



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Brooke McKenna, Acting Chair

Date: January 23, 2023

Subject: 75 First Street Project (PB#231A Amendment 7)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the 75 First Street Planned Unit Development (PUD) 231A Application for Amendment #7 (Major) by Urban Spaces LLC. This Amendment proposes to construct an 84,298 sf six-story residential building, with 90 dwelling units, 3,600 sf ground floor commercial space, 94 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and 9 short-term bicycle parking spaces, to be added to the First Street PUD as a new "Parcel E".

The Project is located at the corner of First Street and Spring Street and presently contains a single-story retail building known as the David's Shoes retail store, which will be razed. The new Project (Parcel E) will be combined with the 85 First Street parcel (Parcel D), by extending the new building above and over the existing surface parking lot located on Parcel D.

According to the PUD Amendment #7, Urban Spaces LLC proposes to provide vehicle parking for the Project in the underground parking garage located under Parcel B and C. However, the Project's Dimensional Form indicates zero off-street parking spaces for the Project. The Planning Board may want the parking shown in the Dimensional Form to be clarified or corrected.

The Dimensional Form in the PUD Amendment #7 Application indicates 11 off-street spaces located on Parcel D (85 First Street), but page 7 of the Project Narrative says that there are 10 parking spaces on Parcel D. The Planning Board may also want this to be clarified or corrected.

Urban Spaces LLC completed a Transportation Impact Study (TIS) for the Project which was certified by TP+T on October 26, 2022. The TIS indicated that the Project will generate the following trips:

- 170 daily vehicle trips (14 AM and 31 PM peak hour vehicle trips).
- 174 daily transit trips (15 AM and 21 PM peak hour transit trips).
- 112 daily pedestrian trips (12 AM and 13 PM peak hour pedestrian trips).
- 24 daily bicycle trips (2 AM and 2 PM peak hour bicycle trips).

Planning Board Special Permit Transportation Exceedances

The TIS indicated that the Project triggered 2 Planning Board Special Permit Transportation Exceedances, which are summarized below:

- The Safe Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities criteria was exceeded for Spring Street because Spring Street does not have a bicycle facility.
- The Safe Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities criteria was exceeded for Hurley Street because Hurley Street does not have a bicycle facility.

The Cambridge 2020 Bicycle Network Plan does not propose greater separation for bicycles for Spring Street and Hurley Street. However, those streets and other streets are being considered as part of TP+T's ongoing [First Street/Second Street Corridor Study](#). The proposed 75 First Street Project will not prevent any potential future changes to the streets as part of that study.

TP+T Initial Comments

TP+T offers the following initial comments to the Planning Board for consideration of this Project's Application for Amendment #7.

General Comments

TP+T believes this would be a positive Project. It will create 90 new residential housing units, including affordable housing, and ground floor commercial space.

A multi-unit residential building at this location is compatible with the mixed-use conditions of the area and the site is a transit-oriented location, including a 5-minute walk to the MBTA Green Line Lechmere Station.

One positive element of the Project is that it will widen the First Street and Spring Street sidewalks along the frontage of the Project. The set-back for the new building will be about 5 feet longer than the existing building's set-back. The result will be about 12 to 13 feet-wide sidewalks for First Street and Spring Street, respectively, compared to the existing 8 feet-wide sidewalks.

Automobile Parking

The Project will construct no new vehicle parking spaces on-site, which reduces the costs to build new housing and could discourage automobile ownership by the residents. The Project proposes to accommodate the residents parking needs by offering off-site parking at the PUDs recently constructed 142-space underground parking garage at 107 First Street, located below Parcels B and C, with vehicle access from Charles Street.

TP+T believes that the parking supply and demand must be managed well so residents with cars can park off-street and residents that do not need a car are encouraged and incentivized to not have a car by using sustainable forms of transportation (e.g., traveling by transit, walking, or biking).

Because the unit sizes are small with 86% of the units as studios or 1-bedrooms, TP+T expects most of the units will be occupied by single-person households who will be working or attending college in the area and not likely have a car. The Applicant also provided some data in the TIS that showed an expected parking demand of about 0.42 vehicles per unit (38 parking spaces) and how that demand can be accommodated at the 107 First Street garage.

Bicycle Parking

The Project will provide 94 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 9 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The bicycle parking spaces appear to meet the City's zoning requirements and Cambridge standard bicycle layout design.

Site Plan, Service and Loading

The pedestrian access to the building will be from Spring Street. Access to the 107 First Street underground parking garage will be from Charles Street.

The Project does not have a loading dock, but will have access to a loading area from the surface parking lot located on Parcel D. TP+T expects that residents move-in/move-out needs will utilize the surface parking lot on Parcel D or will seek a moving truck permit from the city.

The Applicant indicated that they would work with the city arborist and DPW to add street trees to the existing sidewalks around the development. The Planning Board members may want to know more details about if and where new street trees can be provided.

Page 34 in the Application narrative talked about closing curb cuts on First Street, however, there are no existing curb cuts on First Street. The Applicant should clarify or correct this statement.

Transportation Mitigation

The 75 First Street Planned Unit Development (PUD) 231A Application for Amendment #7 did not directly discuss any transportation mitigation for the Project, however, the Project's TIS, which was included in the Appendix, stated that the Project will implement various Transportation Demand Management Measures (TDM).

TP+T believes the TDM measures described in the TIS is a useful start, but more work is needed for a complete and comprehensive transportation mitigation program for the Project to off-set its transportation impacts, which should also be consistent with other recently approved residential development projects in the area.

TP+T will be happy to work with the Applicant and provide recommendations to the Planning Board for the final PUD Planning Board hearing.