

DRAFT MEMO

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee

Date: February 22, 2017

Re: Special Permit PB#326 (211 Concord Turnpike)

The Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee (currently consisting of eighteen Cambridge neighborhood residents and representatives of institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders that was established in 2013 to help guide the City on transit-related issues) has reviewed the proposed project at 211 Concord Turnpike and would like to submit the comments below for consideration by the Planning Board.

In general, we are in support this project because it addresses the demand for residential space in Cambridge and because its location near Alewife makes it feasible for residents and employees to choose transit options over driving. However, we ask that the developer take further steps to support the transit system.

- First, consistent with other recent housing developments (Mass+Main, NoMa/SoMa, MXD), it would be appropriate for the developer to contribute to the improvement of the transit infrastructure around the proposed new housing. Specifically, they could work with the city to fund studies on the feasibility of bus queue jump lanes on route 2, modifications to the bus routes in the area, and make improvements to the Alewife T station.
- Next, to further encourage transit use, we ask that the development subsidize transit passes for 211 Concord Turnpike residents. Specifically, we would like to see the development offer a full subsidy of up to two Charlie Card T passes per unit for three months and a further 50% thereafter, subject to turnover. We suggest that the developer be required to include a statement in all advertising/promotion of the development that “all unit residents will be provided subsidized public transportation of at least 50% for the life of every lease.”
- Also, we would like to see the developer install and maintain highly visible real-time transit information screens in several relevant places, as well incorporate useful wayfinding signage into their design. Both suggestions are consistent with recommendations made as

part of the traffic impact study for the proposed development and would further facilitate the choice of transit over driving.

- We ask that the city engage with the developer to further promote the idea of running shuttle buses from the new development to the T station at Alewife, again with the idea of furthering transit accessibility.
- Finally, we support the request variance to reduce the ratio of parking spaces to units to ~0.76 as a way to encourage residents to choose sustainable transit modes over driving. It is important, as well, that tenants be charged for their parking spaces as an add-on to their monthly rent, as opposed to including the fee in their monthly cost.

In conclusion, we would like to offer tentative support for this project and to ask that more specific measures be put in place to encourage transit use over driving and to help offset the impact of increased transit trips on the MBTA system.