



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: July 6, 2022

Re: **PB #179, Cambridge Crossing (North Point) PUD Amendment 10 (Minor)**

Background

The North Point Planned Unit Development (PUD) is an approved 45-acre, 5+ million square foot development project planned to be built out through 2030. The Final Development Plan was first approved by the Planning Board in 2003, and since that time has been modified several times through the PUD amendment process. The most recent minor amendment (proposed by the current developer, DivcoWest) was granted by the Planning Board on March 15, 2022.

DivcoWest is currently seeking Minor Amendment approval for the following modifications to Parcel Q2:

- Include *Technical office for research and development, laboratory & research facility* (4.34(f)) as an approved use
- Relocate bicycle lockers from the west side of Parcel Q1 to the east side of Parcel Q2.
- Revise the approved subdivision plan

This memo summarizes the key areas of focus associated with the requested minor amendment.

Criteria for Granting Minor Amendments

Per the general PUD provisions in Section 12.37 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board determines whether changes to the Final Development Plan may be approved as minor amendments. The following guidance is provided in zoning:

(12.37.2) Minor amendments are changes which do not alter the concept of the PUD in terms of density, floor area ratio, land usage, height, provision of open space, or the physical relationship of elements of the development. Minor amendments shall include, but not be limited to, small changes in the location of buildings, open space, or parking; or realignment of minor streets.

If the Board determines that the changes are minor, then the Board may approve the minor amendment on the affirmative vote of five Planning Board members.

Comments on Proposed Amendment

Office/Lab Use

Parcel Q2 was originally designated as a hotel use in the original approved development plan of Cambridge Crossing in 2003. Condition 4.c of the Planning Board Decision states that the hotel use “...shall be required unless the Planning Board grants a Minor Amendment to this Permit to allow an alternate, permitted nonresidential use.”

As part of [Minor Amendment #8](#) in October 2019, the Planning Board authorized Parcel Q2 to contain a general commercial office use, and Condition 4.c. was updated to read “The Board hereby allows office as an alternate, permitted nonresidential use on Parcel Q2.” As part of this minor amendment, the Planning Board required the Permittee to submit a Construction Management Plan, subject to review and approval by TP+T, and the final location of Bluebikes Stations for these sites, subject to review and approval by CDD staff, prior to the issuance of a building permit for development on Parcels Q2 and R.

This minor amendment request seeks to expand the approved office use to an office/laboratory use for Parcel Q2. The Applicant states that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in a decline in the demand for general office space in the region, due to the rise in remote work; a trend which the Applicant believes may continue for the foreseeable future.

The proposed change from a general office use to a lab use is the type of change contemplated by the special permit in order to provide flexibility as demands for space for various nonresidential uses fluctuate over time. Additional considerations for potential impacts of lab uses, compared to office uses, might include location of service functions, rooftop mechanicals, and lighting, which are elements that can be addressed during design review by the Planning Board.

Relocated Bicycle Lockers & Parcel Q1 Design Update

Condition #19 of the Special Permit requires that facilities for bicycle repairs and long-term bicycle parking shall be provided in the buildings built on Blocks Q1, Q2, R and/or V, or another location approved by the Planning Board. As part of Minor Amendment #8, the Planning Board approved the location of the lockers in building Q1, with additional lockers located along the outside western façade of Q1. In conjunction with additional proposed open space design changes (detailed below), the Applicant proposes relocating the proposed lockers along the eastern façade of building Q2.

Condition #19 further stipulates that the bicycle lockers be operational when the relocated MBTA station is operational. The Applicant notes that the operation of the bicycle lockers will not be possible until the substantial completion of Building Q2, and therefore proposes to temporarily locate the lockers within the Station Plaza open space within Parcel R now, before being moved to the proposed permanent location upon completion of Q2.

To accommodate the relocation of the bike lockers, the Applicant revised the design of the open space between Parcel Q1 and Q2. Specifically, the Applicant has added an alley of trees along the west side of Parcel Q1, and has modified the brick band pattern such that it terminates at the edge of the parcel line.

The design of Parcel Q2, along with revisions to the design of Parcel Q1 and the open space between them, are all subject to Planning Board approval as discussed in the accompanying memo on the design submission.