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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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BRIAN MURPHY  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

To: Planning Board  
From: CDD Staff  
Date: June 11, 2014  
Re: **Flaherty, et al. Zoning Petition – Staff Analysis**

### **Overview**

The Flaherty, et al. Zoning Petition proposes to extend the Medical Marijuana Overlay District 1 (MMD-1) to encompass 61 Mooney Street. The attached map illustrates the location of the 61 Mooney Street parcel along with the current boundaries of the MMD-1 overlay.

### **Site Location**

61 Mooney Street is located at the end of an industrial street adjacent to the Fitchburg rail line and the state DCR-owned Blair Pond Reservation. The area is characterized by warehouse-type commercial buildings, surface parking, open-lot storage and undeveloped land. The existing building on the site was formerly used for pharmaceutical manufacturing. Mooney Street is accessed only via Smith Place, which starts at Concord Avenue and connects to various other streets in the “Quadrangle” subdistrict of the Concord-Alewife area.

Because the 61 Mooney Street parcel is not contiguous to the current MMD-1, it is not clear precisely how the district would be expanded and whether it would need to incorporate portions of other parcels as well.

### **Medical Marijuana Zoning in Cambridge**

Cambridge’s zoning regulations for medical marijuana were adopted by the City Council in December, 2013. The regulations were developed by CDD staff in consultation with other City departments, community members and the Planning Board.

The zoning allows a Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD), registered pursuant to Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, to be located only in a Medical Marijuana Overlay District (MMD) and only after receiving a special permit from the Planning Board upon reviewing transportation, urban design and other impacts.

When the medical marijuana zoning was being created and reviewed, CDD staff and the Planning Board discussed the rationale for the MMD locations. On the following page, that rationale is summarized and the proposed 61 Mooney Street site is assessed in relation to the factors used in determining the current set of districts.

### **1. Commercial Use Districts**

The MMDs were selected to include districts that allow commercial uses. The base zoning for 61 Mooney Street is Industry B-2, which allows a wide variety of commercial uses. Like all districts in Cambridge, residential uses are also allowed, but there are no existing residential uses in that particular district. However, opposite Blair Pond Reservation is the Cambridge Highlands neighborhood, which is zoned residential.

### **2. Access to Regional Transportation**

The current MMDs are in areas with reasonably convenient access both to public transportation and to the regional roadway system, which is a significant factor since an RMD in Cambridge would likely serve a regional population. 61 Mooney Street is about a half-mile walk from the nearest bus stop (on Concord Avenue) and one and a half miles from Alewife Station by foot or bicycle. Moreover, the route would be challenging for pedestrians or bicyclists given the wide curb cuts and commercial truck traffic on Smith Place and Mooney Street. For people accessing the site by automobile, the main issue would be navigating to the site from nearby major roads given its remote location. An advantage would be that off-street parking is available on the site.

### **3. Emergency Response**

When medical marijuana zoning was being studied, the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) expressed a concern about sites that would be difficult to access if there were an emergency call. CPD has not specifically commented on the 61 Mooney Street site, although it was not one of the sites identified as a concern at the time of the original zoning.

### **4. Consistency with Urban Design Character**

Since the area is characterized by industrial-type buildings, the security requirements for an RMD are not likely to conflict with the established urban character of the area. Low-scale buildings and open parking areas are likely to provide for ease of monitoring, although it may be more difficult to monitor activity within the adjacent Blair Pond Reservation.

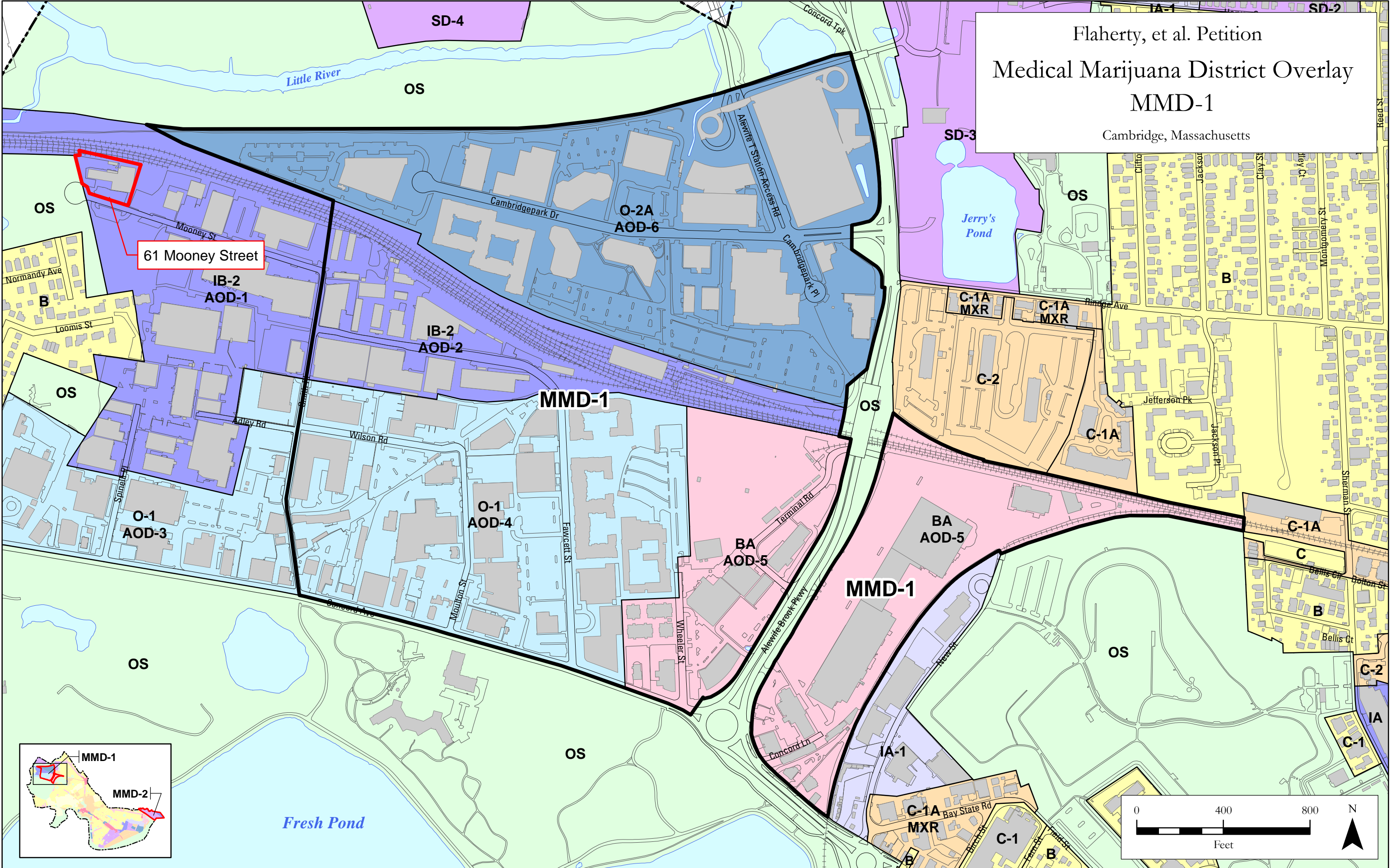
### **5. Availability of Sites Away from Child-Oriented Uses**

The state standard for RMDs is that they should be located at least 500 feet from a school, daycare center, or any facility in which children commonly congregate. It is difficult to create zoning based on this standard because such uses may move and change over time. Therefore, even though not all sites within an MMD might meet this standard, there are likely to be some sites within an MMD that would meet the prescribed distance at a given time. Also, in Cambridge's zoning, the Planning Board may modify the 500-foot standard when granting a special permit if, for other reasons, the site is deemed to be suitably buffered from such uses.

Although there is a private school and some other facilities with child-oriented recreational programming in the area, 61 Mooney Street appears to be at least 500 feet from such uses.

Flaherty, et al. Petition  
Medical Marijuana District Overlay  
MMD-1

Cambridge, Massachusetts



61 Mooney Street

