



March 2, 2010

Mr. Jason R. Zube
260 Elm Street, Suite 102
Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

Re: 260 Elm Street, Somerville, MA – Painted Bird Tattoo

Dear Mr. Zube:

Based on the information you provided we offer the following for your use.

Executive Summary

“The Painted Bird” tattoo parlor desires to relocate from its current location at 622 Somerville Avenue to space currently available at 260 Elm Street in the Davis Square neighborhood of Somerville. Per the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO), the proposed relocation requires three off-street parking spaces to be provided at the 260 Elm Street location; however, only two off-street parking spaces are available at this new location.

Nevertheless, based upon the available parking supply within the Davis Square neighborhood, along with the opportunity for customers to arrive by public transportation, the impact of your project on the Square’s parking supply should be unnoticeable. That being said, we would strongly encourage you to consider offering discounted MBTA passes to your employees, to participate in the City’s employee parking program, and to make your customers fully aware of the public transportation options available to them, especially through the use of your website.

Existing Conditions and Project Understanding

An application has been filed with the Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals to occupy a now vacant retail space located at 260 Elm Street (Figure 1) with “The Painted Bird” tattoo parlor. “The Painted Bird” tattoo parlor is currently located at 622 Somerville Avenue; this would be a relocation of that existing business.

The space to be tenanted, last occupied by Princeton Printers, LLC, and prior to that by Sir Speedy Printers, has been vacant for approximately six months. Approximately 1,700 square feet in size, this ground floor retail space can be directly accessed via the Davis Square plaza, an outdoor pedestrian mall that connects Elm Street with Herbert Street. A service entrance is located at the rear of the space, which can be used as an employee entrance, as well as for loading and unloading. This service entrance also provides direct access to two on-site parking spaces.

The City’s Inspectional Services Department determined that the proposed tattoo parlor use requires three (3) off-street parking spaces in order to be in compliance with Article 9 of the Zoning Ordinance. Only two (2) off-street parking spaces for use by employees and customers are available immediately to the rear of the building, leaving the proposed use short by one (1) off-street parking space. You have indicated that there will be no more than four employees on the premises at any time, with only two fulltime employees being on the premises during most shifts. The hours of operation are anticipated to be Monday thru Saturday from 11:00am to 9:00pm and from 12:00pm to 5:00pm on Sunday.

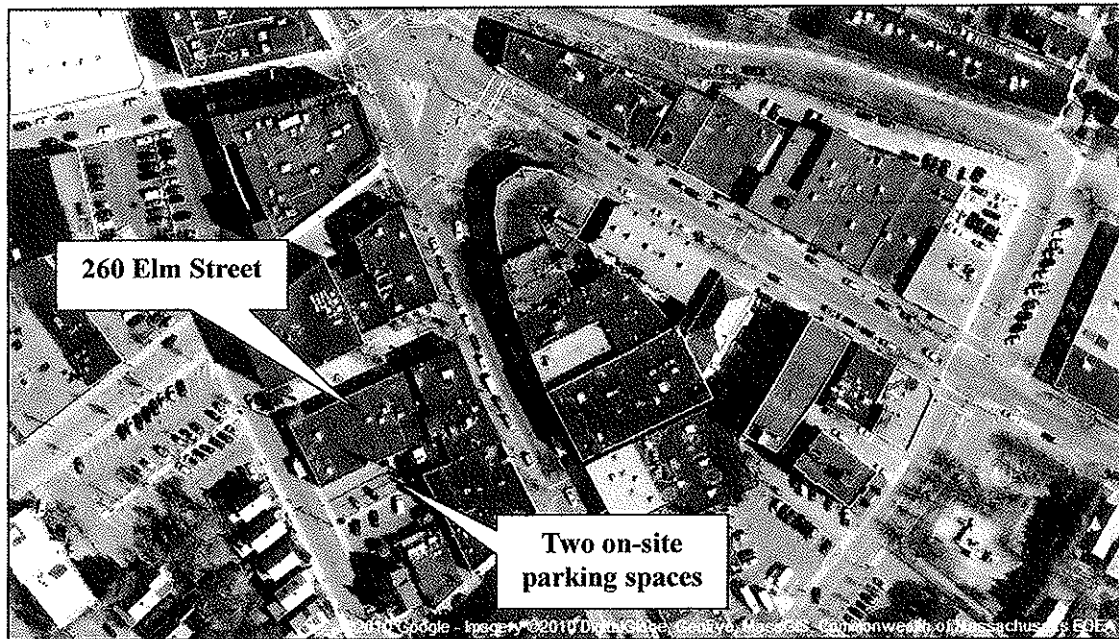


Figure 1 – 260 Elm Street, Somerville, MA.

Special Permit for Modification of Parking Requirements

Under Section 9.13 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance the Special Permit Granting Authority (Zoning Board of Appeals) may grant a special permit modifying parking standards when such a special permit would be consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 9.1 of the Ordinance.

This memorandum will demonstrate that the proposed restaurant use is fully consistent with the requirements for granting the requested special permit. The memorandum will detail findings of previous studies undertaken in Davis Square to demonstrate that there is ample available parking to meet the needs of the proposed tattoo parlor.

Traffic Engineering Standard Practices

The ITE Transportation and Land Use Development Manual (2nd Edition) includes three engineering terms used in the reduction of traffic generation related to proposed uses: Pass-by Trips, Diverted Trips, and Internal Trips.

Pass-by Trips is a term used in traffic engineering, which refers to intermediate stops on the way from an origin to a primary destination. Pass-by trips are not new trips on the roadway network. Diverted Trips is another traffic engineering term which refers to trips that are to or from a site that have been diverted from a route other than the one associated with the subject site. Internal Trips is a third term which refers to trips that both begin and end within a site.

For instance, for mixed-use developments with uses such as office, residential, retail, restaurant and service uses, some of the trips being generated by one use may also be traveling to another use within the same site. It may be argued that Davis Square acts as a large mixed-use site with multiple shared trips within this Central Business District (CBD).

It is widely accepted that these factors help reduce the number of trips generated by a development. Instead of adding all of these discounts together, the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office has determined that for those projects within its jurisdiction a 25% reduction for pass-by trips is an acceptable standard for use in traffic studies. The ITE Trip Generation Handbook indicates that this number may actually approach 40-50% in some cases.

We would extend this methodology (pass-by trips, diverted link trips, and internal trips) to apply to the number of parking spaces required in a CBD as well. This particular CBD, Davis Square includes many types of uses that are indicative of shared trips. In all likelihood people visiting your business will also be visiting other businesses within Davis Square.

Existing Davis Square Public Parking Utilization

Field observations and data collection were undertaken in the Davis Square area in 2005 by Traffic Solutions, LLC, in 2008 by Mark Chase (on behalf of the City), and in 2009 by Fort Hill Infrastructure Services. Twenty one (21) time periods were collected in both 2005 and 2009. Seven time periods were collected during the 2008 data collection effort. All three data collection efforts determined there is reserve capacity in Davis Square's parking supply throughout the day.

2009 Data Collection Effort

The 2009 parking utilization data were collected for the entire square, every 20 minutes during the day-time peak hours on a Thursday and during the evening peak hours on a Saturday. The 2009 data indicate that Davis Square has a total of approximately 561 off-street parking spaces including metered, business permit, short term parking spaces, and accessible parking spaces (Figure 2). This total does not include taxi stand parking spaces or zip car parking spaces since they are not available to the public. For a conservative analysis, on-street resident permit parking spaces were excluded from the Davis Square parking utilization data.

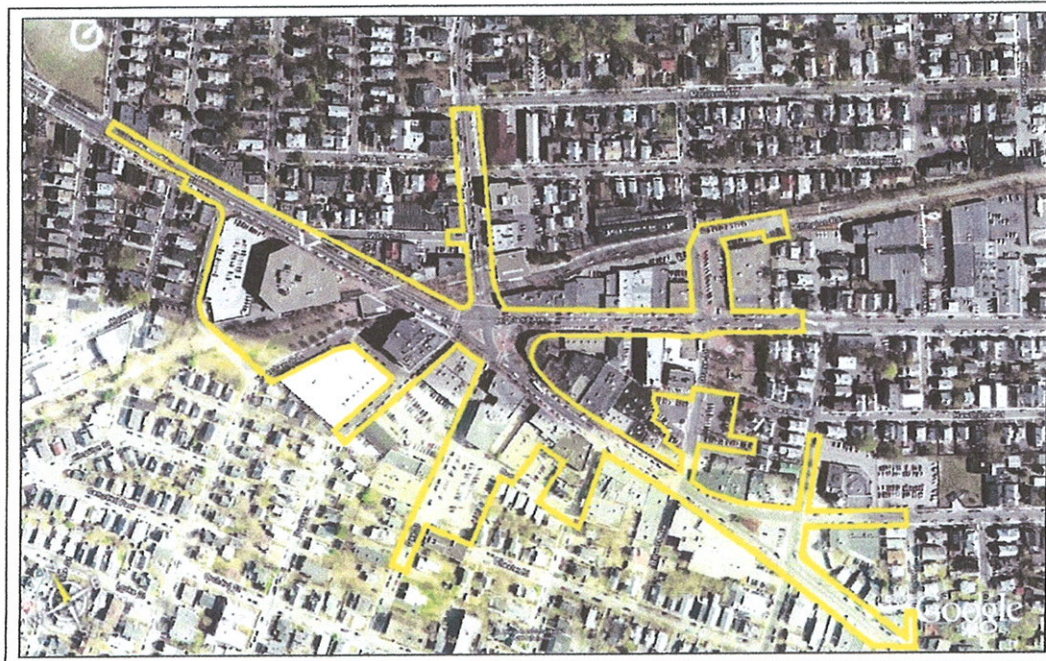


Figure 2 – 2009 Study Area

The 2009 data collection effort confirms that there is ample reserve capacity in Davis Square's parking supply to support the proposed project throughout the day and evening. During all six time period categories early morning, morning, mid-day, early evening, evening, and late evening, there is an abundance of empty parking spaces (Figure 3).

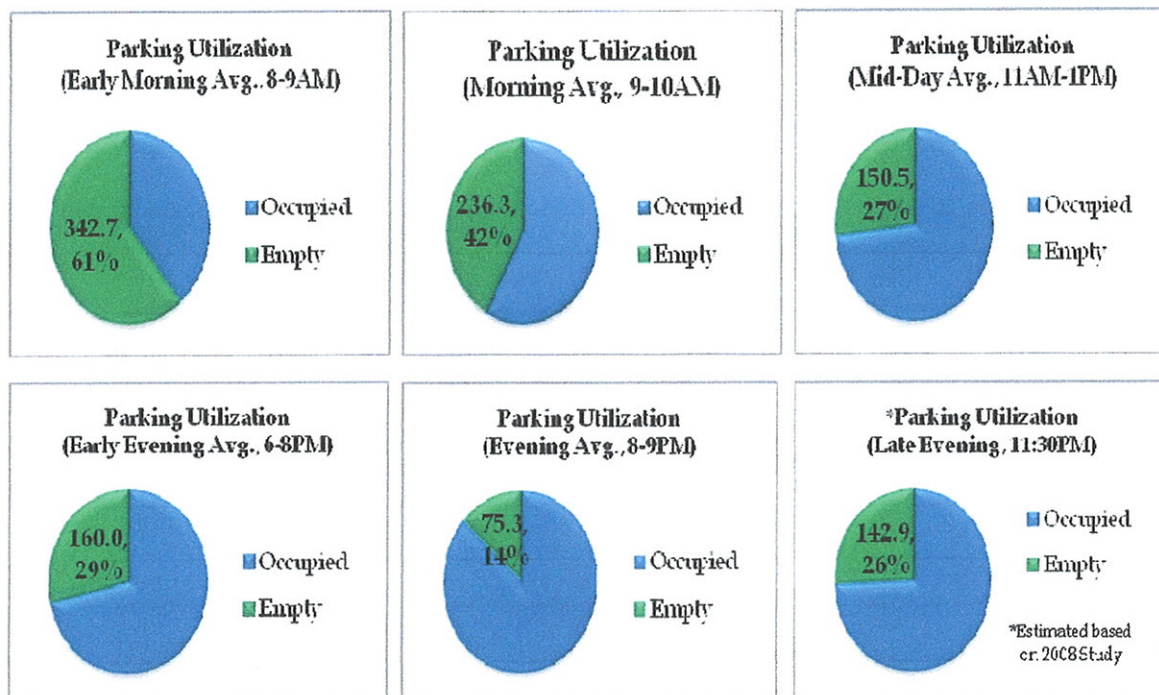


Figure 3 – 2009 Davis Square Parking Utilization – Six Time Period Categories

2008 Data Collection Effort

The 2008 Data collection effort estimated that there are over 1,675 on-street resident permit parking spaces and over 1,000 privately owned parking lot spaces available within in a 10 minute walk from the heart of the Square (*this memorandum does not consider these spaces when determining if reserve capacity exists*). These spaces account for over 75% of the parking in the Davis Square area. The 2008 Study determined several interesting facts by use of a survey. The study determined that 43% of visitors to the square are Somerville residents, while an additional 31% of visitors to the square are from neighboring cities and towns such as Cambridge, Arlington, and Medford (Figure 4). In addition, the study found that 66% of visitors traveling to the square use a transportation mode other than a car, non-auto dependent transportation (Figure 5).

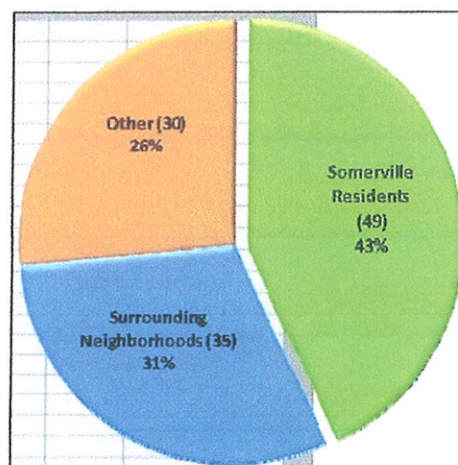


Figure 4 – Davis Square Visitor Geographic Distribution

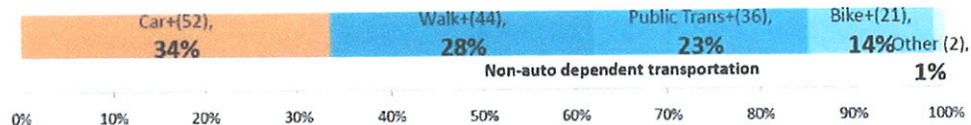


Figure 6. Percentage and total number of times (in parentheses) each travel mode was selected by respondents*

Figure 5 – Mode Split in Davis Square

Davis Square includes several multi-modal transportation options such as rapid transit, bus operations, and a bicycle path. The 2008 Study confirms the large usage of these non-auto dependent options.

2005 Data Collection Effort

The 2005 parking utilization data were collected for the entire Square every 20 minutes during the day-time peak hours on a Thursday and during the evening peak hours on a Saturday. The 2005 data indicated that Davis Square has a total of approximately 560 off-street parking spaces (including metered, business permit, and short term parking spaces). This total did not include taxi stand parking spaces or zip car parking spaces since they are not available to the public. In addition, accessible parking spaces and on-street resident permit parking spaces were excluded for a more conservative analysis.

The 2005 data collection effort was successfully used to demonstrate that there was ample reserve capacity in Davis Square's parking supply to support the One Davis Square development (CVS mixed-use development) at any time throughout the day (Figure 6). One Davis Square received approval despite requiring a variance for failing to provide 28 off-street parking spaces.

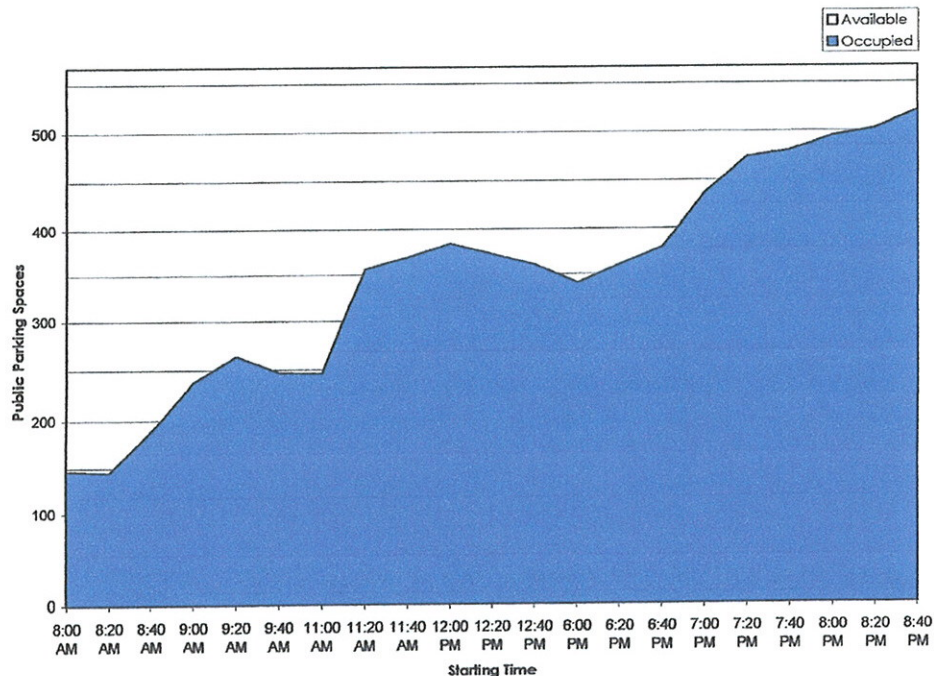


Figure 6 – 2005 Davis Sq. Parking Utilization

Similar Projects within Davis Square

It has been our experience that for those projects within the Square that fail to meet the parking requirements set forth in the SZO, and which can demonstrate negligible impacts on the Square's parking supply, potential impacts can be help offset by providing measures such as the following:

- installation of a bike ring(s);
- offering reduced rate MBTA passes to employees;
- upgrades to the existing roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and parking facilities

Examples of other projects unable to provide parking in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance are listed below. All of these projects obtained special permits or variances when they demonstrated reserve parking capacity within the Square as well as appropriate measures that they were prepared to help implement to improve multi-modal conditions within the Square.

- One Davis Square (CVS, Fitness Center, Office Space);
- Chipotle's Mexican Grill;
- Anna's Taqueria;
- Diesel Café Expansion;
- Antonia's (now a burger restaurant);
- The Blue Shirt Café Expansion;
- 377 Summer Street Mixed-use Development;
- Martsa on Elm (235 Elm Street);
- Flatbread (45 Day Street); and
- The lounge/restaurant now intending to occupy 255 Elm Street.

Conclusion

There is sufficient technical evidence along with an established precedent of similar projects being approved to justify your project's approval. Parking data for the Square indicates that there is an abundance of empty parking spaces throughout the day and evening, and there should be no noticeable impact on the Square's parking supply should your project be approved.

Should the Zoning Board be hesitant to grant approval, you may wish to volunteer providing a monetary contribution to promote non-motorized travel for items such as a bicycle rack or pedestrian/bicycle signage. Or you may wish to contribute toward new parking technologies to improve parking efficiency in Davis Square. Mitigating any potential impacts on the Square's parking supply will help support the overall efficiency and operations of the various transportation modes found in the Square.

In addition, you should offer discounted MBTA passes to your employees and you inquire about utilizing the City's business permit parking program for your employees. This program is offered through the City's Traffic and Parking Department.

Should you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Fort Hill Infrastructure Services, LLC



Todd M. Blake
Project Manager