



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**Traffic, Parking and Transportation**  
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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Cambridge Planning Board  
**From:** Joseph E. Barr, Director   
**Date:** June 1, 2017  
**Re:** EF Education First Expansion Project at North Point (EF III) (PB#328)

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The Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP&T) has reviewed the Transportation Impact Study (TIS) for the Proposed EF Education First Expansion Project at North Point (EF III) by EFEKTA Group, Inc. The project proposes to relocate the current Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) operations and maintenance facility and construct a 300,000 square-foot building containing approximately 161,343 SF student resident uses (up to 500 beds), 28,429 SF academic space, 22,754 SF office space for approximately 250 employees, 12,042 SF fitness center, and 110 above grade structured parking spaces (which are included in the Gross Floor Area calculation). The project will have 55 short-term bicycle parking spaces and 264 long-term bicycle parking spaces.

TP&T certified the TIS as complete and reliable on May 12, 2017. According to the TIS, the project will generate a total of:

- 710 daily vehicle trips, including 76 AM and 90 PM peak hour vehicle trips,
- 1,850 daily transit trips (176 AM/221 PM peak hour transit trips),
- 1,190 daily pedestrian trips (105 AM/139 PM peak hour pedestrian trips) and
- 298 daily bicycle trips (32 AM/38 PM peak hour bicycle trips).

The TIS indicated that the Planning Board Special Permit Transportation Criteria thresholds were exceeded in 12 instances, including:

- Exceeded the AM and PM peak hour criteria threshold for traffic on a residential street. More specifically, the TIS estimated 32 AM and 39 PM new peak hour vehicle trips on North Point Boulevard between East Street and Leighton Street which slightly exceeded the Planning Board Transportation criteria threshold of 30 new peak hour vehicle trips on a residential street.
- Exceeded the criteria threshold for AM and PM peak hour pedestrian level of service (PLOS) at the intersections of O'Brien Highway/Land Boulevard/Gilmore Bridge and O'Brien Highway/Museum Way, which is currently PLOS "E" due to the length of delay for pedestrians crossing the intersection at various crosswalks, and is predicted to remain at that level. These intersections are owned and operated by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and DCR.

The full TIS summary is attached.

TP&T has been working with EF on their proposed project since the beginning of 2017. EF has been very responsive to our comments and our meetings have been productive. TP&T offers the Planning Board the following initial comments for this project:

- 1. General Comments.** Overall, TP&T believes that the proposed EFIII building will be a positive addition to the area because it will create a new active building with publicly accessible open space and amenities, such as a fitness center. A key public transportation benefit of the project will be the completion of a missing segment of the multi-use path connecting the Northpoint development area to the west with the DCR North Point Park to the east along the project's North Point Boulevard frontage. The missing path segment is a critical link for the full path network to connect Somerville, Cambridge and Boston. The proposed EFIII building is also a positive project because it is located in a transit-oriented area with access to Lechmere station on the Green Line and Community College Station on the Orange Line, as well as other transportation options in the area including Hubway and carsharing vehicles.
- 2. Site Access.** Parking and loading access to the site will be provided by a driveway off of North Point Boulevard just east of the Gilmore Bridge. TP&T and EF has discussed the idea of sharing the North Point Twenty/20 building driveway, which would eliminate the need for a curb cut on North Point Boulevard but would require approval from the owners of Twenty/20 and from the state for a driveway underneath the Gilmore Bridge. EF and TP&T agree that the idea is complicated and not likely a feasible option at this time, but that it should not be precluded on the EFIII parcel as a potential future condition should the opportunity arise, particularly once the state has done rehabilitation work on the Gilmore Bridge. TP&T and EF also discussed other driveway location options, such as lining the driveway up with Museum Way, but determined that the current proposed access plan is reasonable and functional and may be preferable considering other project goals.
- 3. Automobile Parking.** The project is proposing 110 above-grade parking spaces, whereas the TIS estimated that the EFIII building will need 74 parking spaces. When EF built their previous EF II building, they sought and received a special permit to reduce parking for that building. They are not seeking a parking reduction for the current proposed EFIII building, for which 110 minimum parking spaces are required by zoning.

In order for EF to discourage new employees from driving, or from shifting existing EF employees to driving from walking, bicycling or transit, EF must have a very robust Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) plan (see discussion below).

From a campus-wide parking perspective, the TIS indicates that EF will have a parking demand of approximately 397 spaces (based on the existing and projected employee estimates and mode shares) and there will be a total of 390 parking spaces provided at full build-out (including the 110 parking spaces proposed as part of this project). So, although fewer than 110 parking spaces are needed for the proposed EFIII building, the total parking supply campus-wide is better balanced with the demand. However, because EF currently has a low share of auto trips with its constrained parking supply, a potential concern is that the additional parking supply might encourage driving for new employees, and may shift existing EF employees to driving from more sustainable modes (i.e. walking, biking and transit). This is another reason why a very strong PTDM plan may be needed for EF to maintain and improve their low drive-alone rates. More details on this topic will be addressed as the PTDM plan is developed in detail prior to issuance of a special permit.

4. **Bicycle Parking.** The Project will meet the long-term and short-term bicycle parking space zoning requirements. TP&T will work with the applicant on the final locations for the short-term bicycle parking spaces, although the current proposed site plan generally appears to be appropriate and reasonable.
5. **Transportation Mitigation.** Because the project will be creating new parking spaces, EF will need to amend its Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Plan with the City, which must be completed before the project can receive a Planning Board Special Permit.

TP&T will also be working with EF on determining appropriate transportation mitigation measures for the project. A full program of mitigation measures should be completed prior to the Planning Board issuing a Special Permit, and may include infrastructure improvements for the transportation network to mitigate the project's new trips, membership in the Charles River TMA, funding to support traveling by alternative modes (such as Hubway), and PTDM/Transportation Demand Management measures.

TP&T would like to thank EF for working with us so cooperatively. TP&T and EF share the goal of long-term success for the North Point area including safe and sustainable travel and we will continue to work together to develop final transportation mitigation program.