



July 7, 2016

Cambridge Planning Board  
City Hall Annex  
344 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Attention: Elizabeth Paden

Via Hand Delivery

**RE: Selected Topics Discussed in First Public Hearing  
Request for Special Permit Amendments  
Northpoint (PB#179)**

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Planning Board, Iram Farooq, and Jeff Roberts:

In connection with our July 26 Planning Board hearing seeking a final decision on our request for a Major Amendment to the NorthPoint Special Permit (PB#179), we would like to respond in this letter to four issues raised at the June 7 Planning Board Hearing. The other comments made during that hearing, as well as those made by city staff, are addressed in the Revised Request for Special Permit Amendments and accompanying materials.

### **I-Cubed Funding**

The City Council approved the North Point I-Cubed application and authorized the City Manager to execute agreements related to the I-Cubed application by Education First and DivcoWest initiated in 2013-2014 between EF and predecessor owners of NorthPoint. The City supported the pursuit of \$25 million in I-Cubed funding, citing the importance of completing the infrastructure in this part of the city, the upgrades to City infrastructure that will be completed as part of this work, and the extensive insulation from risk to the City provided by the structure of the financing. The bonds are to be issued by the Commonwealth based on State income and sales tax revenues generated by the development area. For purposes of tax revenue allocation, the Commonwealth credited EF with new jobs going back to the date in 2014 when state officials recommended the I-Cubed strategy to EF. The infrastructure investments articulated in the I-Cubed application have remained consistent since 2014 and are required to be used for NorthPoint's proposed sewer connection, roadway improvements, utility, and other similar work. The \$25 million in I-Cubed funding represents less than a third of the approximately \$78 million in required infrastructure spending necessary to build-out NorthPoint. The balance of the infrastructure cost will be funded by DivcoWest.

### **Current Green Line Design of New Lechmere Station**

The design and construction of the new Lechmere station, as well as the rest of the Green Line Extension project, is the obligation of the MBTA. Prior owners of NorthPoint transferred responsibility to the MBTA for construction of the new Lechmere station in exchange for acquisition and conveyance to the MBTA of critical enabling rights of way (land and rail rights) at a



cost of approximately \$38.5 million, without which the Green Line Extension would not be possible. DivcoWest valued and acquired NorthPoint in reliance on this agreement. We have now committed an additional \$3 million to fund public realm improvements around the new station and to maintain such areas in perpetuity. Finally, DivcoWest has agreed to match the City's recent \$12.5 million contribution to the GLX project, for a total joint contribution of \$25 million.

The City contribution was conditioned on being no more than one third of the total raised by the Commonwealth from Cambridge and Somerville. Somerville's \$50 million commitment was based on the number of stations in Somerville as compared to Cambridge. City Manager Rossi requested that the \$25 million be tied to Lechmere station directly but the State would not agree. However, the City was successful in conditioning the contribution so that it can only be spent on the Green Line Extension Project, and only if the Lechmere station is relocated.

### **Title to NorthPoint**

DW NP Property, LLC (Divco) confirmed its fee ownership of title to the remaining developable parcels in North Point, other than those owned by the MBTA, with a title insurance policy issued by Chicago Title Insurance Company. That policy takes into consideration the former railroad ownership and tidelands issues and insures Divco's fee title ownership. This matter has been settled conclusively.

### **Destination Retail**

The retail district at Northpoint will be a vibrant, neighborhood-scaled network of local and independent restaurants, cafes, and merchants that will primarily serve tenants and residents of NorthPoint and East Cambridge. Every aspect of our retail plan has been conceived and designed with this goal in mind, and our ability to attract office and life science tenants to Northpoint is directly linked to our ability to succeed in this regard.

The total quantity of retail space our plan can accommodate, at full buildout, is typical of a neighborhood retail district. The individual buildings and ground-level retail spaces are sized for small businesses. The quantity of retail parking permitted by the Special Permit is extremely limited, and requires that nearly all retail customers arrive at the site by foot, bicycle, or public transit. Our initial phase includes no retail parking, because our tenancing plan does not depend upon it, and in any case the handful of spaces allowed is impractical to construct and would not meaningfully impact merchants' viability.

Our plan includes no spaces suitable to larger-format retailers of the type associated with "destination" shopping centers. The allowed parking falls short of the requirements of that class of retailer by 70-90%. The site constraints of Northpoint (confined trade area, constrained access due to Monsignor O'Brien, etc.) are such that these retailers would not consider it a suitable site even if the plan did meet their parking requirements. In addition, the Special Permit limits the size of all retail, except for one grocery store, to 10,000 square feet. We anticipate that most if not all retail at Northpoint will be well below that limit.



The commercial tenants we must attract have no interest in locating in a “destination” retail environment. Their essential needs are for cafes, restaurants, coffee shops, and open spaces that foster gathering and interaction. Current and future occupants of residential buildings will value the same things. A market, recreation-oriented businesses, and a bicycle shop are among the other tenants in our plan that will appeal to both groups and contribute to the desirability of Northpoint as a location to work and live.

Fundamentally, the retail at Northpoint is an essential investment in the success of the rest of the project. It is unlikely to generate adequate economic returns on a standalone basis, so our incentives are to execute our public realm – the retail and its linkages to the open spaces that are the heart of Northpoint – to create beautiful, functional public spaces and amenities, while allocating to it the minimum necessary quantity of Northpoint’s Commercial floor area.

This concern is further addressed in the accompanying materials, including a letter from Jesse Baerkahn, dated June 30, 2016, and the Revised Request for Special Permit Amendments, dated July 1, 2016.

We trust that this letter addresses the concerns raised on these four issues. The other comments which we have received from the Planning Board and City staff are addressed in the accompanying materials and revised Special Permit application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Tom Sullivan". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tom Sullivan  
President, Development Division  
DivcoWest

**PB # 179 Amendment # 6 (Major)- NorthPoint PUD**  
**Planning Board Preliminary Determination, June 07, 2016**  
**Issue date: July 07, 2016**

NO.	ISSUES	RESOLUTION
1	The Final Development Plan should address the comments provided to the Planning Board by the Community Development Department and the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, which are attached to this Preliminary Determination.	Refer to Appendix 2: Responses to CDD Memo and Appendix 3: Responses to TPT Memo.
2	The Final Development Plan should include larger and more detailed site drawings, and a physical three-dimensional model illustrating the bulk of existing and proposed buildings should be presented at the second public hearing.	Larger, more detailed site drawings and a physical model will be presented at the second public hearing.
3	The Final Development Plan should better describe the intended changes to the character of the planned First Street extension north of Monsignor O'Brien Highway, particularly at the proposed new "Site W." The current proposal is a departure from the original plan, which included a wider and more landscaped extension of First Street. While the current proposal seeks to emphasize a more intimate retail-focused streetscape, the Board feels it is important to maintain visual connections and cues that will lead from the relocated MBTA station to the central open space and community path, which are key public amenities.	Divco has changed the design of North First Street in response to Planning Board comment. The revised plan has increased building setbacks, wider sidewalks and a double row of trees to create a green connection between Lechmere Station/Monsignor O'Brien Highway to the open space at the heart of NorthPoint. Open space is visible at the terminus of each road into NorthPoint, including the new park at the end of Water Street and NorthPoint Common at the end of East and North First Streets. This will be presented through physical model and graphic materials. The character and nature of North First Street has also been addressed in the revised Design Guidelines, Section 1.3.2 Streets and Sidewalks and 2.3.2 Streets.
4	The Final Development Plan should include more study of the character of the "finger parks" both as open space amenities and as opportunities for physical and visual connections through the site. One of the Board's concerns is that the current proposal removes side streets from the perimeter of these spaces and connects them directly to building sites, which may result in those spaces feeling less welcoming to the public. The removal of side streets also raises questions about where informal pick-up/drop-off activities for new buildings will occur. Another concern is that some "finger parks" north of Dawes Street appear to be intended to serve as parking and loading access drives, and more information should be provided about the character of those spaces and how they will affect activity along Dawes Street. Another specific area to be looked at further is the proposed "turnaround" at the far western edge of the site and the adjacent open space.	Divco's intent is for the open space to feel welcoming to the public. This will be addressed in the presentation at the second hearing. Refer to revised Design Guidelines Section 1.3.1 Public Open Space and 2.3.1 Open Space and Character which define the ways open space can be made welcoming to the public without having to add streets and without connecting them to adjacent buildings. In response to Planning Board comment Divco has excluded from the defined Open Space those "finger parks" north of Dawes Street that are principally for parking and loading access, and removed loading and parking access from the remaining ones, making them more clearly Open Space that is welcoming to the public. Automobile drop-off and short-term delivery has been accommodated on Dawes and North Streets, as described in Appendix 3: TPT Memo. The location of the turnaround has been changed in response to Planning Board and city staff comments. The open space between the turnaround and Parcel A will be developed as a pocket park consistent with revised Design Guidelines Section 1.3.1 Public Open Space and 2.3.1 Open Space and Character.
5	The Final Development Plan should provide further explanation of how the "retail square" will retain a predominantly local character, and not become a "destination retail" center that would potentially attract more vehicle trips to the site.	Divco's intent is for the retail square to be local in character, and not become a destination retail center that would potentially attract more vehicle trips to the site. This is addressed in the July 6, 2016 letter by Graffito SP, Divco's retail consultant, and the July 7, 2016 letter from Tom Sullivan.
6	The Final Development Plan should provide information about the "I-cubed" application under consideration at the state level, and what alternative funding options may be pursued if that application is not approved.	This is addressed in the July 7, 2016 letter from Tom Sullivan. Divco will fund infrastructure not reimbursed by I-Cubed.
7	The Final Development Plan should include additional information, to the extent available, about the MBTA's plans to construct the relocated Lechmere Station with a reduced design scope, and what opportunities there may be to enhance the station design in the future.	This is addressed in the July 7, 2016 letter from Tom Sullivan.
8	The Final Development Plan should include information in response to questions raised at the public hearing regarding the ownership and title of land within the Development Parcel.	This is addressed in the July 7, 2016 letter from Tom Sullivan.

**PB # 179 Amendment # 6 (Major)- NorthPoint PUD**

**APPENDIX 1: Responses to Additional Planning Board Hearing Comments, June 07, 2016**

**Issue date: July 07, 2016**

NO.	ISSUES	RESOLUTION
1	View up North First Street should provide cues that there is open space at the heart of NorthPoint.	Divco has changed the design of North First Street to increase the building setbacks and add a double row of trees on both sides of the street. The landscaping and public plazas on parcels W and I, and the public shed structure on W, will be visual cues that there is public open space spanning east-west from the existing NorthPoint Common to the new park at the end of Water Street.
2	There should be a connection through the Avalon development and the open space between Sierra and Tango.	There is an important open space connection starting on Monsignor O'Brien Highway, through the new Avalon development, to the existing open space between Sierra and Tango, into NorthPoint Common. It is proposed to continue north, across a traffic table, into Baldwin Park, across another traffic table, and then into the <u>pocket park north of Dawes.</u>
3	What is the nature and character of Dawes Street? Can it be widened? Will it feel like a service street?	Divco has changed the layout of Dawes Street in response to this Planning Board comment. The revised plan shows a 25' setback on the north side of Dawes, allowing a double row of trees or a landscaped building setback on the likely path of travel between Lechmere and Community College MBTA stations, from North First Street to the Brian T. Murphy Memorial Staircase. All buildings north of Dawes will have parking and loading access from service drives north of Dawes. The character of Dawes Street is further defined in the revised Design Guidelines, Sections 1.3.2 Streets and Sidewalks, and 2.3.2C Dawes Street.
4	The open spaces should feel publicly accessible and approachable; they should not feel like private courtyards associated with the buildings. Baldwin Park needs to feel more public even though it is not ringed by a public street.	Refer to Design Guidelines Section 1.3.1 Public Open Space and 2.3 Open Space and Character. The public character of the open space will be maintained by creating a sidewalk circulation zone and tree planting zone, similar to that of a public street, at the edges; accommodating public recreational uses in the open space; maintaining clear lines of sight and access into the open space; providing public signage and wayfinding; and avoiding fences or design that suggests private space.
5	In addition to signalling the publicness of the open space, aren't streets required ringing the open space to accommodate loading?	Loading is accommodated in service drives north of Dawes, and in live-loading/drop-off zones on Dawes Street and North Street.
6	What is the East-West 'green spine'?	The creation of a new park at the end of Water Street, a new public plaza on parcel I, and a covered public plaza on W creates, along with NorthPoint Common and the Community Path, a new east-west green open space spine. Refer to Design Guidelines Section 2.1.1 Urban Design Principles and 2.1.8 Renderings
7	With the re-arrangement of the green fingers, is there a loss of open space? Indicate that the how the new open spaces offset the open spaces being lost.	The proposal provides more than the required 11 acres of open space. Open space has been coalesced into a new open space at the end of Water Street that has an east-west connection to Northpoint Common. Refer to Design Guidelines Section 2.1.3 and Exhibit H docuemnting the open space calculation.
8	What is the nature of Open Space at the end of Parcel A?	The western portion is reserved for future transportation uses. The eastern portion will be designed as a pocket park consistent with the revised Design Guidelines Section 1.3.1A Parks and 2.3 Open Space and Character.
9	How will the view corridors be treated along North First Street and Water Street?	All entries into NorthPoint from East Cambridge (Water Street, North First Street, East Street and Erhart Park) have at least one double row of trees and terminate in open space. View corridors from the open space to the north are terminated either with open space (eg. from Baldwin Park) or with architecture (eg. a building on parcel EF would terminate the view up North First Street before it reaches the rail yard). Refer to Design Guidelines Section 1.3.4 View Corridors and Landmarks and 2.1.8 Renderings

**PB # 179 Amendment # 6 (Major)- NorthPoint PUD**  
**APPENDIX 2: Responses to CDD Memo, May 31, 2016**  
**Issue date: July 07, 2016**

NO.	ISSUES	RESOLUTION
<b>A SITE LAYOUT</b>		
1	The modifications to the street layout create some irregularly-shaped parcels, which was not evident in earlier plans. This creates some interesting new spaces, view corridors and landmark opportunities, which require careful study.	All entries into NorthPoint from East Cambridge (Water Street, North First Street, East Street and Erhart Park) have at least one double row of trees and terminate in open space. View corridors from the open space to the north are terminated either with open space (eg. from Baldwin Park) or with architecture (eg. building terminates the view of North First Street before it reaches the rail yard). Refer to revised Design Guidelines Section 1.3.4 View Corridors and Landmarks and 2.1.8 Renderings
2	Lack of a street frontage and clear pedestrian access for Parcel A, and the cul-de-sac turnaround between the two parcels, compromises the urban structure, and direct and convenient pedestrian access.	Divco has changed the plan in response to this comment. The cul-de-sac has been moved to the west so that Parcel A has street frontage and clear pedestrian access.
3	What is the character and nature of the open space at the end of Parcel A if there is no street access? Staff would prefer to see West Boulevard extended as a street to create better physical and visual connections, as well as opportunities for passive surveillance.	The cul-de-sac has been moved to the end, thereby extending West Boulevard. The open space west of Parcel A will be developed as a pocket park consistent with the revised Design Guidelines 1.3.1 Public Open Space and 2.3.1 Open Space and Character
4	Are different street treatments needed to reflect the opportunities created by new retail corridor on First Street?	Divco has changed the layout of North First Street to address comments from the Planning Board, CDD and TPT. The layout includes larger building setbacks, a double row of trees on each side of the road, cycle tracks, wide sidewalks and a clear connection to the open space at the heart of NorthPoint.
<b>B OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC REALM</b>		
1	There is a need to ensure that North Point Common does not feel fragmented from other open space areas, particularly the Parcel I space. Thus, the PUD should describe how the east-west connection across Parcels W and I can create a gracious and green link between the two open spaces.	The intent is to have a strong east-west green connection between the existing NorthPoint Common and the newly proposed park at the end of Water Street. This connection will be strengthened by plantings in the public plaza on parcel I, and the covered shed over the public plaza on parcel W. The development of these will be subject to Design Review. Refer also to the revised Design Guidelines Section 1.3.3
2	The experience of leaving the T-station, and welcoming visual and physical connections to North Point Common and the "retail square," are important aspects of the master plan. It is unclear how the new retail approach and porosity of connections will carry forward this idea, so conceptual renderings and images of some kind would be helpful to determine this.	Divco has changed the design of North First Street to enhance the experience of leaving the T-station, and provide a welcoming visual and physical connection to the open space at the heart of NorthPoint. The new layout shows increased building setbacks, wider sidewalks and add a double row of trees on both sides of the street. The landscaping and public plazas on parcels W and I, and the public shed structure on W, will be visual cues that there is public open space spanning from the existing NorthPoint Common to the new park at the end of Water Street.
3	What is the role of the courtyard spaces between buildings that will be primarily dedicated to access, and how can the notion of the "green finger" concept be maintained and celebrated?	In response to Planning Board comment Divco has differentiated those spaces between buildings that are primarily dedicated to access from those that are dedicated to open space and public, recreational uses. The former will be attractive and landscaped service drives that provide an urban block structure, but will be designed in a way to discourage pedestrian access. The latter will be designed as pocket parks, designed in a manner consistent with the revised Design Guidelines, Sections 1.3.1 Public Open Space and 2.3.1 Open Space and Character.
4	What is the role of Baldwin Park, between Parcels JK and LM, and is there a need to maintain a street connection, or is an off-street pedestrian / bicyclist connection sufficient?	Divco believes that Baldwin Park is an important public open space, and part of the open space network that extends from Earhart Park, through NorthPoint Common, to the north. Refer to revised Design Guidelines Section 1.3.1A Parks and 2.3.1B Pocket Parks.
<b>C BUILT FORM</b>		
1	The proposed low-scale, fine-grain retail buildings and square concept introduces a new building typology and a variety of new interfaces that were not part of the original plan. As such, conceptual renderings and images are needed to help understand this change, as are guidelines to ensure the new retail creates positives interfaces with North Point Common, the community pathway, and the open space on Parcel I.	New design guidelines for this new building typology have been established. Refer to revised Design Guidelines Section 1.2.1C Retail Blocks - Stand Alone Retail Buildings and Section 1.3.1B Retail Plaza. While these structures have not been designed, initial concepts have also been depicted in renderings and will be shown in the model.

NO.	ISSUES	RESOLUTION
2	Changes to building heights and footprints should be mapped out across the site so that an understanding of the final development outcome can be visualized. It will be important to ensure that the proposed cluster of 220-foot buildings does not overwhelm the small-scale retail, and that the dimensions of combined parcels do not negatively impact the public realm.	This will be addressed in building design review, and be subject to the revised Design Guidelines 1.2 Built Form and Part 3 - Block Guidelines
3	Changes in building height and street alignment may affect wind impacts. Additional design and massing strategies may be needed to ensure that the public realm is a comfortable pedestrian environment.	Refer to Design Guidelines Section 1.2.4 Environmental Guidelines Wind
4	Buildings and open spaces that terminate the view corridors of First Street and Water Street will become important markers within the urban environment and therefore require further review.	Refer to Design Guidelines Section 1.3.4 View Corridors and Landmarks

NO.	ISSUES	RESOLUTION
<b>D</b>	<b>DESIGN GUIDELINES</b>	
1	It is anticipated that many of the issues described above can be refined and further addressed through an update of the North Point Design Guidelines, which were prepared for the PUD area in 2003. The design principles adopted in the guidelines emphasize a variety of scale and form to reflect a diversity of experience throughout the site. Each parcel is intended to relate to its immediate surroundings as well as the larger context.	Design Guidelines have been updated
2	The larger context includes the overall image of North Point, legibility, cohesiveness, scale, character, connections and movement.	Design Guidelines have been updated to include a more elaborate section on massing, public realm and streets to maintain the overall image, legibility, cohesiveness, scale, character, connections and movement.
3	Local context determinants include orientation, solar exposure, parking, views to the surroundings and North Point Common, definition of open spaces, public-private hierarchy, and the integration of multiple uses and interfaces with transit.	Addressed and updated in the Design Guidelines.
<b>E</b>	<b>RETAIL AND PROGRAMMING</b>	
1	Looking to the Final Development Plan and ongoing review of the project, it would be helpful to understand more about the strategies for cultivating a thriving mix of businesses within this newly envisioned context. The original special permit for North Point included a retail report from Deborah Byrnes of Resource, Inc., giving an indication of the mix of retailers that would be sought.	This is addressed in the July 6, 2016 letter by Graffito SP, Divco's retail consultant, and the July 7, 2016 letter from Tom Sullivan. Attached to the Graffito SP letter is a revised list of potential retail uses, which supercedes the retail report by Resource, Inc.
2	Given the changes in retail strategy over the past several years, it would be helpful for the current developer's retail consultant to provide an updated report that addresses the following types of questions:	This is addressed in the July 6, 2016 letter by Graffito SP, Divco's retail consultant, and the July 7, 2016 letter from Tom Sullivan.
3	What are the types of retailers or personal services that will be sought, both for the "retail square" and peripheral retail spaces? The 2013 intercept survey conducted by CDD's Economic Development Division (EDD) identifies some businesses that are desired by the area community and should serve as a reference.	This is addressed in the July 6, 2016 letter by Graffito SP, Divco's retail consultant. Divco and Graffito SP will utilize the Economic Development Division survey as leasing activity commences.
4	What other types of programming (e.g., outdoor activities, "pop-up" spaces) might be envisioned to help activate the retail square? How might these be implemented?	Divco is committed to programming the retail square and is working with Graffito SP on how this might unfold. The covered shed on parcel W is intended to be one potential structure that could house these activities.
5	How will the marketing and activation of retail spaces be managed over time? Where might there be opportunities for the owner to collaborate with EDD staff in the marketing of spaces, or in providing services to support small businesses?	Divco and Graffito SP believe it will be challenging to attract retailers to Northpoint in the early phases, but that this is essential to creating a sense of place and attracting commercial tenants. We would welcome opportunities to collaborate with EDD staff.
6	How will the retail plan support and complement other nearby retail, including existing and planned new retail spaces in the area, such as on Cambridge Street, First Street and Monsignor O'Brien Highway? What will be the relationship between North Point retail and the East Cambridge Business Association?	This is addressed in the July 6, 2016 letter by Graffito SP, Divco's retail consultant, and the July 7, 2016 letter from Tom Sullivan. We have presented the revised masterplan to the East Cambridge Business Association and welcome ongoing dialogue regarding the retail plans for NorthPoint.



**PB # 179 Amendment # 6 (Major)- NorthPoint PUD**  
**APPENDIX 3: Responses to TPT Memo, May 31, 2016**  
**Issue date: July 07, 2016**

NO.	ISSUES	RESOLUTION
1	<p>The elimination of Baldwin Street (between Parcels J/K and L) into open space has been one item that TP&amp;T has been discussing with NorthPoint, especially regarding roadway circulation and connectivity, loading and deliveries for Parcels J/K, and L, and minimizing the creation of superblocks. A technical memorandum by VHB dated April 6, 2016, NorthPoint Internal Roadway Layout Master Plan Revisions, found that the elimination of Baldwin Street will not result in traffic deficiencies or poor traffic operations for the internal roadways at Dawes Street at North First Street and Dawes Street at North Park. However, TP&amp;T believes that pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between North Street and Dawes Street, and loading and delivery for Parcels J/K, and L, and the Retail Square to prevent vehicles from stopping in bicycle lanes still needs some work. TP&amp;T will continue to work with NorthPoint on these issues.</p>	<p>In meetings with planning staff and TP&amp;T focused on urban design and NorthPoint design guidelines, we have reviewed the treatment of the open space between Parcels J/K and L (Baldwin Park). Based on staff feedback, we propose a pedestrian sidewalk with lighting at the perimeter to create a permeable open space design that encourages pedestrians and bicycles to cross between North Street and Dawes Street. In addition, raised pedestrian tables will be incorporated into North Street and Dawes Street on either side of Baldwin Park, such that a seamless connection will be created from NorthPoint Common to the open space between Parcels EF and G. These changes are incorporated in the attached revised 40-Scale Roadway Plan.</p>
2	<p>The 40-scale plan needs more work on adequate buffer space and pedestrian crossings between the Community path and the Retail Square at Parcels I and W.</p>	<p>The buffer space between the Community Path and the Retail Square at Parcels I and W will be increased from 2 feet to 3 feet, consistent with the original Design Guidelines, to ensure no conflicts with pedestrians and/or cyclists when retail doors are opened adjacent to the Community Path. Additionally, we will incorporate language into the revised Design Guidelines which restricts outdoor seating in this buffer area between the retail buildings and the Community Path. The buffer space between the Community Path and the Retail Square at Parcels I and W will be increased from 2 feet to 3 feet, consistent with the original Design</p>
3	<p>The cross-section for First Street between O'Brien Boulevard and Dawes Street needs additional work to best accommodate buses, drop-off/pick-up activity for the future Lechmere MBTA Station, and pedestrian and bicycle conditions and safety. TP&amp;T will continue to work with NorthPoint on this segment.</p>	<p>In response to comments received from both TP&amp;T and the planning team, we have studied the N. First Street corridor. At the southern segment of N. First Street adjacent to the future Lechmere MBTA Station, the road section will be revised to accommodate cycle tracks, a floating bus stop for passenger loading and a sidewalk at the same raised elevation, separated from buses and other vehicular traffic. At the northern N. First Street road segments between NorthPoint Boulevard and Dawes Street, we propose a design which reduces any bicycle/pedestrian conflicts. The road segment running between NorthPoint Boulevard and North Street will include a mid-block pedestrian crossing, which accentuates a natural crossing point along the east-west open space/retail spine of the proposed new Master Plan. We have also reviewed a potential solution to accommodate cycle tracks along the northern segment of N. First Street (See attached sketch, "N. First Street - Separated Bike Lane Study"); however, we recommend that this road cross-section condition be explored further during Design Review of Parcels W and I, to ensure that any pedestrian/bike conflicts are reduced.</p>

NO.	ISSUES	RESOLUTION
4	<p>The Dawes Street approach to NorthPoint Boulevard needs further refinement on the road curvature, and pedestrian and bicycle crossings at the intersection. NorthPoint is working on developing options for addressing the issues that have been raised at this location.</p>	<p>In response to TP&amp;T's comments Beals + Thomas has studied the turning movements of a WB-50 truck with a raised median condition at the Dawes Street crossing. This plan, shared with TP&amp;T at our June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, demonstrated conflicts with a turning movement from Dawes St. to NorthPoint Blvd in which the median and bike lanes are impacted. After studying further, we now propose a solution which shifts the road striping buffer from the center of the roadway to the edges of the travel lanes, protecting the bike lane from conflicts with a truck during its turning movement (see sketch attached "Dawes Street Layout with Striping").</p>
5	<p>The West Boulevard turnaround located adjacent to Parcels A and B, and the Community path needs additional adjustments. However, it should also be noted that this roadway segment is expected to be one of the last areas developed and could also be impacted by a future circumferential transit connection to the Inner Belt area of Somerville.</p>	<p>West Boulevard has been extended to the westernmost edge of the site and now fronts Parcel A in addition to Parcel B. An area will be set aside for an Urban Ring connection from Somerville and a Grand Junction Path connection within the open space west of Parcel A. (See attached revised 40-Scale Roadway Plan). We propose that street parking spaces be maintained on the south side of West Boulevard shown, with the goal of keeping the Community Path straight along West Boulevard.</p>
6	<p>A comprehensive loading and delivery plan should be developed for NorthPoint, especially for the Retail Square.</p>	<p>A comprehensive loading and delivery plan will be developed for NorthPoint in advance of the second Planning Board hearing. Our plan will clearly identify proposed locations for loading docks and live loading areas for daily package deliveries, as well as short term pick-up/drop-off uses. A signage plan will be incorporated to ensure loading areas are clearly marked. The plan will also illustrate typical truck turning movements at the paved service alleys along Dawes Street (adjacent to parcels, EF, G and H). For the Retail Square, loading zones for the small scale retail buildings on Parcel I, W and Q1 will be clearly indicated, and the retail buildings will utilize a refrigerated trash room located on Parcel JK. As each parcel goes through Design Review, the comprehensive loading and delivery plan for NorthPoint will be updated accordingly. In addition, for all lab buildings, bulk gas deliveries will be considered when finalizing location of the loading docks.</p>

July 6, 2016  
GSP Project Memo  
North Point Retail Vision

## I. Summary

Graffito SP (“GSP”) has been engaged by DivcoWest to develop a retail planning and leasing approach for NorthPoint (the “Project” or the “Site”) that embraces the values and goals described in this memo. The overarching objective of the NorthPoint retail plan is to develop a neighborhood-serving retail district that incorporates locally-owned small-format merchants, community-oriented spaces, creative programming, and integration with the project’s open spaces to create an active, vibrant, and unique public realm. Execution of this retail plan will be an essential investment in the success of NorthPoint as a place and of the Project as a whole.

North First Street is the primary retail corridor within NorthPoint because it is the point at which the greatest number of connections are made. The new Lechmere station will be on First Street; it will be the only street in Project that extends directly into the existing street grid in East Cambridge, and, by connecting to Cambridge Street just across Monsignor O’Brien, it will create a linkage to the Cambridge Street retail corridor that will strengthen both that existing retail zone and the new one in NorthPoint. The retail zone on North First Street, already incorporated in the existing NorthPoint Special Permit, is the right strategy for retail at the Site, and the new design strengthens the concept significantly.

The largest portion of the retail space in the NorthPoint plan is in the ground floor of mixed-use buildings. A smaller, but critical, portion has been designed in small retail buildings that help accomplish several essential objectives:

- They will allow the retail to be integrated into the public realm in a way that is not possible with large buildings alone. We believe this integration is a key element of differentiation for the NorthPoint retail district, and essential to inspire retailers to commit to a pioneering location.
- It allows delivery of a minimum critical mass of retail space in the initial phase, when there will likely be only a single commercial building at the Site. This minimum critical mass is crucial from a retail tenant perspective.
- The small buildings will allow DivcoWest to design a place that has a human scale and sense of place, with a variety of architecture and storefronts.

Specific leasing and activation strategies will include:

- Actively recruit and prioritize deals with small, local, owner-operated businesses;
- Deliver rentable premises within the Project of varying shapes and sizes in an effort to foster (i) texture on the ground floor and (ii) maximum flexibility in tenant recruitment;
- Think about ground floor activation as far more than just traditional retail leasing by incorporating into planning and tenanting programmatic and temporary uses; and

- Implement certain best practices from a design/architecture perspective that enhance the ground floor throughout the Project.

## **II. Updated Retail Master Planning Principles**

In order to accomplish the above goals, certain changes have been made to the original master plan from 2002 and 2003. Specifically, (i) First Street has been straightened, (ii) the updated master plan concentrates some retail at the center of the Site on First Street, consistent with the Retail Square concept in the 2003 master plan amendment, and (iii) more retail is moved to phase 1A and 1B to enable early site activation. **Creating a central node of retail along a better-connected First Street corridor is crucial for several key reasons:**

- Concentrating the retail in areas adjacent to the Site's open space and parks will make both the open space and the retail more dynamic. We have embraced a belief that the park and open space is the Site's true anchor and retail merchandizing and planning must show deference to such.
- The Project's retail should fit into the context of (and be inspired by) Cambridge's most successful mixed-use neighborhoods, which means there shall be (i) a compression of stores along and within a few key corridors and (ii) a lack of dependency on the automobile and parking. As such, bringing the retail to locations more proximate to the Green Line is crucial.
- Retailers need concentration and adjacencies to be successful. Building isolated retail premises throughout the Site will be challenging to lease and present the risk of creating spaces that sit vacant for long periods of time, which is a pattern we've seen historically in Cambridge and other locations.

Further, as related to those potential retail uses (and sizes) that were detailed in the original Permittee's application of 2003, while many of those uses and retail targets remain relevant and desirable in the present (*i.e.*, childcare, multiple food uses, florist and fitness), there are certain changes that must be made given the realities of today's market, as follows:

- Travel agencies, large format book stores (5,000 SF+) and video stores are no longer viable, desirable or available uses for the Project;
- There is no need for both a 5,000 SF convenience store and a small grocery store (a small-format grocery store will still though be targeted);
- The Project will be able to accommodate far more than just one full-service restaurant; and
- The Project will benefit from additional recreational and active-lifestyle uses to enhance connection to (and cultural alignment with) open space, the community path, skate-park and the Charles River.

A revised list of potential retail uses is attached.

## **III. Core Retail Design Principles**

As follows is an overview of certain threshold design practices that will be incorporated into written guidelines for the Project:

- Operable windows and storefront features that enhance actual and visual permeability vis-à-vis the public realm will be encouraged, specifically including guidelines regarding use of clear glazing, storefront lighting and entry locations;
- Building facades shall be constructed to properly frame and distinguish the first story of all buildings (canopies, lighting, signage, color and material variation, etc.);
- Outdoor seating to be utilized and encouraged whenever and wherever possible;
- All buildings within the Project shall have centralized loading, trash and back-of-house functions that can be efficiently shared by multiple retail tenants;
- Unique, attractive and functional retail signage and way-finding (and combination thereof) shall be encouraged; and
- Higher than industry standard floor-to-floor clearances will be encouraged at all new ground floor retail spaces.

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Potential Retail Uses  
Northpoint  
July 6, 2016

Neighborhood Market/Grocer	5,000 - 10,000 sf
ATM	200 – 500 sf
Fitness & Recreation Uses	2,000 - 15,000 sf
Childcare Center	3,000 - 10,000 sf
Coffee Shop	500 – 3,000 sf
Brewpub	1,000 – 5,000 sf
Bakery	500 – 5,000 sf
Juice & Health Foods	500 – 1,000 sf
Bistro	2,000 – 5,000 sf
Quick Service Restaurants	1,000 – 2,500 sf
Full Service Restaurants	3,000 – 6,000 sf
Dry Cleaner	500 – 1,000 sf
Florist	500 – 1,000 sf
Bike Shop	500 – 2,000 sf
Specialty fitness	500 – 2,000 sf
Salon / Barber	500 – 3,000 sf