



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board
From: Joseph Barr, Director 
Date: December 9, 2015
Re: First Street PUD & Project Review Special Permit (PB# 231A Amendment 3)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP&T) has been working with Urban Spaces on the proposed First Street Development Project, which was resubmitted as Amendment 3 to Planning Board Special Permit #231A. TP&T has the following comments and recommendations regarding this project:

1.0 Office and Residential Parking

As we requested, the Applicant considered the idea of using existing under-utilized parking in the area, such as the CambridgeSide Galleria mall garage instead of building new parking spaces. While the Applicant subsequently decided to build their parking spaces on-site for various reasons such as marketing of the project and the flexibility of controlling the spaces, TP&T appreciates the Applicant's consideration of this possibility.

The Applicant is seeking a Planning Board Special Permit for a reduction in the residential parking ratio from 1.0 to 0.74 spaces per unit. TP&T supports the parking ratio reduction because it will better match residential parking needs for this project and the location near Lechmere Station. The Applicant is also seeking a special permit for residents and resident's visitors to share the office employee parking spaces, such as during nights and weekends when employee spaces are vacant. TP&T supports the shared use of the office parking space by residents and their visitors. In addition, TP&T also recommends the following:

- The final parking garage layout and detailed parking management plan, including visitor parking, should be approved by TP&T prior to the issuance of the Project's first Building Permit.
- Parking spaces for office use should have a maximum of 42 spaces.
- For project construction phasing, parking spaces in the garage for future residential use should not be made available (i.e. fenced off) until occupancy of the residential units. This will prevent office employees from parking in future residential spaces and getting into the habit of driving and using those spaces.

2.0 Retail Surface Parking

We believe that surface parking lots negatively impact the pedestrian realm and vibrancy in an urban environment. However, we also understand developers desire to provide this type of parking because it

makes the project more attractive to retail tenants who believe parking lots are critical to their success. After numerous meetings with City staff, the Applicant reduced the number of parking spaces from 65 spaces (2.0 spaces / 1,000 sf) proposed in the Transportation Impact Study (TIS) to the 56 spaces (1.73 spaces/1,000 sf).

While TP&T would like see that number of retail parking spaces reduced more, at this time, TP&T's primary concern is the functionality of the three parking spaces in Lot B, particularly the difficulties that may be associated with maneuvering a car out of the spaces without conflicting with the pedestrian walkway. Some potential solutions may include making the pedestrian walkway a raised sidewalk or relocating the bollards to allow a vehicle backing out of the last space to have more area to maneuver. TP&T will work with the Applicant on the final layout details as part of the Building Permit process.

Over time, the number of retail parking spaces needed to support the retail uses will change. TP&T recommends that the Planning Board decision permit a reduction in the number of retail parking spaces without the Project needing a Special Permit amendment. The Applicant should also be obligated to monitor the use of the retail spaces in a format approved by CDD and TP&T and provide yearly reports. The Special Permit should not preclude the spaces from being used for carshare parking, Hubway stations, farmers market, additional green space, or other more sustainable uses that are more appropriate in an urban location, should it be determined by the Applicant and the City that such alternative uses of the parking is preferable.

3.0 Bicycle Parking

The Applicant is seeking a Planning Board Special Permit to provide the office use's long-term bicycle parking spaces in the underground parking garage. The Special Permit is needed because the location exceeds the 200 foot zoning distance for long-term bicycle parking. TP&T supports the Special Permit with the following conditions that will help generally improve conditions for cyclists:

- The Applicant should provide \$50,000 contribution to the City for a Hubway Station/maintenance/operations. The contribution should be made prior to the issuance of the project's first building permit. The City will determine the best use of the funds to support Hubway for the area.
- The proposed short-term bicycle spaces located on Bent Street at Parcel A (i.e., future Petco parking lot) should include a bike shelter, such as a Dero Bike Haven or Kolo Shelter (<http://www.dero.com/product-category/bike-shelters/>) or a similar product. The selected bike shelter should be approved by TP&T prior to the issuance of the first building permit and completed prior to the first occupancy permit for Parcel A.

4.0 Infrastructure Improvements

Because the Project will have its largest impact on the First Street at Charles Street intersection (29 new AM peak hour trips and 39 new PM peak hour trips) TP&T recommends that the Applicant update the traffic signal controller, cabinet, and install an audible pedestrian signal at this intersection. This improvement should be completed prior to the issuance of the Project's first occupancy permit.

5.0 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Measures:

To minimize the Project's traffic impacts, TP&T recommends the Applicant implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures:

1. Offer a 50% subsidy for the cost of a bus/subway link pass (currently \$75, but subject to fare increases) for three consecutive months to each adult member of a household (up to 2 per household) upon move-in. The subsidy ends after 3 months for the household and begins anew upon unit turnover;

2. Offer a one-year Gold Level Hubway membership to each adult member of each household (up to 2 per household) upon move-in. The one-year membership ends after one-year but begins anew upon unit turnover;
3. Provide a 50% MBTA T-pass subsidy to full-time retail employees;
4. Instead of (or in addition to) posting paper MBTA schedules, provide a transit screen in a central location for residents, which displays real-time transit and Hubway information;
5. Become a member of the Charles River Transportation Management Association (CRTMA)
6. Provide access to the EZRide shuttle for Project residents and employees;
7. Provide an MBTA pass subsidy to employees (up to the federal maximum of \$130 per month);
8. Provide showers and lockers that are accessible to employees;
9. Provide air pumps and other bicycle repair tools, such as "FixIt" stations in the bicycle storage area in the garage.
10. Provide a minimum of 4 dedicated parking spaces for carpooling/vanpooling in the garage.
11. Encourage employers to work with the Cambridge Office of Workforce Development,
12. Designate a Transportation Coordinator (TC) to manage the TDM Program for residents and non-residential uses (i.e. office and retail buildings).The TC(s) will oversee the marketing and promotion of transportation alternatives including, posting information in a prominent location in the buildings and on buildings web sites, in property newsletters, and social media outreach, responding to individual request for information in person and via phone and email, performing annual transportation surveys, and implementing the parking and transportation monitoring program.

The TC will compile and distribute up-to-date information explaining all transportation options to all new residents and employees (as part of their New Resident and Employee Packets). The packets will contain information on both the range of options available and any building manager programs to support the use of these options.

- a. The TC will be on-site during a minimum of 2 hours per week at each site and will be available to residents via email and telephone. Email and phone information for the TC will be posted in the transportation information center.
- b. The TC will participate in any TC trainings offered by the City of Cambridge or local TMA and will oversee any City of Cambridge monitoring and reporting requirements.
- c. The TC should actively manage and monitor the resident's auto ownership and parking location and use all reasonable measures to 1.) Encourage residents not to own automobiles, 2.) Provide an appropriate and flexible market-rate parking fee program that best accommodates all residential vehicles (including guest vehicles).

6.0 Traffic and Parking Monitoring

To monitor the parking demand and utilization, the TC should be obligated to undertake periodic surveys of employee and tenant auto use, in a manner acceptable to TP&T and CDD, to determine the extent of vehicle ownership (automobiles and bicycles), use and parking behavior.

Beginning at the point when fifty (50) percent of the residential units in the building are occupied, or within one year of the date of the first Certificate of Occupancy, whichever is sooner, and at least once per year thereafter, the TC shall survey residents, employees and retail patrons to determine the number of cars owned or leased by residents and where the residents customarily store such vehicles overnight, how employees commute to work, and how retail patrons travel to the site.

If the Certificate of Occupancy is issued between September 1st and February 29th, the monitoring should take place during the months of September or October and be reported to the City no later than November 30. If the Certificate of Occupancy is issued between March 1st and August 31st, monitoring should take place during the months of April or May and be reported to the City no later than June 30.

First Street PUD and Project Review Special Permit

Cc: Adam Shulman, TPT; Iram Farooq, Jeff Roberts, Liza Paden, Susanne Rasmussen, Stuart Dash, Cara Seiderman, Stephanie Groll, CDD; Paul M. Ognibene, Urban Spaces; Jim Rafferty, Adams & Rafferty.