

MEMO

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Transit Advisory Committee

Date: September 13, 2016

Re: Special Permit PB#315 (MXD Infill Development Concept Plan)

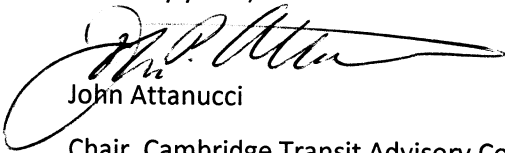
The Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee (established in 2013 to help guide the City on transit-related issues and currently consisting of twenty-one neighborhood residents and representatives of institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders) has reviewed Boston Properties' proposal and would like to submit the comments below for consideration by the Planning Board.

- First, we would like to offer our support for this transit-oriented, mixed-use project that addresses the demand for commercial and residential space in Kendall Square. We also wish to voice our appreciation for the substantial cash contribution (upwards of \$6 million) by Boston Properties to the improvement of transit in Kendall Square. We would be very interested in interacting regularly with the KSTEP Working Group going forward to develop a more specific set of priorities to help expand transit ridership in Kendall Square.
- While we support some measure of improvements to wayfinding and transit screens, we recommend that the majority of the \$6 million fund be used for substantial enhancements to the capacity, reliability, and connectivity of transit in Kendall Square. One specific idea would be to fund for 2-3 years the net operational costs of a bus route (perhaps operated by EZRide) linking Sullivan Square with Kenmore Square via Lechmere and Kendall stations. This proposed line has been studied by the MIT Transit Lab and is intended to improve the accessibility of Kendall Square to riders on Commuter Rail and both the Orange and the Green Lines. Ideally, this program could incorporate sustainable technology in the form of electric buses. We recommend an agreement to use the KSTEP funds on a 50/50 matching basis to leverage State and/or MBTA funds to operate this service.
- We urge Boston Properties to set stronger expectations for transit support by its tenants by more explicitly outlining transportation demand management measures for employers. For example:
 - It is stated that residents will receive at least partial reimbursement for transit passes. Employers should provide a similar benefit to employees.

- As part of their PTDM plan, Boston Properties should require that tenants charge the full cost of monthly or daily parking to their employees rather than subsidizing parking costs unless an equivalent cash benefit is also provided to employees who do not drive to work (including everyone who takes transit, walks or bikes, i.e., a full “parking cash-out” program).
- To encourage employees to make a daily transportation choice and potentially break the habit of driving every day, we strongly recommend that Boston Properties provide parking spaces to each employer to be charged as used on a daily (rather than monthly) basis, as part of their tenant company leases. This allows each employer to manage its own parking inventory by oversubscribing each allocated space among more occasional parkers and provide larger financial incentives to their employees for more sustainable occasional transit use.
- We strongly recommend that Boston Properties take steps to avoid the proliferation of private employer-based shuttles that cannot be used by the general public. Instead, we support the expansion and improvement of existing public bus services where possible.
- We request that the timeline for the outlay of the funds through KSTEP be revisited. While we strongly support linking disbursement to project milestones, our reading of the KSTEP memorandum of understanding suggests that the use of 1/3 (\$2 million) of the KSTEP funding commitment shall be determined before the Initial Payment to be made at the time of the granting of the first building permit. We are concerned the appropriate priorities may not be fully defined by that time, so the funds would not be used in the most impactful way.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our support for this project and our appreciation for the consideration that Boston Properties has given to transit as part of its proposed MXD Infill project and for the substantial cash contribution it has committed to the improvement of the transit infrastructure in Kendall Square. We look forward to further news of this project and to working with the KSTEP Working Group to implement those improvements.

Sincerely yours,



John Attanucci

Chair, Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee