CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Traffic, Parking and Transportation
344 Broadway
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

www.cambridgema.gov/traffic

Susan E. Clippinger, Director
Brad Gerratt, Deputy Director

Phone: (617) 349-4700
Fax: (617) 349-4747

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Board
From: Susan Clippinger
Date: 18 February 2014
Re: 10 Essex Street Project

There was a request from the Board that we comment on this project. I believe there are two questions being asked. Is the .5 parking ratio enough and will residents of the building park on the neighborhood streets?

The Department with CDD did a study of auto ownership in buildings within a quarter mile of a subway station. In addition, the proponent had their traffic consultant collect information for 3 residential buildings in Central Square – 91 Sidney, 23 Sidney and 6321 Mass (Holmes Building). In all cases the parking needed for the autos owned by residents was .5 spaces per unit or less.

We looked at the number of 2013 resident permits issued to the 3 buildings studied by the proponent. We also pulled the number of 2014 permits for Holmes. Only about half of the residents actually bother to get a resident permit for their vehicle. From surveys done by the proponent at Holmes and work TP&T has done in other parts of the City, the cars with resident permits park in the off street spaces provided. It is possible that a resident with a permit may park on the street but there is no information that this is a common occurrence.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Susan Clippinger, Director, Traffic, Parking and Transportation
Adam Shulman, Transportation Planner

FROM: James J. Rafferty

RE: Ten Essex Street
P.B. Case No. 285

DATE: February 13, 2014

CC: Liza Paden
Roger Boothe
Jeff Roberts
Brian Murphy

Introduction

The petitioner in the above-captioned case is requesting a Special Permit from the Planning Board to allow for a reduction in the required amount of parking to .5 spaces per dwelling unit. In accordance with the requirements of Section 6.35.3, the applicant submitted a Parking Analysis prepared by Design Consultants, Inc. dated January 16, 2014. The Parking Analysis estimated the parking demand of the project based upon a variety of factors, including studies prepared by the City of Cambridge as part of the C2 Study Committee process as well as examining "comparable nearby residential projects."

TDM Measures

As part of its request for a Special Permit, the applicant is proposing that for the first three years following the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, it will offer the following amenities to tenants who do not lease a parking space in the building and who do not obtain a resident parking sticker from the City of Cambridge:

1. Free T pass for three months of tenancy
2. Free Membership to ZipCar for first year of tenancy
3. Free Hubway Membership for first year of tenancy
4. $50 Bicycle Shop credit for tune-up or repair every year of tenancy

In order to further promote bicycle usage by residents of the building, there shall be a bicycle repair station located in the building. Additionally, the proponent intends to charge market rates for monthly parking plus a $20 monthly surcharge to help fund the cost of the TDM measures.

Existing Parking on Site

Currently, 10 Essex Street is used as surface parking for the tenants of the offices in the adjoining buildings at 599 and 605 Massachusetts Avenue. While the lot contains 28 spaces, only seven spaces are being utilized. The seven parking spaces are leased on a monthly basis as tenants at will. The current monthly rent being charged for parking is $200. Those seven automobiles will be able to relocate to commercial parking facilities in Central Square for a comparable fee.

As part of the DCI parking study prepared by the proponent, commercial parking lots in Central Square were surveyed to identify locations where parking opportunities exist. The Green Street Garage was found to have ample capacity. Even when applying daily parking rates at the Green Street Garage, the monthly cost is comparable with the monthly parking rates at the commercial parking garages in Central Square, including 30 Pilgrim Street and 55 Franklin Street. The surface parking lot at 438 Green Street, located behind the Post Office charges $180 per month, although there is limited availability at this time.

Resident Parking Stickers

Information recently complied by TP&T regarding the number of Resident Parking Stickers issued for the three residential buildings identified in the DCI Parking Utilization Study revealed a ratio of .27 resident stickers issued per dwelling unit. What the data does not reveal, however, is how many of the resident stickers are being used by motor vehicles that are also parking in the garages for those buildings.

Since the Holmes Building most closely resembles 10 Essex Street in terms of its location in the "Heart of Central Square" subdistrict and its proximity to the Red Line, permission was obtained from building management to perform a visual inspection of the motor vehicles in that garage. The results were as follows:

Time	# of vehicles in garage	# of vehicles containing 2014 resident parking stickers
7:45am (Wednesday)	27	15

Information provided at the time of the inspection from Heather Brignolo of Hunneman Management confirmed that the garage utilization rate at the Holmes Building has never exceeded 50%.

Conclusion

The Holmes Building at 632 Massachusetts Avenue has been fully occupied since 2001. The data gathered from the building provides real evidence showing that when the opportunity is provided, residents without motor vehicles are choosing to live in the heart of Central Square. It is worth noting that the .5 parking ratio being realized at this location is occurring without the benefit of the TDM measures being proposed by this applicant.

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Susan Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation

Date: July 30, 2007

Re: Council Order #4, dated April 9, 2007, requesting a recommendation as to what the appropriate parking space requirement should be for housing in close proximity to mass transit.

Calendar Item # 1 Dated April 23, 2007, regarding research and development of a green zone policy

We have been asked to evaluate the traffic and parking impact created by recent housing developments near mass transit in order to determine how parking demand from residential development is affected by proximity to transit and to determine if parking requirements could be lowered without undue neighborhood impact.

It is a longstanding environmental goal of the city to reduce the number of vehicle trips to reduce traffic congestion and pollution. Reducing the number of required parking spaces for housing developments near transit would be one step to address that goal. If people have the convenient option of using mass transit to meet their transportation needs, they may be less likely to need or use a car.

The Community Development and Traffic, Parking and Transportation departments sampled 33 housing developments with 25 or more units that were within a 5-minute walking distance (1/4 mile) of Red Line MBTA stations in Cambridge. These residential buildings contained both private rental and condominium units but did not include specialized housing such as dormitories, mixed-use buildings or elderly housing.

In order to evaluate the feasibility of reducing the parking requirement, staff started by collecting information on the current rate of auto ownership near transit stops. Data included: the number of vehicles registered (at the Mass. Registry of Motor Vehicles) to a given address, number of 2006 and 2007 resident parking permits for a given address, and the number of off-street parking spaces dedicated to the development. Data was also compared to 2000 US Journey to Work Census

data for all census tracts in Cambridge to determine if households in census blocks closer to transit stations had lower auto ownership.

We found the following:

- Fifty percent of the units surveyed had no vehicles registered. (This was consistent with the Journey to Work data.)
- About 40% of the units had residential parking permits.
- About 50% of the units had a parking space.
- On-site parking at the surveyed developments varied from 0 to 1.1 spaces per unit. The average was 0.5 spaces provided per unit.

Of all the data analyzed, the number of registered vehicles at an address seemed to be the most realistic indicator of how many vehicles are actually associated with residential units. The data showed that when the number of vehicles registered is compared to the number of dwelling units at that site, 28 of the 33 developments (85%) had fewer than .75 cars per unit. The average number of cars per unit ranged from 0.3 for buildings built prior to 1961, when parking requirements were introduced, to 0.8 for developments built after 1961; however, the average for all developments was 0.5 cars per unit.

Based on this data we have concluded that it may make sense to lower the required number of parking spaces per unit within a quarter mile of a rapid transit station. The minimum requirement for residential development would be .75 parking spaces per housing unit; the maximum would be 1.0 parking spaces per unit. The introduction of a maximum for residential use would keep projects from providing an oversupply of parking. Both a minimum and maximum number are needed in order to address the environmental benefit gained from having fewer cars as well as to protect the surrounding neighborhood from too many cars.

The Zoning Ordinance (Sections 6.35.1 and 6.35.2) provides criteria by which the Board of Zoning Appeals or the Planning Board may waive the minimum and maximum parking requirements; that opportunity would continue to be available.

This response also addresses another Council request (#1 dated April 23, 2007) regarding the potential for a green zone policy. If the Council adopts this proposal to lower the parking requirement for developments within a quarter mile of mass transit, the Council would, in effect, be creating a green zone, an area within which the supply of (future) parking spaces would be reduced and the use of mass transit would likely be increased.