


CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Traffic, Parking and Transportation
344 Broadway
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

www.cambridgema.gov/traffic

Joseph Barr, Director
Brooke McKenna, Assistant Director for Street Management

Phone: (617) 349-4700
Fax: (617) 349-4747

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board
From: Joseph E. Barr, Director 
Date: November 30, 2017
Re: MIT Vassar Street Undergraduate Residence Hall (PB# 332)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T) has reviewed the Project Review Special Permit Application from MIT to replace the existing 372 parking space West Garage and 38 parking space Grounds Services complex at 121 and 169 Vassar Street with for an Undergraduate Residence Hall with approximately 450 beds for undergraduate students, 12 apartment style units for graduate students, and 4 apartment style units for faculty housing. The project includes student activity space with study rooms and lounges and a dining hall. It includes 243 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 33 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

TP&T has been working with MIT and offers the Planning Board members the following comments on this project:

- TP&T supports this project because it will not generate new vehicle trips and does not need new parking spaces because the project is primarily an undergraduate residence hall.
 - The project will not add new undergraduate students to the campus because the 450 beds are replacing undergraduate beds lost elsewhere on campus.
 - Students will be walking or bicycling as their primary travel mode.
 - The elimination of the West Garage will reduce traffic on Vassar Street.
 - MIT has also demonstrated in a pilot parking program called AccessMIT that charging staff and faculty to pay for parking at MIT lots or garages by day instead of paying annually reduced parking demand by 5% because people do not feel obligated to drive to campus every day since they paid for a years' worth of parking. Because of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs like this one, not all the parking spaces eliminated from this project need to be replaced. Nonetheless, MIT parking needs will continue to be met at other campus parking facilities.
- TP&T worked with MIT on the project's long-term and short-term bicycle parking which will meet the City's bicycle parking zoning requirements.
- According to MIT, the project is estimated to generate approximately 13 service and delivery trips daily mostly occurring during midday. TP&T believes that Vassar Street will be able to accommodate the trips, especially since the West Garage will be eliminated. (Traffic counts in September 2017 for Vassar Street at the West Garage found an average daily traffic (ADT) of 7,722 vehicles).

- TP&T believes the proposed curb cut width for the off-street service/loading area is appropriate in size but we will also work with MIT on the final curb cut width through the building permit design review process.
 - **As requested in the MIT's Project Review Special Permit Application, TP&T recommends the Planning Board permit the flexibility for the project to modify the curb cut width pursuant to Article 6, Section 6.43.5(b) and as approved by TP&T and the Public Works Department.**
- TP&T will continue to work with MIT through the building permit design review process on the final site plan for the Vassar Street crosswalks, pedestrian ramps and emergency vehicle access to ensure a safe and functional design.
 - **In particular, TP&T recommends MIT work with the TP&T to carefully design the crosswalk on Vassar Street by the Pacific Street railroad crossing because the crosswalk will serve pedestrians, bicyclists, emergency vehicle access, and needs to also consider pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the existing Vassar Street cycle track, and sightlines from on-street parking.**
- TPT will work with MIT on the curb regulations for the project's Vassar Street frontage which TP&T expects will continue to be metered parking spaces as well as a loading zone located near the residence hall's entrance as determined and approved by TP&T for transportation services such as Uber, Lyft, pizza deliveries, etc.

Lastly, TP&T wants to thank MIT for working with us on this project and we will continue to work together on this and other MIT projects in Kendall Square.