



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Joseph E. Barr, Director

Date: August 5, 2019

Subject: Proposed Cannabis Retail Store at 580 Massachusetts Avenue (PB348)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP&T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application and a Transportation Logistic Plan from Home Grown 617 LLC to operate an approximately 5,078 square feet retail store located at 580 Massachusetts Avenue (previously Harvest Market). TP&T offers the Planning Board the following comments for your consideration.

- For a Cannabis Retail Store Special Permit Applications, TP&T established Transportation Logistics Plan Guidelines to help frame the type and level of information that an Applicant should provide on transportation, parking, loading/delivery services, and the Project's impacts on nearby streets, sidewalks and surrounding neighborhood. A copy of the Transportation Logistics Plan Guidelines is attached.
- TP&T also created a Cannabis Retail Store Transportation Summary Form to help the Planning Board evaluate the key transportation information for a Cannabis Retail Store Special Permit Application and be able to compare multiple Applications to each other. The Summary Form template is attached.
- The proposed Home Grown LLC Transportation Logistics Plan and Summary Form are attached. Overall, TP&T believes that there are two key concerns for this Project primarily because of its specific location at 580 Massachusetts Avenue as follows:
 1. Potential impacts from vehicle drop-off/pick-up (i.e. Uber/Lyft) blocking the MBTA bus stop at Massachusetts Avenue/Pearl Street which is located directly in front of the site, and,
 2. Potential long lines of people on the relatively narrow and highly used sidewalk on Massachusetts Avenue in front of site, including the busy MBTA bus stop, and potential lines of people wrapping around the corner onto Pearl Street.
- The two concerns above are based on observations by TP&T staff on Saturday, June 22, 2019 at noontime at the New England Treatment Access (NETA) Cannabis Retail store in Brookline. There was a high demand for personal vehicle and ride-hailing vehicle pick-up/drop-off activity in front of the NETA site. A similar level of activity in front of the 580 Massachusetts Avenue site will negatively impact the MBTA bus stop, such as blocking buses, especially during evening peak hours when activity for a Retail Cannabis Store peaks.

- TP&T staff observed approximately 100 people lined-up outside the NETA site in Brookline waiting to get into the store. There were two lines (for people with appointments and for people without appointments). When additional Cannabis Retail stores open in the region, long lines will likely diminish, but TP&T does not know when that will happen and for the near term, lines of people on the Massachusetts Avenue sidewalk and wrapping around onto Pearl Street or elsewhere could be an issue with blocking sidewalk access. The Applicant's Transportation Logistics Plan stated that "if lines on the outside start to form, thereby causing any congestion on the public way, overflow area on Pearl Street will be utilized." It is not clear exactly what overflow area on Pearl Street the plan is referring to, given the relatively narrow sidewalk width.
- TP&T recommends that the Applicant work with TP&T to address the issues above and that an acceptable operations plan should be approved by TP&T prior to issuance of a Building Permit. This plan should address in greater detail how the Applicant is intending to manage sidewalk crowding in a manner that maintains safety and access to adjacent buildings, transit, and other key uses.
- Home Grown 617 LLC is proposed to be opened seven days a week from 10:00 AM to 11:00 PM. The Project has no parking spaces of its own and will rely on existing on and off-street public parking. The Applicant's Transportation Logistic Plan conducted a parking occupancy study on Wednesday June 12 and Saturday June 8, 2019 for on-street parking spaces (within 500-feet around the site), and for Municipal Parking Lot #5, and the Green Street Municipal Parking Garage. The results for Wednesday June 12, 2019 found that the peak parking demand was at 12:00 PM and there was 1 vacant on-street parking space, 3 vacant spaces in Municipal Lot #5 and 11 vacant spaces in the Green Street Garage. On Saturday June 8, 2019 the peak parking demand was at 3:00 PM and there were 2 vacant on-street spaces, 12 vacant spaces in Municipal Lot #5 and 44 vacant spaces in the Green Street Garage. TP&T agrees with the conclusion of the Applicant's Transportation Logistics Plan that parking in the area is constrained. TP&T further agrees with the Logistics Plan's statement that the constrained parking will help reduce auto travel to the site and encourage transit usage (and other modes such as bicycling).
- The Project proposes to use an existing loading zone on Green Street in the rear of the site. The Transportation Logistics Plan stated that the loading zone is exclusive to the dispensary and is expected to be utilized 20 times per week. It is not clear what they mean by exclusive to the dispensary since the loading zone is available for general use in accordance with the Traffic Regulations and is not exclusive to the proposed project. The Transportation Logistics Plan did not provide information about the current availability of the loading zone on Green Street (it is currently being used for construction related activity and may continue to be for several years into the future). There is an existing loading zone on the east side of Pearl Street adjacent to the Pepper Sky Thai restaurant, but that loading zone is highly used and often by delivery trucks for the Target store at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Pearl Street. One potential option for loading deliveries could be use of the Green Street Municipal Garage during times when the Garage is least used (note that garage is most heavily used during the middle of the day on weekdays, but there are other times when usage is lower, and more space is available). We are also open to other solutions that will help better manage loading operations.

- The Transportation Logistics Plan estimated approximately 178 weekday evening peak hour vehicle trips, 54 transit trips, 64 pedestrian trips, and 20 bicycle trips. The trip generation estimates were based on peak hour pedestrian counts at the NETA site and the number of registers at the NETA site (20 registers) compared to 10 registers at the proposed site. Given the limited information available about trip generation for cannabis stores, it is difficult to evaluate whether this provides a good estimate for the trip generation, particularly upon initial opening. As a result, TP&T recommends that the Applicant be required to work with TP&T and the Cambridge Police Department during the initial opening period, to identify and respond to any unexpected situations (i.e., sidewalk crowding, blocking of bus stops, or other safety issues).
- The Applicant's site plan includes 22 long-term bicycle parking spaces (11 bicycle racks). TP&T believes that providing long-term bicycle parking spaces for employees is great, but it is not clear why they picked 22 long-term bicycle spaces, since the Project will have approximately 14 employees at one time.
- There is no available space for the Applicant to provide short-term bicycle parking spaces on their property (i.e., bicycle spaces for customers) because the existing building has no property line set-back. Typically, in cases like this, TP&T recommends that the Applicant contribute to the City's public bicycle fund in lieu of providing short-term bicycle parking spaces on their property. For this Project, TP&T recommends a minimum contribution for 4 short-term bicycle spaces (i.e., 2 bicycle racks) to the City's Public Bicycle Parking Fund.
- TP&T believes that the best way to minimize any traffic and parking impacts from a Project in Cambridge is for the Applicant to provide robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to advise and encourage employees and customers to travel by sustainable modes, such as walking, bicycling taking public transit, and carpooling.
- TP&T recommends the following baseline TDM measures and monitoring program, which are routinely recommended by TP&T as conditions for special permit approval and are consistent with approved registered marijuana dispensaries (RMD) in Cambridge. Because this project is for a Cannabis Retail Store (compared to a RMD project) the Planning Board may also want to consider additional transportation mitigation measures depending on project-specific characteristics and potential transportation impacts on the surrounding area because a Cannabis Retail store may likely generate more trips and traffic impacts than a RMD.
 1. Provide 100% MBTA T-Pass subsidies to all employees. (may be pro-rated for part-time employees) The program shall be administered by the employer through the MBTA Corporate Pass/Perq Program.
 2. Offer all employees Gold-Level Bluebikes bikeshare membership, to be administered through the Bluebikes Corporate Program by the employer.
 3. Provide lockers for employees that walk or bike to work.
 4. Have available an air pump and bicycle repair tools for employee and customers to use when needed.
 5. Designate an employee of the facility as a Transportation Coordinator (TC) to manage the implementation of TDM measures and a transportation monitoring program if required. The TC will:

- a. Post in a central and visible location (i.e., lobby for customers, break room for employees) information on available non-automobile services in the area, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Available pedestrian and bicycle facilities near the Project site.
 - ii. MBTA maps, schedules and fares.
 - iii. "Getting Around Cambridge" map (available at the Cambridge Community Development office).
 - iv. Locations of bicycle parking.
 - v. Bluebikes regional public bikeshare system.
 - vi. Carpool-matching programs.
 - vii. Other pertinent transportation information.
 - Instead or in addition to posting paper MBTA schedules, provide a real-time transportation display screen in a central location to help people decide which mode to choose for each trip.
- b. Compile and provide up-to-date transportation information explaining all commuter options to all employees. This information should also be distributed to all new employees as part of their orientation.
- c. Provide customers with sustainable transportation information to access the site.
- d. Provide and maintain information on the project's public website, newsletters, social media, etc. on how to access the site by all modes, with emphasis on sustainable modes.
- e. Participate in any TC training offered by the City or local Transportation Management Association.
- f. If requested by TP&T or the Community Development Department (CDD), the Applicant should provide TP&T and CDD information on employee and customer travel modes and where they customarily park, as well as information on loading and delivery operations. Surveys of employees and customer shall be designed and conducted in a manner approved by TP&T and CDD.
- g. Prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, the Applicant should provide a loading and service delivery management plan that includes all delivery activity to TP&T for TP&T's approval.
- Provide a one-time contribution to the City toward transportation, transit and/or bicycle improvements to support non-automobile travel modes for employees and customers and to mitigate the Project' traffic and parking impacts on the surrounding area. TP&T recommends the Applicant contribute \$35,000 to the City prior to the issuance of a Building Permit to help improve transportation services, operations, and information in the immediate area.