



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Joseph E. Barr, Director

Date: October 22, 2021

Subject: Proposed Cannabis Retail Store at 98 Winthrop Street (PB384)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Application for a Planning Board Special Permit and Transportation Logistics Plan from Western Front, LLC to operate an approximately 1,589 square foot Cannabis Retail Store in the rear of the 98 Winthrop Street building behind the Red House restaurant.

This is a brand-new Application for a Planning Board Special Permit for a Retail Cannabis Store at 98 Winthrop Street. The space was previously a Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD), which is no longer operating. The Proposed project will operate a new retail cannabis store in the previous RMD space.

The Project site has no off-street automobile parking spaces and proposes to not add any new off-street parking spaces. The Project proposes to contribute to the City's Short-Term Bicycle Parking Fund under 6.104.2 for two (2) short-term bicycle spaces (i.e., one (1) bike rack). The Project will also provide two (2) long-term bicycle parking spaces (i.e., one (1) bike rack) within the premises for employee use.

TP+T offers the Planning Board the following comments for your consideration.

- Harvard Square is a transit-oriented location served by the MBTA Harvard Square Red Line station, 13 MBTA bus lines, two nearby Bluebikes bikesharing stations, and on-street and off-street vehicle parking, including private commercial parking garages. Overall, TP+T believes that providing no new automobile parking spaces for this project will not cause a substantial negative impact if employees and customers are informed and encouraged to access the Project by sustainable forms of transportation, such as taking public transportation, bicycling, and walking.
- TPT+T believes that a key concern for this Project is potential long lines of people queuing on Winthrop Street, especially since the Project has a small waiting area that can accommodate no more than approximately 10 people based on a total occupancy load of 20 people for the store. To prevent people queuing on Winthrop Street, the Application indicated that if needed customers can queue within the nearby Charlies' Kitchen restaurant, however no plans were provided in the Application. The Application also mentioned they will use Q-Less appointment software to allow customers to visit other locations within the retail district in Harvard Square while waiting for an appointment, but there was little information about the how the software would work, such as what will be the maximum number of appointments issued per hour, and if the store will be appointment only or allow walk-ins. **TP+T**

recommends appointment only for the initial six months unless authorized by the City to shorten the time period if no queuing issues occur, but the City may also re-start and extend the appointment only process if it is reasonably needed to prevent queuing, nuisance or safety issues.

- **At no time should there be lines of people outside the building entrance.** TP+T also notes that any surveillance cameras must abide by the City's Surveillance Technology Ordinance, to the extent that ordinance may apply.
- The Project proposes that customers will be greeted by a Western Front ambassador stationed outside the front entrance. TP+T believes that any greetings by ambassadors, and any security personnel, should be inside the store and not outside, especially on any public right-of-way such as on Winthrop Street unless approved by the Cambridge Police Department.
- The Project also proposed that security personnel will provide specific attention to Winthrop Park and the pedestrian way on Winthrop Street, but it is unclear if the Cambridge Police Department will want security personnel monitoring Winthrop Park. **TP+T recommends that an initial Operations plan should be approved by the Cambridge Police Department and TP+T prior to issuance of a Building Permit and final detailed plan approved prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit.** The operations plan should include details regarding managing sidewalk crowding while maintaining safety and access to adjacent buildings and transit, as well as management of vehicle drop-off/pick-up around the site and other key uses.
- TP+T supports the Applicant's proposal to provide two (2) long-term bicycle parking spaces (i.e., one (1) bike rack) and contribute to the City's Public Bicycle Parking Fund for two short-term bicycle parking spaces (i.e., one (1) bike rack). **The two long-term bicycle parking spaces and the contribution for the two short-term bicycle spaces should be made prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit.**
- Loading and service deliveries for the Project are proposed to use the loading zone spaces on Winthrop Street (when it is open to vehicles between 2:00 AM and 11:00 AM). The Project may also use available on-street metered parking spaces or off-street parking spaces at a permitted commercial parking garages in the area. At no time should a transport vehicle stop, block, or impede the flow of traffic for vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians on Winthrop Street or any other public right of way. **Prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, the Applicant should provide a loading and service delivery management plan to TP+T for approval.**
- The Applicant does not propose conducting home delivery from this location but indicated it may want to pivot to that use in the future and is requesting that the Planning board allow TP+T to administratively review any future proposals to provide home delivery, thereby eliminating the need for a Planning Board review. TP+T believes that home deliveries from this location could be problematic since the site has no parking spaces of its own and is located on a street that is closed to vehicular traffic after 11am, but we are willing to consider supporting a potential future home delivery plan for this site if 1.) the Planning Board wishes to provide TP+T that authority, 2.) The Applicant can demonstrate they have the access to off-street parking spaces, 3.) Transporting cannabis between the store and parking spaces can be done in a safe manner and not cause any adverse transportation or parking impacts 4.) the Applicant agrees to any other conditions or commitments deemed necessary by TP+T or other City Departments and to abide by all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

- If the Planning Board approves the Special Permit for this Project, 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 other 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. 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.
 - b. Compile and provide up-to-date transportation information explaining all commuter options to all employees and 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 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.
- The Permittee shall contribute \$35,000 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. **Half of this contribution shall be made prior to the issuance of a Building Permit and the other half shall be made prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit.**