

February 29, 2020

Mr. Vladimir Lyubetsky
DRA Architects, Inc.
235 Bear Hill Road
Waltham, MA 02451

Re: Landscape Existing Conditions Report
Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School
100 Hemlock Rd, Wakefield, MA 01880

Dear Vladimir:

We visited the site on February 19, 2020 early afternoon to observe existing site conditions for preparation of this report. During our site visit, we met with Head of Maintenance, Joe Capraro who walked the site with us. We subsequently reviewed record drawings provided by DRA Architects. This report excludes utilities and drainage reviewed separately by Nitsch Engineering and structural condition of bleacher and press box reviewed by Engineering Design Group.

Module 3: Section 3.1.4 Evaluation of Existing Conditions

Wakefield Assessor's Parcel Record

Parcel ID: 40A-000-ORS
Parcel Size: 60 acres
Zoning District: SR

Site Configuration

Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School, commonly known as Northeast Metro Tech, is located on the northern half of the site on the east side of Wakefield approximately 4 miles from the town center. Approximately 28 acres is developed including the building, parking and fields while the southern half of the site is undeveloped woodland with rugged terrain at substantially higher elevations punctuated with extensive exposed ledge.

The site is bordered by Wakefield Memorial High School parcels to the west between which Hemlock Road provides the single vehicular access to the site, Farm Street to the south and Breakheart Reservation to the north and east. An electric utility easement with overhead transmission lines runs past the east side of the site over a strip of land owned by the Town of Wakefield between the site and the City of Saugus. Breakheart Reservation which spans this municipal boundary is a 640-acre forest and a public recreational area with trails and carriage paths winding through the rocky hills and providing access to the streams and ponds.



The baseball field southwest of the school building is about 10 feet higher in elevation than the parking area in front of the building. The football field and track are more than 25 feet higher than the baseball field. A pair of basketball courts is terraced between the track and rear of the school building. A softball field and a practice field are located on the lowest part of the site to the north, more than 30 feet lower than the grade directly behind the school building.

The school has 2 internal courtyards and there is also a separate early childhood playground to the west of the school. The main parking is in front of the school and parking areas line the driveway around the school perimeter providing access to the vocational programs.



Site Access and Circulation

The existing school building is located at the end of Hemlock Road. This singular access for all school traffic and emergency access is also used by visitors to the Breakheart Reservation who share the same parking lot with dedicated visitor spaces. The parking lot to the west of the school is also used by the maintenance vehicles. There is some parking out the back of the school which serves the school's vocational program needs and bus parking.

There is no pedestrian access on Hemlock Road beyond the Wakefield Memorial High School site as the sidewalk on both sides of the road ends there. A guard shack is located within Hemlock Road where it enters the Northeast MetroTech site. This access is also shared by visitors to Breakheart Reservation. Besides the Breakheart Reservation visitor spots, some of the parking spaces in the main lot are reserved for other entities such as Reading Cooperative Bank, NE Restaurant and Child Care Drop Off.

There is a one-way loop provided in the main parking lot for drop off and pick up along the front of the school. The parking spaces are oriented diagonally along landscape medians with no sidewalks. This main parking area in front of the building slopes down toward the school entrance. The counterclockwise one way driveway around the building perimeter also serves as emergency access.



Parking

Per the Head of Maintenance, there is not sufficient parking for the schools needs. The curbing is asphalt curb in most spaces and concrete curb along some key areas like the front drop entrance. All of the curbing is in poor condition. Most of the driveways and associated parking have deteriorated pavement and large cracks were observed. Some of the access roads to the fields are hazardous.



Accessibility

All site facilities including the fields and playground are lacking accessible routes and the bleachers do not have accessible seating. The pedestrian access to the fields is shared with service vehicles.

There is accessible parking and associated ramps at the front and the side parking lots but the handrails are non-compliant. We observed several building doorways that do not have flush conditions. Refer to the separate accessibility report by KMA, LLC.

The one courtyard with outdoor seating and tables does not have wheelchair accommodation at the tables and has uneven surfacing that poses accessibility and safety issues. The other courtyard is an open space not used for public access.



Athletic Facilities

The softball and the practice fields are situated on the back of the school on the north side and are natural grass fields without irrigation. The football practice field is undersized. Both of these fields have poor drainage and are in extremely poor condition with uneven grading, bare patches of grasses and exposed stones and holes. There is a bleacher for the softball field that is in poor condition and is not accessible. The softball field is varsity and JV with no lights. The outfield is shared by the football practice team. Lacrosse also practices on the grass fields which makes maintaining grass even more difficult. The backstop fencing is in fair condition but perimeter fencing is in poor condition.



There are two full size basketball courts with asphalt pavement in disrepair. The posts are in fair condition but the hoops are in poor condition. The perimeter fencing is in fair to poor condition. The school does not have any tennis courts.



The football field inside the track is a natural grass field with an underperforming irrigation system fed from an undersized water line connected to town water. There is substantial aluminum bleacher and wooden pressbox on steel frame and concrete footings. A small wooden storage building is located east of the track, and a relatively new small wooden

concession building and outdoor grills exist off the west end of the bleacher. The natural grass field is shared by Boys Soccer and Girls Soccer and is in poor condition by being worn out. There are no lights and an old scoreboard. There is no restroom facility. The track is asphalt in disrepair with cracks and uneven bumps and is not regulation size. The bleachers and press box are not ADA compliant and need to be evaluated for compliance with current structural engineering requirements. North of the track is a large rock outcropping where the land is higher.



The baseball field is shared with Field Hockey practice in Fall allowing only “half field” for baseball practice. The grass in in poor condition with exposed rocks. An irrigation system was installed a few years ago and is fed by town water from behind the backstop. The field is not big enough to accommodate space for dugouts or spectator seating as there are no bleachers. The players have no place to sit that is protected by fencing. The fencing is in fair to poor condition. There is an electronic scoreboard



Outdoor Spaces

There are two internal courtyards. One serves as the outdoor cafeteria with some benches and café tables. The site furnishings are in poor condition and not accessible. The courtyard surfacing is bluestone and is in complete disrepair. There is a small raised area for outdoor gardens. The landscaping is neglected with leaves covering the only catch basin. There is one mature Elm tree. The other courtyard is an open lawn space with some trees and slopes gradually with no pathways. This courtyard does have a mature London Plane tree.



There is an early childhood playground to the west of the school which is accessed by crossing the perimeter driveway and is adjacent to the baseball field outfield fence. The chain link fence is in poor condition. The playground equipment appears to be outdated. The safety surfacing is engineered wood fiber which is compacted and needs replenishment and maintenance to provide required fall protection. Wood fiber is not considered accessible by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. Poured in place rubber surfacing is required for accessible routes to each type of play activity from an accessible route around the inside the perimeter.



Service Areas

The service areas around the school perimeter are shared with some school parking and vocational program needs. The kitchen service area to the east has a loading dock with severely restricted maneuvering space that does not accommodate large trucks. An underground oil tank located in front of the kitchen loading dock provides the primary fuel source for the school's heating system which is also served by a propane tank located on the opposite side of the driveway. The main receiving area to the north does not have a loading dock, but functions adequately. Dumpsters and recycling containers are located around the perimeter driveway.

The asphalt is deteriorated in several places with visible cracks and bumps. There is a lot of vocational material left out back in an unorganized way interfering with driveway and parking. There are access gates on both entrance and exit to the service areas which doubles as emergency access. The perimeter fencing and guard rails where the grade drops off to the surrounding Breakwater Reservation are in complete disrepair.



Site Lighting

There are two types of exterior site lighting. There are dual-arm fixtures at parking lot light fixtures and downwards mount pedestrian light fixtures. The pedestrian light fixtures appear to be in fair condition.



Vegetation

The school is adjacent to the Breakwater Reservation and as such surrounded by mature woodland of mainly native trees such as pine, beech and oak. The landscape type on school grounds is primarily lawn and trees with minimal foundation shrubs primarily yews which are poisonous if ingested. There are few mature trees. Most of the trees would benefit from pruning to improve health and not in good shape particularly the crabapples along the parking lot.





End of Report