FAQs — Vol. 4

Highland Innovation Center

557 Highland Avenue
Needham Heights, MA 02494

On December 15, 2021, 557 Highland, LLC, an affiliate of The Bulfinch Companies, Inc., ("Bulfinch") purchased the property at 557 Highland Avenue formerly owned by the Muzi auto dealership and carwash. Bulfinch completed the demolition of all of the former Muzi buildings in February 2022. Bulfinch now proposes to redevelop the property by building approximately 500,000 square feet of office/laboratory/R&D space in two new buildings, with approximately 10,000 square feet of retail/restaurant/amenity space, and a standalone parking garage (the "Project"). This is the fourth volume of FAQs providing answers to questions that have been asked of the Project team during the course of introducing this Project to town officials, neighbors, and the community at large. This volume primarily addresses questions raised during the sixth and seventh Zoom public meetings, on May 24, 2022 and June 1, 2022.

Project Description Questions

1. ***How many pickleball courts are being proposed?***

   After several back-and-forth discussions with residents preferring more or fewer courts, we have settled on two courts, with an adjacent green space area that could be transformed into a seasonal ice skating rink during the winter months.

2. ***Have you considered increasing the landscaping around the project?***

   Yes. We have doubled the number of large trees around the site's perimeter, from one approximately every 80–90 feet to one approximately every 40 feet. Also, we have added clusters of evergreen shrubs and hedges and other flowering plants between the trees. The increased plantings will screen the view of the buildings from the neighboring roads and residences and help absorb sound that might otherwise reflect off the buildings' facades. As part of revising the landscaping, we also have pulled the perimeter fitness path back from Highland Avenue, moving it closer to the South Building.

3. ***Have you thought further about ways to diminish the impact of the loading bay doors on the building facades?***

   Yes. We eliminated one loading bay area and door from the North Building's west-facing facade, and a second loading bay area and door from the South Building's north-facing facade. In the North Building, this will allow for an expansion of the interior space, with large, punched windows consistent with the building's facade replacing the loading bay door. In the South Building, we

have replaced the loading area with bicycle storage, including a bicycle repair shop so employees commuting by bicycle will be able to make minor repairs.

4. ***Have you given up on the idea of a brewery or brewpub?***

Not completely, but we certainly have heard from those who would prefer a more family-style restaurant, perhaps with a beer and wine license. We consider this an ongoing discussion and look forward to receiving further input from the Planning Board during the special permit public hearing process, and from area residents.

5. ***What level of LEED certification do you hope to achieve for the buildings?***

We are targeting LEED Gold. We also are targeting certification under the fitwel and WELL Building standards that focus on the physical and mental health of the buildings' occupants.

6. ***How many jobs will the project create?***

The Project will create approximately 300 construction jobs and approximately 1,250 permanent jobs at full occupancy.

7. ***How tall will the buildings' rooftop mechanical systems be?***

None of the rooftop equipment will have a height greater than fifteen feet. The Needham Zoning By-Law excludes from building height measurements rooftop mechanicals that extend less than fifteen feet above the rooftop, so that is our limit. Equipment taller than this, *e.g.*, the cooling towers, will be placed at ground level or within the parking level below the buildings. Some rooftop equipment may be placed within a "well" or "sunken" area in the roof so that the top of the equipment does not extend more than fifteen feet above the rooftop.

8. ***Will the retail space be occupied by multiple tenants or a single tenant?***

We are hoping to attract multiple tenants for the space. We would like some combination of a café, a provider of midday food offerings for tenants' employees, and a (family style) restaurant offering dinner that might also offer lunch for employees on a sit-down or takeout basis with catering for meetings. This could be one business or multiple businesses. Retail tenants might include a dry cleaning/laundry drop-off location or a small convenience store. This location would not support a grocery store.

9. ***How will the perimeter fitness path accommodate fire trucks?***

We originally conceived a walking/jogging path around the perimeter of the buildings. When we our plans to the Fire Department, they asked if we could make the path ten feet wide to accommodate their trucks, so we did. Then the Fire Chief asked if we could widen the path to twenty feet, so that the outriggers of a ladder truck or pumper truck would have a solid surface to set

down on. In response, we decided that rather than proposing a twenty foot wide gravel path we would propose a ten foot wide compacted gravel fitness path with five foot boundary strips of pervious pavers or a different pervious material. This will provide a generous walking/jogging/fitness path and adequate support for fire equipment outriggers. Using pervious pavers or another pervious material for the wide borders will facilitate stormwater infiltration, something that is important for ecological reasons and as part of our LEED certification requirements. The final selection of materials will be made in consultation with the Fire Chief.

10. ***Could you provide a rendering of the Gould Street/ Highland Avenue corner of the site and the south building, showing what one will see driving east from Needham toward Route 128/I-95?***

Absolutely. We will include this rendering in our presentation to the Planning Board.

11. ***Can you soften the impact of the site's southwest corner, at the intersection of Gould Street and Highland Avenue, beyond a water feature homage to the former Muzi koi pond, to have this gateway project better respect the neighborhood?***

We have introduced a "kink" into the footprint of the South Building, bending the westerly end to the north. This creates space for a plaza adjacent to the relocated retail/restaurant space, at the site's southwest corner. That space now wraps around the end of the South Building, creating a better opportunity to divide the space into smaller areas for different retail/restaurant tenants. The terrace, now on the building's south side, will receive more sunlight, making it an inviting and attractive space during more hours of the day. This also pulls the taller portion of the South Building farther back from the intersection, softening the interaction of that corner of the site with the residential districts across Highland Avenue and Gould Street.

12. ***Have you considered solar canopies above the buildings' mechanical equipment?***

Yes. It is technically possible, but the Needham Zoning By-Laws height restrictions and definitions do not allow for it given the size of the rooftop mechanicals the buildings require. We are looking at thin photovoltaic panels that could be installed on the flat upper surfaces of certain mechanical equipment.

13. ***Will the green roofs need maintenance and mowing?***

Yes, occasionally. Bulfinch has engaged an experienced company, which has installed and maintains green roofs on other Bulfinch buildings, to design, install, and maintain the Project's green roofs. The roofs will be planted with hearty species that grow slowly, reducing the need for mowing or maintenance.

LANDSCAPING QUESTIONS

14. ***What will the "water feature" at the corner of Gould Street and Highland Avenue look like, will there be a fountain or fish?***

There will be a fountain(s) of some sort, if for no other reason to prevent the water from becoming stagnant. The recent redesign of the South Building shifts the retail/ restaurant space and accompanying outdoor courtyard to face this corner. We are exploring ways to integrate the water feature into this space, so it is not the isolated pool it was during Muzi's time. Koi fish could be an option, although we would need to have a way to keep them alive through the winter. This is one of the Project's evolving design elements.

15. ***How much green/open space will be provided, and does this calculation include green roof space?***

The Needham Zoning By-Law requires that at least 25% of the site be open space. The Project was designed to have ~35% open space, including ~30,000 square feet planted with grasses and ground cover and ~10,000 square feet of decorative planting areas. We need to recalculate the open space percentage in light of the redesign of the Gould Street end of the South Building and will provide the updated information at the Planning Board public hearing.

16. ***Would it be possible to plant the grass areas with species that require less maintenance, e.g., less mowing with gasoline-powered equipment?***

Yes, the areas that we do not expect the public to frequent will be planted primarily with meadow grasses that will need to be cut once or twice during the growing season and then before the winter. We will try to schedule this mowing to not coincide with the use of the grasses by pollinators, butterflies, or other winged species. Manicured areas adjacent to Gould Street and Highland Avenue, *e.g.*, at the pickleball courts and adjacent recreational areas, will be planted with a more manicured species such as Kentucky bluegrass.

PARKING QUESTIONS

17. ***How will drivers of vehicles arriving at the site know where parking spaces are available?***

We will have Park Assist® signs at the entrances to the freestanding garage and to the parking areas below the buildings indicating the number of spaces available. The garage sign also will indicate the levels on which the empty spaces are located.

18. ***What happens to your assumptions about the number of required parking spaces if the buildings are fully occupied by a life sciences tenant(s), whose employees will not be able to do laboratory work from home?***

Based on our experience with other life science buildings, we expect that even if a single life sciences tenant were to occupy both buildings approximately fifty to sixty percent of that space would be occupied by offices, meeting spaces, etc. Many life science employees spend little or no time working in laboratories, as these companies also need managers, accountants, marketers, and other non-laboratory workers. And employees who spend most of their time in a laboratory usually have a separate office as well. All of which Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., the Project's traffic consultant, has taken into consideration in its analysis of the number of parking spaces the Project will require.

19. ***How many parking spaces will there be in the garage?***

The Project proposal includes approximately 1,408 parking spaces, with approximately 1,021 located in the standalone garage, approximately 343 beneath the buildings, and approximately 44 surface spaces. The exact number and allocation of the parking spaces will be finalized during the Planning Board public hearing process.

PERMITTING QUESTIONS

20. ***What special permits and waivers are you asking the Planning Board for?***

Bulfinch is requesting special permits under the recently adopted Highway Commercial 1 district zoning to increase the floor area ratio to 1.25, for the North Building to have a height of 5 stories/70 feet, for the South Building to have a height of 3 stories/42 feet, and for the parking garage to have a height of 55 feet. We also are seeking special permits under the general zoning bylaws to allow a restaurant use, to allow for the possibility of a single retail use with a gross floor area greater than 7,500 square feet, to provide fewer parking spaces than otherwise required, and for relief from certain requirements for retaining walls facing Route 128/I-95. Finally, because it involves the construction of more than 10,000 square feet of gross floor area, the Project requires Major Project site plan approval, which the Planning Board grants as a special permit.

The complete special permit application and other Project-related materials can be found on the 557 Highland Ave. page of the Town's website: http://www.needhamma.gov/5180/557-Highland-Ave-former-Muzi-site

LIFE SCIENCES TENANT QUESTIONS

21. ***Who will regulate life sciences tenants?***

Life sciences tenants will be subject to layers of federal, state, and local regulations. Depending on the particular materials and processes being used, the federal agencies regulating life sciences tenants may include the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the United States Department of Transportation (DOT), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). State agencies regulating life sciences tenants may include the Massachusetts Department of Health (MDPH), the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), and the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Local agencies regulating life sciences tenants may include the Needham Fire Department, for storage of flammable materials, and the Needham Health Department, for use of biologic materials. Finally, Bulfinch, as landlord, will require that life sciences tenants implement environmental health and safety programs and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

22. ***Did you really mean it when you said there will be no BSL-3 tenants?***

Yes.

TRAFFIC QUESTIONS

23. ***Will the traffic mitigation work?***

We think we have the traffic analysis right, that we actually have overdesigned the Project's mitigation measures. We are proposing to implement all of the traffic mitigation measures recommended by the Town's traffic consultant, Greenman-Pederson, Inc. ("GPI"), during the rezoning process, even though those recommendations assumed that the Channel 5 site also would be redeveloped. We have retained the premier traffic consultants of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. ("VHB") to analyze the current and projected traffic conditions. We are paying for a peer reviewer selected by neighbors (Judith Nitsch Engineering) to evaluate GPI's study and VHB's work. The Town has engaged GPI to review VHB's work. We will not solve every traffic problem in the Town of Needham, but we will be addressing the problems in the area of our development: Gould Street at Highland Avenue/Hunting Road, Gould Street at TV Place, Gould Street at Central Avenue, concerns about cut through traffic on nearby residential streets.

24. ***How can your trip counts be accurate with so many people still working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic?***

Wherever possible, we are using 2019 pre-pandemic trip counts. We then adjust these counts upward where appropriate to take into consideration post-2019 construction. This is consistent with Massachusetts Department of Transportation ("MassDOT") guidance. We have used worst case assumptions throughout our analysis and proposed measures to mitigate those conditions. Traffic engineers use the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) trip generation guidelines, which project daily and peak hour trip generation for a wide variety of uses. Those guidelines are inherently conservative; real, measured post-construction numbers are always lower than ITE projections. Our analysis assumes that the entire employee population will commute to and from the site every workday by single occupancy vehicle. That is just not what happens with Class A office space along Route 128/I-95. People carpool. People bicycle. People take public transportation. We are committed to a robust transportation demand management plan that will include, among other elements, bicycle facilities, an electric shuttle service to the nearby MBTA station, and the requirement that tenants subsidize their employees' transit expenses.

Life sciences tenants (and corporate headquarters tenants) strive to attract the best and the brightest to work for them, which includes younger workers who prefer to live in a larger city like Boston. Most of those workers will commute to and from the Highland Innovation Center by public transportation; many of them will not even own cars. We already see this pattern of workers living in the city and commuting to work in the suburbs in Lexington, Waltham, and other cities and towns along Route 128/I-95. Although we will not achieve the percentage of mass transit utilization possible in downtown Boston or Cambridge, we expect to achieve 8–12% utilization. The Project's electric shuttle service to the MBTA station will help make this an attractive alternative way for those workers to commute to and from the Project. And the new reality of remote working will reduce the number of people commuting each day and allow others to commute at off-peak hours. Combined, these factors will reduce single occupancy vehicle trips to and from the Project and reduce traffic volumes during peak hours.

25. ***How many car trips per day will the Project generate?***

Each arrival or departure of a vehicle counts as a single trip, which means that driving a vehicle to the site and then back to its point of origin counts as two vehicle trips. A worst case scenario analysis of the Project suggests that it will generate approximately 5,000 vehicle trips on an average weekday. These trips will be spread out throughout the day. The Project will generate approximately 644 vehicle trips in the morning peak hour (552 entering the Site and 92 exiting the Site) and approximately 651 vehicle trips in the evening peak hour (121 entering the Site and 530 exiting the Site).

These trip volumes are based on national data from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). ITE numbers are very conservative; the actual Site-generated traffic is likely to be lower. ITE estimates assume that 100% of the employees will commute using single occupancy vehicles and that all employees will commute to work five days a week. In reality, the Project's numbers are likely to be lower as some employees will commute by transit (including a shuttle service the Proponent will provide) or by walking/biking. And in a post-COVID world it is likely that some employees will continue to work from home at least a few days a week. ITE numbers also do not consider the existing trips that the Site generated when the Muzi dealership and the car wash were in operation, *i.e.*, suggest that the Project's estimated vehicle trips represent a net increase in the number of vehicles on the roads. The Project's proposed roadway improvements were designed based on the conservative ITE trip volumes to address a "worse case" scenario.

26. ***Residents in the area around the intersection of Hunting Road and Sachem Road already deal with drivers turning around in private driveways, blocking traffic, and causing accidents, and worry that the Project will make the situation worse.***

Bulfinch is committed to implementing mitigation measures for all the potential adverse traffic impacts identified in the Town and VHB's traffic studies, even those not needed unless and until the Channel 5 properties are redeveloped. We cannot fix all of Needham's intersections. To the extent that the turning around drivers are lost, the Project should not contribute to this situation as tenants' employees will know where they work and how to return to their homes. The Project's creation of two dedicated left turn lanes on the southbound end of Gould Street, with longer queueing distances, should eliminate the instances of drivers, unable to make a left turn from Gould Street onto Highland Avenue, choosing to go down Hunting Road and return.

After hearing from residents about problems with traffic on Hunting Road, VHB reviewed MassDOT's studies, design, and traffic count data. Traffic volumes on Hunting Road travelling to and from the intersection with Highland Avenue have decreased significantly since the addition of a fourth lane to Route 128/I-95 southbound and the Kendrick Street interchange. People still will use Hunting to access south Needham or Dedham, but most regional users now go directly to Route 128/I-95.

27. ***Will the Project improve traffic conditions on Hunting Road?***

Hunting Road is used as a cut through for people trying to get to south Needham and beyond. MassDOT's addition of the Route 128/I-95 intersection at Kendrick and widening of that highway greatly reduced the volumes of regional traffic on Hunting. We are proposing radar embedded speed limit signs to deter speeding, and to pay for occasional police details to back up the speed limits. The reality is that Hunting Road is a local connector road, not a smaller

residential street like Noanett Road and there is only so much that can be done to deter nonresidents from using it.

28. ***Have you considered elevating the bicycle lanes above the grade of the vehicle travel lanes or completely separating them from the vehicle travel lanes so that people with families, not just professional riders, will use them to access the Project's public amenities, Mills Field, and other destinations farther up Gould Street?***

We are trying to do the best we can in the space we have. The Town's rezoning plans did not show any bicycle lanes along Gould Street next to the Project site, meaning that bicyclists would have had to share a lane with motor vehicles. There is not enough room to separate bicycle lanes from Gould Street while providing the necessary roadway improvements. Doing so for bicyclists approaching Highland Avenue would require the Town to take land from WIngate Residences and other abutters on that side of the road.

The bicycle lanes have been positioned to keep bicyclists to the left of cars making right hand turns. This avoids the so-called "left hook" when a driver looking for an opening in traffic does not see a bicyclist coming up on the right side of his or her vehicle. Elevated bicycle lanes in the proposed locations would interfere with Needham DPW's plowing of Gould Street and could channel stormwater into the wrong locations. The proposed design complies fully with the Traffic Control for Bicycle Facilities section of the United States Department of Transportation's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways.

North of TV Place, Gould Street narrows and there is no room to provide separate bicycle lanes unless the Town takes part of everyone's front yard from TV Place to Central Avenue. Under the current circumstances, this section of Gould Street will have to be share a lane. We have offered to pay for "share the road" signs and lane markings along this stretch of the road.

We will continue to discuss the design of the Gould Street bicycle lanes adjacent to the Project site with the Needham DPW, residents, and other interested parties, to see if there are opportunities for further improvements.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS QUESTIONS

29. ***What creative ideas do you have to mitigate the impacts of light from within the buildings and from site lighting on nearby properties?***

All of the interior spaces facing TV Place, Gould Street, or Highland Avenue will have motion sensors to automatically shut off the lights when the spaces are unoccupied. This is a requirement of LEED and of the State Building Code. Each of the windows facing the residential areas will have shades controlled by the building management system, which will lower the shades automatically at

dusk. We have had great success with this type of system at Cambridge Discovery Park. Exterior site lighting will be dark sky compliant, very unlike Muzi's tall pole lighting.

We would like to have external lighting illuminating the banners on the garage facades. These would automatically shut off at 10:00 p.m., which we could move to 9:00 p.m. if people would prefer that.

Lighting within the garage will be tucked up to the ceiling, making the fixtures less visible from outside. The perimeter lights, above the parking spaces, will only be lit during the daytime. The central lights, over the drive aisles, will be tied to occupancy motion sensers. At night, these fixtures normally will operate at about 10% of their illumination capacity. When motion is detected—from someone walking to or from his or her car or a car arriving or leaving—the lights will become brighter, then automatically dim back down after five minutes without motion.

30. ***Will the tenant signs be internally or externally lit?***

Signage is not part of the special permit application, and we do not yet have a proposed tenant signage package, as we do not have any tenants. The words "Tenant Signage" and the like in the architectural renderings are placeholders only. The signage could vary greatly depending on whether the buildings have a single tenant, two tenants, or multiple tenants. We will need to go through a separate, public sign approval process under the Needham Zoning By-Law, once we know who the tenant(s) will be and their signage desires.

31. ***What will be done to control noise from the rooftop mechanicals, generators, and could they be moved closer to Route 128/I-95 to lessen their impacts?***

We have hired Acentech, a firm with a century of experience, as our noise consultant. They have already taken baseline readings of existing conditions that will be used to verify that the operation of the buildings does not cause unacceptable increases in noise levels. Rooftop equipment will have acoustical enclosures and an enclosing fence to control noise. Bulfinch has experience constructing buildings close to residential buildings, *e.g.*, the recent conversion of the former Atrium Mall on Route 9 into a medical office building. That building is approximately 120 feet away from the Imperial Towers condominium building. Similarly, at Discovery Park in Cambridge our buildings abut several hundred residential units. With Acentech's help, we have been able to avoid having any noise issues with these projects.

32. ***Do the renderings show details of the rooftop mechanicals?***

Not yet. The renderings show the rooftop screens that will surround the mechanical systems. We will prepare 3D renderings showing greater details of the systems and their proposed locations.

33. ***Will sound echo off the Highland Avenue facade of the south building toward the residential neighborhood on the south side of Highland Avenue?***

When we build taller buildings, *e.g.*, in Boston or Cambridge, we hire a wind and noise mitigation consultant to analyze wind patterns around the building and the building's noise impacts. This is not usually done for low-rise buildings such as those of the Project. We will hire a consultant to do an analysis of what the echoes, if any, might be off the South Building's facade facing Highland Avenue. We expect that with the doubling of landscaping along Highland Avenue, the distance from the South Building across Highland Avenue to the residential area, and the volumes of traffic on Route 128/I-95 and Highland Avenue, there will not be any echoes perceivable at the residential properties. We will share the study results.

PUBLIC BENEFITS QUESTIONS

34. ***What benefits will the Project bring to the Town or the neighborhood, are the traffic improvements worth a year of roadway construction, will there be neighborhood retail to replace Muzi's service bays?***

Upon completion, the Project will pay approximately $5 Million in annual real estate and personal property taxes, an annual increase of over $4 Million above what the Muzi operations paid. These additional tax revenues can be used to support Needham's educational and recreational programs, housing initiatives, community and open spaces, and other town priorities.

Traffic infrastructure improvements to Gould Street and its intersections with Highland Avenue and Central Street will benefit the many Needham residents travelling by vehicle in the vicinity of the site. The addition of bike lanes, new sidewalks, additional vehicle travel lanes, and other street upgrades will improve traffic flow. While there will necessarily be traffic disruptions while Gould Street is being widened and improved, we will coordinate with the Needham Department of Public Works to minimize disruptions. And, yes, the improved traffic flow, reduced waiting times at intersections, and reduced cut through traffic trying to avoid congested intersections will be worth it.

The Project includes approximately 10,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space. While we do not yet know who these tenants will be, we do know that their businesses will be open to the neighborhood and to all Needham residents. The Project also will provide other public benefits including pickleball courts, a fitness/walking path, and other recreational spaces.

35. ***Can you do anything to help people from the Noanett Road area access the site's public amenities on foot or by bicycle?***

We understand that the sidewalk along the westerly side of Gould Street from Noanett Road to Highland Avenue is not in great shape. With the Town's permission, we will reconstruct that sidewalk in conjunction with the Gould

Street roadway improvements. We also plan to pay for "share the road" signs and lane markings for Gould Street between TV Place and Central Avenue.

CLIMATE CHANGE QUESTIONS

36. ***Will the Project include green roofs or rooftop solar arrays?***

The roofs of the lower portions of the buildings, *e.g.*, over the retail/ restaurant space, and portions of the atrium roof will be green. Much of the rooftop space on the North and South Buildings not required for mechanical equipment will be green or covered with solar panels.

37. ***How will the amount of electricity generated by on-site solar arrays compare to the Project's electricity requirements?***

Initial energy modeling for the MEPA process, which conservatively assumes that both buildings are fully occupied by life sciences uses (because lab space has the highest demand for electricity for heating, cooling, and ventilation) suggests that the Project may require as much as 20 million kilowatt hours (KWh) of electricity annually. The solar panels proposed for the garage roof would generate approximately 600 KWh annually. The addition of solar panels on portions of the buildings' roofs will narrow this gap. The reality is that laboratory uses are energy hungry. Covering the entirety of the buildings' roofs and the site's open space with solar arrays still would not generate enough electricity to satisfy the Project's requirements.

These additional FAQs are meant to provide general answers to some of the more frequently asked questions about the Project, and to provide a brief overview of what is being proposed. Any further questions or comments not adequately addressed above can be directed to questions@557highland.com. If you would prefer to speak directly to any of our team members or have questions relative to the various disciplines, please let us know and we would be happy to arrange for a one-on-one discussion.