



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

## NOTICE OF PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

2017 JUN 21 PM 3:13  
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Case Number:	328
Location of Premises:	10 North Point Boulevard
Zoning:	North Point Residence District / PUD-6
Applicant:	EFEKTA Group, Inc. 2 Education Circle, Cambridge, MA 02141
Owner:	Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation / Department of Conservation and Recreation
Application Date:	May 15, 2017
Date of Public Hearing:	June 6, 2017
Date of Determination:	June 6, 2017
Summary of Proposal:	Development Proposal for Planned Unit Development (PUD) to construct a new building of 300,000 square feet containing student housing, educational office, retail uses, and 110 accessory above-grade structured parking spaces.
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: Swaathi Joseph

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/PUD Application dated May 15, 2017, including application forms, executive summary, technical studies/project impacts, consistency with special permit zoning criteria, urban design objectives narrative, summary of community outreach, certificate of receipt of plans, graphic materials, and appendix.
2. Slides from Presentation to Planning Board on June 6, 2017.

### Other Documents

3. Memo to the Planning Board from Katherine F. Watkins, City Engineer, dated May 31, 2017.
4. Memo to the Planning Board from Community Development Department Staff, dated June 1, 2017.
5. Memo to the Planning Board from Joseph E. Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated June 1, 2017.
6. Letter from East Cambridge Business Association, dated June 6, 2017.
7. Letter from City Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., dated June 6, 2017.
8. Letter from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, dated May 19, 2017 to Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs with City of Cambridge Comments on Final Environmental Impact Report.

## **APPLICATION SUMMARY**

The Development Proposal is to construct a twelve-story mixed-use building for the Hult International Business School and its affiliate EF Education First (collectively EF), with a first floor predominantly dedicated to public uses, office uses on some upper floors, and the remainder of occupied space devoted to student housing and accessory housing uses. The project also includes a public open space that will be maintained and programmed by EF offering multiple recreational amenities. Above-grade structured parking will be incorporated into the building to accommodate 110 parking spaces, and 264 long-term bicycle parking spaces will be provided in two exterior sheds in addition to the bike room in the building. Fifty-four short-term bicycle parking spaces will also be provided on site.

## 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 in conformance with the General Development Controls set forth in Section 12.50 and the development controls of the PUD-6 zoning district contained in Section 13.70 of the Zoning Ordinance. The PUD-6 development controls include two standards for which specific Planning Board approval is required in the case of the proposed project. First, a Planning Board special permit is required to allow a project to include 100% non-residential uses if only one building is located within the Development Parcel. Secondly, a written Planning Board determination is required to allow a retail or consumer service establishment to exceed 10,000 square feet in floor area.

Student housing is a non-residential institutional use in the Zoning Ordinance. The Board finds that the proposed non-residential uses are appropriate given the nature of the single proposed building as an expansion of an institutional presence that has positively served the objectives of the district, and provides student housing to balance EF and Hult's existing classroom and office functions. The Planning Board finds that the proposed fitness center and café use occupying approximately 12,042 square feet is consistent with the intent of the district requirements and appropriate as it caters to public recreational needs and complements the proposed open space improvements in the area.

- (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 zoning for the PUD-6 district was developed in response to the recommendations of the Eastern Cambridge Planning Study to primarily encourage a transformation from its previously dominant industrial character to a mixed-use neighborhood with housing as a dominant use, while also including office development, limited amounts of retail, and new public open spaces. The Board finds that the Development Proposal advances the development of the area in a way that responds to this past planning, while also advancing the evolution of the EF institutional presence as enabled by the rezoning process for this area in 2010. The Board also finds that the proposal is generally consistent with the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines established for the area, with the understanding that details will be confirmed as the review process continues. The Board acknowledges that the proposed building's siting away from the street edge, above grade parking not screened with active building uses, and continuous principal façade massing deviates from some particular elements of the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines and citywide urban design objectives, but finds that the design approach remains generally consistent with the intent of the

guidelines and is an acceptable response to the particulars of the proposed use, site and open space connections.

*(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 enabling redevelopment of an underutilized parcel in an area that is currently witnessing improvements, while providing open space and other amenities serving occupants of the area and the general public.

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

*(a) 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 Development Proposal includes a site design focused on linking the existing parks in the vicinity with new publicly beneficially open space exceeding the requirements of the PUD-6 zoning. The proposal will also include a mix of uses that complements the adjacent North Point development west of the Gilmore Bridge. The public amenities proposed in the ground floor of the proposed new building will be beneficial to the occupants as well as other local residents, encouraging an active lifestyle.

*(b) Traffic flow and safety*

The Development Proposal includes a thorough transportation impact study, performed pursuant to the Project Review Special Permit requirements in Section 19.20 of the Zoning Ordinance and reviewed and certified as complete and reliable by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T), that looks comprehensively at all forms of transportation. The Planning Board received a communication from TP&T dated June 1, 2017, and testimony at the public hearing addressing the anticipated impacts on traffic, which are found to be relatively modest in scale. The project will be subject to TP&T requirements that will limit or mitigate traffic impacts, which will be discussed further in the context of the Final Development Plan. The project will be designed to provide safe access, egress and circulation meeting City standards.

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

According to the Development Proposal, existing utilities and public infrastructure will be adequate to serve the proposed building. All connections to public infrastructure will be subject to review and approval by the appropriate City departments. The City Engineer in the Department of Public Works has reviewed the

proposal, and the Planning Board received a communication from the City Engineer dated May 31, 2017, indicating that applicable requirements are expected to be met, subject to continuing review.

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

The Development Proposal is not expected to result in any negative impact on existing public facilities. The proposed building and associated recreational uses are expected to have positive impacts on the use and activation of surrounding public open spaces and urban development.

*(e) Potential fiscal impacts*

The Development Proposal is expected to result in positive fiscal impacts for the City, including increased tax revenue, public improvements, and other contributions, without placing additional burdens on public resources.

## **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, a conditional approval with recommendations for modifications subject to additional review, or deny the application.

It is the Planning Board's Determination to **APPROVE** the Development Proposal subject to conditions and with recommendations for modifications and to authorize the Applicant to prepare a Final Development Plan for submission to the Board in accordance with Section 12.36.

The Final Development Plan must respond to the specific comments set forth in the memoranda provided to the Planning Board by the Community Development Department, Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, and Department of Public Works attached to this Preliminary Determination. In addition to those comments the Board makes the following comments and recommendations:

### Site Planning and Design

- In consultation with City staff, consider alternative design approaches in order to minimize the amount of paved area along North Point Boulevard.
- Provide details of the proposed fence treatment around the multi-use field.
- Consider the arrangement of benches and flexible seating options, including movable outdoor furniture.
- Update context rendering to show the proposed retail at North Point.

### Building Concept Design

- Explore alternative sizes, shapes and architectural treatment of the exterior support column in the front façade.
- Investigate alternative materials for the façade other than precast concrete.
- Improve the design of the roof-top mechanical screen so as to completely screen all mechanicals, if possible.
- Improve the visual character of the blank wall at the north corner of the building.
- Explore using a similar façade treatment for both the internal elevations and the front elevations of the building, with an emphasis on doing more with publicly visible facades.
- Consider if there is adequate width of windows in the residential areas of the building, and provide an interior rendering of a dorm room.
- Provide details of the roof terrace parapet/balustrade.

### Transportation

- Provide details for reducing conflict between vehicles and bicycles near the garage entrance and bike sheds.
- Consider potential conflicts between pedestrians accessing the building from the sidewalk and bicyclists on the multi-use path.

Sustainability

- Consider seeking full LEED certification of the building.

Open Space

- Consider alternatives to synthetic turf for the multi-use field.
- Provide details of all public realm and landscape treatments.

Voting in the affirmative to approve the Development Proposal were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Steven Cohen, Tom Sieniewicz, Hugh Russell, and Associate Member Thacher Tiffany, 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, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.

A copy of this Preliminary Determination PB #328 shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk.