



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

LOUIS A. DePASQUALE
City Manager

PTDM Ordinance—FINAL DECISION

Project: Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper School

Project Number: F-71

Applicant: City of Cambridge Public School Department

Contact: Brendon Roy, Construction Program Manager

Address: 197 Vassal Lane, Cambridge, MA 02138

Date of Application: June 17, 2021

Decision Deadline: August 16, 2021

Date of Issue: July 14, 2021

This form indicates the FINAL decision of the Parking and Transportation Demand Management Planning Officer with respect to the PTDM plan submitted for the project listed above. Please review the enclosed attachments, which include information about ongoing monitoring and reporting relative to this project.

Decision:

- Approve (attachment: approval letter and copy of plan)
- Approve with Conditions (attachment: letter of conditions and copy of plan)
- Deny (attachment: reason for denial and copy of plan)

Stephanie Groll
Parking and Transportation Demand Management Planning Officer





City of Cambridge

Executive Department

LOUIS A. DePASQUALE
City Manager

July 14, 2021

Brendon Roy
Construction Program Manager
City of Cambridge Public School Department
197 Vassal Lane
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Mr. Roy,

The attached form indicates the final decision on the Parking and Transportation Demand Management Plan for Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper School, developed by the City of Cambridge Public School Department. The final decision is an **approval**. This letter describes recommendations for additional TDM programs that might improve your non-single-occupancy-vehicle mode split. The last section lays out details about implementation of the monitoring and reporting program that is required as part of your plan. This PTDM plan will help reduce the impacts of your facility on traffic and parking in the surrounding area.

Encouraging people to change their transportation modes from driving alone to walking, bicycling, taking transit and carpooling takes a comprehensive approach. Extensive research has been conducted on changing travel behavior and indicates that both disincentives and incentives are necessary to achieve mode-shift success. The City also believes that supporting sustainable commute modes is important to its effort to attract highly qualified workers, create an equitable transportation system, and make real strides towards reversing current climate change trends.

Additional Recommendations

In addition to the measures described in the PTDM Plan, I am recommending the implementation of the following additional TDM measures. If the current Plan fails to achieve the stated mode-split goals, implementing these programs could help to achieve that goal:

- Charge employee parking fees as a daily rate, rather than provide monthly parking passes, to give employees flexibility to make daily choices for whether to commute by car or sustainable mode rather than maximize the sunk cost of a monthly parking pass.
- Increase the parking fee to 100% of market rate.



- Increase the transit subsidy to 100%, up to the federal fringe benefit maximum.
- Offer a financial incentive to commuters who bike, walk, carpool, or vanpool.

Monitoring and Reporting Plan

The Owner has committed in the Plan to conducting a mode-split survey and monitoring and reporting mode-split information annually. Driveway counts and parking utilization (for vehicles and bicycles) shall be reported every two years. If the certificate of occupancy for the project is issued between September 1 and February 29, the monitoring shall take place during the months of September or October and be reported to the PTDM Planning Officer no later than November 30. If the certificate of occupancy for the project is issued between March 1 and August 31, monitoring shall take place during the months of April or May and be reported to the PTDM Planning Officer no later than June 30. This will ensure that the monitoring captures a realistic assessment of the performance of the project, while giving time to compile the results and report them to the City.

It is important to note that while approvals under the PTDM ordinance are transferable by and among private parties, this is contingent upon the new owner agreeing to continue to operate under the existing PTDM plan. Should the Owner elect to transfer all or some portion of the project, Section 10.18.050 (g) of the PTDM ordinance would apply.

I look forward to working with you in the future as you implement this plan. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (617) 349-4673 or sgroll@cambridgema.gov.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Groll
PTDM Planning Officer

cc: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Susanne Rasmussen, Director of Environmental and Transportation Planning Division of CDD
Joseph Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department

Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper School

Cambridge, Massachusetts

PREPARED FOR



City of Cambridge
Cambridge Public Schools

PREPARED BY



99 High Street
Boston, MA 02110
617.728.7777

July 14, 2021
DRAFT





Project Information Summary

PTDM Project #: F71

Project Name: Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper School
Project Address: 197 Vassal Lane
Cambridge, MA 02138
Owner: City Of Cambridge Public School Department
Contact Person: Brendon Roy, Construction Program Manager
Contact Address: 795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
Phone: (857) 998-7312
E-mail: broy@cambridgema.gov

Project Description:

The City of Cambridge proposes to completely reconstruct the existing Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper School into a new building and implement significant enhancements to the playing fields and community recreation provided at the adjacent Father Callanan Park, which shares the site.

The proposed Project, as currently envisioned, involves the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new building that will include the following redesigned components:

- › Tobin Montessori School (including DHSP Preschool and Special Start)
- › Vassal Lane Upper School
- › Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Program
- › Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Program
- › Underground parking garage with space for 150 vehicles (including approximately 100 parking spaces for faculty and staff and 50 short-term drop-off/pick-up spaces)
- › 18 long-term and 102 short-term bicycle parking spaces
- › 25-dock Bluebikes station

The Proposed Project, when complete, will accommodate a total of 979 students as follows: (i) 336 students in the Tobin School (JK to 5th grade); (ii) 450 students in the Vassal Lane Upper School (6th to 8th grade, including 75 SEI students); (iii) 68 students in the (ASD) Program (including the two schools); (iv) 45 students in Special Start and (v) 80 students in the Department of Human Services Programs (DHSP) Preschool.

Table 1 summarizes those anticipated changes in relation to student and staff occupants, which are broken out by school program/components.



Table 1: Proposed Project Summary

School Program/Component	Quantity
Previously Registered Staff Parking Spaces	60 (80 Vehicles Observed)
Net-New Registered Staff Parking Spaces	+40
Total Staff Parking Spaces	100
Total Short-Term Drop-off Pick-up Spaces (for use by families and caregivers)	50
Proposed Long-Term Bicycle Parking	18
Proposed Short-Term Bicycle Parking	102
Square Footage of Building*	330,000
Estimated # of Occupants	979 Total Students 238 Total Staff
Census Tract #	3544

* Per traffic study dated January 13, 2021

Table 2 summarizes those anticipated changes in relation to student and staff occupants, which are broken out by school program/components.

Table 2: Proposed Site Occupants: Student Enrollments + Staffing

School Program/Component	Square Feet	Car Parking Spaces	Long-Term Bike Parking Spaces	Short Term Bike Parking Spaces	Total People	Total People On-site at One Time ¹
Tobin Montessori employees	330,000	100	18*	102*	85	56
Vassal Lane Upper School employees					74	49
DHSP pre-school employees					33	22
Shared Resources Employees*					46	30
Tobin families and caregivers		50	0		<i>Tobin—45 (Special Start)</i>	<i>Tobin—23 (Special Start)</i>
VLUS families and caregivers					<i>VLUS—64 (ASD)</i>	<i>VLUS—32 (ASD)</i>
DHSP pre-school families and caregivers					<i>DHSP—80 (Preschool)</i>	<i>DHSP—40 (Preschool)</i>
Total Students				979	784	



TOTAL	330,000	150	18	102	238 employees 189 families + caregivers 979 students	157 employees 95 families + caregivers 784 students
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Per City of Cambridge zoning 6.100 based on 60 classrooms. (0.3 spaces per classroom for long-term and 1.70 spaces per classroom for short-term)

*Shared spaces: Learning Commons, Gym/Health center, Dining, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Nursing Suite, OT/PT, Buildings and grounds

¹Due to shifts, absences, vacations, and the flow of families and caregivers on-site throughout the drop-off/pick-up period for the given schools it has been assumed that 65% of employees, 50% of families/caregivers, and 80% of students would be on site at a given time.

Project Overview

On behalf of City of Cambridge Public School (CPS) Department, VHB has prepared this Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Plan for the proposed Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper School redevelopment at 197 Vassal Lane in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The location of the site and its neighborhood context is shown in Figure A. The Proposed Site Plan is illustrated in Figure B. The project site is bounded by Concord Avenue to the north, Alpine Street to the west, Massachusetts National Guard Base to the east and Vassal Lane to the south.

The Project includes the construction of a new school complex that will include the following components:

- Tobin Montessori School
- Vassal Lane Upper School
- Special Programs
- Community School

Parking and Access – The development will be supported by a total of 100 below-grade parking spaces dedicated to staff, 50 below-grade drop-off spaces, as well as 18 long-term bike parking spaces and 102 short-term bicycle spaces, as detailed in Figures C through L.

Vehicular access to the parking garage and drop-off area will be provided via a garage ramp off Vassal Lane at its intersection with Standish Street. The parking spaces are a combination of single and tandem spaces, for most efficient use of garage footprint. In addition to parking spaces for employees, families and caregivers of students will be allowed to park in designated drop-off and pick-up spaces in the garage.



. Tandem spaces are reserved exclusively for staff. Garage parking is not available for visitors during peak daytime pick-up + drop-off operations.

Based on the parking analysis presented in the Traffic Study dated January 13, 2021, the Project is providing sufficient parking to meet zoning requirements. A detailed parking study was conducted and included in the Traffic Study to demonstrate daytime parking availability to support school uses.

The majority of students will arrive to school via school buses, with some students getting dropped off by parents in the designated drop-off spaces zones in the southwest corner of the garage. The main pedestrian entrance is accessed from the school lobby, with other access point available off the north side and south side of the school.

Short-term and long-term bicycle parking will be provided on-site and designed to be in compliance with the City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guidelines. Long-term bicycle parking will be accessed via a bicycle-sized (5' x 7') elevator from the north side of the school into the garage. Bicycles will not be using the automobile garage ramp to access the garage.

Public Transit – The Project area is accessible by several Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Bus lines. A graphical illustration of study area transit lines is presented in Figure M (Public Transit Services) and summarized in the following sections.

Route 72 – Aberdeen Ave – Harvard Station

MBTA Route #72 connects Aberdeen Avenue and Harvard Square via Concord Avenue and Huron Avenue. The nearest bus stop to the Project Site is located at the corner of Huron Avenue and Lakeview Avenue. Various stops along this route connect with other bus lines and the Red Line. The bus route operates inbound-only to Harvard Square from 6:55 AM to 9:42 AM on weekdays, with 15-30 minute headways during service. There is no weekend service for this route. This route has been temporarily suspended.

Route 74 – Belmont Center – Harvard Station

MBTA Route #74 connects Belmont Center and Harvard Square in Cambridge via Concord Avenue. The nearest bus stop to the Project Site is located at the corner of Concord Avenue and Alpine Street. Various stops along this route connect with other bus lines and the Red Line. The bus route runs on weekdays from 5:10 AM to 1:22 AM with 11 – 20-minute headways during peak hours. On Saturday, service runs from 5:54 AM to 7:19 PM, and there is no service on Sunday.

Route 75 – Belmont Center – Harvard Station

MBTA Route #75 connects Belmont Center and Harvard Square in Cambridge via Huron Avenue. The nearest bus stop to the Project Site is located at the corner of



Huron Avenue and Lakeview Avenue. Various stops along this route connect with other bus lines and the Red Line. The bus route runs on weekdays from 5:20 AM to 11:19 PM with 11 – 20-minute headways during peak hours. On Saturday, service runs from 5:20 AM to 1:35 AM, and Sunday service is from 6:20 AM to 10:15 PM.

Route 78 – Arlmont Village – Harvard Station

MBTA Route #78 connects Arlmont Village and Harvard Station via Concord Avenue and the Concord Turnpike in Cambridge. The nearest bus stop to the Project Site is located at the corner of Concord Avenue and Alpine Street. Various stops along this route connect with other bus lines and the Red Line. The bus route runs on weekdays from 5:35 AM to 12:54 AM with 20 – 40-minute headways. On Saturday, service runs from 6:25 AM to 12:57 AM, and Sunday service runs from 6:10 AM to 1:01 AM.

Currently, there are several Zipcar locations within a mile of the project site, with one Zipcar location just 0.7 mile (14-minute walk) from the school. Employees can use Zipcars during the day for meetings, appointments and errands instead of driving their personal vehicle in to work.



PTDM Plan Initiative and Mode Split Commitments

In accordance with the City’s Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Ordinance, the Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper Schools are committed to implementing vehicle trip reduction measures. The Project will take an active role in pursuing PTDM measures that can reduce peak period traffic volumes and single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips in the neighborhood.

The Project site is located in US Census Tract 3544 and mode share data from the 1990 Census, as presented in Table 3, is used to calculate the mode-split commitment goals for this Project.

Table 3 - 1990 Census Mode Share (Tract 3544)

Mode	%
Drive Alone (SOV)	43%
Rideshare (HOV)	18%
Public Transit	7%
Bicycle	3%
Walk	12%
Other	0%
Work at Home	17%

The mode-split commitment is determined by subtracting 10 percent from the 1990 Census Journey to Work data SOV rate.

$$(1990 \text{ Census SOV mode share } \%) \times 0.90 = \text{Mode-Split Commitment } \%$$

$$43 \% \text{ (from Table 3)} \times 0.90 = 39 \%$$

The proposed SOV mode share goal for the Project employees (school and CPS Admin) will be 39 percent.

The commitment is based upon a 10 percent reduction from the 1990 Census SOV mode share Census Tract 3544, and the City of Cambridge Public School Department commits to making a reasonable effort to achieve this goal.

The SOV mode-split commitment for families and caregivers of students will be determined by conducting a baseline survey within the first six months of occupancy for building. The baseline survey SOV results will then be reduced by 10%, to establish a mode-share commitment to be met within 5 years of the baseline year, and each successive year.



Visitors are not able to park in the garage, are not subject to the Ordinance, and do not have an SOV commitment.

Transportation Programs and Incentives

Tobin Montessori + Vassal Lane Upper Schools will support a program of transportation demand management (TDM) actions to reduce automobile trips generated by the Project consistent with TDM actions that are currently in place at other CPS locations. However, if bargaining units reduce transportation benefits in favor of other non-transportation benefits, the school district will need to keep offering transportation benefits to comply with the PTDM Plan. The goal of the Project's TDM plan is to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips by encouraging the use of ridesharing, public transportation, walking and biking.

Employee Transportation Coordinator

The school department will designate an on-site Tobin/VLUS Transportation Coordinator to manage the PTDM program and ensure that PTDM requirements are implemented and that goals are being met. CPS leadership will need to set tone for supporting sustainable transportation to increase chance of success of the coordinator's efforts.

Preferential Carpool Spaces

Allocate and clearly mark 8 parking spaces (approximately 5%) in the garage for registered carpools. The school will set aside additional spaces for carpools to meet demand provided there is additional demand.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Options

Crossing guards will be available at crosswalks, to assist pedestrians and bicyclists in crossing the street.

Approximately 18 long-term, secure and covered, bicycle parking spaces will be provided on-site in the below ground parking garage. There will also be 120 short-term bicycle parking spaces provided near the building entrances. All bicycle parking will be designed in full conformance with Article 6 of the Cambridge Zoning



Ordinance and the City's Bicycle Parking Guidelines. The bicycle parking needs will be assessed annually and additional parking spaces will be added as needed.

The School Department will be responsible for funding an approximately \$18,000 25-dock public bikeshare station (Bluebikes or its successor). The station shall be located as per the project plans, unless an alternative is approved by the City. Payment will be made prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

The Project will offer an annual Gold-Level Bluebikes membership to all staff.

All employees who walk or bike to work will be provided with access to showers, lockers, and changing rooms to help facilitate their non-motorized commute.

A bike repair stand with air pump will be provided in the garage bike parking area.

Electrical outlets will be installed in the bike parking area for charging e-bikes, e-scooters, or other small electric mobility devices

Parking

Monitor and enforce the regulations regarding where people park (including staff, teachers, parents/caregivers) and ensure that no illegal parking occurs and drop-off parking functions as designed. The School Department will not guarantee parking spaces available for all teachers in contract and explore the viability of charging employees for parking, which is a program that is intended to reduce single-occupancy vehicle commuting.

The Project will equip 25% of the long-term parking spaces with electric vehicle supply equipment, or 25 employee parking spaces. One EVSE may serve two parking spaces. The remaining 75% of long-term spaces will be EVSE-ready, i.e. wired for EVSE to be installed in the future.

Public Transportation

A transit subsidy will be offered to all Cambridge Teacher's Association members, members of Custodian, Family Liaison, Food Services and Security Collective Bargaining Units; and any non-union permanent employee who works 20+ hours a week.

- The Cambridge Teachers Association members, Professional Unit Members and Family Liaisons are entitled to a 65 percent subsidy up to \$60 per month.
- All other union members are entitled to a 65 percent subsidy, up to \$40.



The school department will consider an increase in transit subsidies as part of future contract negotiations with the above bargaining units.

All non-union permanent employees who work 16+ hours per week will receive a minimum of 65 percent transit subsidy up to \$120 per month under the Federal Fringe benefit level.

Ride Matching

The school will join the Alewife TMA, which will provide ride matching services to all on-site employees.

Emergency Ride Home

The school will provide employees with an Emergency Ride Home program through the TMA for all employees who commute by non-SOV mode at least three days a week.

Student/Family TDM Measures

The school will provide the following TDM measures to shift student/family trips to sustainable transportation choices.:

- Implement a Safe Routes to School Program to decrease auto trips among students/parents, including all of the following:
 - Implement annual pedestrian and bicycle programs through the Physical Education curriculum, including continued implementation of CDD's annual trainings.
 - Cooperate responsively with the CDD's SRTS staff to schedule trainings, PE programs, and incorporate SRTS messages in curriculum and school communications.
 - Participate in Walk & Bike to School Day celebrations and other encouragement or education programs to promote walking and bicycling to school.
 - Distribute safety information to all parents/caregivers and staff emphasizing safe driving around those who walk and bicycle. This information will be distributed at the beginning of the school year as well as additional times during the year. (CDD staff can assist with providing key safety information/resources.)
- Regularly engage with students and families to understand their mobility needs. This will be an ongoing conversation to allow the transportation coordinator and family liaison to respond to family transportation needs.
- Implement a student/family carpool-matching program and bike/walk/bus buddy program. Report details of the program in the annual monitoring report.
- Engage in other marketing and promotions as described in next section.



Transportation Programs Marketing and Promotions

- Host a minimum of one transportation-related workshop for staff, such as a Plan Your Commute Workshop, Bike Safety Workshop, Lunchtime Walks, etc.
- Maintain an annual transportation fair for all employees to be managed by the Transportation Coordinator.
- Send monthly communication to staff with helpful tips and information regarding sustainable transportation modes.
- Send monthly communications to staff/faculty/parents emphasizing safe driving practices around the school.
- Provide public transit, walking, and bicycling directions to the school on the website, as the preferred mode of access for daily school and special events.
- Ensure that all staff receive the hard and electronic copies of the updated "Commute Manual," provided by CDD each year by the end of June.
- Add a transportation section in the green school manual, as created by the administration.
- Provide easy access to the CitySmart for Employees website for all staff.
- Provide CitySmart for City Employees information to all new hires during orientation.
- Prominently display CitySmart information, including bus routes that serve the school, in a main concourse for all students, staff, and visitors to easily access.
- Implement a marketing program for the MBTA pass subsidy program, to ensure that all eligible staff understands their potential benefit.
- Upon installation of Bluebikes station, implement a marketing program to enroll staff in the benefit.
- Promote the Emergency Ride Home benefit and carpool-matching program via the Alewife TMA.



Monitoring and Reporting Plan

The Project will conduct annual faculty/staff/employee survey to determine if the mode-split commitment is being met. The survey questions will be PTDM approved and sent out to all faculty/staff/employees for a 60 percent minimum response rate. The owner may choose to offer raffle prizes, to ensure that the minimum response rate is met.

The Project will also conduct an annual parent/student survey. The survey questions will be PTDM-approved and sent out to parents of all pre-school, elementary, and upper school students and will achieve a 60 percent minimum response rate.

The school will file an annual monitoring report in the format provided by the PTDM Officer.

In the first year, and every two years thereafter, the report shall also include automobile and bicycle parking utilization reports and driveway counts.

If the certificate of occupancy for the Project is issued between September 1 and February 29, the monitoring will take place during the months of September or October and be reported to the PTDM Planning Officer no later than November 30. If the certificate of occupancy for the Project is issued between March 1 and August 31, monitoring will take place during the months of April or May and be reported to the PTDM Planning Officer no later than June 30. This will ensure that the monitoring captures a realistic assessment of the performance of the project, while giving time to compile the results and report them to the City.



Office of Workforce Development

The School Department commits to work with the Cambridge Office of Workforce Development to expand employment opportunities for Cambridge residents.

Corporate Office Certification

I hereby certify that a commercial parking permit has been obtained for space being used for commercial parking. None of the other existing or proposed parking spaces at this parking facility have been or will be available as commercial spaces until a commercial parking permit has been obtained.

Signed _____
(Superintendent, Cambridge Public School District)

Date: _____



Attachments

Figures

Figure A.....	Regional Context Map
Figure B.....	Proposed Site Plan
Figure C.....	Basement Parking Garage Plan
Figure D.....	Bicycle Parking Site Plan
Figure E.....	Short-Term Bicycle Parking – Zone 1
Figure F.....	Short-Term Bicycle Parking – Zone 2
Figure G.....	Short-Term Bicycle Parking – Zone 3
Figure H.....	Short-Term Bicycle Parking – Zone 4
Figure I.....	Short-Term Bicycle Parking – Zone 5
Figure J.....	Proposed BlueBikes Station
Figure K.....	Long-Term Bicycle Parking – Level 1
Figure L.....	Long-Term Bicycle Parking – Basement
Figure M.....	Public Transit

Interdepartmental Parking Facility Registration Form