

To: Land Use Committee of the City of Newton Board of Aldermen

From: Lou Mercuri, Planning Horizons

Re: 320 Needham Street, Bright Horizons Children's Center

Date: September 12, 2014

On behalf of the petitioner for this land use petition, Planning Horizons is submitting this report regarding the availability of parking for the proposed child care center (Bright Horizons) at 320 Needham Street in Newton.

Summary of Proposal

The site at 320 Needham Street includes a multi-level, multi-tenanted 41,780 square foot office building. Bright Horizons is seeking to locate a child care center on the first or ground floor that will serve up to 122 children with 25 staff members. In order to accommodate a play area on site, 23 existing surface parking spaces will need to be removed. This results in a parking deficit for the site which will require a parking waiver of 20 parking stalls per Section 30-19(m) of the zoning ordinance. The detail of the parking calculation can be found in the zoning review memorandum dated July 28, 2014 from Jane Santosuosso, Chief Zoning Code Official to John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services.

On Site Parking

Altogether there are 166 parking stalls (including handicap) on the site in two parking areas. The primary parking area consists of 135 primary parking spaces and is set at the lower or ground level in close proximity to the proposed entrance to Bright Horizons. These parking spaces are accessed from Christina Street through a shared driveway with the office use at 25-27 Christina Street. The second parking area consists of 31 stalls and is set at the second floor level and services the upper floors of the 320 Needham Street office building. There is no connection by vehicle between the two lots.

As was mentioned earlier, it is expected that 23 of the existing parking stalls in the large lot will need to be removed to accommodate the proposed play area. Thus, 112 parking stalls (135-23) will be available for both the existing office uses and Bright Horizons parents and staff.

Parking Methodology and Results

Bright Horizons will create its peak parking demand during the weekday early morning and late afternoon time periods when parental drop-offs and pickups occur and staffing levels are highest. Little parking turnover occurs between 9:30 AM and 4:30 PM as the staff remains on site. The critical period for parking activity will be between 8:30 AM and 9:00 AM, and at approximately 5:00 during evening pickup and drive home.

Planning Horizons surveyed the parking occupancy of the lot on five occasions between September 8 and September 11, 2014. Three of the five surveys occurred in the late afternoon and two counts were conducted at the morning peak.

The results of these parking counts follow:

Primary Parking Lot, Peak Hour counts

Date	Time	Conditions	Capacity	# Parked	# Vacant
Tuesday, September 9	9:00	70°, partly cloudy	135	71	64
Thursday, September 11	9:00	65°, cloudy	135	64	71
Monday, September 8	5:00	75°, sunny	135	78	57
Tuesday, September 9	5:00	70°, cloudy	135	64	71
Thursday, September 11	5:00	70°, cloudy	135	68	67

Average for morning counts: # parked: 68 # vacant: 67

Average for evening counts: # parked: 70 # vacant: 65

Average for all counts: # parked: 69 # vacant: 66

Although there are relatively few data points, both the morning and afternoon peak occupancies are relatively consistent. There is a small differential between what the current parking capacities reveal based on building occupancy and what will occur when Bright Horizons becomes a tenant. It has been established that a waiver of 20 parking spaces is required under this special permit application which takes into account the loss of 23 spaces due to construction of the new play area. Thus, the lower parking area will operate with 112 spaces (135 current - 23 lost) upon completion of the project.

Using the parking waiver requirement of 20 spaces, current operating capacities, and the smaller 112 space lot, there is still a surplus of spaces as follows:

Current Lower Lot Capacity	At Completion Lower Lot Capacity	Average Parking Occupancy (All Counts)	Average Parking Surplus
135	112 (loss of 23 spaces)	69	43

The average parking surplus (using current conditions) well exceeds (by 23) the 20 space parking waiver requirement.

From an operational standpoint, the parking waiver request is justified by the number of available parking spaces. However, asking staff to park further away from the building and away from the parent and visitor parking will help achieve the goal of an orderly drop-off and pickup process.