CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Joseph E. Barr, Director

Date: February 5, 2020

Subject: 34-40 Hampshire Street (PB358)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application from 36-40 Hampshire Street, LLC., for a hotel project at 34-40 Hampshire Street. The Project proposes a 68-room hotel with 16 auto parking spaces using a stacking system, 6 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and 10 short-term bicycle parking spaces. TP+T offers the Planning Board the following comments for your consideration.

1.0 Reduction in Parking. The Applicant is seeking a reduction in zoning required parking spaces from 34 parking spaces to 16 parking spaces. TP+T supports the reduction in parking spaces and has the following comments:

    1.1 The Special Permit Application included a Parking Utilization Study by Design Consultants, Inc. dated November 8, 2019 that found the average and peak parking demand at 7 similar-size hotels was respectively 0.18 to 0.26 parked vehicles per room, or an estimated parking demand for this Project of 12 to 18 parking spaces. TP+T believes the study was professionally done and we believe that 16 parking spaces is reasonable for this project, especially since if additional parking spaces are needed there are existing commercial parking garages in the area such as the One Kendall Square garage which has parking availability.

    1.2 The site is currently registered for 2 customer/visitor parking spaces. Because the Project proposes 16 parking spaces it requires a small PTDM plan which should be approved by the City's PTDM Officer prior to the Planning Board's Approval of a Special Permit. TP+T believes that PTDM plans help reduce parking demand for projects by encouraging sustainable modes of transportation such as taking public transportation, walking and bicycling.

2.0 Access to Off-Street Parking. The Applicant is seeking to modify the access and layout of their off-street parking spaces. More specifically, the Applicant proposes valet parking operations, a car elevator, and car stackers or double-decker parking spaces in a below-grade garage. TP+T supports the parking plan and has the following comments:

    2.1 Because of the small size of the site, TP+T supports the use of valet parking, car elevator and car stackers. A similar parking scheme exists at the Porter

Square Hotel, and 1868 Hotel also located in Porter Square. TP+T has not heard of any parking related issues with those projects.

2.2 TP+T recommends that Prior to a building permit, the applicant should provide elevator specifications to ISD and TP+T along with a maintenance plan and a contingency plan describing how the garage would be managed if the elevator were out of service. TP+T also recommends that the property owner be obligated to contact TP+T and ISD if the automobile elevator is out of service, report when it will be repaired, and provide an update when the repair is complete and the elevator is back in service.

2.3 TP+T believes the property owner should be obligated to provide sufficient staff for valet operations and management, and at no time should vehicles stand of queue back onto Portland Street when entering the parking garage vestibule.

2.4 The Project would like to have valet operations for guest drop-off/pick-up at the Hotel's front door on Hampshire Street. Hampshire Street, however, is on the City's Bicycle Network Plan as being a candidate for a separated bicycle facility which means valet parking may only work if it is compatible with a separated bicycle lane. TP+T and the Applicant discussed this and mutually agreed to the following protocol. First, TP+T recommends, and the Applicant agreed, to design the Project so that hotel guests that arrive by vehicle can pull into the hotel's vehicle entry off Portland Street where a valet operator would transport and store the car in the below-grade garage. Likewise, the valet operator would retrieve the car for the patron to pick-up within the garage. This parking operations plan would be necessary if valet parking on Hampshire Street was not permitted. Valet operations/drop-off/pick-ups absolutely cannot be on Portland Street because it would block traffic on Portland Street, which has one southbound travel lane adjacent to the site. Second, TP+T discussed with the Applicant the rough idea of a separated bicycle lane (possibly a raised sidewalk level cycle track) and valet parking on Hampshire Street adjacent to Project. TP+T indicated that the Applicant can propose a design for valet parking and a separated bicycle lane adjacent to the Project on Hampshire Street and if the design is feasible and approved by TP+T and DPW, the Applicant could build it. Lastly, any valet parking application on a public street would be reviewed through TP+T's regular valet parking permit application process and if approved would require a fee and annual renewals.

3.0 Location of Short-term Bicycle Parking Spaces. The Applicant is seeking to locate short-term bicycle spaces approximately 86 feet away instead of within 50 feet from the primary hotel entrance on Hampshire Street. TP+T is supportive of this request and has the following comments:

3.1 The short-term bicycle parking spaces will be on the Project's property, covered, lit, supervised, accessible directly from the Portland Street sidewalk, and around the corner from the building lobby entrance.

3.2 TP+T recommends sign(s) should be posted to direct guests to short-term bicycle parking at locations to be determined and approved by the City staff through the Building Permit design review process.

4.0 Loading/Curb Cut, Sidewalk Conditions. TP+T supports designating a 30-feet by 10-feet area on the 1st floor plan for loading activity and has the following loading, curb cut and sidewalk comments:

4.1 The Building Permit Plan must clearly show the designated Loading zone area including pavement markings and signage.

4.2 Because loading and delivery vehicles will need to back-out onto Portland Street, the Project should provide a "Vehicle Exiting Warning Device" if feasible, and also maximize the sight-line visibility for vehicles exiting the garage (i.e. windows) as much as possible to see pedestrians on the sidewalk. Plans should be approved by TP+T prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. The Applicant should also consider whether a staff member should be assigned to help trucks/vehicles back out safely onto Portland Street.

4.3 The existing curb cut on Portland Street should be as narrow as feasible and meet City standard design treatment, as approved by TP+T and DPW.

4.4 The sidewalks adjacent to the Project, and pedestrian ramps if required, at the Hampshire Street/Portland Street intersection shall be reconstructed as approved by DPW and TP+T to be compliant.

4.5 The Project proposes 4 new street trees. TP+T supports new street trees because they improve the pedestrian conditions, but each proposed location must be reviewed for conflicts by DPW.

5.0 PTDM and TDM Measures. The project is required to have a small Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) plan. **The PTDM plan must be approved before the Planning Board issues a Planning Board Special Permit.**

In coordination and/or in addition to the PTDM Plan, TP+T recommends the Project implement the following **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)** Measures to encourage and support non-single occupancy vehicle travel for hotel guests and employees.

5.1 Provide 65% transit pass subsidies to full time hotel employees.

5.2 Offer Gold level membership to all employees at the site who wish to enroll in the Bluebikes bike share program.

5.3 Provide a real-time transit and Hubway display screen in in the Hotel lobby to help people decide which mode to choose for each trip.

5.4 Provide incentives for patrons to not bring a car to the hotel.

5.5 Promote public transportation and other sustainable modes of travel on the hotel's web site.

5.6 Have available an air pump and bicycle repair tools for employees and customers to use when needed.