



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI
Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: September 13, 2022

Re: **PB #179, Cambridge Crossing (North Point) PUD Amendment 11 (Minor)**

Background

The North Point Planned Unit Development (PUD) is an approved 45-acre, 5+ million square foot development project planned to be built out through 2030. The Final Development Plan was first approved by the Planning Board in 2003, and since that time has been modified several times through the PUD amendment process. The most recent minor amendment was granted by the Planning Board on July 12, 2022.

DivcoWest, the current main developer of the PUD, along with JAMI North Point LLC ("Rock and Roll Daycare") and Parcel N owner PRLI Twenty20, LLC (the "Parcel N Owner"), seek minor amendment approval to permit a "Preschool, day care center, kindergarten, not exempt by statute" on the ground story of Parcel N.

This memo summarizes the key areas of focus associated with the requested minor amendment.

Criteria for Granting PUD Amendments

Per Section 12.37 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board determines whether changes to a PUD Final Development Plan may be approved as minor amendments or major amendments. The following guidance is provided in zoning:

(12.37.2) Minor amendments are changes which do not alter the concept of the PUD in terms of density, floor area ratio, land usage, height, provision of open space, or the physical relationship of elements of the development. Minor amendments shall include, but not be limited to, small changes in the location of buildings, open space, or parking; or realignment of minor streets.

(12.37.3) Major amendments represent substantial deviations from the PUD concept approved by the Planning Board. Major amendments shall include, but not be limited to, large changes in floor space, mix of uses, density, lot coverage, height, setbacks, lot sizes, open space; changes in the location of buildings, open space, or parking; or changes in the circulation system.

If the Board determines that the changes are minor, then the Board may approve the minor amendment on the affirmative vote of five Planning Board members. A determination that the proposed change(s) to the Final Development Plan constitute a major amendment require that the Board hold two public hearings and issue a new special permit following the procedures applicable to a new PUD special permit application.

Zoning Comments on Proposed Amendment

Parcel N received design review approval in 2012 as a 394,000 square-foot mixed-use development, consisting of 385,400 square feet of multifamily dwelling uses, 8,600 square feet of ground floor retail in two locations consisting of several tenant bays (as also depicted in the Conceptual Retail Plan component of the Final Development Plan), 184 off-street parking spaces, and approximately 9,000 square feet of open space. Parcel N has completed construction and the residential component has been occupied for several years. In late 2021, the Planning Board approved a Quick-Service/Fast Order Food Establishment (Scoop 'N' Scootery) to occupy approximately 1,400 square feet in the ground story. Rock and Roll Daycare, a childcare center, is proposed to occupy approximately 3,000 square feet of the 8,600 square foot ground story of Parcel N. Other tenant spaces in the ground story are not yet occupied. The fit-out of the proposed use is substantially complete and the center is currently seeking a Certificate of Occupancy. Condition 12.c.iv of the approved special permit states as follows:

The retail Gross Floor Area proposed for Blocks I, N, Q1, R and W, constituting the 75,000 square foot as of right quantity of retail use allowed in Section 13.70, may be eliminated or relocated only after the issuance of a Major Amendment to the permit. It is essential that the at-grade environment at these locations be attractive and lively and inviting to pedestrians from within and without the district.

Childcare centers are considered an institutional use in the Zoning Ordinance (4.33.b.2 in the Table of Use Regulations). However, the Final Development Plan for the North Point PUD includes a retail program (attached to the Special Permit Decision) that lists "Childcare Center 3,000 - 10,000 s²" among a list of potential retail uses.

The Applicants propose amending Condition 12.c.iv of the special permit to read as follows:

The retail Gross Floor Area proposed for Blocks I, N, Q1, R and W, constituting the 75,000 square foot as of right quantity of retail use (which may include day care center uses identified in Section 4.33.b.2. of the Ordinance) allowed in Section 13.70, may be eliminated or relocated only after the issuance of a Major Amendment to the permit. It is essential that the at-grade environment at these locations be attractive and lively and inviting to pedestrians from within and without the district.

The Applicants have submitted materials to the Planning Board that include a narrative, elevation and sign drawing, and supporting documentation showing that childcare uses were contemplated in the approved retail plan for Cambridge Crossing and maintaining that the change would not alter the concept of the PUD.

Urban Design Comments on Proposed Amendment

From an urban design perspective, the main distinction between a typical retail use and a childcare center is that the former tends to have a more transparent and active storefront to create visual interest along the streetscape, while the latter tends to be visually screened and less active. In this case, however, much effort has been made to maintain the transparency of the existing storefronts. The daycare center will occupy three storefronts on the south side of Building N (also known as Twenty|20),

facing North Point Common. The interior design layout establishes access along the inside of the windows, which means that two of the storefronts will not need to be screened. Only a small amount of frosted film will be added to the upper transom of these two storefronts to address glare issues. The storefront to the right of the main entrance will accommodate infants, which requires additional screening to assist with nap schedules. For this storefront, window film will be added above the entrance door and shades will be used during the early afternoon. Staff are satisfied that this design approach provides an appropriate level of streetscape activation and transparency, while balancing the needs of the daycare center. Additional graphics or artworks could also be considered to help enliven the façade.

Conditions

The following is a summary of recommended items for ongoing review by staff if the Board decides to approve the amendment:

- Details of the window film, including level of opacity and application method.