

MEMO

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Transit Advisory Committee

Date: January 17, 2017

Re: Special Permit PB 320 and 321 (Mass+Main)

The Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee (currently consisting of eighteen Cambridge neighborhood residents and representatives of institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders that was established in 2013 to help guide the City on transit-related issues) has reviewed Watermark Central Venture LLC's Mass+Main proposal and would like to submit the comments below for consideration by the Planning Board.

In general, we are in support of this project because it addresses the demand for residential space in Central Square and because its location near the Red Line and several important bus lines will make it feasible for residents and employees to choose transit options over driving. As the traffic impact study describes, the development is expected to generate a significant number of transit trips, so we recommend that greater measures be put in place to encourage transit use and support the transit system, especially since there are several other ongoing major developments in the area (MXD Infill, NoMa/SoMa) that will also increase transit ridership.

- First, we think that, considering the scope of this development, it is appropriate for Watermark Central Venture LLC to fund improvements to the usability and reliability of the transit system that serves the proposed project, just as contributions have been made as part of the recent MXD Infill and NoMa/SoMa developments. Specific ideas include: supporting implementation of on-the-ground bus priority treatments (such as queue jump lanes) and bus signal priority on Mass. Ave. and other major transit corridors nearby; exploring routing improvements for buses that serve Central Square; and improving the Central Square bus stops by enlarging the shelters and installing and maintaining real-time transit information displays.¹

¹ Many of these ideas were generated by the [Central Square Bus Access and Circulation Study](#), which was completed in 2014, and are aligned with the non-zoning recommendations of the Central Square Advisory Committee.

- Next, to further enable transit use, we suggest that the development subsidize transit passes for Mass+Main residents and employees. Consistent with other recent large-scale developments, such as NoMa/SoMa, the TDM should require employers to subsidize (perhaps at 50%) a transit pass for all employees, both to encourage commuting by public means and to reduce parking demand on the neighborhood. For residents, we recommend that passes (up to two per unit) be subsidized at 100% for the first three months and 50% for the remainder of the year, subject to turnover.
- Finally, we support a parking plan that encourages use of sustainable transportation modes over driving for residents and retail employees/customers. Specifically, it is important that the development limit the number of available residential parking spaces and charge tenants for them as an add-on to their monthly rent, as opposed to including it in the monthly cost.

In conclusion, we would like to offer our general support for this project but ask that more specific measures be put in place to encourage use of sustainable transportation modes including public transit over driving and to help offset the impact of increased transit trips on the MBTA system. We would be happy to discuss any of our suggestions further and look forward to collaborating to increase the impact of transit.