



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

# TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Cambridge Planning Board

**From:** Joseph E. Barr, Director

**Date:** July 31, 2020

**Subject:** Proposed Cannabis Retail Store at 1908 Massachusetts Avenue (Porter Square Remedies LLC). (PB#363).

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application (PB#363) and the Transportation Logistics Plan from Porter Square Remedies LLC, to operate an approximately 1,100 square feet Cannabis Retail Store at 1908 Massachusetts Avenue. TP+T offers the Planning Board the following comments for your consideration.

- The Dimensional Form in the Planning Board Special Permit Application indicated there are 2 existing parking spaces on the parcel, but that does not appear completely correct; based on a review of Google imagery there appears to be more than 2 parking spaces behind the building. In addition, the site plan does not provide an adequate parking lot layout plan which should show the total number of parking spaces, parking space dimensions, and driveway aisle and curb cut widths.
  - According to TP+T's records, there were 18 parking spaces labeled on the City's 1990 parking inventory map on the Project's site and TP+T's records indicated the 18 spaces were for customer/visitors to Carpet Colony. However, the address was listed as 1990 Massachusetts Avenue. The Property owner should update the parking registration for the site, including noting who currently uses those parking spaces.
- The Planning Board Special Permit Application stated that the Project will have exclusive use of two on-site parking spaces. One space will be used for an employee parking space and the other will be used for loading/delivery service activities and for drop-off/pick activities for customers (such as from ride-hailing services such as Uber or Lyft). This is intended to prevent drop-off/pick-ups from occurring in front of the site on the bike lane along Massachusetts Avenue.
- The Special Permit Application narrative listed the Porter Square Shopping and University Hall parking lots, but the Applicant has clarified to TP+T that they did not intend to give the impression, nor did they state, that these two parking lots were parking lots that the public in general can use because they are restricted to Porter Square Shopping Center and University Hall patrons only. The Applicant indicated that they intended to show that there is abundant parking for some other businesses

in the area and that those businesses therefore do not significantly impact the availability of on-street parking. The Applicant has also stated that the Porter Square Remedies Project has no arrangement with the Porter Square Shopping Center or University Hall for their customers to park there. TP+T wants to further reiterate that the Porter Square Shopping Center and University Hall parking lots are not “Commercial Parking Spaces” under City Ordinance 10.16 (i.e., open to the public for a fee), therefore, those parking lots can only be used for employees and visitors to those sites.

- The Application’s Transportation Logistics Plan Summary Form estimates a peak customer automobile parking demand of 25 parking spaces. The Applicant’s Parking Supply and Demand study conducted on Wednesday June 20, 2019 found 10 to 11 vacant metered on-street parking spaces between 10 AM and 5 PM, and 3 metered parking spaces available at 7 pm. Based on this information, TP+T believes it will be challenging for the Project to accommodate its customer’s peak automobile parking demands, particularly without Appointments Only operations. On the positive side, however, the Project location is well served by the Porter Square MBTA Red Line station, Commuter Rail, and bus routes #77, #83, and #96. There is also a Bluebikes bikeshare station nearby. TP+T recommends that the Project be very clear in communicating to its customers that the site has no customer parking spaces (other than a single drop-off/pick up space on-site), and customers should be highly encouraged to access the site by using public transit, bicycling, or walking.
- The proposed Project has a very small (6-person) waiting area which raises a concern about impacts of potential long-lines of people spilling out onto the public sidewalk. TP+T recommends the Applicant’s final operations plan provide strong commitments to not have any customer lines outside the building blocking the sidewalk.
- The Project’s Massachusetts Avenue frontage has a bicycle lane which raises a key concern about impacts of ride hailing drop-off/pick-ups blocking the bicycle lane and therefore bicycle safety. The Project should also be aware that this segment of Massachusetts Avenue is identified in the Cambridge Bicycle Plan as a location where separated bicycle lanes are proposed for future development. This further emphasizes the need to ensure that any drop-off/pick-up activity does not occur on Massachusetts Avenue.
- The Project does not propose in the Special Permit Application any bicycle parking spaces. Even though it may not be required per zoning for this Project, other Cannabis Retail Stores in Cambridge have provided on-site long-term bicycle parking for employees, which will be important for employees who want to safely and securely store their bicycle. TP+T recommends that similar to other Cannabis Retail projects in Cambridge that received a Special Permit, this Project should also provide long-term bicycle parking spaces (at least 2 spaces) for employees on-site. A final plan should be provided and approved by TP+T and CDD prior to the Issuance of a Building Permit.

- For short-term bicycle parking spaces, there are 3 existing short-term bicycle racks on the City sidewalk in front of the site, however, as mitigation, TP+T recommends that the Project contribute toward the City's Public Bicycle Parking Fund for 2 bicycle parking spaces (i.e., 1 bicycle rack), which would currently be \$800. This can be provided prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit and the funds would help the City install additional public bicycle racks in the City as demand continues to increase for bicycle parking.
- If the Project is approved by the Planning Board, TP+T recommends that the Applicant work with TP+T and the Cambridge Police Department on an operations plan which should be approved by the City prior to issuance of an Occupancy Permit. This plan should address in detail how the Applicant is intending to manage bicycle lane infringement and sidewalk crowding in a manner that maintains safety and access to adjacent buildings, transit, and other key uses. TP+T also recommends that the Applicant be required to work with TP+T and the Cambridge Police Department on a specific plan for the initial opening period, to identify and respond to any unexpected situations (i.e., sidewalk crowding, blocking bike lanes, or other safety issues).
- As stated in other Cannabis Retail Store special permit applications TP+T believes that the best way to minimize any traffic and parking impacts from a Project in Cambridge is for the Applicant to provide robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to advise and encourage employees and customers to travel by sustainable modes, such as walking, bicycling taking public transit, and carpooling. If the Project is approved by the Planning Board, TP+T recommends the following baseline TDM measures and monitoring program, which are routinely recommended by TP+T as conditions for special permit approval and are consistent with approved Cannabis Retail Stores in Cambridge.
  1. Provide 100% MBTA T-Pass subsidies to all employees. (may be pro-rated for part-time employees) The program shall be administered by the employer through the MBTA Corporate Pass/Perq Program.
  2. Offer all employees Gold-Level Bluebikes bikeshare membership, to be administered through the Bluebikes Corporate Program by the employer.
  3. Provide lockers for employees that walk or bike to work.
  4. Have available an air pump and bicycle repair tools for employee and customers to use when needed.
  5. Designate an employee of the facility as a Transportation Coordinator (TC) to manage the implementation of TDM measures and a transportation monitoring program if required. The TC will:
    - a. Post in a central and visible location (i.e., lobby for customers, break room for employees) information on available non-automobile services in the area, including, but not limited to:
      - i. Available pedestrian and bicycle facilities near the Project site.
      - ii. MBTA maps, schedules and fares.
      - iii. "Getting Around Cambridge" map (available at the Cambridge Community Development office).
      - iv. Locations of bicycle parking.
      - v. Bluebikes regional public bikeshare system.

- vi. Carpool-matching programs.
- vii. Other pertinent transportation information.
  - Instead or in addition to posting paper MBTA schedules, provide a real-time transportation display screen in a central location to help people decide which mode to choose for each trip.
- b. Compile and provide up-to-date transportation information explaining all commuter options to all employees. This information should also be distributed to all new employees as part of their orientation. Transportation information packets may be purchased from the Community Development Department.
- c. Provide customers with sustainable transportation information to access the site.
- d. Provide and maintain information on the Project's public website, newsletters, social media, etc. on how to access the site by all modes, with emphasis on sustainable modes.
- e. Participate in any TC training offered by the City or local Transportation Management Association.
- f. If requested by TP+T or the Community Development Department (CDD), the Applicant should provide TP+T and CDD information on employee and customer travel modes and where they customarily park, as well as information on loading and delivery operations. Surveys of employees and customer shall be designed and conducted in a manner approved by TP+T and CDD.
- g. Prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, the Applicant should provide a loading and service delivery management plan that includes all delivery activity to TP+T for TP+T's approval.
- TP+T recommends that the Applicant provide a one-time contribution to the City toward transportation, parking, transit and/or bicycle improvements to support non-automobile travel modes for employees and customers and to mitigate the Project's traffic and parking impacts on the surrounding area. Because the Project is an Economic Empowerment Applicant, TP+T recommends the Applicant contribute \$35,000 to the City with half due prior to the issuance of a Building Permit and half due prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit to help improve transportation services, operations, and information in the area.