



10 Dexter Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

<https://newburyportlivablestreets.org>

September 23, 2025

Newburyport Zoning Board of Appeals
City Hall
60 Pleasant St
Newburyport, MA 01950
Re: Plaza Landings Comprehensive Permit Project

Dear Chair Ciampitti and members of the Board

In support of our organization's goal to improve the safety and comfort of people walking and biking throughout the city, Newburyport Livable Streets offers the following comments and recommended improvements for the Zoning Board's consideration during the permitting and design review approval process for the Plaza Landings Comprehensive Permit.

As context, Livable Streets had previously completed a walk audit along Low Street in May of 2024 to observe current conditions, note any deficiencies in existing pedestrian facilities, and identify opportunities to improve walkability in this area. These observations are incorporated into our comments below.

1) Internal pedestrian connectivity and access considerations

We agree with TEC's comments as provided in the technical review letters that the project should improve the sidewalk network within the Port Plaza to facilitate and encourage pedestrians to safely and comfortably travel between the proposed residential use to nearby shopping and services. A complete, convenient, and comfortable sidewalk network will benefit future residents of the proposed development and also help to decrease reliance on single occupancy vehicles for short trips which can help to offset potential traffic congestion. Specifically, we request the following:

- That a minimum 5' wide sidewalk be provided on **both** sides of the main driveway through the Port Plaza (on the west side of the proposed residences) between Low Street to Storey Avenue. Where topography or existing structures make the provision of sidewalk on both sides impractical, we request that a minimum 8' wide sidewalk be provided on one side of the main driveway.
- Addition of landscaping and street trees at closely spaced intervals along existing and proposed pedestrian ways.
- Curb extensions (aka bump outs) at crosswalks to reduce crossing distances.

- Addition of a high visibility crosswalk, curb ramps, and a pedestrian signal across the entrance to the Port Plaza on Low Street.
- 2) External pedestrian connections
- We support the addition of a crosswalk across Low Street at the main driveway entrance in conjunction with a HAWK (pedestrian activated crosswalk beacon) or traffic signal. The addition of this crosswalk should also include improvements to the south side of Low Street to create a safe and continuous connection to the existing sidewalk on that side of the street.
 - We request that the proposed sidewalk improvements along the north side of Low Street extend along the entire frontage of the Port Plaza property, including upgrading and widening the existing sidewalk to function as a shared use path. The shared use path should be a minimum 10' wide with a 2' to 4' buffer between the path and the street.
- 3) Provision of adequate covered bicycle parking
- It is unclear from the existing site plan whether outside bicycle parking is proposed. We request that covered bicycle parking be provided on the north and west side of the building.
- 4) Bus shelters along Low Street
- We encourage including a condition of approval that the developer construct or provide funding to support the construction of bus shelters along either side of the Low Street in front of the proposed development. Providing comfortable and protected stops along the existing MEVA bus route network can help to encourage transit use, would be beneficial to future residents of the proposed development, and ultimately help to decrease reliance on single occupancy vehicles which would offset traffic congestion.

Sincerely,



Juliet Walker, Clerk
Newburyport Livable Streets

cc: NLS Board of Directors and members