

Transportation

Since the issuance of the Amended Planned Unit Development-Preliminary Master Plan approval in August 2010, the Proponent has advanced the construction of the project significantly. During this time the permitting and design of multiple individual blocks has advanced, and the comprehensive off-site traffic mitigation program was implemented in 2011. This current transportation evaluation builds upon the prior extensive analyses conducted for the *Planned Unit Development (PUD) Preliminary Master Plan, Assembly Square, Somerville, MA* which was approved by the Planning Board on December 14, 2006, and amended on August 5, 2010. The previously prepared Traffic Impact and Access Study¹ for the nearby Block 11A development also was considered as part of this current evaluation.

This section provides an evaluation of the new Assembly Line Park development consisting of two restaurant buildings totaling 8,058 square feet (the “Project”). The specific potential traffic impacts associated with this current development project, as described in the following section, is also evaluated as part of this current assessment.

Assembly Line Park Development Program

The Project involves the construction of approximately 8,058 square feet (sf) of building space on an approximately 16,684 sf parcel of land centered on Assembly Row between Foley Street and Revolution Drive. As these buildings will be oriented solely to the surrounding residential and commercial uses it is expected that its customer base will be people already visiting other uses within Assembly Square. As such, the parking needs for the new building will be satisfied through the existing parking facilities provided in conjunction with the immediately surrounding development along with nearby on-street parking. Street-oriented restaurant uses such as those proposed within Assembly Line Park have always been envisioned within the overall Assembly Square development program. Accordingly, this current proposal is entirely consistent with those initial developments plans.

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¹ Final Level PUD Approval – Parcel 11A – Assembly Row; Somerville, Massachusetts; Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.; May 15, 2014.

Vehicular Access and Circulation

As noted above, the Project will be constructed on a 16,684 sf parcel of land located just north of the new Partners office development on Block 11A. Specifically, the site is centered on Assembly Row bound by Foley Street to the north, Revolution Drive to the south, Block 8 to the east, and Block 7 to the west. Assembly Row will be divided between Foley Street and Revolution Drive, with single 20-foot, one-way travel lanes provided on each side of Assembly Line Park. The southbound one-way segment will include ten curbside parallel on-street parking spaces, while the northbound segment will have eight parallel parking spaces. As described later in this section, there will be a designated on-street loading area just south of the three northernmost parking spaces proposed at the northbound segment of Assembly Row. To enhance the pedestrian-oriented nature of this area, Assembly Line Park will feature crosswalks extending from this area to both Blocks 7 and 8. Specifically, 12-foot wide unit paver crosswalks will be located at both ends of Assembly Row at its intersections with Foley Street and Revolution Drive. Two mid-block crosswalks also will be provided and will be raised to be flush with the adjacent curbs. Each crosswalk will feature architectural pavers instead of standard pavement. All of the crosswalks will incorporate detectible warnings and the four block-end crosswalks will incorporate bollards within the wheelchair ramps. With the pedestrian-oriented use of Assembly Line Park there will not be any dedicated vehicular driveways to this parcel. Instead, patrons of the new park area will be walking to and from the building by way of the accommodations outlined in the following section.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Accommodations

The Assembly Line Park itself has been specifically designed to be pedestrian oriented. Specifically, the buildings will be located within the island created by the two one-way travel lanes, and with outdoor seating areas, landscape areas, and associated amenities. Temporary bituminous sidewalks along Block 7 and Block 8 will remain to provide pedestrian access to the adjacent blocks. As noted earlier, mid-block crosswalks will be provided at Assembly Line Park along with crosswalks at both ends of the roadway segment at its intersections with Foley Street and Revolution Drive. The Project design also includes three bicycle racks being provided within the Assembly Line Park Streetscape.

Loading

Loading needs for the proposed Assembly Line Park buildings will be accommodated through an on-street loading that will be located on the eastern side of Assembly Row just south of the three northernmost parking spaces. Delivery trucks will enter this area by way of Revolution Drive and travel northbound along this one-way roadway segment. After completing deliveries, trucks will exit the area by turning left onto Foley Street which in turn provides multiple options for exiting Assembly Square. The exact number and schedule of deliveries to the two proposed buildings cannot yet be exactly determined as tenant have not been officially determined. However, loading activity for this Project is expect to be consistent with the other similar small-scale restaurant or commercial uses within the overall PUD site.

Specifically, deliveries are expected to mostly occur during morning hours so as not to interfere with the normal customer activity that increases later in the day. This also will help avoid conflicts with other nearby commercial uses in this area.

Traffic Volumes

In addition to the extensive analysis conducted for the Assembly Square Mixed-Use Redevelopment, there have been other recent transportation studies conducted within Assembly Square. Given the size of the Project with its pedestrian-oriented environment there are no technical factors which would require updated traffic data collection as part of this current assessment.

Trip Generation

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)² is the most commonly used source for estimating traffic for development projects. However, this database does not include any land use codes which accurately reflect the intended nature of the 8,058 sf of café/specialty food uses envisioned. In this instance, ITE's "Specialty Retail Center" land use code can include specialty shops which could have similar trip generating characteristics to the proposed Project. Applying the rates for that land use code would result in between 55 and 40 vehicle trips during the respective weekday morning and evening peak hours. However, those projections do not account for shared trips with other nearby uses and travel by walking, biking, or public transportation. With the Project being an entirely pedestrian-oriented use within a densely developed mixed-use project, the actual vehicular trip generation associated with this use should be negligible.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to measures that can be put in place to minimize or lessen the impact of vehicular traffic to an area. Commercial uses such as the proposed Assembly Line Park buildings comprised of small restaurant or commercial uses are generally less compatible with TDM planning than office or residential uses, though employee traffic can be managed to some degree. In this instance, bike racks will be provided within Assembly Line Park. This amenity combined other planned bike accommodations within the roadways in and around Assembly Square will help to promote bicycle travel to and from the site. The nearby MBTA station, and available MBTA bus service, allow for means of traveling to and from the site besides private automobile.



² [Trip Generation Manual](#), 9th Edition, Institute of Transportation Engineers, Washington, D.C. (2012).

Conclusion

Street-oriented cafés and small-scale commercial uses such as those proposed within Assembly Line Park always have been envisioned as a vital part of the overall Assembly Square development program. Accordingly, the current Project proposal is entirely consistent with those initial developments plans. With the Project being an entirely pedestrian-oriented use within the surrounding densely developed mixed-use area, this new use should not have any notable associated vehicular trip generation. Both sides of the one-way Assembly Row segments will feature on-street curbside parallel parking. In addition to those eighteen parking spaces there also will be a designated loading area just south of the three northernmost parking spaces. The planned pedestrian-oriented nature of this area will be enhanced further by 12-foot wide crosswalks provided at both ends of the one-way Assembly Row segments, along with a 12-foot wide raised mid-block crossing.