



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC, PARKING, + TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board

From: Joseph E. Barr, Director 

Date: March 9, 2021

Subject: Proposed Cannabis Retail Store at 57 JFK Street (Blue Enterprises HSMA, LLC (PB376))

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP+T) has reviewed the Special Permit Application and the Transportation Logistics Plan from Blue Enterprise HSMA, LLC to operate an approximately 3,037 square foot Cannabis Retail Store at 57 JFK Street located in Harvard Square (previously a Staples retail store). TP+T offers the Planning Board the following comments for your consideration.

- The proposed Blue Enterprise HSMA, LLC Transportation Logistics Plan and Summary Form are attached to the Special Permit Application.
 - One item in the Transportation Logistics Plan that should be corrected or clarified is that the Overview section says the Project proposes to be a Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD), but then talks about a Cannabis Retail Store.
- Harvard Square is a transit-oriented location served by the MBTA Harvard Square Red Line station, 13 MBTA bus lines, nearby Bluebikes bikesharing stations. Harvard Square also has on-street and off-street vehicle parking spaces, including a private commercial parking garage located at 65 JFK Street that provides public parking for approximately 265 vehicles and is a 1-minute walk from the Project site. Because of the area's various transportation options, TP+T supports the Project having zero on-site parking spaces.
- As stated in previous memos to the Planning Board for Cannabis Retail Stores in Cambridge, TP+T believes key concerns for Cannabis Retail stores are potential impacts from long lines of people on the public sidewalk and from vehicle drop-off/pick-ups directly in front of the site thus impacting bike lanes or traffic flow. However, the Applicant has been paying attention and addressed both concerns in their Special Permit Application, such as maximizing the size of the waiting area/queuing space for customers inside the building, providing on-line advance ordering and separated designated areas for fulfillment on-site, committing to having no queuing on any streets surrounding the store and no customer loitering on the sidewalk or the surrounding area, incentivize customers to utilize public transportation, and work with the City if customer drop-off/pick-up activities, such as from Transportations Network Companies (i.e., Uber/Lyft) activities are an issue.

- The Applicant proposed 4 long-term bicycle parking spaces for employees in the basement of the building with access from an elevator. The Applicant should confirm that the elevator is large enough to accommodate a bicycle. Furthermore the 4 long-term bicycle spaces show on Sheet A-104 do not appear to fully meet the City standards because they are not 8 feet long without impeding slightly into the doorway aisle by about a foot. TP+T believes this can be corrected by slightly moving the doorway to bicycle parking area over to the left about 1 foot or moving the wall behind the bike racks to the right about a foot.
- Because the Building has limited set back space to accommodate short-term bicycle parking, and the project has already committed to adding planters on Winthrop Street as part of separate project, the Applicant proposes to contribute toward the City's Public Bicycle Parking Fund for 1 rack (or \$800). TP+T supports this proposal, and funding should be provided prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit.
- It appears from the Special Permit Application that the Proponent has been paying attention to TP+T's Planning Board memos for other Cannabis Retail Store projects and has committed to implementing transportation mitigation that is consistent with the other Cannabis Retail Stores that have obtained Planning Board Special Permits, including the following measures:
 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 obtained 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.
- 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. No offsite deliveries should be made from this location to customers.
 - The Permittee shall submit an operations plan to TP+T and Cambridge Police Department for approval prior to issuance of a Building 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 any other key uses. In addition, there should be a specific plan for the initial opening period, including how the Permittee will identify and respond to any unexpected situations (i.e., sidewalk crowding, blocking bike lanes, or other safety issues). If required by TP&T in the course of approving an operations plan, the Permittee shall commit to use an on-line pre-purchase and/or appointment-only scheduling system for operations for a period of time that is determined by TP&T to be necessary to manage traffic impacts and prevent queuing on the public sidewalk that may cause disruption to the operation of other nearby businesses or to the general public. The City shall extend the commitment beyond that period if it is deemed by the City to minimize transportation impacts.
 - 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. As 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 immediate area.**
 - For consistency, when the Applicant submits their Host Community Agreement Statement of Interest to the City, these mitigation commitments should be restated in the same format and/or the Applicant should include an attestation that they intend to implement the same mitigation commitments that are included in the Special Permit decision.