



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ  
Acting Assistant City  
Manager for Community  
Development

To: Planning Board  
From: Jeff Roberts, Land Use and Zoning Planner  
Date: March 24, 2015  
Re: **PB #243, Alexandria PUD Request for Parking Reduction**

**Overview**

The Planning Board in 2010 approved a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for about 1.5 million square feet of commercial uses and about 220,000 square feet of residential uses on several sites along Binney Street (now called "Alexandria Center"). Currently, development on all but one of the approved sites is completed or in construction.

The current proposal would not make any change to the approved uses or buildings, but would alter the parking characteristics. Comments on the proposal are included in the accompanying memo from the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T). The following approvals are required from the Planning Board:

- Reduction in Required Parking. Zoning requires one space per dwelling unit for residential uses, but allows the Planning Board to reduce the rate per the special permit provisions of Section 6.35.1. For commercial uses, zoning sets a maximum rate of 0.9 spaces per 1,000 square feet, which is not proposed to change.
- Amendment to PUD Special Permit. The original special permit authorizes 1,902 total parking spaces. To meet the reduced residential parking ratio and the current maximum non-residential parking ratio, the PUD will need to be amended to allow 1,847 spaces. The Applicant is seeking approval as a Minor Amendment, which requires a written determination. If the Board finds it to be a Major Amendment, two public hearings and the granting of a new special permit would be required.

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings (see appendix for zoning text excerpts)
Reduction in Required Parking (Section 6.35.1)	Lesser amount of parking will not cause excessive congestion, endanger public safety, substantially reduce parking availability for other uses or otherwise adversely impact the neighborhood, or provide environmental or other benefits. <i>(Based on review of Parking Analysis provided by Applicant.)</i>
Minor Amendment to PUD Special Permit (Section 12.37)	Change does not alter PUD concept in terms of density, floor area ratio, land usage, height, provision of open space, or physical relationship of elements of the development; examples are small changes in location of buildings, open space, parking.

344 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Voice: 617 349-4600  
Fax: 617 349-4669  
TTY: 617 349-4621  
www.cambridgema.gov



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**Traffic, Parking and Transportation**  
 344 Broadway  
 Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

www.cambridgema.gov/traffic

Joseph Barr, Director  
 Brad Gerratt, Deputy Director

Phone: (617) 349-4700  
 Fax: (617) 349-4747

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Cambridge Planning Board  
**From:** Joseph Barr, Director   
**Date:** March 24, 2015  
**Re:** PB# 243-Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc. Minor Amendment – reduction in parking

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP&T) reviewed the request for a Minor Amendment by Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc. for PUD Special Permit #243 (the Project), to reduce the Project's parking supply from 1,902 to 1,847 spaces.

TP&T had initially believed that 1,902 parking spaces was more than sufficient to meet the Project's parking needs and had encouraged Alexandria to consider seeking an amendment for a reduction. Studies have shown that limiting parking and providing TDM measures reduces vehicle trips and encourages sustainable modes of transportation, such as walking cycling and transit.

Alexandria subsequently commissioned a residential parking study, which study verified that 1 space/unit is more than sufficient to meet the Project's residential parking needs. TP&T supports the request to reduce the residential parking supply to 0.75 parking spaces/unit. Non-residential uses will continue to be subject to a maximum of 0.9 spaces/1,000 sf, per the PUD Special Permit. The Project's overall parking will be reduced from 1,902 spaces to 1,847 spaces (55 fewer spaces or a 2.9% parking space reduction). A summary of the parking supply by location is provided in the PUD Special Permit application under Scenario 1, and summarized below:

Uses	Building Program	Parking
Commercial	1,533,200 sf	1,380 spaces @ max. 0.9 spaces/1,000 sf
Residential	220,000 sf (220 units)	165 spaces @ min. 0.75 spaces/unit
Athenaeum Building	Pre-existing building	302 space (replacement of existing)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,753,200 sf</b>	<b>1,847 spaces</b>

Finally, in order to meet the PUD Special Permit condition for a maximum of 0.9 spaces/1,000 sf for R&D use, Alexandria should either sign 165 spaces for residential use only, or demonstrate, as part of the Project's yearly PTDM monitoring report, that no more than 1,380 spaces are being used by the Project's commercial uses at any one time, plus up to 302 spaces for the Athenaeum building. The maximum 0.9 spaces/1,000 sf was established to meet the Projects PTDM single occupancy mode share goal of 42%.

cc: CDD: Iram Farooq, Jeff Roberts, Susanne Rasmussen, Stephanie Groll  
 TP&T: Adam Shulman

## Reduction of Required Parking

**6.35.1** Reduction of Required Parking. Any minimum required amount of parking may be reduced only upon issuance of a special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals. A special permit shall be granted only if the Board determines and cites evidence in its decision that the lesser amount of parking will not cause excessive congestion, endanger public safety, substantially reduce parking availability for other uses or otherwise adversely impact the neighborhood, or that such lesser amount of parking will provide positive environmental or other benefits to the users of the lot and the neighborhood, including specifically, among other benefits, assisting in the provision of affordable housing units. In making such a determination the Board shall also consider whether or not less off street parking is reasonable in light of the following:

- (1) The availability of surplus off street parking in the vicinity of the use being served and/or the proximity of an MBTA transit station.
- (2) The availability of public or commercial parking facilities in the vicinity of the use being served provided the requirements of Section 6.23 are satisfied.
- (3) Shared use of off street parking spaces serving other uses having peak user demands at different times, provided that no more than seventy-five (75) percent of the lesser minimum parking requirements for each use shall be satisfied with such shared spaces and that the requirements of Subsection 6.23 are satisfied.

Example: Office and Theatre uses with peak user demands at different times. Office requires a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) spaces and the theatre requires a minimum of one hundred (100). Seventy-five (75) percent of the lesser minimum requirement is seventy-five (75) (75% of 100). Therefore seventy-five (75) spaces can be shared but twenty-five (25) (100-75) would still be required, making the total amount or required parking for both uses (150 + 25) one hundred and seventy-five (175).

- (4) Age or other occupancy restrictions which are likely to result in a lower level of auto usage; and
- (5) Impact of the parking requirement on the physical environment of the affected lot or the adjacent lots including reduction in green space, destruction of significant existing trees and other vegetation, destruction of existing dwelling units, significant negative impact on the historic resources on the lot, impairment of the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, or loss of pedestrian amenities along public ways.
- (6) The provision of required parking for developments containing affordable housing units, and especially for developments employing the increased FAR and Dwelling unit density provisions of Section 11.200, will increase the cost of the development, will require variance relief from other zoning requirements applicable to the development because of limitations of space on the lot, or will significantly diminish the environmental quality for all residents of the development.

## Approval of a PUD Minor Amendment

- 12.37** *Amendments to Final Development Plan.* After approval of the Final Development Plan by the Planning Board, the developer may seek amendments to the Final Development Plan, only if he encounters difficulties in constructing the PUD which could not have reasonably been foreseen, such as with terrain or soil conditions or other complications.
- 12.37.1** Amendments to the Final Development Plan shall be considered major or minor. Minor amendments, as specified in Section 12.37.2 shall be authorized by written approval of the Planning Board. Major amendments, as specified in Section 12.37.3, shall be considered as an original application for a Special Permit to construct a PUD and shall be subject to procedures specified in Section 12.34 through 12.36. The Planning Board shall decide whether proposed changes are major or minor.
- 12.37.2** Minor amendments are changes which do not alter the concept of the PUD in terms of density, floor area ratio, land usage, height, provision of open space, or the physical relationship of elements of the development. Minor amendments shall include, but not be limited to, small changes in the location of buildings, open space, or parking; or realignment of minor streets.
- 12.37.3** Major amendments represent substantial deviations from the PUD concept approved by the Planning Board. Major amendments shall include, but not be limited to, large changes in floor space, mix of uses, density, lot coverage, height, setbacks, lot sizes, open space; changes in the location of buildings, open space, or parking; or changes in the circulation system.