



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

# TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Cambridge Planning Board

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

**Date:** August 6, 2020

**Subject:** Proposed Cannabis Retail Store at 759 Massachusetts Avenue (GreenSoul Organics, LLC)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application and the Transportation Logistics Plan from GreenSoul Organics LLC to operate an approximately 1,365 square foot Cannabis Retail Store at 759 Massachusetts Avenue (Previous Hair Collage hair salon in Central Square). 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 other Cannabis Retail Store Special Permit Applications, including the potential impacts from vehicles drop-off/pick-ups, and potential long lines of people on the public sidewalk.
  - The project frontage has an extended sidewalk and a bicycle lane directly in front of the site. To the right of the site and in front of the 1369 Coffee House, the previous Sublime Hair Salon, and Pill Hardware store is a loading zone (7 AM – 6 PM), followed by metered parking spaces. If pick-ups and drop-offs 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 to prevent lines of people on the public sidewalk. If well managed, TP+T believes these systems can minimize any significant impacts on public sidewalks.
- The Project is located in Central Square which is 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 lot at 438 Green Street behind the Central Square Post Office building.
- On page 12 in the Special Application, it stated, "Other than parking in the designated loading zone and walking into the rear entrance, all loading activity occurs within the facility itself." TP+T recommends that the Applicant clarify if they are talking about the designated loading zone on Massachusetts Avenue or parking in the loading zone in the rear alley? There was no clear site plan of the rear alley

and it was unclear if a vehicle can park there for loading activity because there are dumpsters located in the alley.

- The Project proposes 2 employee long-term bicycle parking spaces (i.e., 1 bike rack) in the back of the house space on the first floor of the Project site. A detailed plan (i.e., 1 inch = 10 feet scale) was not provided in the Application. TP+T supports providing on-site, weather protected bicycle parking for employees and recommends 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 existing bike racks in front of the Project on the public 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 memo dated June 1, 2020, from the Greater Boston Survey and Engineering indicated that the loading zone is expected to be utilized 20 times per week which is inconsistent with Special Permit Application which stated two to three times per week. This should be clarified or corrected. The Cannabis Retail Stores Transportation Logistics Plan Summary Form also had errors. It indicated 2,342 square feet instead of 1,365 square feet. It also indicated different mode share percentages for customers and different Trip Generation numbers compared to Table 3 in the June 1, 2020 Transportation Logistics memo. All these items should be clarified or corrected.
- The Transportation Logistics Plan memo dated June 1, 2020 attempted to estimate the Project's Trip Generation and indicated that the project would generate approximately 124 vehicle trips during the evening peak hour, 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).**
- 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.

- GreenSoul Organics stated in their Special Permit Application that they recognize the importance of minimizing traffic in the City and will put forth its best efforts to encourage customers to take public transportation. TP+T notes however, that the proposed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures in the Special Permit application was not as robust as required in Special Permits for other Cannabis Retail Stores in Cambridge. **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 (i.e., walking, bicycling, taking public transportation).
    - 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's 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.**