

City of Portsmouth

Department of Public Works



MEMORANDUM

TO: Parking and Traffic Safety Committee

FROM: Eric Eby, P.E., Parking and Transportation Engineer

DATE: March 10, 2015

SUBJECT: HarborCorp Project Recommendation

At a special workshop session of the Parking and Traffic Safety (PTS) Committee on March 5, 2015, the applicant for the North End Portsmouth Development, HarborCorp, LLC, presented their proposed project and the parking and traffic impacts associated with the project. The City's traffic peer review consultant, TEC, was also present at the meeting to provide the Committee with the results of their review of the parking, traffic and transportation aspects of the project to date and to answer any questions from the Committee. Members of the public were also given an opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas on the project after the workshop session of the meeting had finished.

City staff has worked for many months on their review of the project, and has met many times with the developer, as well as TEC, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to ensure that the project meets the goals and objectives of the City's Master Plan and supporting plans and policies and complies with the City's site plan review regulations. On March 4, 2015, the TAC voted to recommend approval of the project with several stipulations. The letter of approval from the TAC is attached to this memo. The project now moves on to the Planning Board for review, as well as the Historic District Commission for a Conditional Use Permit.

As part of the site plan that has been submitted for approval to the Planning Board, the HarborCorp project proposes several changes to on-street parking, bus stops, and intersection configurations which will ultimately require City Council approval. The role of the PTS Committee at this stage in the site plan review process is to provide a recommendation to the Planning Board regarding the proposed parking and traffic control changes and traffic mitigation measures associated with the project. This is a recommendation only, which is subject to the final approval of the site plan by the Planning Board and subsequent approvals from the City Council related to any land transfers, easements, licenses and on-street parking changes associated with the approved site plan. The PTS Committee does not have jurisdiction over other aspects of the project, such as land use and zoning, landscaping, building size and appearance, or revenue impacts to the City.

The HarborCorp project proposes to make changes to the on-street parking supply on Russell Street and Deer Street. Based on input and review from City staff and the City's peer reviewer, in an effort to provide for safe accommodations for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicycles, buses, trucks and cars, the project will remove 20 on-street parking spaces on Deer Street and all 21 on-street parking spaces on Russell Street. The loss of on-street parking will be offset by the available public

parking within the parking garage proposed as part of the project. The garage will provide a total of 523 parking spaces. Based on calculations provided in the applicant's traffic study, on a typical weekday there will be 172 spaces in the garage available to the public, with 71 spaces available to the public on a typical Saturday.

To accommodate buses, bus bays will be provided in both directions on Russell Street. On the northbound side in front of the Sheraton Hotel the bus bay will provide space for one bus. On the southbound side in front of the proposed project, the bus bay will provide room for 3 buses.

To provide safer accommodations for bicycles, bike lanes will be provided on Russell Street for its entire length between Market Street and Deer Street. Sharrows will be provided on Deer Street between Russell Street and Maplewood Avenue, and a bike box and bike lane provided on Maplewood Avenue at its intersection with Deer Street. Bike racks for 50 bicycles will be provided around the perimeter of the site.

Pedestrian safety will be accommodated by providing crosswalks across each site driveway, across all three legs of the Deer Street and Russell Street intersection, across both legs of Russell Street at the site driveway intersection, across Green Street at its intersection with Russell Street, across Deer Street at the Portwalk Place intersection, and across all four legs of the Deer Street and Maplewood Avenue intersection. Wheelchair ramps will be provided at all new crosswalks. Pedestrian warning signs will be provided at the crosswalk on Deer Street at Portwalk Place, and on Russell Street at the site driveway. Colored, patterned concrete pavers will be installed within the intersection of Russell Street, the site driveway and the Sheraton driveway, as well as within the intersection of Russell Street and Deer Street to provide a visual and tactile indication to both motorists and pedestrians that these are areas of pedestrian priority. Curb radii and street widths have been narrowed wherever possible to provide shorter pedestrian crossing distances, while still allowing large trucks to access the site.

The intersection of Deer Street and Russell Street will be realigned to form a 90 degree "T" intersection. Stop sign control will remain on the Russell Street approach, with the stipulation that stop signs could be added to the Deer Street approaches after monitoring and observations of the traffic operations within one year after the opening of the project.

The railroad crossing signs and pavement markings on Maplewood Avenue will be refreshed, and new pavement markings provided at the Green Street crossing. In addition, the applicant will contribute \$25,000 to the city for the long-term upgrade of the Maplewood Avenue railroad crossing.

The applicant will optimize the traffic signal timings at each of the four signals along Maplewood Avenue at Deer Street, Hanover Street, Congress Street and State Street, to ensure that traffic flows efficiently through the corridor. The traffic signal operations will also be monitored and optimized within one year of the project opening. All changes to the signals will first be reviewed and approved by the City Department of Public Works.

With the changes and modifications to traffic and parking as described, City staff believes that the traffic and parking impacts associated with the project will be adequately and safely mitigated. City staff therefore recommends that the PTS Committee vote to approve the parking and traffic changes proposed by the applicant, subject to approvals by the Planning Board and City Council.