




CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Joseph E. Barr, Director 

Date: January 24, 2020

Subject: Sullivan Courthouse Project at 40 Thorndike Street (PB288)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application by Leggat McCall Properties, LLC, and their financial partner Granite Properties, to modify certain provisions of Planning Board Special Permit #288 to reduce the amount of off-street parking by 150 spaces and to convert approximately 24,000 square feet of approved office space to an additional 24 dwelling units, which will result in 48 total dwelling units for the Project, all of which will be affordable units.

TP+T also reviewed a Parking Demand Update memo by VHB dated January 10, 2020, which provided background information on the Project's permitting and parking, updated the Project's program and parking zoning requirements, and provided an updated automobile and bicycle parking analysis for the Project. TP+T believes that the parking analysis was professionally done, and we support its conclusion that the proposed new supply of 362 spaces falls within an expected parking demand range based on observed or approved parking use ratios for comparable projects.

The change to the Project's parking plan is from 512 total spaces (420 spaces off-site, 92 space on-site) to 362 total spaces (277 spaces off-site, 85 spaces on-site). The difference is a reduction in 150 spaces. However, it's important to note that the reduction in parking spaces is generally not a reduction in the physical number of parking spaces (with the exception of on-site spaces going from 92 spaces to 85 spaces as a result of design changes to satisfy updated code requirements and the increased residential program), but rather it's mostly a reduction in the minimum number of required leased parking spaces off-site in the First Street Garage. TP+T supports the change because we believe the Project's updated parking ratios are consistent with other projects in the area and with the transportation, parking and mobility recommendations and goals articulated in City Plans such as Envision Cambridge and the 2013 Kendall Square (K2) plan.

A summary of the parking plan and allocation of parking space is shown below:

Parking Summary

Land Use	Size	First Street Garage	On-Site Parking (40 Thorndike St)	Total Parking	Parking Ratio
R&D	396,000 SF	272	67	339	0.86
Housing	48 Units	5	18	23	0.48
Retail	17,000 SF	0	0	0	0
Total		277	85	362	

To encourage residents of the 48 affordable housing units to travel by sustainable modes such as public transit and bicycle, TP+T recommends (and the Applicant has agreed) to implement the following residential Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, which would supplement the transportation mitigation conditions in the original Special Permit (which continue to apply to the Project), be consistent with the additional commitments that were made in the proposal the Applicant submitted to the City as part of the disposition process for the parking spaces in the First Street Garage, and a be part of the measures outlined in the Project's approved PTDM Plan and Amendment:

- Transit Pass Program: All Project Residents will receive one MBTA monthly pass, at 100% subsidy, for the first three months of tenancy. Benefit applies each time a new household moves in.
- Expansion of Bluebikes Membership to Project Residents: Subsidize Bluebikes Gold-level membership for one year for up to two adults per Project Resident household. Benefit applies each time a new Project Resident household moves in.
- Charge Project residents parking fees separate from the rent to remind residents of the cost of owning and parking a vehicle. Because all housing units will be affordable, this program is subject to constraints under Cambridge's affordable housing program.