

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

2015 OCT 28 AM 8 50

## NOTICE OF PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION FOR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) PROPOSAL

Case Number:	231A, Amendment 3 (Major)
Location of Premises:	85 First Street; 107-119 First Street; 121-139 First Street; 159 First Street; 65 Bent Street; 29 Charles; 14-26 Hurley Street
Zoning:	Business A / PUD 4B; Industry A-1 / PUD 4B
Applicant:	First Street - US, LLC 111 First Street, Cambridge, MA
Owner:	Bent Associates Limited Partnership; The Eldor First Street Realty Trust; First Street – US LLC; Linear Retail Cambridge #2 LLC; Linear Retail Cambridge # 3 LLC; Donald Prescott & William Prescott; Hurley Corporation; B & D Realty Trust.
Application Date:	July 24, 2015
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	September 29, 2015
Date of Preliminary Determination:	September 29, 2015
Summary of Proposal:	Major Amendment to PUD Final Development Plan (Section 12.30), to enlarge the Development Parcel and increase the number of building sites from three to six. Amended Development Proposal includes a total of 243,125 square feet of residential Gross Floor Area and 191,641 square feet of commercial Gross Floor Area. One residential building at 159 First Street and one commercial building at 65 Bent Street have been completed per the original Final Development Plan. Application also seeks amended Project Review Special Permit (19.20), Reduction in Required Parking (6.35.1) and Modification of Bicycle Parking Requirements (6.108.1).
Determination:	<b>APPROVED, with conditions and requests for modification.</b>

Copies of this Preliminary Determination and plans, if applicable, are on file with the Community Development Department and the City Clerk.

Authorized Representative of the Planning Board: Jeffrey C. Roberts

For further information concerning this Preliminary Determination, please contact Liza Paden at 617-349-4647, or [lpaden@cambridgema.gov](mailto:lpaden@cambridgema.gov).

## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

### Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit application dated July 24, 2015 containing narrative volume that includes: Introduction, Cover Sheet, PUD Development Proposal, Article 19 Project Review Special Permit, Dimensional Forms, Ownership Certificates, Tree Study, Preliminary Stormwater Drainage, Water and Sewer Impact Statement, Noise Emissions Evaluation, LEED Narrative and Checklist, Transportation Impact Study; and graphics volume that includes: Site Plans, Amended Development Parcel, GFA Diagram, Neighborhood Maps, PUD Solar Study, Architecture, Open Space Design, Building Designs, Bicycle Parking Plan and Garage Plan, PUD Solar Study, Existing Site Survey.

### Other Documents

2. Memo to the Planning Board from Joseph Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated September 22, 2015.
3. Memo to the Planning Board from Community Development Department staff dated September 23, 2015, with attached memos from the Community Development Department and Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department dated March 18, 2015 and attached Planning Board Preliminary Determination on case PB #297 made on March 24, 2015.

## **APPLICATION SUMMARY**

This Application is a revised version of a Development Proposal that was heard and granted preliminary approval by the Planning Board on March 24, 2015. The previous Development Proposal sought a new PUD special permit (case PB #297) for development on four building sites, one of which is partly within the Development Parcel of a PUD previously approved by Special Permit PB #231A. The previous PB #297 application included a proposed amendment to PB #231A to reduce that PUD from three building sites to two, which have already been constructed (159 First Street and 65 Bent Street), resulting in two non-overlapping PUD Development Parcels.

The current Application proposes amending the PUD Final Development Plan authorized in PB #231A to include all six development sites that were part of the Development Proposal heard in March. The building sites, scale of development and arrangement of uses are substantially the same as in the previous Development Proposal. However, the current Application if approved by the Planning Board would result in a single PUD Final Development Plan governing development on all six sites.

The proposed site plan includes two buildings that have already been built pursuant to the existing PB #231A Final Development Plan: a 115-unit residential building with ground-floor retail space at 159 First Street, and a 108,600 square-foot commercial office/laboratory building

at 65 Bent Street (also known as 150 Second Street). The proposal also includes four proposed new buildings: a five-story office building with retail on the ground floor fronting First Street (“Parcel A” in the Application Plans), a six-story residential building with 118 dwelling units and retail on the ground floor fronting First Street (“Parcel B”), a four-story residential building with 18 units fronting Hurley Street (“Parcel C”) and a single-story retail building fronting First Street (“Parcel D”). The site plan also includes a below-grade parking deck with 142 parking spaces and 160 long-term bicycle parking spaces below Parcels B and C, with access and egress via Charles Street, as well as 62 surface parking spaces across all three blocks to serve retail uses. Between the proposed buildings on Parcels B and C, above the proposed parking deck, will be about 23,000 square feet of publicly accessible open space that will provide a mid-block pedestrian passage between Charles and Hurley Streets. The development would be phased, with construction of Parcels A and D expected complete in late 2016 and Parcels B and C expected complete in late 2018.

## FINDINGS

Based on a review of submitted Application materials and testimony given at the public hearing, the Board makes the following findings with reference to the criteria for preliminary approval of a Planned Unit Development Proposal as set forth in Article 12.000 of the Zoning Ordinance. In making these Findings the Board restates and affirms the Findings made in March, 2015 when granting a preliminary determination on case PB #297.

- (1) The Development Proposal conforms with the General Development Controls set forth in Section 12.50, and the development controls set forth in the specific PUD district in which the project is located.*

The Board finds that the Development Proposal is consistent with the General Development Controls set forth in Section 12.50 and the development controls of the PUD-4B zoning district contained in Section 13.50 of the Zoning Ordinance, provided that an Amendment to Special Permit PB #231A is also granted. More specific dimensional data will be included in the Final Development Plan.

- (2) The Development Proposal conforms with adopted policy plans or development guidelines for the portion of the city in which the PUD district is located.*

The relevant guidelines for the PUD district are contained in the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines and the Eastern Cambridge Planning Study (ECaPS), dated October 2001. Broadly, the proposed site development plan and mixed-use program reflect the overarching aims of those documents. The notion of creating a strong urban presence with continuity of built form and retail activity on First Street is highly desirable in East Cambridge and is consistent with the ECaPS and associated Design Guidelines. The Planning Board in its conditions is seeking more detailed illustrations of various aspects of the proposal in order to better understand what is being proposed, the extent of surface parking and arrangement of

buildings adjoining parking areas, and how proposed buildings will interface with the public realm and proposed open space.

(3) *The Development Proposal provides benefits to the city that outweigh its adverse effects.*

The Board finds that, on the whole, the proposed PUD will benefit the City by transforming the character of First Street from low-scale, often vacant buildings and marginal uses to a corridor with a strong urban form, providing a mix of residential, office and retail uses that will bring vitality to the neighborhood.

*In making this determination the Planning Board shall consider the following:*

(a) *The quality of the site design, including integration of a variety of land uses, building types, and densities; preservation of natural features; compatibility with adjacent land uses; provision and type of open space; provision of other amenities designed to benefit the general public*

The buildings are to contain a mix of office, retail and residential uses, and are distributed across the site in a manner that responds to the neighborhood context and provides a suitable transition in scale. While the Planning Board was pleased with the strong street frontage and retail presence on First Street, the proposed surface parking distributed across the three blocks, particularly on both sides of Hurley Street, was considered a poor urban design outcome. Provision of surface parking that is visible from public streets and pathways is not consistent with the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines or Citywide Urban Design Objectives. The Planning Board is therefore requesting further information regarding surface parking, particularly where it creates dead space along Hurley Street and how it relates to the retail frontage and open space on Parcels B and C.

The centrally located open space and mid-block connection between Charles and Hurley Streets provides a significant amenity for future residents, as well as benefiting the neighborhood. The creation of mid-block connections in the relatively dense urban blocks of East Cambridge is consistent with the Design Guidelines. The Planning Board finds that the proposed building interfaces, consisting of common areas, are an appropriate response to the future open space. The proposed building setbacks generally support the street-level design aims of the Design Guidelines, however the Planning Board finds that further study is needed to consider additional sidewalk setbacks to comfortably accommodate the anticipated levels of pedestrian activity.

(b) *Traffic flow and safety*

The Development Proposal that was heard by the Planning Board in March, 2015 included a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) in accordance with the Project Review Special Permit requirements (Section 19.20 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Development

Proposal and TIS were reviewed by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TPTD), which provided comments in a memorandum to the Board dated March 18, 2015 indicating that no traffic criteria are exceeded and suggesting measures to further reduce traffic and transportation impacts. The Planning Board shall make findings with regard to the Traffic Impact Criteria in issuing a Project Review Special Permit for the Final Development Plan.

A memo from TPTD dated September 22, 2015 indicates that the revised development proposal is not likely to change the results of the TIS. However, additional information has been requested by TPTD that is incorporated into the requests made in this Preliminary Determination and will be reviewed by the Board when reviewing the Final Development Plan.

*(c) Adequacy of utilities and other public works*

The Planning Board received a memorandum from the Department of Public Works dated March 17, 2015, indicating that the project is expected to meet all applicable requirements, pending detailed pre-construction review of proposed development at the Building Permit stage. The revised Application does not contain any changes that are expected to impact the Board's determination.

*(d) Impact on existing public facilities within the city*

The Development Proposal is not expected to result in any impact on public facilities.

*(e) Potential fiscal impacts*

The Development Proposal is not expected to result in negative fiscal impacts on the City.

## DETERMINATION

Section 12.35.2 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that the Planning Board make a preliminary determination on a Development Proposal prior to holding a hearing to consider granting a special permit for a PUD Final Development Plan. The Planning Board may make a preliminary approval, potentially with conditions and subject to additional review and final approval of a special permit at a subsequent public hearing, or deny the application.

It is the Planning Board's Determination to **APPROVE** the Development Proposal, subject to the following conditions and requests to be addressed in the preparation of a Final Development Plan. The Board reiterates and affirms the requests made in approving the prior preliminary determination on case PB #297 in March, 2015.

1. The Final Development Plan must address and respond to the points made in the Community Development Department (CDD) and Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TPTD) staff memoranda, dated September 23, 2015 and September 22, 2015 (respectively) and both referring to prior memoranda dated March 18, 2015 and attached to this Preliminary Determination. Without limiting the foregoing, the Board's particular requests, listed below, reflect and reinforce many of the points expressed in those memoranda.
2. The Final Development Plan must continue to include detailed site planning information and design drawings, including details on sidewalk width, setback dimensions and landscaping of setbacks, open spaces and parking lots. The Board will give particular consideration to whether the sidewalk widths and setbacks are appropriate for a street with the proposed amount of retail activity.
3. The Final Development Plan should continue to address the issues raised regarding surface parking, particularly where it impacts the streetscape character along Hurley Street as well as how the surface parking on Parcel B impacts the retail frontage and open space on either side. Consideration should be given to what the projected parking needs are for the anticipated retail types, whether the amount of surface parking can be reduced initially or over a phased period, and whether parking can be provided through alternative arrangements such as on-street metered parking or valet parking.
4. The Final Development Plan should continue to revisit the design approaches to the Parcel C, Parcel B and Parcel A buildings with a particular focus on visual balance, articulation, choice of façade materials and colors, geometry of windows, and screening treatment of rooftop mechanicals. The Final Development Plan should also discuss, in consultation with CDD staff, the level of architectural design detail that is appropriate at the PUD approval stage and the process for reviewing any future refinements or changes to the buildings' architectural design that may occur in the future.
5. The Final Development Plan must include a discussion of the types of retail anticipated in the ground floor spaces. Consideration should be given to retail types that will serve residents and workers in nearby neighborhoods as well as more "destination" types of retail and

services that may draw from a wider area. Further information should be provided to explain how the double-sided retail proposed for the Parcel B and Parcel D buildings will work.

Voting in the affirmative to approve the Development Proposal were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., Catherine Preston Connolly, H Theodore Cohen, Steven Cohen, Mary Flynn, Hugh Russell, and Associate Member Thacher Tiffany, appointed by the Chair to act on the case, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board.

For the Planning Board,



H Theodore Cohen, Chair.

A copy of this Preliminary Determination PB #231A, Amendment 3 shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk.



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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IRAM FAROOQ  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

To: Planning Board  
From: CDD Staff  
Date: September 23, 2015  
Re: **PB #231A Amendment – First Street Assemblage PUD**

### **Update**

The application currently before the Board is an amended version of a set of applications heard on March 24. Although the changes to the proposed development are modest, there have been substantial changes in the way the application is constructed. Therefore, the formal PUD review process is being “re-started” with the first hearing.

In the original application, the applicant proposed to amend PB #231A, an approved mixed-use PUD on three sites, two of which have been completed, by reducing the development parcel to contain only the two built sites. The unbuilt site would be incorporated into a new development parcel for a separate PUD (designated PB #297). In the current application, the proposal is to amend PB #231A by enlarging the development parcel to incorporate the area that was previously designated PB #297. As a result, all development would be governed by the expanded PB #231A, and PB #297 would no longer be considered as a separate special permit case.

The Planning Board issued a favorable Preliminary Determination (attached) on the earlier applications in March, and included some issues to be addressed in the Final Development Plan. For the new application, the Board will similarly need to issue a Preliminary Determination based on the findings summarized in the chart on the following page, and may include the same set of issues or a modified set of issues to be addressed in the Final Development Plan.

### **Revisions**

Although the major change requiring the new application is the reconfiguration of the Development Parcel, and the actual development plan otherwise remains substantially the same as before, there are some design changes incorporated into the new submission that are commented on further in this memo. Discussions with staff have been ongoing, and additional refinements may be considered in preparing the Final Development Plan. This hearing will provide an opportunity for the Board to view and comment on the progress of the work to date.

The new application does not include a formal response to the requests in the prior Preliminary Determination (attached), which references staff comments presented in March (also attached). Staff continues to recommend that the Final Development Plan include a narrative responding to the requests made in the prior Preliminary Determination.

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Requested Action	Summarized Findings (see appendix for zoning text excerpts)
Preliminary Approval of a PUD Development Proposal (Section 12.35.3)	<p>The PUD Development Proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conforms with general PUD development controls and district development controls</li> <li>• Conforms with adopted policy plans or development guidelines for that portion of the city</li> <li>• Provides benefits to the city which outweigh its adverse effects, considering:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quality of site design</li> <li>○ traffic flow and safety</li> <li>○ adequacy of utilities and other public works</li> <li>○ impact on existing public facilities</li> <li>○ potential fiscal impact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Comments on Current Proposal**

Since the initial hearing, staff has met with the Applicant on several occasions. As there were many questions raised by the Planning Board about the architectural character of various buildings, these meetings have primarily focused on design. Discussions continue to be ongoing around other topics such as alternative retail parking solutions and anticipated retail types, which should be addressed in the Final Development Plan.

Site planning and landscape design

Overall, the design parti remains the same; a strong mix of uses, and centrally located open space, as well as continuity of built form, active retail and transparency on First Street. In response to the Planning Board’s comments, the applicant has reduced the number of surface parking spaces, enhanced the landscape screening and continued to refine the design and details of the open space. These changes are an improvement on the first application. The reduction in parking spaces has enabled more substantive landscape screening to be provided in front of each of the parking lots. This landscaping helps to soften the view of these extensive paved areas, which was a concern raised by the Planning Board. The applicant is also considering removing three spaces that were proposed below the Parcel B building and replacing these with amenity spaces, which would enhance the pedestrian environment and creates a more meaningful connection between Building B and the open space. Every effort should continue to be made to design the parking areas as attractive spaces, with high levels of landscaping and the potential for multiple uses over time.

While the additional landscape screening is beneficial from a streetscape perspective, overall there is still a sense of too much surface parking filling in the spaces behind or to the side of each building. In this regard, a further change that should be considered is extending the Parcel D building further down Hurley Street. The amount of surface parking for such a small retail building seems unnecessary, and this

suggested change would create a stronger street presence with approximately 30 – 40 feet of new frontage.

Sidewalks widths still require further consideration. It is proposed to maintain an 8-foot sidewalk in front of Parcel A on First Street. This seems a little narrow for a commercial area, and given that Parcels B and D provide 11-foot wide sidewalks, it is logical to maintain this width for all three blocks.

### Building design

#### *Parcel A*

In amending the PUD, additional square footage has been accommodated at Parcel A resulting in a consistent five-story building height for the office building. The original building stepped down from five to four stories, which did provide some variation in form. Also, in response to the Board's comments, further work has been done to achieve better visual balance in materials, colors and fenestration. A palette of masonry and metal in various gray tones has been selected to represent the more formal character of an office building, and a strong urban presence. Greater definition of the building entrance, through a "faux" multi-height lobby is also very successful as demonstrated in the Figure 62 images. The architect is still refining various elements of the design, including further articulation of the first floor facades, and review of the metal panel seaming patterns. Staff also note the utility and transformer room on the corner of the parking lot and Bent Street, which should be further reviewed with regard to improved façade treatments.

#### *Parcel B*

The Planning Board's comments about this building were primarily concerned with the disparate architectural languages of the two intersecting volumes on First Street. The revised proposal has created greater consistency between the intersecting volumes. On Charles Street, the building now reads as three volumes, with the interconnecting charcoal gray volume recessed behind the prominent brick façade and the more domestic wood-clad façade. The corner of Charles and First Streets has been further demarcated with a double-story base, and an additional bay on the end brick wing has reduced the sense of visual discomfort. Balconies on First Street and more robust detailing, result in a strong commercial presence for the retail elements, and a more layered and interesting façade.

#### *Parcel C*

The Planning Board and staff were very positive about this modest residential building, and the intent of the new application is that it remain unchanged. While there does appear to be some minor changes to the architectural details and the submitted renderings are very dark, the overall form, massing and architectural character is consistent with the original submission. Staff suggest continuing review of design details as the project evolves.

#### *Parcel D*

A design has now been developed for Parcel D. The retail building will present as a sleek glassy box, which celebrates the street corner with a lantern-style double-height space and green wall. The detailing of this building, including its structural elements, will be most important in achieving a high quality design outcome.

While the high degree of transparency on both front and back is commended, further information should be provided to demonstrate how both sides of the retail will remain activated and transparent once tenants move-in. It is also noted that the storage room and transformer shown at the rear of the parking lot should be better integrated with the design of the building, particularly if the building was extended up Bent Street.

Bicycle amenities

Some modifications have been made to the bicycle parking in the site plan, but outstanding issues remain that will require further discussion. The prior CDD and TPT memos note the issue that long-term bicycle parking for Parcel A is proposed to be provided off-site in the Parcel B underground garage, which could be inconvenient for cyclists working in the Parcel A building. It was suggested that the Applicant either explore providing some long-term bicycle parking within the Parcel A building or identify other mitigating measures to ensure that the garage bicycle parking would be convenient to Parcel A workers and visitors.

Questions were also previously raised about the location and design of short-term bicycle parking, which seems to be evolving in the site design and should be shown in detail in the Final Development Plan. A related issue was the placement of a Hubway station, which should be addressed in the Final Development Plan.



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**Traffic, Parking and Transportation**  
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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:** September 22, 2015  
**Re:** First Street PUD & Project Review Special Permit (previous PB# 297, currently amendment to PUD Special Permit 231A)

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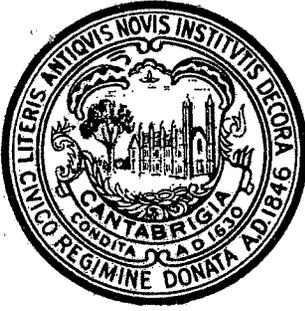
The Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP&T) Department offers the following comments on the First Street PUD and Project Review Special Permit Application dated July 24, 2015.

### Project History

- In October 2014, Vanasse & Associates Inc. on behalf of 121 First Street, LLC submitted a Transportation Impact Study (TIS) for the First Street Redevelopment Project.
- On November 14, 2014, the TP&T Department certified the (TIS) as complete.
- On March 5, 2015, First Street – US, LLC submitted an application for a PUD and Project Review Special Permit (PB#297).
- On March 18, 2015, the TP&T Department submitted the attached memo to the Planning Board with our comments on the Project.
- On March 24, 2015, the Planning Board issued a Preliminary Determination for the Project.
- On July 24, 2015 the applicant submitted a new application seeking to amend a previously approved PUD #231A instead of seeking a new PUD and Project Review Special Permit (PB#297).
- On September 14, 2015, Vanasse & Associates Inc. submitted a memo to the TP&T Department that evaluated the change in the Project office space from 42,800 square feet to 46,900 square feet. The change was estimated to increase the project generated trips by 18 additional daily vehicle trips, 2 additional morning and 2 additional evening peak hour vehicle trips. The Project also reduced the number of parking spaces from 31 to 26 parking spaces in the surface parking Lot B. The parking for the full project changed from 207 to 202 proposed parking spaces.

### TP&T Comments

- The two additional peak hour project vehicle trips is not expected to change the results in the TIS, however, at a minimum the applicant should provide updated TIS summary sheets for trip generation.
- The applicant should provide a full response to questions in the Preliminary Determination and TP&T's March 18, 2015 memo.
- TP&T will work with the applicant on the Project and provide comments and recommendations to the Planning Board when the final Development Plan is submitted.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

## NOTICE OF PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION FOR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
2015 APR 14 PM 3 49

Case Number:	297
Location of Premises:	85 First Street; 107-119 First Street; 121-139 First Street; 29 Charles; 14-26 Hurley Street
Zoning:	Business A / PUD 4B; Industry A-1 / PUD 4B
Applicant:	First Street - US, LLC 90 Hamilton Street, Cambridge, MA
Owner:	Bent Associates Limited Partnership; The Eldor First Street Realty Trust; First Street – US; LLC; Linear Retail Cambridge #2 LLC; Linear Retail Cambridge # 3 LLC; Donald Prescott & William Prescott; Hurley Corporation; B & D Realty Trust.
Application Date:	March 5, 2015
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	March 24, 2014
Date of Preliminary Determination:	March 24, 2014
Summary of Proposal:	Development Proposal for Planned Unit Development (PUD) containing approximately 130,000 square feet of residential use, 46,000 square feet of office use, 32,000 square feet of retail use, with above and below grade parking and open space, seeking PUD Special Permit (Section 12.30); Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20), Reduction in Required Parking (Section 6.35.1), Modification of Bicycle Parking Requirements (Section 6.108.1).
Determination:	<b>APPROVED, with conditions and requests for modification.</b>

Copies of this Preliminary Determination and plans, if applicable, are on file with the Community Development Department and the City Clerk.

Authorized Representative of the Planning Board: Jeffrey C. Roberts

For further information concerning this Preliminary Determination, please contact Liza Paden at 617-349-4647, or lpaden@cambridgema.gov.

## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

### Application Documents and Supporting Material

Special Permit application filed with the City Clerk's Office on March 5, 2015, containing the Cover Sheet, Project Description, Development Proposal, Ownership Certificates; Site Plans; Floor Plans; Elevations; Photographs; Traffic Impact Study and Appendices.

### City of Cambridge Documents

Letter to the Planning Board from Catherine M. Hornby, Member of the Cambridge Bike Committee, dated March 18, 2015.

Copy of the Memorandum to Paul Ognibene, Urban Spaces, from Joseph Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated March 26, 2015.

### Other Documents

Letter to the Planning Board from City Councilor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., dated March 24, 2015.

Email to the Planning Board from Patrick Magee, Owner, Atwood's Tavern, and President of the East Cambridge Business Association, dated March 24, 2015.

PowerPoint presentation dated March 24, 2015.

## **APPLICATION SUMMARY**

The Application is for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Development Proposal that would redevelop four buildings on three different blocks of land located on the eastern side of First Street, in the section between Bent Street and Spring Street. The proposal includes the demolition of some existing commercial buildings and their replacement with new construction of approximately 130,000 square feet of residential use, 46,000 square feet of office use, 32,000 square feet of retail use (with specific amounts to be clarified in the Final Development Plan).

The proposed site plan includes a five-story office building with retail on the ground floor fronting First Street ("Parcel A" in the Application Plans); a six-story residential building with 118 dwelling units and retail on the ground floor fronting First Street ("Parcel B"); a four-story residential building with 18 units fronting Hurley Street ("Parcel C"); and a single-story retail building fronting First Street ("Parcel D"). The site plan also includes a below-grade parking deck with 142 parking spaces and 160 long-term bicycle parking spaces below Parcels B and C, with access and egress via Charles Street, as well as 62 surface parking spaces across all three blocks to serve retail uses. Between the proposed buildings on Parcels B and C, above the proposed parking deck, will be about 23,000 square feet of publicly accessible open space that will provide a mid-block pedestrian passage between Charles and Hurley Streets. The

development would be phased, with construction of Parcels A and D expected complete in late 2016 and Parcels B and C expected complete in late 2018.

The Development Parcel contains portions of a different PUD Development Parcel that was approved by the Planning Board as Special Permit PB #231A. The portion of PB #231A to be included in the current Development Proposal has yet to be developed. An application has been submitted for a Major Amendment to PB #231A that would effectively extract portions from the PB #231A Development Parcel to be included in the new Development Parcel. The public hearing for that Major Amendment application was held concurrently with the public hearing for this Development Proposal.

## **FINDINGS**

Based on a review of submitted Application materials and testimony given at the public hearing, the Board makes the following findings with reference to the criteria for preliminary approval of a Planned Unit Development Proposal as set forth in Article 12.000 of the Zoning Ordinance.

- (1) The Development Proposal conforms with the General Development Controls set forth in Section 12.50, and the development controls set forth in the specific PUD district in which the project is located.*

The Board finds that the Development Proposal is consistent with the General Development Controls set forth in Section 12.50 and the development controls of the PUD-4B zoning district contained in Section 13.50 of the Zoning Ordinance, provided that an Amendment to Special Permit PB #231A is also granted. More specific dimensional data will be included in the Final Development Plan.

- (2) The Development Proposal conforms with adopted policy plans or development guidelines for the portion of the city in which the PUD district is located.*

The relevant guidelines for the PUD district are contained in the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines and the Eastern Cambridge Planning Study (ECaPS), dated October 2001. Broadly, the proposed site development plan and mixed-use program reflect the overarching aims of those documents. The notion of creating a strong urban presence with continuity of built form and retail activity on First Street is highly desirable in East Cambridge and is consistent with the ECaPS and associated Design Guidelines. The Planning Board in its conditions is seeking more detailed illustrations of various aspects of the proposal in order to better understand what is being proposed, the extent of surface parking and arrangement of buildings adjoining parking areas, and how proposed buildings will interface with the public realm and proposed open space.

- (3) The Development Proposal provides benefits to the city that outweigh its adverse effects.*

The Board finds that, on the whole, the proposed PUD will benefit the City by transforming the character of First Street from low-scale, often vacant buildings and marginal uses to a corridor with a strong urban form, providing a mix of residential, office and retail uses that will bring vitality to the neighborhood.

*In making this determination the Planning Board shall consider the following:*

- (a) *The quality of the site design, including integration of a variety of land uses, building types, and densities; preservation of natural features; compatibility with adjacent land uses; provision and type of open space; provision of other amenities designed to benefit the general public*

The buildings are to contain a mix of office, retail and residential uses, and are distributed across the site in a manner that responds to the neighborhood context and provides a suitable transition in scale. While the Planning Board was pleased with the strong street frontage and retail presence on First Street, the proposed surface parking distributed across the three blocks, particularly on both sides of Hurley Street, was considered a poor urban design outcome. Provision of surface parking that is visible from public streets and pathways is not consistent with the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines or Citywide Urban Design Objectives. The Planning Board is therefore requesting further information regarding surface parking, particularly where it creates dead space along Hurley Street and how it relates to the retail frontage and open space on Parcels B and C.

The centrally located open space and mid-block connection between Charles and Hurley Streets provides a significant amenity for future residents, as well as benefiting the neighborhood. The creation of mid-block connections in the relatively dense urban blocks of East Cambridge is consistent with the Design Guidelines. The Planning Board finds that the proposed building interfaces, consisting of common areas, are an appropriate response to the future open space. The proposed building setbacks generally support the street-level design aims of the Design Guidelines, however the Planning Board finds that further study is needed to consider additional sidewalk setbacks to comfortably accommodate the anticipated levels of pedestrian activity.

- (b) *Traffic flow and safety*

The Development Proposal has included a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) in accordance with the Project Review Special Permit requirements (Section 19.20 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Development Proposal and TIS have been reviewed by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, which provided comments in a memorandum to the Board dated March 18, 2015 indicating that no traffic criteria are exceeded and suggesting measures to further reduce traffic and transportation impacts. The Planning Board shall make findings with regard to the Traffic Impact Criteria in issuing a Project Review Special Permit for the Final Development Plan.

*(c) Adequacy of utilities and other public works*

The Planning Board received a memorandum from the Department of Public Works dated March 17, 2015, indicating that the project is expected to meet all applicable requirements, pending detailed pre-construction review of proposed development at the Building Permit stage.

*(d) Impact on existing public facilities within the city*

The Development Proposal is not expected to result in any impact on public facilities.

*(e) Potential fiscal impacts*

The Development Proposal is not expected to result in fiscal impacts on the City.

## **DETERMINATION**

Section 12.35.2 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that the Planning Board make a preliminary determination on a Development Proposal prior to holding a hearing to consider granting a special permit for a PUD Final Development Plan. The Planning Board may make a preliminary approval, potentially with conditions and subject to additional review and final approval of a special permit at a subsequent public hearing, or deny the application.

It is the Planning Board's Determination to **APPROVE** the Development Proposal, subject to the following conditions and requests to be addressed in the preparation of a Final Development Plan.

1. The Final Development Plan must address and respond to the points made in the Community Development Department and Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department staff memoranda, both dated March 18, 2015 and attached to this Preliminary Determination. Without limiting the foregoing, the Board's particular requests, listed below, reflect and reinforce many of the points expressed in those memoranda.
2. The Final Development Plan must include more detailed site planning information and design drawings, including details on sidewalk width, setback dimensions and landscaping of setbacks, open spaces and parking lots. Particular consideration should be given to whether the sidewalk widths and setbacks are appropriate for a street with the proposed amount of retail activity. Consideration also should be given to how the open space relates to the open space on the PB#231A Development Parcel, as the same may be amended.
3. The Final Development Plan should address the issues raised regarding surface parking, particularly where it impacts the streetscape character along Hurley Street as well as how the surface parking on Parcel B impacts the retail frontage and open space on either side. Consideration should be given to what the projected parking needs are for the anticipated retail types, whether the amount of surface parking can be reduced and whether parking can

be provided through alternative arrangements such as on-street metered parking or valet parking.

4. The design approach to the Parcel B residential building should be reconsidered along the First Street façade where conflicting building styles give a feeling of discomfort. The design approach to the Parcel A office building should also be reconsidered to achieve better visual balance in the arrangement of façade materials and colors and the geometry of windows. The proposed design of the Parcel D retail building should be included in the Final Development Plan for the Board to review.
5. The Final Development Plan must include a discussion of the types of retail anticipated in the ground floor spaces. Consideration should be given to retail types that will serve residents and workers in nearby neighborhoods as well as more “destination” types of retail and services that may draw from a wider area.

Voting in the affirmative to approve the Development Proposal were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Steven Cohen, Hugh Russell, and Associate Member Thacher Tiffany, appointed by the Chair to act on the case, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Theodore Cohen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.

A copy of this Preliminary Determination PB #297 shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk.



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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IRAM FAROOQ  
Acting Assistant City  
Manager for Community  
Development

To: Planning Board  
From: Jeff Roberts, Land Use and Zoning Planner  
Suzannah Bigolin, Urban Design Planner  
Date: March 18, 2015  
Re: **PB #297, First Street PUD Assemblage – Development Proposal**

### **Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overview**

The Zoning Ordinance designates certain areas of the city as Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay zoning districts. In those districts, a property owner may seek approval for a PUD development (which may include one or more buildings on one or more sites) pursuant to the requirements in Articles 12.000 and 13.000 of the Zoning Ordinance, which are applied in place of the base zoning regulations.

In general, PUD districts allow greater development density and height and more flexible dimensional standards than base zoning, but include requirements meant to advance the city's plans for that area, such as a desired mix of uses and provision of open space. A more rigorous review process is required to evaluate the proposal's consistency with the plans and urban design guidelines established for the area.

### **PUD Review**

PUD approval is a two-step process. The purpose of the first public hearing is to review a Development Proposal at a conceptual level and grant provisional approval based on findings summarized on the following page. The provisional approval may include requests from the Planning Board to modify or provide further detail on certain aspects of the proposal. After preliminary approval, the Applicant submits a Final Development Plan to be reviewed at a second public hearing. After that hearing, the Planning Board may approve the project by granting a special permit with conditions and limitations.

### **Current Development Proposal**

The Applicant proposes development on three adjacent blocks fronting First Street. The development standards for this area are set forth in the PUD-4B regulations (Section 13.50) and the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines, both established during the Eastern Cambridge Planning Study (ECaPS) process completed in 2001.

A portion of the Development Parcel lies within the Development Parcel of a previously approved PUD (PB#231A), which will need to be amended because PUD Development Parcels cannot overlap. The amendment and the new proposal will be heard concurrently, but the Planning Board will need to take separate action to grant a Major Amendment to PB#231A prior to approval of the new proposal. The criteria and review process for a Major Amendment are the same as for approval of a new PUD.

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In the case of this proposal, at the time of approving a Final Development Plan the Board will also need to make findings based on the criteria for granting a Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20), a Reduction in Required Parking (Section 6.35.1) and Modification of Bicycle Parking Requirements (Section 6.108). However, for preliminary approval, only the following summarized findings must be made:

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings (see appendix for zoning text excerpts)
Preliminary Approval of a PUD Development Proposal (Section 12.35.3)	<p>The PUD Development Proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conforms with general PUD development controls and district development controls</li> <li>• Conforms with adopted policy plans or development guidelines for that portion of the city</li> <li>• Provides benefits to the city which outweigh its adverse effects, considering:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quality of site design</li> <li>○ traffic flow and safety</li> <li>○ adequacy of utilities and other public works</li> <li>○ impact on existing public facilities</li> <li>○ potential fiscal impact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The remainder of this memo, along with attached memos from the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TPT) and Department of Public Works (DPW), provide comments related to these criteria, and also provide suggestions for additional items the Board may request in a Final Development Plan.

**Planning Goals**

As noted above, the planning principles and specific zoning requirements for the district were established in the Eastern Cambridge Planning Study (ECaPS) and associated rezoning in 2001. ECaPS classifies this zone as a “Transition Area” in recognition of the commercial and industrial development patterns that separate the residential neighborhood of East Cambridge from the riverfront.

The primary goals for Transition Areas are to encourage residential uses, create a transition in heights from the neighborhoods to Kendall Square and provide better transitions between developed/developing areas and residential neighborhoods. The zoning was meant to:

- Encourage new residential development and conversion of existing buildings to residential use.
- Create a differential in Floor Area Ratios (FARs) allowing more residential than commercial use.
- Apply finely graduated height limits to create transitions in scale from commercial areas to residential neighborhoods.
- Encourage ground floor retail along First Street.
- Allow commercial development rights to be transferred to areas south of Binney Street and encourage conversion of areas north of Binney Street to residential.

## Urban Design Guidelines

The Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines were developed as part of ECaPS to promote consistently high-quality public environments, and to ensure that development contributes to the character and vitality of the surrounding community. The following provisions are most relevant in assessing the overall orientation, height, scale and massing of a proposed development.

### Scale and Massing

- *Block size should be similar to the existing East Cambridge blocks. An attempt should be made to reduce the distance that pedestrians have to walk to a crosswalk in order to safely cross the street.*
- *Buildings should avoid continuous massing longer than 100 feet facing residential streets and 200 feet facing mixed-use and retail streets. If massing extends beyond this length, it should be made permeable and visibly articulated as several smaller masses using different materials or colors, vertical breaks, bays, or other architectural elements.*
- *In addition to the above limits, buildings should reflect a rhythm and variation appropriate to the urban context. For example, this can be achieved by expressing bay widths of 16 to 25 feet along residential streets and 25 to 50 feet along mixed-use and retail streets.*
- *Buildings should have a clearly expressed base, middle, and top. This may be achieved through changes in material, fenestration, architectural detailing, or other elements.*
- *Use variations in height and architectural elements such as parapets, cornices and other details to create interesting and varied rooflines and to clearly express the tops of buildings.*
- *Emphasize corners using taller elements such as towers, turrets, and bays*
- *Taller buildings should be articulated to avoid a monolithic appearance: Taller buildings should be point towers instead of slabs, and should have smaller floor plates instead of larger floor plates.*

### Building Height and Orientation

- *On First Street, set back any portion of the building above 65 feet by at least 10 feet from the principal facade.*
- *On other streets, if the prevailing height of surrounding buildings is 65 feet or less, establish a cornice line that matches the prevailing height of surrounding buildings. For additional height above the cornice line, provide a setback of at least 10 feet from the principal facade.*
- *For retail and office uses on First Street, build to the lot line or provide small setbacks (5 to 15 feet) from the right-of-way for café seating, benches, or small open spaces. Setbacks used exclusively for ornamental landscaping are not permitted but may be allowed to accommodate street furniture, street trees, or generous sidewalks. Awnings and canopies are encouraged to provide shelter and enliven the ground floor facade.*
- *For residential uses, provide small setbacks (5 to 10 feet) for stoops, porches, and front gardens.*
- *Driveway turnaround and vehicle drop-off facilities are strongly discouraged along public streets.*
- *Locate loading docks on side streets or service alleys, and away from residential areas.*
- *In use, design, and entry, orient buildings towards corners.*
- *Locate courtyards and open spaces to maximize sun exposure.*

### Street-level Uses and Design

#### *Residential blocks (primarily lined with housing):*

- *Create a consistent residential edge, with small setbacks for stoops, porches, and front gardens.*
- *Buildings should be designed with individual units and front doors facing the street, including row house units on the lower levels of multi-family buildings. Where residential lobbies face the street, doors should generally be spaced no more than 75 feet apart.*
- *Blank walls should be avoided along all streets and pedestrian walkways.*

#### *Mixed-use blocks (housing and/or commercial uses, with a mix of active uses strongly encouraged on the ground floor):*

- *Street-level facades should include active uses.*
- *Office/ R&D uses are discouraged from occupying extensive ground-floor frontage. Where these uses do occur, they should occupy no more than 200 to 250 feet of continuous frontage along public streets.*
- *Major entrances should be located on public streets, and at or near corners wherever possible. Entrances should relate well to crosswalks and pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations.*
- *Transparent materials and interior lighting should be used to maximize visibility of street level uses. Ground floor facades should be at least 30 to 50 percent transparent surface to permit a clear view from the sidewalk to the interior space of the building.*
- *Blank walls should be avoided along all streets and pedestrian walkways.*

#### *Retail blocks (both commercial and residential uses on upper floors, with retail strongly encouraged on the ground floor):*

- *At least 75 percent of the street frontage should be occupied by retail uses, including cafes and restaurants.*
- *Major entrances should be located on public streets, and on corners wherever possible. Entrances should relate to crosswalks and pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations.*
- *Transparent materials and interior lighting should be used to maximize visibility of street level uses. Ground floor facades should be at least 50 to 75 percent transparent surface to permit a clear view from the sidewalk to the interior space of the building.*
- *Blank walls should be avoided along all streets and pedestrian walkways.*

### Open Space

#### *Public open space:*

- *The provision of open space of diverse sizes and use is encouraged to enhance the public environment in the study area.*
- *The provision of interconnected series of open spaces is encouraged to provide connections to neighborhoods and to encourage pedestrian movement.*
- *Where major new parks are required by zoning, provide programmed, multi-use open space for both recreational and cultural activities.*
- *For Transition Areas locate new open spaces to create linkages and connect to existing parks and open spaces, where possible.*

*Semi-private open space:*

- *For residential development, create semi-private open spaces (e.g. front and rear yards, porches, stoops, and patios) that create a transition from public sidewalks and courts to private interior spaces.*
- *Design residential courtyards to be visually accessible from streets to enhance safety and activity along the street.*

Streets and Sidewalks

- *Use streetscape elements such as trees, benches, signage, and lighting to support active pedestrian uses and to reinforce the character and identity of each district.*
- *Design streets to encourage pedestrian and cycle activity, and to control vehicle speed in residential areas.*
- *In the design of new streets, provide sufficient pavement width to accommodate on-street parking where appropriate in order to provide short-term parking and to serve local retail.*
- *In the design of new streets, pathways, and parks, provide pedestrian-scale lighting to enhance pedestrian safety.*
- *Refer to the Cambridge Pedestrian Plan and the Cambridge Bicycle Plan for additional guidance on creating a safe and pleasant environment for pedestrians and bicyclists and for guidance on sidewalk width and street trees.*

Connections

- *Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to future regional pathways (Grand Junction railroad, North Point path).*
- *Provide strong pedestrian, bicycle and visual connections to the Charles River and public parks through view corridors, signage, and/or art installations.*
- *Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing and new bus stops and to transit stations including Kendall Square, Lechmere, Community College and North Station MBTA stations. In particular, direct access from the residential neighborhood south of Msgr. O'Brien Highway and Cambridge Street to the new T station, if relocated, is desirable.*

Parking

- *While underground parking is preferable everywhere, if above ground parking is to be built it should be designed so as not to be visible from public streets or pathways. Above ground structured parking should be lined with active uses (shops, cafes, etc.) along major public streets, or with housing units along residential streets.*
- *Locate vehicular parking entrances on side streets and alleys and provide safe pedestrian access from public streets.*
- *All parking garages must provide direct pedestrian access to the street.*
- *The primary pedestrian exit/access to all garages serving non-residential uses should be to the street or a public area.*
- *Design and locate lighting fixtures in surface parking lots and garages to enhance safety while minimizing light spillover onto adjacent properties.*

## **Staff Comments**

### Site planning and landscape design

As described in the application materials, the PUD incorporates an assemblage of parcels located between First, Second, Bent and Hurley Streets. The overall site planning approach seeks to consolidate a strong urban presence on First Street with linear buildings ranging from one to six stories in height. The proposed mix of uses is also appropriate, particularly the emphasis on retail on First Street, and relates well to the existing context. The proposed approach successfully provides continuity of built form, active retail and transparency on a street that currently lacks such urbane characteristics and is therefore a positive urban design outcome.

While the strong street frontage and retail presence on First Street are beneficial, the proposal seems to taper out behind this wall with an emphasis on surface parking distributed across the three blocks. This results in the street wall only being reinforced sporadically on Bent and Hurley Streets, and the parking interrupts the ground plane and first floor active edge. Such an extent of publicly visible on-grade parking is not consistent with the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines or Citywide Urban Design Objectives.

The substantial centrally located open space, which also provides a mid-block connection between Charles and Hurley Streets, is highly desirable in this location. The need for mid-block connections in the relatively dense urban blocks of East Cambridge is called out in the design guidelines. The Parcel C building appears to have an appropriate interface with the open space; however, it seems to be floating in the middle of the landscaped area, rather than connected to a consistent street edge. Its location also creates somewhat of a pinch-point between the on-grade parking and the mid-block connection.

The PUD proposal attempts to ameliorate some of these negative impacts by proposing building entries and storefront windows for the Parcel B building that face the parking area and open space, and providing a direct public connection through the Parcel B building that has potential to become an interesting pedestrian cut-through. However, this approach may have the side effect of drawing pedestrian activity away from First Street. It is also unfortunate that the relationship between the retail on Parcel B and the open space is interrupted by parking and loading functions. There is great potential to activate the open space with outdoor restaurant seating, outdoor sales or other synergistic functions, but the placement of parking directly adjacent to the retail spaces discourages this type of activity.

The landscaped setback on Charles Street requires further refinement in terms of its purpose and character. The intent of the design guidelines is for smaller setbacks (5 to 10 feet) for stoops, porches, and front gardens, rather than ornamental landscaping. Furthermore, sidewalks are fairly narrow within the neighborhood, thus further detailed study is needed to consider additional building setbacks where additional public realm is to be accommodated.

### Building height, scale and massing

The proposed massing strategy of providing higher, yet contextually appropriate buildings on First Street is consistent with the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines and the ECaPS goals. This generally creates a strong street wall and sense of enclosure, except in the case of the proposed one-story building on Parcel D, which seems somewhat underwhelming. While this does create variation in height, such low

heights are generally not encouraged from an urban design perspective in dense urban areas as they result in a lack of street definition.

While all proposed buildings are clearly an improvement on the existing context with their active frontage and significant transparency on First Street, there are some areas that require further consideration as the project develops. The Parcel C residential building appears to be the most resolved and has a higher level of refinement and articulation compared to the proposed buildings on Parcels A and B. The latter two buildings are relatively long and should be given the same level of articulation to vary the scale and break down the overall bulk as suggested in the design guidelines. The Parcel B office building may also benefit more from a clearly expressed base, middle and top approach as per the guidelines as the continuity of the massing and relatively flat architectural expression is repetitive. No plans or images of the Parcel D building have been provided.

#### Street wall and edge treatments

The proposal appears to achieve a high degree of transparency, primarily focused on the First Street frontage. This provides a strong element of consistency with the design guidelines and will undoubtedly result in the successful redevelopment and transformation of First Street. The side streets are the appropriate location for servicing and loading; however, given the size of the PUD area it may be preferable to locate these internally. The large presence of the NSTAR facility on Charles Street should be reviewed and consideration given to whether or not a better location, internal to the site might be available. There also appears to be several areas of blank frontage allocated for servicing, which should be located internally if possible.

#### Bicycle amenities

Overall, the approach to the bicycle parking is positive with good quality graphics provided. The provision of short-term covered bicycle parking is especially positive. Although the long-term bicycle parking works well for the residential buildings, it is not conveniently located for the office uses on Parcel A. Options for locating long-term bicycle parking within the office building should be considered. Alternatively, if the Planning Board grants a special permits allowing the long-term bicycle parking as shown, it would be beneficial to consider covered bicycle parking on Parcel A as well, since some office workers will likely use those racks out of convenience, even if they are parking all day. Additional comments on bicycle parking and amenities are discussed in the attached TPT memo.

### **Further Study and Modification**

While the proposal demonstrates broad conceptual consistency with the planning goals and guidelines for the area, there are a few specific areas where we would suggest the Board require further study and improvement in preparing a Final Development Plan. The following suggestions are made in addition to those suggested in the text above and in the TPT memo.

#### Surface parking

This memo and the attached TPT memo both comment on the proposed surface parking for retail uses. We would recommend that the Board and Applicant take into account the following considerations:

- *Parking Ratios:* The proposed ratio of approximately 1.9 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail is higher than what is typical for recent retail developments in mixed-use projects. Retail types such as the proposed pet store on Parcel A may justify a higher amount of parking, but that site proposes a ratio of about 1.0 space per 1,000 square feet, meaning that the retail on sites B and D will have even higher ratios closer to those provided in single-use retail centers. As noted in the TPT memo, the Cambridgeside Galleria, with a parking ratio less than 3 spaces per 1,000 square feet, has many unused spaces. What types of retail are anticipated that would require such high ratios?
- *Parking Design:* Particularly on Parcel B, the proposed surface parking interrupts what could be a strong synergy between retail/restaurant uses and publicly accessible open space. If some surface parking is to be provided, the Applicant should explore how it can be designed and arranged to prioritize pedestrian access and flexible uses such as seating, outdoor markets or food trucks that would benefit retailers and the general public alike. This would involve detailed consideration of additional plantings, furniture and paving treatments.
- *Screening:* Particularly on Parcels B and D, as an alternative to the design options discussed above, consider wrapping buildings around corners to screen on-grade parking areas with built form and active uses. This would result in some on-grade parking being retained within the middle of each block.
- *Alternative Parking Options:* As noted in the TPT memo, First Street is an area with existing structured parking facilities such as the municipal garage, Cambridgeside Galleria garage and One Canal Park garage that are underutilized much of the time. While such parking may not be suitable for all retail types, some types such as restaurants may find valet parking arrangements equal or preferable to surface parking lots. In addition, the proposal does not discuss the availability and potential expansion of on-street metered parking, which could be accomplished through discussions with TPT.

#### Retail uses

Relative to the discussion above, the Final Development Plan should include more discussion of what retail types are anticipated in the proposed development on Parcels B and D. The Applicant is encouraged to review the desired retail types in the Kendall Square Survey (2011) and East Cambridge Survey (2013) conducted by CDD's Economic Development Division. Businesses that both neighborhoods would like to see include: grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, specialty retailers (hardware, bookstore, sporting goods), and entertainment/live music venues. A mix of both destination businesses and neighborhood services is desired.

#### Design details

The following aspects of the proposal will require more detail in the Final Development Plan:

- More detailed site and landscape plans showing sidewalk widths, proposed street tree plantings, plantings, paving materials and lighting. Consider additional building setbacks where additional public realm is to be accommodated.
- Further details regarding how private and public open space will be delineated within the PUD and the character of the transition between the two.

- Additional perspective views from the eye of the pedestrian walking through the open space demonstrating how successful the mid-block connection will be and how parking areas will be softened and screened.
- Perspective views of all on-grade parking areas.
- Conceptual design of Parcel D building.
- Complete plans and elevations of all buildings showing materials, colors and finishes. Alternatively, building designs may be presented at a conceptual level in the Final Development Plan, in which case staff would recommend that the Planning Board condition any PUD approval on requiring review and approval of each building design by the Planning Board prior to issuance of a building permit for that building.

#### Clarification of Development Plan Details

There are some minor inconsistencies among the development figures in different parts of the Application Materials. The Final Development Plan should include a consolidated chart summarizing the dimensional characteristics of the PUD as a whole (including GFA by use type, height, open space and parking) and a breakdown by site. This consolidated summary would be provided in place of a standard Dimensional Form.

#### **Comments on Major Amendment Proposal**

The proposed Major Amendment to PUD Special Permit PB#231A is necessary to enable the new PUD that is proposed. Essentially, the third (yet unbuilt) phase of project PB#231A would be replaced by the proposed development on Parcels B and C of the new PUD. In preparing a Final Development Plan, the Applicant should submit documentation verifying that the amended development parcel for PB#231A, with the development already completed, will continue to meet all applicable requirements of the zoning district.

If the Planning Board finds that the proposed development on Parcels B and C better meet the objectives of the area than the previously approved proposal, it is reasonable to grant the Major Amendment along with the granting of a new PUD special permit. In the previously approved PUD, the Planning Board had authorized the construction of eight townhouse units on that site, which is currently used as a commercial parking lot. The original proposal had been to convert that parking lot to open space, but the Planning Board suggested townhouses as a way to establish a continuous urban street edge and to provide larger residential units with entrances on the street.

In the current development proposal, the intent of the residential development on Parcel C is to replicate some of the benefits provided by the previously approved townhouse development on the mid-block portion of the side street. However, as previously noted, the placement of the housing adjacent to open space and surface parking does not support as continuous of a street edge as the originally approved townhouse development.



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Brad Gerratt, Deputy Director

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**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Cambridge Planning Board  
**From:** Joseph Barr, Director *JB*  
**Date:** March 18, 2015  
**Re:** First Street PUD & Project Review Special Permit (PB# 297)

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The First Street PUD and Project Review Special Permit Application, by First Street – US, LLC, relates to a proposed 208,848 Gross Floor Area (GFA) Project consisting of 136 housing units (130,488 GFA), 46,010 GFA office building, and 32,350 GFA ground floor retail. The Project proposes 204 parking spaces including an underground garage with 142 spaces and three surface parking lots totaling 62 spaces. It also proposes 160 long-term bicycle spaces and 35 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) for the Project was completed and certified by the Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP&T) on November 14, 2014. The TIS indicated that the Project had no Planning Board Special Permit exceedances. It will generate the following trips:

796 daily automobile trips, including 64 AM and 83 PM peak hour vehicle trips;  
670 daily transit trips (53 AM/69 PM peak hour transit trips);  
510 daily pedestrian trips (30 AM/47 PM peak hour pedestrian trips); and,  
128 daily bicycle trips (9 AM/13 PM peak hour bicycle trips).

The TIS summary sheets are attached.

TP&T reviewed the First Street PUD and Project Review Special Permit Application. TP&T commends the Project for demonstrating a design concept that is in many ways consistent with City goals for mixed-use development, including residential, office, retail and open space. We offer the following comments to the Planning Board for consideration.

- The Project proposes 204 parking spaces at 0.75 spaces/residential unit, 0.9 spaces/1,000 square feet of office use, and 1.9 spaces/1,000 sf of retail use. The retail parking ratio is higher than other recently permitted development in the areas such as Kendall Square, North Point and Binney Street, which have ranged from no retail parking at all to about one space per 1,000 sf and have utilized on-street parking and shared parking to serve retail needs. In 2013 the CambridgeSide Galleria had a peak parking utilization of approximately 0.9 spaces/1,000 sf. still considerably lower than the ratio proposed by the Project. The Planning Board may want to consider asking the Applicant for more information on how much retail parking is vital, considering the Project is located near transit and near existing commercial parking garages.

## First Street PUD and Project Review Special Permit

- TP&T believes that the 10 space parking lot at Parcel A to serve Petco is reasonable (9,800 sf @ 1 space/sf = 10 spaces). Given that the lower ratio is acceptable for Petco, the Planning Board may want to ask why Parcel B and D need a higher ratio.
- The First Street PUD and Project Review Special Permit Application proposes to develop an underground parking garage and surface parking lots. TP&T has asked the Applicant about the potential opportunity of utilize existing underutilized commercial parking spaces in the area instead creating new spaces (an expressed goal of this department). For example, the Cambridgeside Galleria garage has over 1,000 unused parking spaces during the day (there are 2,538 total spaces in the Galleria garage), and it's Parking Facility Permit allows for the leasing of spaces under certain conditions, with prior approval from TP&T. TP&T recognizes that it could be difficult to obtain project financing when parking is owned by another entity, and on-site parking is an amenity to residents, however, there could be benefits from utilizing existing parking such as, reducing the cost of development, lowering housing costs, and discouraging automobile dependency by accommodating parking needs nearby instead of on-site. The Planning Board may want the Applicant to discuss whether leasing nearby parking would be a more constructive and lower impact means of providing the required parking.
- The Planning Board may consider asking for more detailed information on how the proposed 142-space underground garage will be managed. For example, empty residential parking spaces during the day may be tempting for office workers to use, which would add additional vehicle trips and exceed the 0.9 spaces/1,000 sf f office parking ratio. The proposed shared parking operations plan between resident and office should also be explained in greater detail.
- The project proposes to provide long-term bicycle parking spaces for the office use in the proposed underground parking garage and seeks a special permit because it exceeds the 200 foot zoning distance. The Planning Board may consider asking the Applicant whether the Project can provide long-term (secure, weather protected) bicycle parking within or closer to the office building for office employees. Locating bicycle parking spaces within the office building would be more aligned with the City's policy to actively promote alternative modes of transportation by making that bicycle parking more convenient and easier to use.
- The Project's Traffic Impact Study committed to implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, including the following:
  1. Providing MBTA Charlie card equivalent to the value of a monthly pass (currently \$75) to each adult member of a new household after the household has established residency;
  2. Post public transportation schedules and information on pedestrian and bicycle facilities in a centralized location for residents;
  3. Become a member of the Charles River Transportation Management Association (TMA) and provide access to EZ Ride shuttle for Project residents and employees;
  4. Analyze the possibility of a Zipcar location sited within the Project parking spaces;
  5. Provide an MBTA pass subsidy to employees (up to the federal maximum of \$130 per month);
  6. Provide information about the transportation options that are available to employees at orientations and on the company website;
  7. Provide showers and lockers that are accessible to employees;
  8. Encourage employers to work with the Cambridge Office of Workforce Development; and,
  9. Encourage resident to obtain free Bike Charlie card, allowing residents the ability to use the bike cages at area MBTA stations and other areas free of charge.

## First Street PUD and Project Review Special Permit

The Applicant should be aware that the MBTA no longer uses separate bike Charlie cards, but rather allows customers to activate their regular Charlie card for bike access to MBTA bike parking.

TP&T appreciates and supports the Applicants commitment to TDM, but given the critical importance of reducing the vehicle trips in this part of Cambridge, we would recommend considering the following additions or changes:

- a. Instead of providing an MBTA Charlie Card to each member of a new household, offer a 50% subsidy for the cost of a bus/subway link pass (currently \$75, but subject to fare increases) for three consecutive months to each adult member of a household (up to 2 per household) upon move-in. The subsidy ends after 3 months for the household and begins anew upon unit turnover;
- b. Offer a one-year Gold Level Hubway membership to each adult member of each household (up to 2 per household) upon move-in. The one-year membership ends after one-year but begins anew upon unit turnover;
- c. Instead of (or in addition to) posting paper MBTA schedules, provide a transit screen in a central location for residents, that displays real-time transit and Hubway information;
- d. Provide a 50% T-pass subsidy to full-time retail employees;
- e. Donate a standard size Hubway station with a 3-year maintenance agreement and consider options for placing a Hubway station on-site.
- f. Provide at least two carshare parking spaces on-site, if desired by a local car-share company. Carshare vehicles will be available for use by the general public as well as the residents.

Lastly, because the Project will have its largest impact on the First Street at Charles Street intersection (29 new AM peak hour trips and 39 new PM peak hour trips) we anticipate recommending that the Applicant update the traffic signal controller, cabinet, and install an audible pedestrian signal at this intersection.

Cc: Adam Shulman, TPT; Iram Farooq, Jeff Roberts, Liza Paden, Susanne Rasmussen, Stuart Dash, Cara Seiderman, Stephanie Groll, CDD; Paul M. Ognibene, Urban Spaces; Jim Rafferty, Adams & Rafferty.

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**Special Permit Transportation Impact Study (TIS)**

**Summary Sheet**

Planning Board Permit Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: First Street Redevelopment

Address: 85 First Street, 107-119 First Street, 121-39 First Street, 18 Hurley Street

Owner/Developer Name: 121 First Street, LLC

Contact Person: Jeffrey Hirsch

Contact Address: 90 Hamilton Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

Contact Phone: 617-868-5558

ITE sq. ft.: 84,950 sf/138 units

Zoning sq. ft.: \_\_\_\_\_

Land Use Type: Office and Retail Space / Residential Space

Existing Parking Spaces: 140 Use: Employee/Customer

New Parking Spaces: 207 Use: Employee/Customer/Residential

Date of Parking Registration Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip Generation:	Daily	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
Total Person Trips	2,222	164	224
Transit Person Trips	670	53	69
Pedestrian Person Trips	510	30	47
Bicycle Person Trips	128	9	13
Other Person Trips	54	3	6
Vehicle Person Trips	860	69	89
<i>Automobile Trips<sup>a</sup></i>	796	64	83

<sup>a</sup>Automobile trips calculated as Vehicle Person Trips ÷ 1.08.

Mode Split (person trips):

Vehicle:	<u>51/35/35</u>	%
Transit:	<u>38/29/27</u>	%
(Office/Retail/Residential) Pedestrian:	<u>6/28/28</u>	%
Bicycle:	<u>5/6/6</u>	%
Other:	<u>0/2/4</u>	%

Transportation Consultant: Vanasse & Associates, Inc.

Contact Name: Scott W. Thornton, P.E.

Phone: 978-474-8800

Date of Building Permit Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**Special Permit Transportation Impact Study (TIS)**

**Planning Board Criteria Performance Summary**  
**Page 1**

Planning Board Permit Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: First Street Redevelopment

Total Data Entries = 151 Total Number of Criteria Exceedences = 0

1. Project Vehicle Trip Generation

Weekday = 796 AM Peak Hour = 64 PM Peak Hour = 83

Meets Criteria? [Y/N]	Y/Y/Y
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2. Level of Service (LOS)

Intersection	A.M. Peak Hour			P.M. Peak Hour		
	Existing	With Project	Meets Criteria?	Existing	With Project	Meets Criteria?
Third Street at Binney Street	E	E	Y	D	D	Y
Binney Street at Second Street	B	B	Y	C	C	Y
First Street at Charles Street and Cambridgeside Place	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
First Street at Binney Street	C	C	Y	C	C	Y
Hurley Street at First Street	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
Hurley Street at Second Street	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Bent Street at Second Street	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
Bent Street at First Street	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
Charles Street at Second Street	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Charles Street at Petco Drive/Garage Exit	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Bent Street at Proposed Petco Drive	-	A	Y	-	A	Y
Hurley Street at 107/119 First Street Drive	-	A	Y	-	A	Y

3. Traffic on Residential Streets

Street Segment	A.M. Peak Hour			P.M. Peak Hour		
	Existing Volume	With Project	Meets Criteria?	Existing Volume	With Project	Meets Criteria?
Hurley Street, Second Street to First Street (Amount of residential = >1/3 but <1/2)	111	123	Y	132	152	Y
Charles Street, Second Street to First Street (Amount of residential = <1/3)	97	149	Y	171	226	Y
Bent Street, Second Street to First Street (Amount of residential = <1/3)	99	99	Y	80	80	Y
Second Street, Spring Street to Charles Street (Amount of residential = 1/2 or more)	300	306	Y	237	245	Y
Second Street, Charles Street to Rogers Street (Amount of residential = <1/3)	258	264	Y	335	343	Y

4. Lane Queue

Intersection	No. of Lanes Analyzed	A.M. Peak Hour			P.M. Peak Hour		
		Existing	With Project	Meets Criteria?	Existing	With Project	Meets Criteria?
<i>Charles Street at First Street</i>	4						
Charles Street EB LT/TH/RT		1	2	Y	3	4	Y
Charles Street WB LT/RT		2	2	Y	4	4	Y
First Street NB LT/TH/RT		2	2	Y	5	5	Y
First Street SB LT/TH/RT		2	2	Y	2	2	Y
<i>Binney Street at Third Street</i>	9						
Binney Street EB LT		2	2	Y	8	8	Y
Binney Street EB TH		2	2	Y	5	5	Y
Binney Street EB TH/RT		2	2	Y	5	5	Y
Binney Street WB LT		5	5	Y	2	2	Y
Binney Street WB TH		3	3	Y	3	3	Y
Binney Street WB TH/RT		3	3	Y	3	3	Y
Third Street NB LT/TH		4	5	Y	9	9	Y
Third Street NB RT		2	2	Y	3	3	Y
Third Street SB LT/TH/RT	16	16	Y	5	5	Y	
<i>Binney Street at First Street</i>	7						
Binney Street EB LT		2	2	Y	6	6	Y
Binney Street EB TH		2	2	Y	3	3	Y
Binney Street EB TH/RT		2	2	Y	3	3	Y
Binney Street WB LT		5	5	Y	3	3	Y
Binney Street WB TH/RT		5	5	Y	3	3	Y
First Street NB LT/TH/RT		1	1	Y	1	1	Y
First Street SB LT/TH		5	5	Y	7	8	Y
First Street SB RT	4	4	Y	3	4	Y	
<i>Binney Street at Second Street</i>	6						
Binney Street EB LT		1	2	Y	4	4	Y
Binney Street EB TH/RT		2	2	Y	2	2	Y
Binney Street WB LT		2	2	Y	1	1	Y
Binney Street WB TH/RT		4	4	Y	3	3	Y
Third Street NB LT/TH/RT		1	1	Y	4	4	Y
Third Street SB LT/TH/RT	1	1	Y	2	2	Y	

5. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (Pedestrian LOS)

Intersection	A.M. Peak Hour			P.M. Peak Hour		
	Existing PLOS	With Project	Meets Criteria?	Existing PLOS	With Project	Meets Criteria?
<b>First Street at Charles Street and Cambridgeside Place</b>						
Crossing Charles Street (East)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
Crossing Charles Street (West)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
Crossing Cambridgeside Place (North)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
Crossing Cambridgeside Place (South)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
<b>First Street at Binney Street</b>						
Crossing Charles Street (East)	C	C	Y	C	C	Y
Crossing Charles Street (West)	C	C	Y	C	C	Y
Crossing Cambridgeside Place (North)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
Crossing Cambridgeside Place (South)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
<b>Third Street at Binney Street</b>						
Crossing Binney Street (East)	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
Crossing Binney Street (West)	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
Crossing Third Street (North)	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
Crossing Third Street (South)	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
<b>Binney Street at Second Street</b>						
Crossing Binney Street (East)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
Crossing Binney Street (West)	D	D	Y	D	D	Y
Crossing Second Street (North)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Crossing Second Street (South)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
<b>Second Street at Hurley Street</b>						
Crossing Hurley Street (East)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Crossing Hurley Street (West)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Crossing Second Street (North)	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
Crossing Second Street (South)	B	B	Y	B	B	Y
<b>Second Street at Charles Street</b>						
Crossing Charles Street (East)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Crossing Charles Street (West)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
Crossing Second Street (South)	B	B	Y	C	C	Y
<b>Second Street at Bent Street</b>						
Crossing Bent Street (East)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
<b>First Street at Hurley Street</b>						
Crossing Hurley Street (West)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y
<b>First Street at Bent Street</b>						
Crossing Bent Street (West)	A	A	Y	A	A	Y

5. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (Safe Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities)

Adjacent Street or Public Right-of-Way	Sidewalks or Walkways Present?	Meets Criteria?	Bicycle Facilities or Right-of-Ways Present?	Meets Criteria?
Hurley Street	Y	Y	Y	Y
Charles Street	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bent Street	Y	Y	Y	Y
First Street	Y	Y	Y	Y



City of Cambridge  
Department of Public Works

*Owen O'Riordan, Commissioner*

147 Hampshire Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
theworks@cambridgema.gov

Voice: 617 349 4800

TDD: 617 499 9924

March 17, 2015

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Katherine F. Watkins, PE  
City Engineer

**RE: First Street PUD and Special Permit Application**

We are in receipt of the Special Permit and PUD Application materials for the First Street Development project, dated January 29, 2015. We have reviewed the materials and have presented below some comments related to the interests of the Department of Public Works.

Generally, the DPW, based on the provided documentation, does not anticipate the project having any issue meeting all of the requirements of the DPW with the understanding that the project will be subject to a thorough and complete engineering review at the time of the Building Permit Application.

A "Preliminary Stormwater Drainage, Water and Sewer Impact Statement" was prepared by Stantec Consulting, Ltd. and was included with the Application package. The document indicated that the Applicant was familiar with the requirements of the DPW and acknowledged that further coordination with the Department be required.

As the project is further developed, DPW will work with the applicant to ensure the following requirements are met:

**Public Infrastructure:**

1. Requirements for temporary and permanent alterations to the Public Right of Way will be considered as part of the Building Permit review process, when a full understanding of the scope of the utility and surface work is presented.
2. Given the extent of the public infrastructure being reconstructed and the proximity of the buildings to the edge of the right-of-way a detailed traffic management plan for construction activities will be required, with particular attention paid to accommodating pedestrians and cyclists during construction.
3. Eversource, the electric service provider for the project area has known supply issues in this neighborhood. The Applicant is encouraged to reach out them to coordinate supply for the project as soon as possible.

**Stormwater Management:**

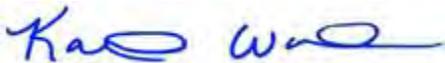
1. Under the City Land Disturbance Regulations, the Applicant will need to obtain a Stormwater Control Permit from the Department of Public Works. The permit requirements cover the design standards and long term operation and maintenance of a stormwater management system for the project site, as well as the construction phase erosion and sedimentation control plans. The permit requirements also include the standard to mitigate the stormwater runoff from the site from the proposed 25-year storm to a rate below the pre-redevelopment 2-year stormevent. The Applicant acknowledged the need to apply for this permit in the Application.

**Sewer System:**

1. Applicant may also be required to remove I/I from the system sufficient to offset new proposed sewer flows at a ratio of 4:1.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns related to the comments provided above.

Sincerely,



Katherine F. Watkins, P.E.  
City Engineer

## Approval of a PUD Development Proposal

**12.35.2** Within twenty-one (21) days after the public hearing, the Planning Board shall make a determination concerning the Development Proposal. If the Planning Board approves the Development Proposal or conditionally approves the Development Proposal with recommendations for modifications, then the developer must submit a Final Development Plan as specified in Section 12.36. If the Planning Board disapproves the Development Proposal then the application for a Special Permit to construct a PUD shall be denied. If the Planning Board makes no decision within the specified time limit, then the Development Proposal shall be considered approved and the developer shall prepare a Final Development Plan.

**12.35.3** Approval of the Development Proposal shall be granted only upon determination by the Planning Board that the Development Proposal:

- (1) conforms with the General Development Controls set forth in Section 12.50, and the development controls set forth for the specific PUD district in which the project is located;
- (2) conforms with adopted policy plans or development guidelines for the portion of the city in which the PUD district is located;
- (3) provides benefits to the city which outweigh its adverse effects; in making this determination the Planning Board shall consider the following:
  - (a) quality of site design, including integration of a variety of land uses, building types, and densities; preservation of natural features; compatibility with adjacent land uses; provision and type of open space; provision of other amenities designed to benefit the general public;
  - (b) traffic flow and safety;
  - (c) adequacy of utilities and other public works;
  - (d) impact on existing public facilities within the city; and
  - (e) potential fiscal impact.