



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

# TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Cambridge Planning Board

**From:** Joseph E. Barr, Director

**Date:** October 31, 2019

**Subject:** Proposed Cannabis Retail Store at 1686 Massachusetts Avenue (Budega Inc. (PB#355))

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application and the Transportation Logistics Plan from Budega, Inc. to operate an approximately 2,332 square foot Cannabis Retail Store at 1686 Massachusetts Avenue (i.e., currently Stereo Jack store). TP+T offers the Planning Board the following comments for your consideration.

- TP+T's comments on this Project are similar to those that we provided the Planning Board for the Cannabis Retail Stores in Central Square located at 567 Massachusetts Avenue (Western Front LLC) and at 580 Massachusetts Avenue (Home Grown 617 LLLC), which is that our key concerns are potential impacts from vehicles drop-off/pick-ups, and potential long lines of people on the public sidewalk.
  - Like the 567 Mass. Avenue Project (Western Front LLC), the 1686 Massachusetts Avenue building also has a sidewalk curb extension and a bicycle lane directly in front of the building. If drop-off/pick-ups, loading, and service deliveries are not actively managed to occur only in legal and safe locations, it could impact the bicycle lane and therefore bicyclist safety.
  - Because the Project has a small waiting area, lines could potential extend outside the building onto the public sidewalk. The Applicant proposes measures, such as appointment only, or a cell phone texting waiting system, like ones used at restaurants. If well managed, TP+T believes these systems can minimize any significant impacts on public sidewalks.
- Although the 1686 Massachusetts Avenue site is accessible by public transit, such as a 10-minute walk from the Porter Square Red Line Station, it is not as near to public transit as the recently approved Cannabis Retail Stores in Central Square. Massachusetts Avenue has metered parking spaces but these are highly used based on the Project's Transportation Logistics Plan which indicated that on-street parking ranged from 65% to 95% occupancy from a study conducted on September 6<sup>th</sup> and September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The limited availability of parking may however also discourage customers from driving to the site and instead use more sustainable modes, such as walking, bicycling and taking public transit. Customers that do drive will need to rely on the on-street metered parking spaces or park and walk from a public parking facility in the Harvard Square area.

- There are on-street loading zones on Massachusetts Avenue, south of the site from 7 AM to 12 PM, with metered parking spaces from 12 PM to 8 PM. The Transportation Logistics Plan did not indicate the percent occupancy of the loading zones but given the limited number of loading and delivery trips expected (i.e., 2-3x/week), TP+T believes the Project will not have or cause a significant loading impact.
- No offsite deliveries should be made from this location to customers.
- 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.
- The Project proposes 6 employee long-term bicycle spaces (i.e., 3 bike racks) in the basement. Access will be from a stairway which is not good because it would be difficult to transport a bicycle up and down stairs and may discourage use of traveling by bicycle. TP+T recommends that the Project provide long-term bicycle parking for employees on the first floor like the Western Front LLC Cannabis Retail Store Project. A final plan should be provided to and approved by TP+T and CDD 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. Even though there are 4 existing bike racks in front of the Project on the sidewalk, 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 and the funds would help the City install additional public bicycle racks in the City as demand continues to increase for bicycle parking.
- The Transportation Logistics Plan attempted to estimate the Project's Trip Generation (i.e., 10 AM and 13 PM vehicle trips), but given the limited information available about trip generation for cannabis stores, it is difficult for TP+T to evaluate whether they provided good estimates for the trip generation, particularly upon initial opening. **As a result, TP+T recommends that the Applicant work with TP+T and the Cambridge Police Department on an operations plan which should be approved by the City prior to issuance of an Occupancy Permit.** This plan should address in detail how the Applicant is intending to manage bicycle lane infringement and sidewalk crowding in a manner that maintains safety and access to adjacent buildings, transit, and other key uses. **TP+T also recommends that the Applicant be required to work with TP+T and the Cambridge Police Department on a specific plan for the initial opening period, to identify and respond to any unexpected situations (i.e., sidewalk crowding, blocking bike lanes, or other safety issues).**
- 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 Cannabis Retail Stores 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. **Because the Project is an Economic Empowerment Applicant, 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 area.**