

PROJECT # 16-003291.00

DATE: October 12, 2021
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PROJECT NUMBER: 16-003291.00

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Walker Consultants (Walker) has been retained by the Town of Brookline through Environmental Partners Group to review parking needs for the 108 Centre Street 40B application.

Walker has reviewed the application materials provided by the applicant that are generally available on the Town's website for this project. This review included the following:

- Comprehensive Permit Application by Hebrew Senior Life dated June 3, 2021; and
- Parking Demand Analysis Memo from Stantec dated September 14, 2021

Walker also reviewed email correspondence from Saralynn Allaire dated September 23 as well as verbal and written comments from Town DPW staff, all of which refer to an existing deficiency of parking supply in the area around 108 Centre. The DPW staff noted that they receive complaints about vehicles blocking the Centre Street bike lane due to the lack of area parking. DPW staff also noted that vehicles with ADA placards or license plates are allowed to park on the street overnight (almost all other vehicles are prohibited), and that the presence of these vehicles on Centre Street can hinder the overnight street sweeping.

The applicant proposes 54 new one-bedroom rental units of affordable senior housing to be managed in coordination with 336 existing units in adjacent buildings. There also would be 5,290 SF of community space in the new building. No new parking is planned and all residents, staff, visitors and caretakers for the new building would be directed to use on- and off-street public parking in the vicinity. The applicant and their consultant Stantec performed multiple occupancy counts of area parking and concluded that sufficient parking supply exists to absorb the additional demand from 108 Centre.

This site is in the M2.0 Zoning District, the Coolidge Corner Design Overlay District, and Transit Parking Overlay District. The combination of these districts requires the following to meet zoning:

- a. 1.4 spaces per residential unit with 1 bedroom as a base supply
- b. 10% increase of residential spaces for visitors and tradespeople
- c. Total parking minimum requirement per Zoning for the proposed program is:
 - i. Seventy-six (76) spaces for residents.
 - ii. Eight (8) additional spaces are required for visitors and tradespeople.
 - iii. Eighty-four (84) total spaces for this project, or a ratio of 1.56 spaces per unit.

Walker offers the following comments from our review of the application materials:

1. Weekday parking demand in the existing parking facilities at 100 and 112 Centre was observed on three dates by the Applicant and generally confirmed by Walker. The applicant noted that the highest total observed occupancy for the combined surface lots at 100 Centre and the garage at 112 Centre was 75 vehicles at 10:15 AM on May 12, 2021. Walker observed a total of 77 vehicles at 10:30 AM on September 22, 2021. There are a total of 97 spaces.
2. For weekday demand at on-street public parking in the area, Walker's observations at 11:00 AM on September 22, 2021 showed more available spaces than the applicant's observations from September 3 at 1:30 PM (the highest observed occupancy). Walker observed 43 available spaces while the applicant showed 32 available spaces.
3. For off-street public parking at the Fuller and Centre Street lots, Walker also found more available spaces than the applicant – 78 available spaces found by Walker on September 22 as compared to 30 available spaces observed by the applicant. However, it should be noted that the applicant's count appears to include some restricted spaces in the Centre Street lot – if the 7 empty ADA and 15-minute spaces are subtracted from the total observed on September 3 at 1:30 PM, there would have been only 23 available spaces combined in the two lots that would be suitable for parking by 108 Centre Street staff, residents and visitors.
4. Walker observed 19 vehicles parked on-street with caregiver placards on September 22, which exactly matched the number of placards observed by the applicant on September 3.
5. The applicant's claim that September 3 had high occupancy due to the upcoming Rosh Hashanah holiday seems reasonable. Overall, the weekday parking occupancy observations submitted by the applicant appear to be an appropriate baseline for existing conditions.
6. Similarly, the applicant's calculated existing parking demand using the occupancy counts and visitor logs appears reasonable as well. The sum of demand from residents, staff and visitors/caretakers was calculated at 0.31 vehicles per dwelling unit. This is less than the 0.61 vehicles per unit from data compiled for Senior Adult Housing in ITE's Parking Generation Manual, but the difference can be attributed to transportation and amenities provided for the site, a walkable neighborhood, and nearby frequent public transit.
7. If the proposed residences at 108 Centre generate parking demand similar to the existing adjacent buildings at 100 and 112 Centre, there would be 17 additional vehicles (0.31×54 units) needing parking in the area, as the applicant states. It's possible that the new building might attract somewhat younger residents with higher parking demand.
8. Even if the observed available parking spaces in the area were reduced based on note #3 above to a total of 55 spaces (23 off-street and 32 on-street, based on the highest observed occupancy), and even if new parking demand is somewhat higher than 17 vehicles, there appears to be sufficient available public parking in the vicinity of 108 Centre to absorb the new demand. However, this additional demand from 108 Centre would reduce the amount of public parking available to others in the future, and the Town can decide if this is allowable.
9. The applicant should nevertheless continue an aggressive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program in order to reduce parking demand, and assist those who need parking with information about where to find available spaces.

10. Regarding the late evening observations, the applicant submitted two counts at 10:00 PM from May 18 and August 31, showing 16 and 18 vehicles respectively in the surface lots at 100 Centre. Walker observed 21 vehicles at 10:00 PM on October 7. The applicant also submitted counts of 29 vehicles on both evenings in the 112 Centre garage, which Walker could not access to confirm. Walker did observe 6 vehicles parked on Centre Street at 10:00 PM on October 7, including 2 vehicles with ADA hangtags. The parking facilities at 100 and 112 Centre have available spaces overnight, and the applicant should consider offering overnight parking to new residents if there are no available resident permit overnight spaces in area lots.

Overall, the applicant's observation data appear to be sound. It should be noted that the COVID pandemic has disrupted parking and travel patterns in many places, and it is possible that the post-COVID parking demand in the area might be somewhat different than observed during 2021. Nevertheless, Walker agrees with the applicant's conclusion that sufficient public parking exists in the immediate area to absorb new demand from 108 Centre. However, this available public parking is a scarce shared resource which will be reduced due to the applicant's project generating new parking demand without providing new parking supply on site. It is up to the Town to decide if this is acceptable.

We remain available to answer further questions and attend the Town's ZBA meeting as required.