January 15, 2020

Planning Board Design Guidelines for Counterbalancing Improvements For Major Impact Projects and Other Commercial Projects as allowed per Sec. 9.05 for Special Permits

The Brookline Planning Board has developed the following design guidelines for Major Impact Projects as required by Section 5.09 of the Zoning By-law. A Major Impact Project is defined as any residential development of 16 units or more, any nonresidential development containing more than 25,000 square feet, or any other project with the potential for substantial environmental impact on the community. Such projects must also provide counterbalancing improvements to the site that benefit the community.

Counterbalancing improvements shall include some or all of the following:

1. Street Tree Planting

Where space permits, projects must incorporate tree planting as an essential counterbalancing improvement. To the extent possible and consistent with the dimensional standards enumerated below, projects shall utilize "best practices" that include some of the following:

- Below sidewalk pavements: provide structural planting soils with aeration pipes and a drainage layer. Permeable pavers shall cover structural planting soils where possible. Where possible, structural plantings soils should extend 3' - 5' wide x 3' deep min. x 30'. Where two or more trees are included within planters, provide 3' - 5' wide x 3' deep min. x 20' per tree.
- Open tree pits should have a minimum width of 3' covered with mulch, groundcovers or other plantings. Protect open planters with curbing, low fencing or both.
- In locations with subsurface restrictions or to provide temporary seating: Raised tree beds with stone or concrete curbing to between 16"-24" height, with 20" height being preferred, to act as a seat wall.
- Tree pits shall be as large as possible while still allowing for proper sidewalk clearances and access to parking meters.

Final street tree planting detailing is subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works and by the Tree Warden or his/her designee.

2. Stormwater Infiltration and Bio-Filtration Planters

Where appropriate and consistent with "best practices" for stormwater management, projects shall include as a counterbalancing improvement some of the following:

- Curbed stormwater planters that include curb cuts/runnels in street or sidewalk curbs to allow for water to enter the planter.
- Where large stormwater planters are adjacent to parking spaces: provide pavement crossings to allow pedestrians to cross planters to access parked cars.
- Provide bio-mediation planting soils above drainage layer for infiltration. Where subsurface soils have slow percolation rates, provide overflow drain piping to storm drains.

Final stormwater infiltration and bio-filtration structures shall be reviewed and approved by the Department of Public Works and by the Director of Parks and Open Space or his/her designee.

3. Street Furniture

Street Furniture should not interfere with entrances to buildings, loading zones, parked cars, fire hydrants, crosswalks, etc. The style and finish of all site furnishings shall be coordinated throughout the streetscape of each commercial area to maintain a consistent aesthetic. Street furnishings shall be consistent with DPW specifications and shall be reviewed and approved by the Department of Public Works and the Planning Department. Street furnishings include benches, trash compactors, recycling bins, bicycle racks, and bus shelters.

Benches

- When considering seating: size, orientation and locations must adhere to clearance requirements as specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Location and frequency of benches will vary based upon surrounding uses.
- Provide seating at bus stops.
- Provide seating for a minimum of two people.
- Where multiple benches are located at a site, some should be backless or armless.

Trash compactors and Recycling Bins

- Where the width of the sidewalks allows, locate trash compactors and recycling bins at intersections and cross-walks where people tend to wait/congregate. Receptacles shall be sited:
  - 5' from hydrants.
  - 1' from any in-ground obstruction such as a manhole or tree pit.
  - 3' from other street furniture.
  - 5' from the pedestrian zone near the receptacle.

Bicycle Racks

- Shall be securely mounted to the pavement and allow for two-points of contact above the bike's center of gravity.
- Provide 2' x 6' clear around the bicycle rack to allow for the bicycle.
- Where possible, provide bike racks in clusters.

Bus Stops

- Provide an 8' x 5' minimum clear landing space for loading and unloading of passengers at all door locations of the bus.
- Be located a minimum 5' from crosswalks.
- Trees shall not be planted in the landing zone and shall be located a minimum of 10' from the landing zone.