



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Joseph E. Barr, Director

Date: September 3, 2019

Subject: Proposed Cannabis Retail Store at 567 Massachusetts Avenue (Western Front, LLC (PB351))

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application and the Transportation Logistics Plan from Western Front, LLC to operate an approximately 2,027 square foot Cannabis Retail Store at 567 Massachusetts Avenue (i.e. Central Kitchen restaurant site). TP+T offers the Planning Board the following comments for your consideration.

- This is the second Planning Board Special Permit Application for a Cannabis Retail Store in Cambridge and similar to the recent Home Grown, LLC application this Project is also located in Central Square. Specifically, this Application is to occupy the first floor of the existing Central Kitchen restaurant adjacent to the "Graffiti Alley".
- The proposed Western Front, LLC Transportation Logistics Plan and Summary Form are attached.
- **TP+T believes a key concern for this Project is potential impacts from vehicle drop-off/pick-ups directly in front of the site in a bicycle lane.** This is a location where we already receive complaints about pick-up and drop-off activity in the bike lane, and the opening of a cannabis retail store in this location could exacerbate these issues if not managed properly.
- The second key concern from TP+T is **potential long lines of people on the public sidewalk**, especially since the project has a small waiting room/education area that can accommodate approximately 4 people. These lines could also potentially wrap around to Graffiti Alley.
- **On the positive side, Central Square is a transit-oriented location** served by the MBTA Central Square Red Line station, 7 MBTA bus lines, four Bluebike bikesharing stations and the MASCO M2 shuttle bus which is open to the public for \$4 per ride. Central Square also has five municipal parking lots, Green Street Municipal garage, on-street metered parking spaces, and a nearby public parking garage at 55 Franklin Street at University Park.
- The Special Permit Application indicated that trash containing cannabis infused products will be stored securely on-site and transported back to the cultivation facility from which they were purchased. The Application also stated that business related trash will be disposed by a commercial trash pickup. However, the exact operational details for the trash removal was not provided. For example, for trash management,

the Central Kitchen restaurant currently has a dumpster located behind the restaurant in Municipal Lot #5. **It was unclear if Western Front intends to share the Central Kitchen dumpster (for their business waste).**

- The Central Kitchen Dumpster is allowed pursuant to a 20-year old 1999 License Agreement with the City. TP+T would like to have that License Agreement updated to match more current Agreements, fees and an updated dumpster area (i.e. new concrete pad, new fence enclosure, landscaping, etc.). Furthermore, TP&T believes that if the current dumpster area is carefully designed it may be possible to fit another dumpster (and not impact an existing tree located in that area). Another dumpster could also help address some ongoing dumpster issues in Lot #5. **TP+T recommends that Applicant design and reconstruct a new dumpster area as approved by TP+T, property owner, and other City departments, including obtaining an updated License Agreement with the City.**
- Deliveries vehicles are expected to use existing loading zones in Municipal Lot 5. At no time should transport vehicles stop on Massachusetts Avenue or any public street in a way that blocks bicycle lanes or impedes the flow of traffic.
- According to the Special Permit application, the Western Front Cannabis Retail Store is expected to operate between the hours of 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM subject to approval from the Planning Board and any other permits. TP+T believes that one way to minimize negative transportation impacts (i.e. drop-offs/pick-ups on Massachusetts Avenue and lines of people on the sidewalk) could be by controlling the operating hours, such as not open until 10 AM to avoid morning peak hour and not be open during evening peak hour (i.e. 5-7 pm). However, this may not alleviate people waiting outside the store if it causes lines of people to wait until the store opens. Nonetheless, the ability to experiment and control operating hours might be a useful tool for the City to have. TP+T believes that 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 uncontrolled drop-offs/pick-ups by ridehailing services on Massachusetts Avenue remains a concern.
- **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.
- The Transportation Logistics Plan estimated approximately 26 weekday evening peak hour trips. For comparison, the Home Gown LLC Logistics Plan estimated approximately 178 weekday evening peak hour vehicle trips. It can therefore be seen that 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 bike lanes, or other safety issues).**
- The Applicant's site plan showed parking for 2 bicycles in the storage area for long-term bicycle parking (i.e. employees), although details, such as 1 inch = 10 feet scale plans were not provided and should be provide prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

- 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. TP+T recommends a minimum contribution for 2 short-term bicycle spaces (i.e., 1 bicycle rack) to the City's Public Bicycle Parking Fund, which would currently be \$800. This can be provided prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit.
- 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.
 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. Transportation information packets may be obtained from the Community Development Department.
 - 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, parking, 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. **Based on feedback from the Planning Board at the Special Permit hearing for Home Gown LLC, TP+T recommends the Applicant contribute \$35,000 to the City with half due prior to the issuance of a Building Permit and half due prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit to help improve transportation services, operations, and information in the immediate area.**
- No offsite deliveries will be made from this location to customers.