

cc: Albany County Planning Board Members  
Ken Kovalchik, Town of Guilderland