



City of Cambridge  
Department of Public Works

*Katherine Watkins, Commissioner*

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May 31, 2023

TO: Planning Board

FROM: James Wilcox, PE  
City Engineer

**RE: 2161 Massachusetts Ave Special Permit**

We are in receipt of the Special Permit Application for 2161 Massachusetts Ave, dated April 3, 2023. We have reviewed the materials and have presented below some comments related to the interests of the Department of Public Works.

The submitted Application does not acknowledge all the requirements of the DPW, and thus we would require additional information, specifically related to the management of stormwater, prior to advancing any permits on this project.

We have outlined our concerns below.

**Resiliency to Flooding:**

The Application does not address the projects response to the projected flood elevations as presented in the Floodviewer. Based on the mapping there is a 1% Long Term Flood Elevation risk at the parcel. The mapped limits of the flooding on the parcel for this 1% event appear to be minor, but we have asked the Applicant to confirm the limits of the flooding and the structures elevations related to it.

Based on the limits of the Flooding, this likely can be addressed and confirmed as part of the DPW's subsequent reviews for a Building Permit for the Development.

**Urban Forest:**

As the project does not require a formal tree study, impacts to trees on private property, and the mitigation associated with these impacts, will be managed under the Tree Protection Ordinance. The Application does identify trees to be removed, but the Applicant should be aware that removals of jurisdictional trees will require a permit from the Urban Forestry Division.

The existing multi-stem magnolia tree at the corner of the lot is identified to be maintained but is not shown in the renderings. We respectfully request that the Applicant confirm if this tree will be maintained. The Tree appears to be in good condition and the DPW would advocate for it to be saved.

The canopy of this tree, along with all onsite trees to be maintained, should be considered, related to the potential for impacts by construction and logistics associated with development of the site.

**Stormwater Management:**

Under the City Land Disturbance Regulations, the Applicant will need to obtain a Stormwater Control Permit from the Department of Public Works, prior to the start of construction. The permit requirements cover the design standards and long-term operation and maintenance of a management system for the project site, as well as the construction phase erosion and sedimentation control plans.

The Application does not acknowledge this requirement in the Application. DPW requests that the Applicant acknowledge this requirement and provide some initial indication as to how the standards of the Permit will be addressed.

**Public Infrastructure:**

As the development progresses through the Building Permit process, we will review the site and utility design related to DPW standards and requirements. The DPW reserves the right to establish appropriate mitigation measures, related to impacts to public utility infrastructure and the public right of way (streets and sidewalks), throughout the process as the design presents the full scope of these impacts.

As the project is further advanced, DPW will work with the Applicant to ensure that the requirements noted above are addressed. Formal complete engineering review will be undertaken by the DPW at the time of the Building Permit Application, to confirm that all DPW Standards have been met.

We look forward to working with the Applicant on this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns related to the comments or information provided above.

Sincerely,



James Wilcox, PE  
City Engineer