



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Joseph E. Barr, Director

Date: March 18, 2021

Subject: Ragon Institute 2.0 Project, 600-624 Main Street (PB#375)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Application for a Project Review Special Permit (PB#375) dated January 29, 2021, for the Ragon Institute. The Project is located at 600-624 Main Street and proposes a 185,810 square foot research and development building with an approximately 40-person daycare facility, 120 below-grade parking spaces, 41 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

TP+T provides the Cambridge Planning Board the following comments on the Project:

- TP+T certified the Transportation Impact Study (TIS) for the Project on October 29, 2020 and has been working with the Applicant's team both before and after that certification. The TIS is included in Volume 3 of the Application for Project Review Special Permit. It found that the Project has six Planning Board Criteria Performance Exceedances, including four for Pedestrian Level of Service at the Main Street/Albany Street intersection, and two for lack of bicycle facilities on Portland Street and Albany Street.
- TP+T worked with the Applicant's team on various elements of the project, including the access locations for the parking garage and loading dock, overall project site plan including an improved bicycle facility on Main Street, and the project's parking plan.
- The Project is seeking Planning Board Special Permits for a reduction in parking spaces and for the width of the curb cut.
 - TP+T supports the proposed reduction in parking to 120 spaces or 0.65 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet, because based on the information provided in the TIS, TP+T believes it is a reasonable number of parking spaces for the Project.
 - TP+T also supports the proposed loading dock plan including the width of the curb cut because we believe that it will be as narrow as possible to be functional. TP+T will also continue to review the plans and work with the Applicant on the final loading dock design as part of the Building Permit process.

- To mitigate the Project's 442 daily, 75 morning peak hour, and 77 evening peak hour vehicles trips, and the Project's Planning Board Special Permit Exceedances, TP+T recommends, and the Applicant has agreed, to construct a sidewalk level separated bicycle facility along the Project's frontage on Main Street. The bicycle facility will be consistent with Cambridge 2015 Bicycle Plan and meet the intent of the 2020 Cambridge Cycling Safety Ordinance. City staff have been working with the Applicant's team on the bicycle facility design. The latest version is shown in the Application for Planning Board Special Permit Volume 2B, sheet B-68. In addition, sheets B-61-B-63 show general cross-section plans for Main Street which City staff believe are generally correct, although some further refinements will be needed as the project plans progress. For example, at some locations on Main Street, the width for tree plantings should be expanded from 3' to 4' to better support the trees resulting in 9-foot-wide sidewalk instead of 10 foot. Ultimately, the final design for the raised cross-section should be approved by City staff (DPW, CDD, and TP+T) prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. The construction work should be completed prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, unless approved by TP+T to have a later completion date if reasonably needed for functional reasons or circumstances beyond the Applicant's control.
- TP+T recommends that the Project construct a new crosswalk on the west side of the Main Street/Albany Street intersection (crossing Main Street), which is illustrated on Sheet B-68. The work shall include the required pedestrian ramps on both the north and south sides of Main Street and shall optimally not impact existing street trees on the north sidewalk. The Applicant shall submit plans for the crosswalk to TP+T and DPW prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, and it should be approved and constructed prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit, unless approved by TP+T to have a later completion date if reasonably needed for functional reasons or circumstances beyond the Applicant's control. The new crosswalk will help mitigate the Planning Board Special Permit exceedances at the Main Street/Albany Street intersection.

TP+T recommends that the Project install a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at one of the crosswalks on Main Street, either at the newly created crosswalk at Albany Street or the existing crosswalk adjacent to the Technology Square driveway. This would include two sets of foundations, poles, buttons, and flashers, to provide a fully functional RRFB at one of these locations. The Applicant shall submit plans for the RRFB to TP+T and DPW prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, and it should be approved and constructed prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit, unless approved by TP+T to have a later completion date if reasonably needed for functional reasons or circumstances beyond the Applicant's control.

The project will also provide Transportation Demand Management measures (TDM) and fund a new Bluebikes station, as noted in the Final Decision on the Applicant's PTDM Plan. This will address existing and future demand, as the users and visitors to this site will be heavy bikeshare users and there is not the available infrastructure to support all the additional use at this site. The funding for the Bluebikes Station should be provided prior to the issuance of the Building Permit to provide the necessary time for the City to order the station.