



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

Department of Public Works

Engineering & Transportation Division

TRANSPORTATION BOARD
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August 1, 2022

Jesse Geller, Chair
Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

Re: 217 Kent Street

Dear Chair Geller,

Per Chapter 317 of the Acts of 1974 the Transportation Board for the Town of Brookline is the local governing body which has authority to enact rules and regulations regarding the movement of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians on the public way. However, as you are aware, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B Sections 20 – 23 and 760 CMR 56.02 supersedes our enabling legislation for not only permitting but also for creating and altering the Traffic Rules and Regulations for the Town's public ways. Therefore we are writing this letter to provide comments and recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals relative to the proposed 217 Kent Street Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Application.

At the June 29, 2022 meeting of the Transportation Board, we reviewed the plans and peer review memorandums for the proposed 40B development at 217 Kent Street with representatives from the proponent including Jennifer Gilbert, Dennis Greenwood, and Scott Thornton. It is the Boards understanding that the project will entail the removal of the existing building and construct in its place a new Residential Development with:

- 100 residential units with pedestrian access from Kent Street,
- 42 parking spaces including 2 van accessible HP space, 6 compact vehicle spaces, 15 stacker spaces for medium size vehicles, and 19 regular spaces
- A u-shape driveway for onsite drop off and pick up
- Onsite bike parking spaces in the garage and externally

The hearing included a discussion with the developer and neighborhood residents on the design elements of the building, the existing traffic congestion and impacts by the project, the appropriateness of the onsite parking

ratio and its relation to area accommodations for alternative travel modes, planned and potential transportation demand management and travel mode choices by future residents, planned safety improvements by 217 Kent Street project, and proposed safety improvements.

In response to this discussion and our review of the plan, in recognition of the Town's sustainability goals and to increase mode share of non-personal motor vehicle travel, we offer the following comments and recommendations on this project that were unanimously adopted by the Transportation Board:

1. Supports the proposed, revised onsite parking amounts of 42 spaces, including 2 van accessible spaces that meets the design standards of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB)
2. Further requests that the parking, with respect to the number of accessible spaces, meet the recently adopted bylaws as passed by the November 2021 Town Meeting and awaiting approval from the Attorney General. If unable, then the Board requests that priority for lease of onsite parking be given to those with state issued handicap placard or plates.
3. Brookline Village and the nearby Lawrence Historic District are one of the most walkable parts of Brookline and the area provides easy access to non-personal motor vehicle modes of transportation including the MBTA Rte. 60, 65, & 66 Bus, MBTA C & D branch light rail lines, BlueBikes station, Car Share, and Ride Share. In recognition of this, the Board supports, to the extent allowed by law, the unbundling of the parking spaces from the residential leases rather than automatically including the space with the rental price of a residential unit. This is an increasingly common best practice in parking constrained neighborhoods in Brookline. Priority for lease of onsite parking should be given to those with state issued handicap placard or plates.
4. Requests that the On-site parking, driveways, walkways, etc. comply with MAAB accessibility guidelines.
5. Requests that the amount of onsite bike parking spaces and their locations internal to the building be included on the design plans and that the number of bike parking meet the proposed zoning amounts recently adopted by the May 2022 Town Meeting and awaiting approval from the Attorney General.
6. Requests the installation of at least 5 inverted hoop (or similar) bike racks outside of the building on the property site for use by residents and visitors.
7. Supports the use of a u-shape driveway, as designed, to allow for pick-up, drop off, and deliveries to take place on-site. In order to improve safety at the driveways, the Board requests the following:
 - a. The driveway exits be placed under STOP control
 - b. Parking along the public way 20 feet west of the garage driveway to 10 feet east of the entrance curb cut for the U-Shape driveway be restricted as NO PARKING ANYTIME/TOW AWAY ZONE with all signs and poles initially installed paid for by the developer and meet Town of Brookline specifications
 - c. The building owner be responsible for the removal of snow and ice in the loading zone, driveways, driveway curb cuts, and adjacent sidewalks so that it remains available for their tenant use

8. Request that the driveway entrances and exits should not be depressed, but should be at the elevation of the sidewalk to minimize impacts to pedestrians.
9. To ensure the location is walkable and ADA compliant, requests that the project reconstruct the sidewalks adjacent to their property on Kent Street to Town specifications.
10. Given the projects reliance on pedestrian accommodations for commuting purposes and to reach other modes (bike share, car share, public transportation), the Board requests that the developer provide for a counter balancing amenity through the contribution funds necessary for the purchase and installation of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons and ADA compliant wheel chair ramps, meeting Town specifications, at the adjacent intersection of Kent Street at Francis Street.
11. In line with the Select Board's Pedestrian Friendly Committee Report, include, to the extent feasible, pedestrian friendly lighting throughout the site and on the adjacent public way
12. In accordance with the Town's Transportation Access Guidelines and Zoning Bylaw, requests that the developer meet the number of onsite EV Chargers and Make Ready spaces per the recently adopted bylaws passed by the May 2022 Town Meeting and awaiting approval from the Attorney General. If unable, then the Board requests that the meet the requirements in the current Zoning Bylaws.
13. Requests implementation of a Transportation Demand Management Plan in-line with the Town's Transportation Access Plan Guidelines including:
 - a. A transportation coordinator will be designated for the Project to coordinate the elements of the TDM program;
 - b. Transit screens (similar to <https://transitscreen.com/>) or a similar technology displaying real time information for MBTA buses, Greenline Trolleys, and other alternative modes of transportation should be installed in the onsite residential lobby for use by residents, visitors, and service people.
 - c. A "welcome packet" will be provided to residents detailing available public transportation services, bicycle and walking alternatives, and commuter options available;
 - d. Discounted MBTA and BlueBike memberships for employees that choose to commute via non-single occupant vehicles (SOV); and
 - e. other measures recommended by staff to minimize single occupant vehicle trips.
14. Requests a Transportation Access Plan Agreement including traffic monitoring that comply with the Town's Transportation Access Guidelines.
15. The Transportation Board supports the parking ratio allocation in the garage as proposed by the project team as outlined above
16. Reserve the right to comment further in the process when this information is made available for review by the public.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed 217 Kent Street Chapter 40B

Comprehensive Permit Application. Because the proposal may change throughout this process the Transportation Board does reserve the right to provide comments further in the process when this information is made available for review by the public.

Sincerely,



Brian Kane, Chair
Brookline Transportation Board

Cc: Kara Brewton, Director – Planning & Community Development
Daniel Bennett, Building Commissioner
Robert King, Director – Engineering & Transportation Division