



City of Somerville

# PLANNING BOARD

City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**TO:** Planning Board  
**FROM:** Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff  
**SUBJECT:** 394 McGrath, P&Z 21-122  
**DATE:** September 16, 2022  
**RE:** Supplemental Staff Memo 2

**RECOMMENDATION:**     **Special Permit:** Approve with Conditions  
                                  **Site Plan Approval:** Approve with Conditions

At their September 8, 2022, meeting, the Planning Board (“the Board”) resumed their deliberations of 394 McGrath Highway with the purpose of determining the material palette for the building façade.

At the conclusion of the discussions, Member Aboff raised questions about parking, loading, and deliveries at the site. After further Board discussion, the case was continued until the September 22, 2022, Planning Board meeting. This would allow Staff time to obtain further comment from the Mobility Division on the issues raised and for information to be gathered regarding whether this portion of McGrath is under State or City jurisdiction.

During the intervening week, Staff obtained the following feedback and information:

## **Ownership of and jurisdiction over road**

The Engineering Department confirmed that this portion of McGrath Highway is owned and controlled by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The City of Somerville has no jurisdiction over this street (e.g. the City does not have the authority to install signs, paint the road or curbing or similar).

## **Deliveries, loading, parking**

The Mobility Division confirmed that parking and loading are already not permitted in front of this building. This means that mail trucks and delivery vehicles already are prohibited from parking in front of this property and other sites along this portion of McGrath and need to park elsewhere when making deliveries.

The Mobility Division also provided the following:

1. Mobility acknowledges the Board’s concerns, but do not have a good solution to offer. Mobility notes that parking and loading are already not permitted in front of this building. Mobility would support the Planning Board conditioning their SPA approval with language noting that parking and loading are not permitted in front of this location.

2. While MR-zoned sites present challenges with regards to loading and deliveries, there is no uniform plan or guidance in place to address these items generally.
3. The applicant team might be able to attempt to handle loading and deliveries on-site if the parking spaces were eliminated and the existing curb cut were used to allow one vehicle to back into the site and unload. (PPZ staff notes that there is likely not enough clearance for typical delivery vehicles (such as FedEx, UPS) to clear the vehicular entry)
4. Mobility acknowledges that the 394 McGrath site is small and narrow and changes to the site to accommodate loading and deliveries, such as a wider drive aisle, for example, could create issues with setback, green score, and façade build-out requirements.