



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

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MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board
From: Joseph E. Barr, Director 
Date: October 17, 2016
Re: 605 Concord Avenue Project (PB#319)

The Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department (TP&T) has reviewed the Transportation Impact Study (TIS) for the Concord Avenue/Wheeler Street, Phase 2 Mixed-Use Development project, by Acorn Holdings LLC., located at 605 Concord Avenue. The Project proposes to replace an existing bank building and construct 49 residential apartment units totaling 53,551 square feet, plus 4,128 square feet of ground floor commercial space. The Project proposes 68 automobile parking spaces, 54 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and 8 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

TP&T certified the TIS as complete and reliable on February 9, 2016. The project will generate a total of:

318 daily vehicle trips including, 12 AM and 32 PM peak hour vehicle trips,
208 daily transit trips (9 AM Peak/21 PM Peak hour transit trips),
74 daily pedestrian trips (4 AM/8 PM Peak hour transit trips) and,
36 daily bicycle trips (1 AM/4 PM Peak hour bicycle trips).

The TIS indicated that the Planning Board Special Permit Transportation Criteria were exceeded in 2 instances (the full TIS summary is attached). TP&T has been working with the applicant and offers the Planning Board the following comments and recommendations for this project:

- 1. Planning Board Exceedences.** The Project triggered the planning board special permit Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) criteria during the AM and PM peak hours at the Concord Avenue/Fawcett Street intersection (crossing Concord Avenue). The intersection had a PLOS F. However, there is a rapid flash pedestrian beacon at the intersection that was installed by the City as part of the Concord Avenue reconstruction project. That beacon was not taken into consideration in the PLOS analysis to be conservative (i.e. the analysis assumed people do not push the button to activate the rapid flash pedestrian beacon). Pushing the button and activating the beacon will increase yielding by vehicles and improve pedestrian safety. It should also be noted that there is an existing pedestrian actuated traffic signal in front of the project site to cross Concord Avenue. In addition, further pedestrian improvements are likely to occur in the future as additional development occurs in the district.

2. **Site Access.** Currently, the project site (including 579/603 Concord Avenue (Phase I) has four curb cuts, including three curb cuts on Concord Avenue and one curb cut on Wheeler Street. The proposed Project will reduce the curb cuts to two – one on Concord Avenue and one on Wheeler Street. The Concord Avenue curb cut will also be moved approximately 20 feet further west from the existing curb cut and further from the Concord Avenue/ Wheeler Street intersection and Fresh Pond rotary, which will provide a safer condition for vehicles exiting the site.

TP&T has been working with the applicant since the initial Phase I project, including evaluating alternative curb cut and access options. We believe the proposed access plan is acceptable and significantly better and safer than the original site conditions prior to the Phase I development when it had 5 curb cuts. We believe the changes to the parcel by the Phase I development, as well as the City's reconstruction of Concord Avenue and Wheeler Street and addition of 8 new on-street parking meter spaces on Wheeler Street, plus the proposed Phase II project, will continue to transform the previous large and undesirable asphalt surface parking lot into an a safer and more vibrant urban environment.

3. **Automobile Parking.** The Project is proposing one parking space per unit (49 residential units and 49 parking spaces), which meets the City zoning requirement. The Project also proposes 19 parking spaces for retail use, for 68 total parking spaces, including 48 below grade and 20 surface parking spaces. The proposed, new below grade parking garage will be connected and accessed through the existing Phase I parking garage ramps.

According to a 2016 survey of residents at the 100% occupied 61 unit Phase I project there is an average of 0.87 vehicles per unit. Based on this survey, TP&T believes that one-space per unit will be more than sufficient to meet the Project's residential parking needs. TP&T also believes that 19 retail parking spaces is reasonable for this Project. The Project does not trigger PTDM because the 19 proposed non-residential parking spaces are less than the 21 non-residential parking spaces registered for the parcel when it was a bank. It is important to note that if the Project merges the Phase II surface parking lot with the Phase I surface parking lot at 603 Concord Ave in order to operate one parking lot for all of the retail and restaurant uses at the two sites, it will need to seek approval for a large project PTDM plan.

4. **Bicycle Parking.** The Project will meet the long-term and short-term bicycle parking space zoning requirements. TP&T will work with the applicant on the final locations for the short-term bicycle parking spaces.
5. **Project Mitigation.** To mitigate the Project's traffic impacts, TP&T recommends the Planning Board consider the following items be required as conditions of the project's Planning Board Special Permit.

Prior to the Issuance of the Project's Building Permit:

- A. Contribute \$25,000 to the City toward funding a Hubway station to be located in the Quadrangle area. The final location of the Hubway station will be determined by the City and will provide another mobility option for residents, visitors, and retail employees' and patrons
- B. Contribute \$27,800 to the City toward the continued feasibility study and designs for the Alewife bicycle and pedestrian bridge and commuter rail station. The amount is based on the number of units and contributions by other development projects in the district.
- C. The applicant should consider providing automatic power assist doors to enter/exit the bicycle room, which will make it more convenient for cyclists.

Prior to the Issuance of the Project's Occupancy Permit:

- D. To improve bicycle conditions on Concord Avenue, the existing on-street bicycle lane along the site frontage on the north side of Concord Avenue (Wheeler Street/Concord Avenue intersection to the existing cycle track), should be reconstructed into a cycle track to connect with the existing cycle track further west on Concord Avenue. The applicant should design the cycle track, to be approved by the City, and construct the cycle track. Following construction of the cycle track, the property owner should also be responsible for maintaining the cycle track along the site frontage (i.e. remove debris, snow and ice).
- E. If requested by the City, the Applicant should purchase and install a bench for the inbound bus stop on the south side of Concord Avenue, located across the street from the Project site.
- F. The Project should be required to implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to encourage residents to choose preferred modes of transportation, including, transit, walking and bicycling over traveling by single-occupancy vehicles. Such measures are key to ensure that the Project achieves the low level of vehicle trip impact anticipated in the TIS.
 - a. To establish the habit of using mass transit, each adult member of each household (up to 2) upon move-in will be offered a Charlie Card valued at the cost of 50% of a Monthly MBTA LinkPass (currently \$84.50/month but subject to fare increases) for 3 consecutive months. This requirement renews each time a new household moves in to incentivize new household to use public transit.
 - o It should be noted that the Special Permit for the Phase I Project (PB#269) requires the Project to provide each adult member of a new household (up to 2) MBTA Charlie Cards, with the value of one month of a combined bus/subway pass. TP&T recommends that to be consistent for all new residents in both Phase I or Phase II, the Planning Board should permit the applicant to Provide the Phase I residents the updated transit incentive for 50% subsidy for 3 months, instead of 100% for one month.
 - b. Provide air pumps and other bike repair tools in the bicycle storage areas.
 - c. The Property owner shall join the Alewife Transportation Management Association (TMA) including access to shuttle buses to/from Alewife MBTA station as provided by the TMA or a comparable shuttle service.
 - d. Install a real-time multimodal transportation display screen to help people decide which mode to choose for each trip or post at a transportation information center located in an area that is central, visible, convenient, and equally accessible to all residents and visitors. The center will feature information on:
 - Available pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the Project site.
 - MBTA maps, schedules, and fares.
 - Area shuttle map and schedule, if one exists.
 - "Getting Around in Cambridge" map (available at the Cambridge Community Development Department office).
 - Location of bicycle parking.
 - Hubway regional bikeshare system.
 - Carsharing/Ride-matching programs.
 - Other pertinent transportation information.
 - e. The Property owner shall designate a transportation coordinator (TC) for the site to manage the TDM program and coordination with the TMA. The TC will also oversee the marketing and promotion of transportation options to all residents at the site in a variety of ways:
 - Posting information in a prominent location in the building and on the Project's website, social media, and property newsletters.

605 Concord Avenue/Project

- Responding to individual requests for information in person and via phone and email.
 - Provide one new resident packet of transportation information to all units upon move-in.
- f. The TC will participate in any TC trainings offered by the City of Cambridge or local TMA.
- g. The Project should not charge for bicycle parking.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE Planning Board Criteria Performance Summary
 Special Permit Transportation Impact Study (TIS)

Planning Board Permit Number: 319

Project Name: 605 Concord Avenue/Wheeler Street Phase 2 Mixed-Use Development

Total Data Entries = 14

Total Number of Criteria Exceedances = 2

a. Project Vehicle Trip Generation

Time Period	Build	Exceeds Criterion
Weekday Daily	318	N
AM Peak	12	N
PM Peak	32	N
SAT Peak	35	N

b. Level of Service (VLOS) at Signalized Intersections

There are no signalized study intersections

c. Traffic on Residential Streets

There are no Residential Streets in the study area

d. Lane Queue (for signalized intersections critical lane)

There are no signalized study intersections

e. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Intersection	Crosswalk	AM Peak			PM Peak		
		Existing	Build	Exceeds Criterion	Existing	Build	Exceeds Criterion
<i>Concord Avenue at:</i>							
Fawcett Street	North	B	B	N	B	B	N
	West	F	F	Y	F	F	Y
Between Wheeler and Site Driveway East	Signalized	C	C	N	C	C	N
Wheeler Street	North	C	C	N	C	C	N

Adjacent Street	Link (between)	Sidewalks or Walkways Present?	Exceeds Criteria	Bicycle Facilities or Right of Ways Present?	Exceeds Criteria
Concord Avenue	Wheeler and Fawcett	Y	N	Y	N



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE Planning Board Criteria Performance Summary
Special Permit Transportation Impact Study (TIS)**

Planning Board Permit Number: _____

PROJECT NAME: 605 Concord Avenue/Wheeler Street Phase 2 Mixed-Use Development

Address: 605 Concord Avenue, Cambridge MA

Owner Name: Abodez Acorn Concord LLC

Contact Person: Phil Terzis AIA

Contact Address: One Gateway Center, Suite 805

300 Washington Street

Newton, MA 02458

Contact Phone: 617-433-9700

SIZE:

ITE sq. ft.: 49 residential rental units and 2,800 sq. ft. retail (likely quality restaurant)

Zoning sq. ft.: 60,164 sq. ft.

Land Use Type: Residential and Retail

PARKING:

Existing Parking Spaces: 21 Use: Retail

New Parking Spaces: 49 Use: Residential

19 Use: Quality Restaurant

(Net addition, 47 residential spaces)

Date of Parking Registration Approval: N/A

TRIP GENERATION:

	Daily	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour	Saturday Peak Hour
Total Trips	636	26	65	68
Vehicle	318	12	32	35
Transit	208	9	21	22
Pedestrian	74	4	8	7
Bicycle	36	1	4	4

MODE SPLIT (PERSON TRIPS): _____ RESIDENTIAL & (QUALITY RESTAURANT)

Vehicle (SOV): 34.9% (49%) Bicycle: 5.5% (4%)

Rideshare (HOV): 4.4% (11%) Pedestrian: 10.5% (9%)

Transit: 30.8% (23%) Work at Home: 14.0% (4%)

TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANT:

Company Name: VHB

Contact Name: David Black/Meghan Houdlette, P.E.

Phone: 617.728.7777

Date of Building Permit Approval: _____