



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

TO: Planning Board
FROM: OSPCD Staff
SUBJECT: 256-260 Elm Street, P&Z 21-039
POSTED: January 27, 2023

RECOMMENDATION: None

Staff memos are used to communicate background information, analysis, responses to public comments, review of statutory requirements and other information from Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff to the Review Board members.

This memo summarizes the development review application submitted for 256-260 Elm Street, identifies any additional discretionary or administrative development review that is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and provides related analysis or feedback as necessary. The application was deemed complete on November 9, 2022 and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 2, 2023. Any Staff recommended findings, conditions, and decisions in this memo are based on the information available to date prior to any public comment at the scheduled public hearing.

LEGAL NOTICE

AP Davis Square Plaza, LLC proposes to develop a LEED Platinum four (4) story Lab Building in the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) district, which requires Site Plan Approval.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

AP Davis Square Plaza, LLC is proposing to construct a 4-story LEED Platinum Lab Building. The proposed development will produce 80,000 square feet of commercial space, 15 long-term bicycle parking spaces, 4 short-term bicycle parking spaces, and the proposed landscape will earn a Green Score of 0.21.

BACKGROUND

256-260 Elm Street is located on a Pedestrian Street and in the 0.25mi Transit Area in the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) zoning district in the Davis Square neighborhood represented by Ward 6 Councilor Lance Davis. Establishing a Lab Building in the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) district requires Site Plan Approval. Site Plan Approval is the administrative review and approval of conforming development to address any potential impacts as necessary. The Planning Board is the decision-making authority for all (non-variance) discretionary or administrative permits required for the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) zoning district.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

The first neighborhood meeting was hosted by Ward 6 Councilor Lance Davis and the applicant on March 17, 2021, via a remote participation platform. The second neighborhood meeting was hosted by Ward 6 Councilor Lance Davis and the applicant on May 26, 2022, via a remote participation platform.

DESIGN REVIEW

The proposal was reviewed by Somerville Urban Design Commission via the GoToWebinar meeting platform on March 1, 2022. The Commission provided its official recommendation on April 26, 2022.

ANALYSIS

Following review of the original application, Staff provided the Applicant with comments and requested supplemental information. The Applicant has continued to work with Staff to address comments and provide updated information. On January 24, 2023, the Applicant submitted a number of updated documents in response to additional feedback from Staff. Staff have not had time to review the updated materials and confirm that comments have been addressed. Staff will continue working with the Applicant to address any outstanding comments.

CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS

The Planning Board is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to deliberate each of the following considerations at the public hearing. The Board must discuss and draw conclusions for each consideration, but may make additional findings beyond this minimum statutory requirement.

Site Plan Approval Considerations

1. The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.
2. The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.
3. Mitigation proposed to alleviate any impacts attributable to the proposed development.

Information relative to the required considerations will be provided in a supplemental Staff Memo.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Staff will recommend conditions in a supplemental Staff Memo.