



City of Somerville

PLANNING, PRESERVATION, & ZONING

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

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Sarah Lewis, Director of Planning, Preservation, & Zoning
SUBJECT: 200 McGrath Highway, P&Z22-097
DATE: March 31, 2023

BACKGROUND

As a response to public testimony at the March 2, 2023, Planning Board Hearing regarding the proposed Master Plan Special Permit at 200 McGrath, a follow up meeting between Planning and community members was requested by Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen. On Wednesday March 15th the meeting was held via remote participation with 2 City Council members (Ben Ewen-Campen and Jake Wilson), 2 members of Planning Staff (Sarah Lewis and Emily Hutchings), and representatives from Brickbottom Artist Lofts and the Union Square Neighborhood Council.

CONCERNS

The community members expressed concerns about both the proposal and the process. From documents presented at the meeting the primary ask is to

“Reduce the scale/density to:

1. make the development design more contextual with the surrounding community
2. reduce traffic impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods of Brickbottom, Boynton Yards and Union Square
3. create opportunities for more usable open space, in alignment with the smart development concepts of Somervision.”

There were also concerns over perceived “Gaps in the Process”. The slides that were presented for discussion are attached.

RESPONSE

The meeting addressed the topics above and below is a summary of the information shared by planning staff.

Contextual Design

The current proposal is quite different from the original submission. The proposal was reduced significantly at two points in the process as a response to city staff and community comments and concerns. The original submission of November 2020 showed 3 buildings for a total of 1.5 million square feet with 1000 parking spaces. Then, in October 2021, the proposal was revised and presented 2 buildings (just under 1.2 million square feet total) with 700 permanent parking spaces and an additional 150

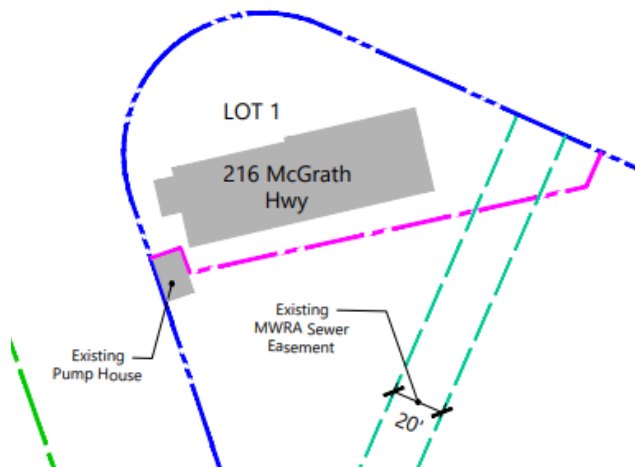
spaces as “stackers” tied to an expiration date. The current proposal is 2 shorter buildings – still leaving the northernmost portion of the property available to achieve Milk Square as was shown in the Union Square Neighborhood Plan – for 980,000 square feet with 588 parking spaces. The parcel labeled Lot C in the proposal is shown as undeveloped at the request of city staff to achieve larger goals for the area.

To this end, there were several mobility network discussions that took place internally in the early stages of this project and the Brickbottom Small Area Plan effort. We moved some of the background investigative work for a future Union East/Milk Square neighborhood planning effort ahead of schedule to determine transportation capacity and parking ratios around the larger area (Union Square, Boynton Yards, & Brickbottom). It was from this effort that the 0.6 spaces per 1000 square feet ratio was determined and is being applied equitably in multiple large developments.

Traffic Impacts

The Capital Hall team paid for their engineers (VHB) to work with PPZ and Mobility on the intersection of the re-aligned Medford Street with McGrath Highway and the cross sections of the re-aligned Medford/Poplar and Somerville Avenue Extension. This was all technical transportation planning and engineering work so public input was not sought. The alignment and cross section of Thoroughfare 1 and the two-way bike facility on Somerville Avenue Extension, shown on the current proposal, are a result of those meetings and option studies.

Given the complexity of utilities in the area and other potential MassDOT changes, the staff memorandum recommends to the Planning Board that a condition be added to any approval for the final alignment and details be subject to review and approval by PPZ, Mobility, and Engineering. This is not an unusual practice and has occurred on large development projects across the city from Boynton Yards to Clarendon Hill.



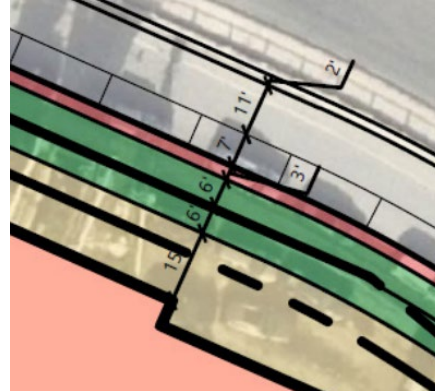
For further information, there is an existing MWRA easement that must be maintained and an existing pump house (as seen on image to the left from the existing lot plan in the application).

The cross section of Somerville Avenue Extension (“Scary Way”) was also discussed in the VHB meetings. We are aware that this is a difficult site due to the narrowness of the existing thoroughfare and the Squire’s Bridge abutment retaining wall.

The development is proposing to widen the right-of-way to allow more room for pedestrian safety and bicycle facilities separated from the vehicle travel way as requested by city staff and neighbors.

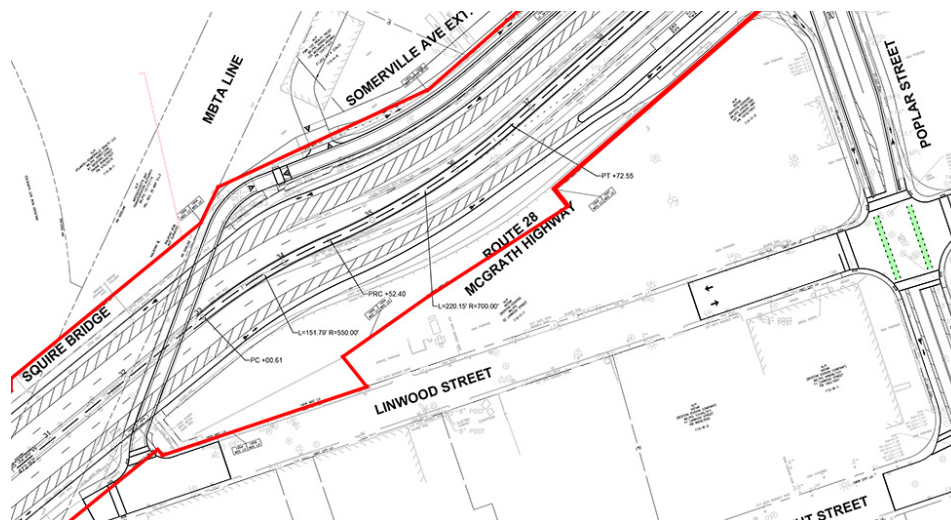
The widening of the right-of-way for the bike lanes and improved sidewalk in front of the building can be achieved by the building setting back, as proposed, from the property (and right-of-way) line, and then through legal documents allowing public facilities to be developed on private property as is standard practice. The details of this thoroughfare improvement may change from the exact proposed dimensions due to further survey and engineering work or coordination with MassDOT but it is the city's intent to make sure the two-way

bike facility and widened sidewalk are developed.



It is also the intention of staff to redesign the cross section and alignment of the thoroughfare and intersection as it turns under the bridge as shown in the draft Brickbottom Small Area Plan. By tightening the turn of Somerville Avenue Extension as it passes under Squire's Bridge, the intersection can become close to perpendicular (a proper "T" intersection) with Linwood Street providing for slower vehicle movement and an opportunity to guide vehicles toward Poplar Street and away from the Brickbottom Artist Lofts building, as shown in the draft Brickbottom Small Area Plan.

However, Somerville Avenue Extension is under the purview of MassDOT – the access road (Somerville Avenue Extension), the bridge, and the land under the bridge are included in the McGrath Highway state right-of-way. The image below is from MassDOT, regarding the highway improvements such as the Squire Bridge and the grounding of McGrath, with the right-of-way line shown in red.

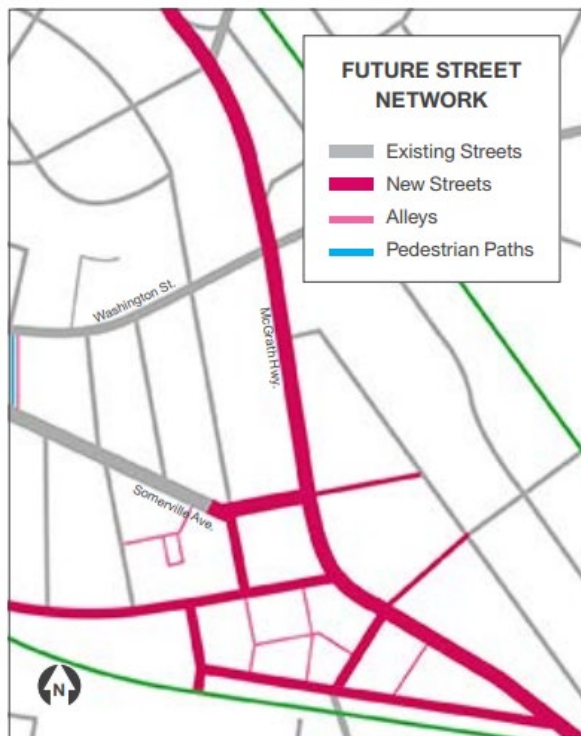


The intersection of Somerville Avenue Extension with Linwood Street is more complicated due to the location of the bridge structure. Currently the retaining wall, where the bridge begins the slope down to grade, is immediately adjacent to the portion of Somerville Avenue Extension that is under the bridge. Any re-alignment will take some intense coordination between City staff and MassDOT, we see this as possible but is difficult to predict when the work might be completed. We do have a good working relationship with multiple sections within that organization and are hopeful that they will be supportive.

To further address some of the neighborhood concerns, new conditions have been added regarding mobility management and transportation improvements, along with some language edits to other conditions for clarity. A consolidated and edited list of recommended conditions is attached.

Open Space

Per the zoning, this site is not required to provide Civic Space. There is a small open space at the southern/eastern end of the parcel as seen on the Landscape Plan in the application. The staff report notes the challenges of this location due to the existing surrounding infrastructure. It is intended, however, that Lot C (at the northern/western end of the parcel) will become a future Civic Space.



The Union Square Neighborhood Plan continues to be the guiding document for the Milk Square area. It has always been the intent of city staff to honor the time committed by the community during that process and work towards achieving the civic space at the end of Somerville Avenue bridging the Union Square and Brickbottom neighborhoods.

Process

To step back a little, there was also a brief conversation about the zoning overhaul process and the mapping of the Union East area. Much of the community concern about

the proposals on these lots stems from the parcels being mapped High Rise and being allowed unlimited height during the final stages of the zoning overhaul adoption process. Based on this zoning, this particular application is a request for a Master Plan Special Permit (MPSP). Per the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) 15.2.2.d, the MPSP requires only one neighborhood meeting. That meeting was held on February 24, 2020 (prior to the application submission as required). All subsequent meetings between the development team and the community were voluntary so no planning staff attendance was required. Once US2 acquired the property and there was another significant change to the scope, it was determined that a return to the community with the revised proposal was necessary. Meeting minutes by staff from both required neighborhood meetings are attached for reference. While part of the case file per the ordinance requirements, these minutes are used to verify the summary provided by the applicant but are not usually shared unless requested.

In response to questions that were raised regarding written testimony and the uncertainty of whether those letters are shared, all correspondence addressed to a board is forwarded to that board. Staff does not reply to any letters addressed to any board but does acknowledge letters that are addressed directly to staff. However, if the letter is effectively testimony for a case or an expression of opinion then we share those letters with the boards but do not respond directly. If there are specific questions, we do our best to answer.



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

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

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff
SUBJECT: 200 McGrath Hwy, P&Z 21-172

APPENDIX: UPDATED CONDITIONS LIST

This appendix provides a complete and updated list of all Staff-recommended conditions of approval for the proposed MPSP at 200 McGrath Hwy (P&Z 21-172). Condition language that has been updated since the 2/24/23 Staff Memo has been underlined. Please note that conditions that were included in the 2/9/23 Staff Memo but were recommended for exclusion in the 2/24/23 Staff Memo are not present. Numbers have been added here for ease of reference during discussion.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the required Master Plan Special Permit, Staff recommends the following conditions:

Permit Validity

1. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
2. This Decision certifies that development may proceed in accordance with the standards of the USQE sub area of the Master Planned Development overlay district and the superseding zoning districts specified on Map 8.3.18 (a) of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.
3. Applying for any discretionary or administrative permit necessary for any proposed thoroughfare, civic space, or building type identified in the approved Master Plan constitutes substantial use of the MPSP for the purpose of subsequent development entitlement.
4. This Decision does not authorize any development of Lot C except for replatting the land in accordance with this Decision.

Plan Revisions

5. Changes to the number or general configuration of lots; the types of thoroughfares, civic spaces, or building types; development phasing; the commercial GFA or ACE space GFA is a major amendment to the approved Master Plan.

Public Record

6. A copy of the recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division for the public record.
7. Digital copies of all development review submittal materials, permitted by the Planning Board, must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division for the public record.

Legal Agreements

8. The property owner(s) and all applicable future tenants must comply with the Master Mobility Management Plan dated October 5, 2021, as approved and conditioned by the Director of Mobility's Final Approval dated April 13, 2022.
9. Development must comply with the Development Covenant by and between the City of Somerville and US McGrath Owner, LLC dated **MONTH XX, 2023**, as amended.
10. Following completion of construction, Thoroughfare 1 must be dedicated to the public by a covenant or other deed restriction or conveyed to the City of Somerville in accordance with Section 15.6.1 Land Conveyance. Satisfaction of this condition must be approved by the City Solicitor.

Performance Obligation

11. US McGrath Owner, LLC must post a performance bond for 125% of the total estimated costs to design and construct all transportation impact mitigation prior to applying for any building permit, thoroughfare permit, or civic space permit for development subject to this MPSP decision.

Development Permitting

12. Development must proceed as identified in Phase 1 (Section 1.10.1) and Phase 2 (Section 1.10.2) of the Application dated September 2022, and illustrated in Figure 1.15 of that Application.
13. If a period of one (1) year lapses between the Site Plan Approval required for any thoroughfare, civic space, or building types and the date of decision of the preceding Site Plan Approval for any thoroughfare, civic space, or building type in the same phase, the Applicant must update the Planning Board on the anticipated schedule of permitting and construction at the next regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting.
14. Except as approved in writing by the Director of Planning, Preservation, & Zoning, the Applicant may not apply for the development review of any thoroughfare, civic space, or building type in a succeeding phase until all thoroughfares, civic spaces, and building types are under construction for the preceding phase.
15. Except as approved in writing by the Director of Planning, Preservation, & Zoning, the Applicant may not apply for any Certificate of Occupancy for any building in a succeeding phase until a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for all buildings in the preceding phase.
16. The Applicant may not apply for or receive a Certificate of Occupancy for Building A until Thoroughfare 1 is operational, as determined by the Directors of Engineering and Mobility.

Site Design

17. The general alignment, connectivity, right-of-way width, and geometry of thoroughfares must be substantially equivalent to the thoroughfares shown in the approved Master Plan, unless otherwise conditioned by this Decision.
18. Land platting must result in a number and general configuration of lots and rights-of-way that is substantially equivalent to Sv-1 Preliminary Lotting Plan of the approved Master Plan and to the conditions of this Decision.
19. The Thoroughfare 1 right-of-way must be at least sixty-six feet (66') wide.

20. The Applicant must submit a conceptual study showing the alignment of Thoroughfare 1 and its relationships to Poplar and Medford Streets to the Director of Mobility, the Director of Engineering, and the Director of Planning, Preservation, and Zoning prior to applying for Site Plan Approval for Thoroughfare 1. Study scope must be reviewed and approved by the Director of Mobility, the Director of Engineering, and the Director of Planning, Preservation, and Zoning.
21. The Applicant must submit a grading study for Thoroughfare 1 and its connection with Medford Street to the Director of Engineering prior to applying for Site Plan Approval for Thoroughfare 1.

Utilities

22. The Medford Street pump station and all connecting utilities should remain in their existing locations. If relocation of the pump station or any connecting utilities is necessary, the Applicant must reconstruct the system to current City standards.
23. Stormwater management systems must be located entirely under private property, and designed to not negatively impact utilities, infrastructure and landscape elements in the public way.

Mobility

24. A maximum of 588 parking spaces or 0.6 spaces per 1,000 SF of commercial development is permitted, whichever is fewer.
25. All on-site and off-site sidewalk improvements constructed by the Applicant must be ADA compliant including, but not limited to, a minimum of a five-foot (5') wide accessible route and accessible curb ramps at all street crossings.
26. Prior to the first Certificate of Occupancy, the Applicant must submit an evaluation of the structural integrity of the Medford Street retaining wall, including the portion under the MBTA overpass. The evaluation must be performed by a Structural Engineer currently licensed in Massachusetts.
27. The Site Plan Approval application for Thoroughfare 1 must include evidence of an approved permit from MassDOT to allow vehicles to turn from Thoroughfare 1 onto the McGrath Highway southbound on-ramp.
28. As voluntarily committed to in their Mobility Management Plan, the Applicant shall conduct annual reporting to track, assess, and report on the implementation of mobility management, to the specifications of the Director of Mobility.
29. Separate Mobility Management Plans and MMP Approval Letters from the Director of Mobility are required for the Site Plan Approval applications for Building A and Building B.

Transportation Mitigation

30. To mitigate transportation impacts, the project's frontage along Medford Street must be improved with, at least, a curb-separated bike lane. Final design must be approved by relevant City departments.
31. As voluntarily committed to in the Transportation Impact Study to mitigate transportation impacts, the Applicant must improve Medford Street along the property's frontage with, at least, a six-foot (6') walkway, a furnishing zone, and a planted frontage zone. Final design must be approved by relevant City departments.

32. As voluntarily committed to in the Transportation Impact Study to mitigate transportation impacts, the Applicant must improve Somerville Avenue Extension along the property's frontage with, at least, a two-way sidewalk-level cycle track. Final design must be approved by relevant City departments.
33. As voluntarily committed to in the Transportation Impact Study to mitigate transportation impacts, the Applicant must improve Somerville Avenue Extension between the edge of the property to the intersection with Linwood Street with, at least, a sidewalk-level shared-use path. Final design must be approved by relevant City departments.
34. As voluntarily committed to in the Transportation Impact Study to mitigate transportation impacts, the Applicant must improve, and potentially re-align, the intersection of Somerville Avenue Extension, Linwood Street, and Fitchburg Street to discourage vehicles from turning onto Fitchburg St. Final intersection design must be approved by the Directors of Planning, Preservation, & Zoning, Mobility, and Engineering.
35. To mitigate transportation impacts, Linwood Street between Somerville Avenue Extension and Poplar Street must be improved with, at least, sidewalks of up to twelve feet (12') wide on each side of the street and additional traffic calming elements to reduce vehicle speed and volume. Final design must be approved by relevant City departments.
36. As voluntarily committed to in the Transportation Impact Study to mitigate transportation impacts, the intersection of Poplar Street and Linwood Street must be improved with, at least, wayfinding signage, extended curb to reduce crossing distances, restriped crosswalks, and new accessible curb ramps. Final design must be approved by relevant City departments.
37. The Applicant must implement all mitigation strategies voluntarily committed to in the Transportation Impact Study dated January 2022 and submitted as part of this application, unless the Director of Mobility determines that a specific strategy is no longer relevant due to changes to thoroughfares planned by the City or State.
38. Prior to the first Site Plan Approval application for a building or thoroughfare, the Applicant shall communicate relevant road and right-of-way improvements, including but not limited to sidewalks, cycle tracks, shared-use paths, and bicycle lanes, to MassDOT, and provide evidence of this communication and any necessary approvals from MassDOT to the Directors of Mobility and Engineering.

Conditions

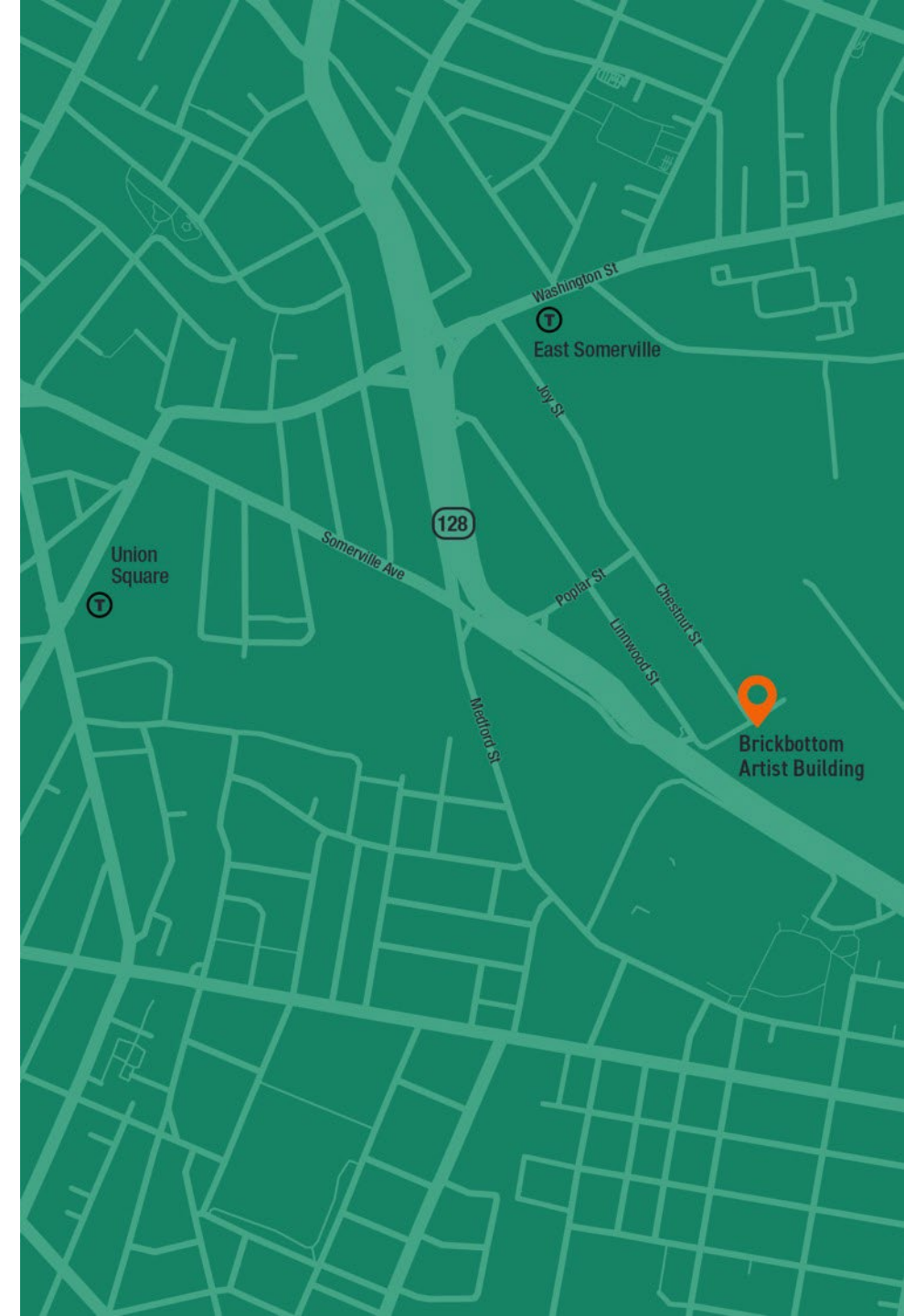
39. A written narrative or descriptive checklist identifying the completion or compliance with these conditions must be submitted to the Inspectional Services Department at least ten (10) working days in advance of a request for a final inspection.

“We’re not against development, we’re just concerned about the impacts of such a large jump in scale to the surrounding area.”

Our consistent ask —

Reduce the scale/density to:

1. make the development design more contextual with the surrounding community
2. reduce traffic impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods of Brickbottom, Boynton Yards and Union Square
3. create opportunities for more usable open space, in alignment with the smart development concepts of Somervision



FOUR MAJOR ISSUES:

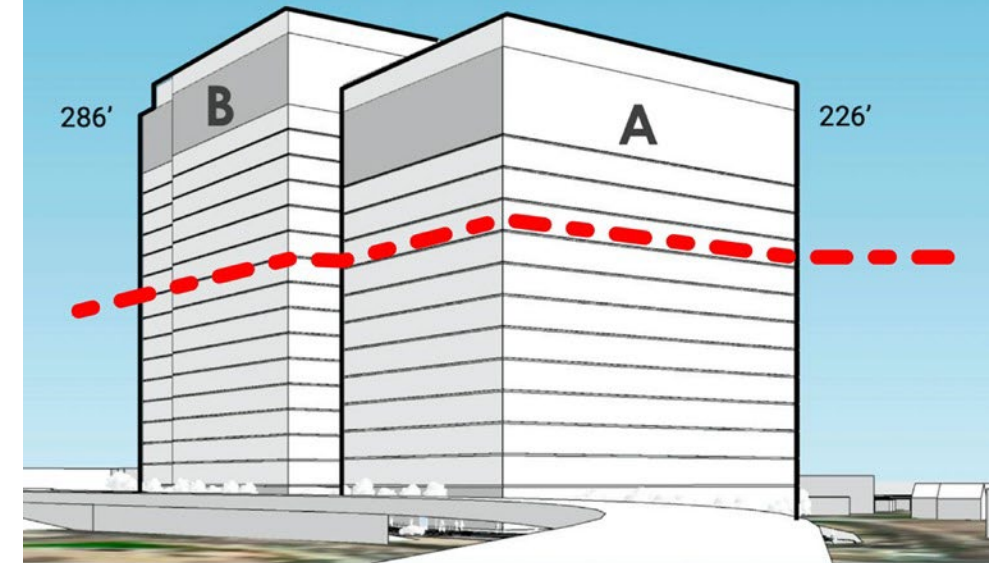
1. Scale

The proposed height of the two buildings at 200 McGrath is 11 stories and 16 stories.

The other buildings under construction in Brickbottom and along McGrath Highway are between 6 and 9 stories (plus up to 30 feet of mechanicals)

This range of 6–9 stories would be contextual to the surrounding neighborhoods and mitigate to some extent the impending traffic and environmental impacts

BLDG A: 12 STORIES
BLDG B: 16 STORIES



Proposed Massing at 200 McGrath
Red line shows approximate height from Milk Square Area UDF

FOUR MAJOR ISSUES:

2. Traffic

We seek **integrated** planning, both in a **spatial** and **temporal** sense, for traffic impacts. This is a major concern when the **scale** of traffic anticipated is out of proportion to the local infrastructure along with the 200 McGrath site's physical constraints.

This project anticipates creating **3,600 new vehicle trips a day**, and possibly, as the mobility planner at the last planning meeting said, this is an underestimate.

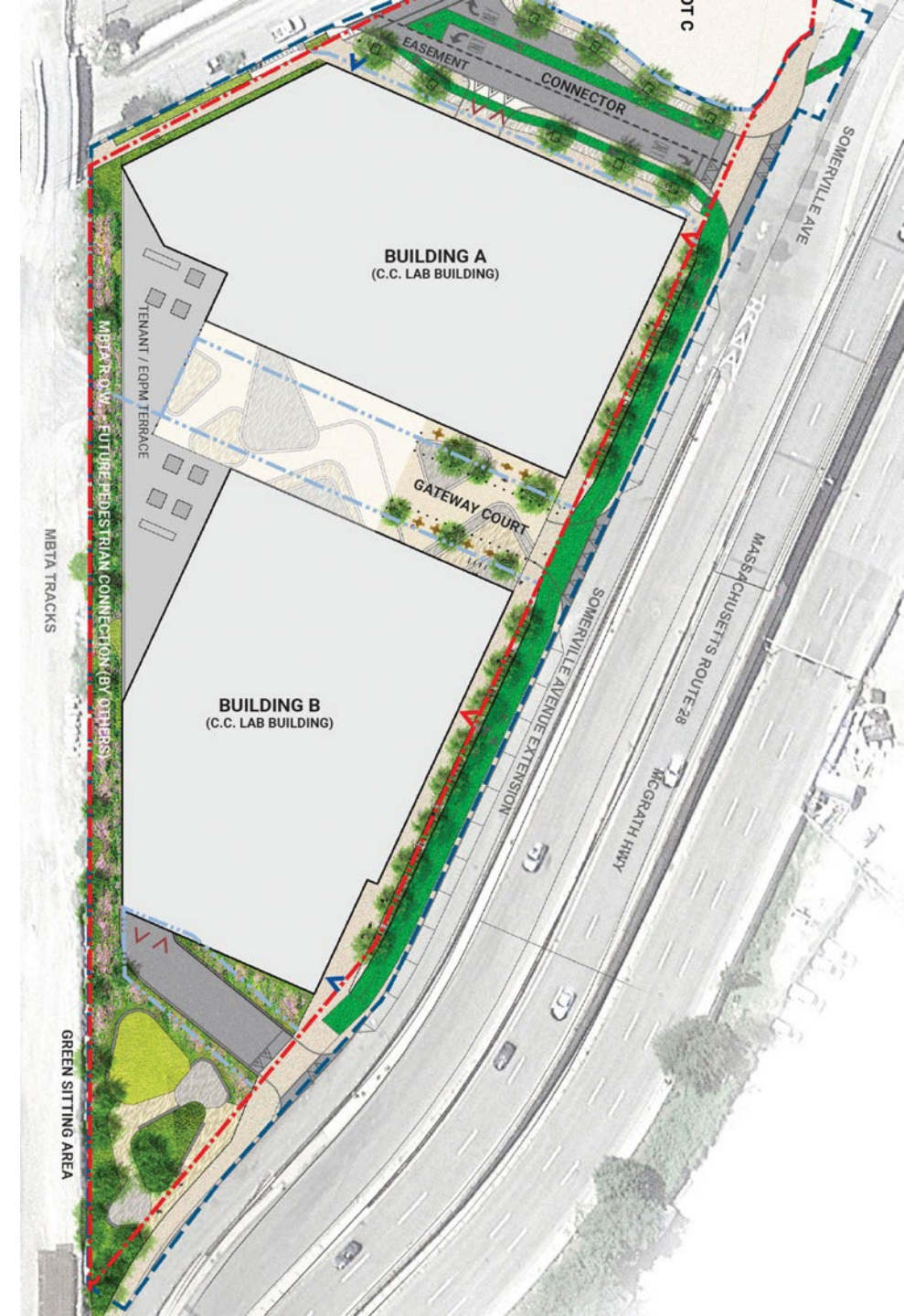
- Without area traffic studies encompassing Boynton Yards' egress, Medford Street's existing traffic volume, and the car trips from soon-to-be-finished 100 Chestnut Street, and the under-development lab buildings at 15 and 35 McGrath, along with the anticipated grounding of McGrath, the traffic impacts of 200 McGrath on the region seem unresolved.
- The 200 McGrath "solution" for mitigating the anticipated substantial increase of workday vehicles flowing into the 1-way "Scary Way" to Linwood St. and then to Poplar St. (essentially a big exit loop from the land-locked site) is primarily signage, directing cars away from Fitchburg St.
- In addition, **today's** mix of businesses and residents, the 200 McGrath impact of added volume on Linwood St. at peak times, needs to have factored in the **near future** —100 Chestnut's life sciences building's vehicles (from apx. 400 parking spaces)
 - The traffic impacts need to accommodate the **future plans** of the Brickbottom District, in a way that doesn't limit our areas' potential and livability.



FOUR MAJOR ISSUES:

3. Neighborhood Impact

- Inadequate open space
- Environmental impacts (both during construction and after)

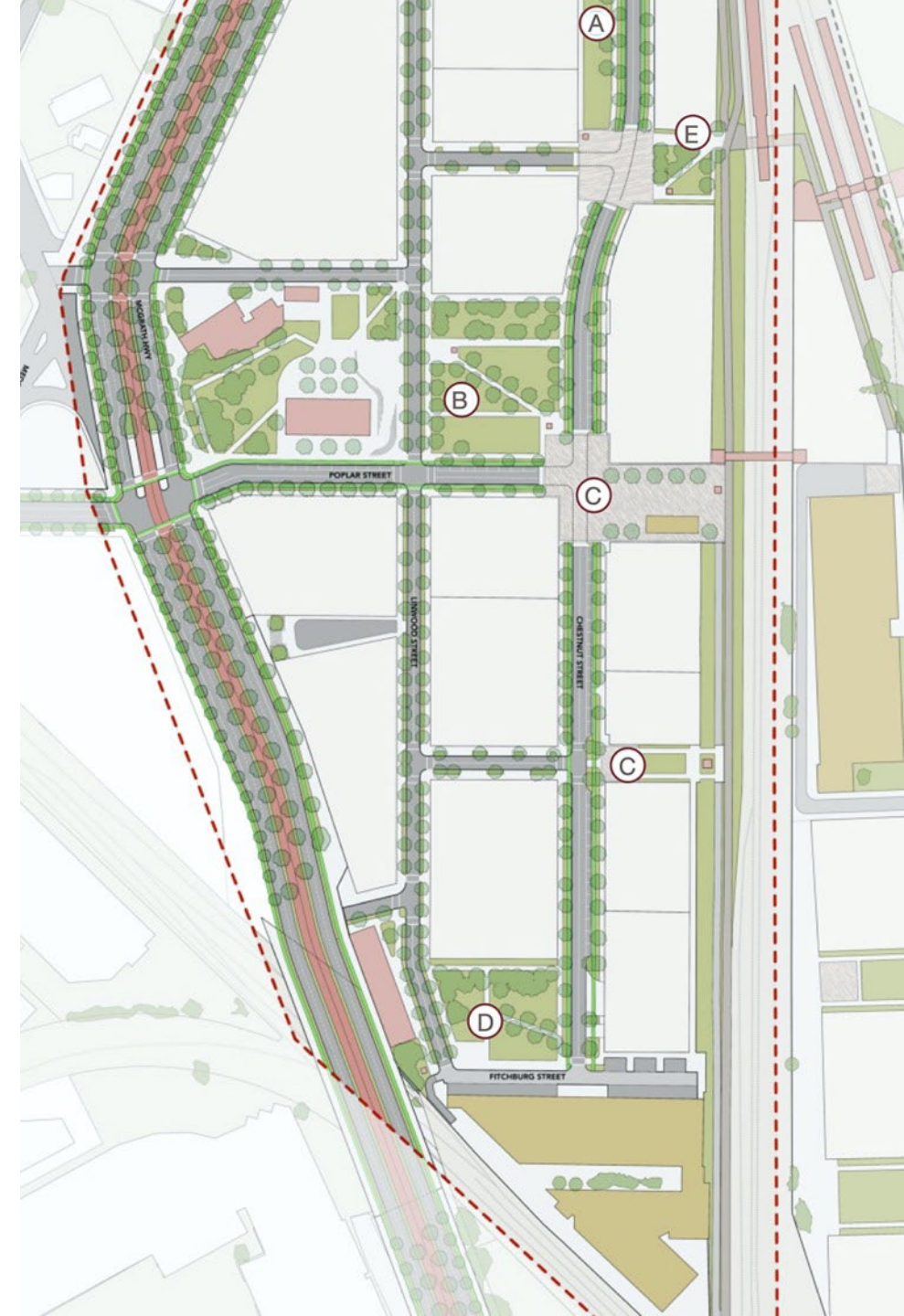


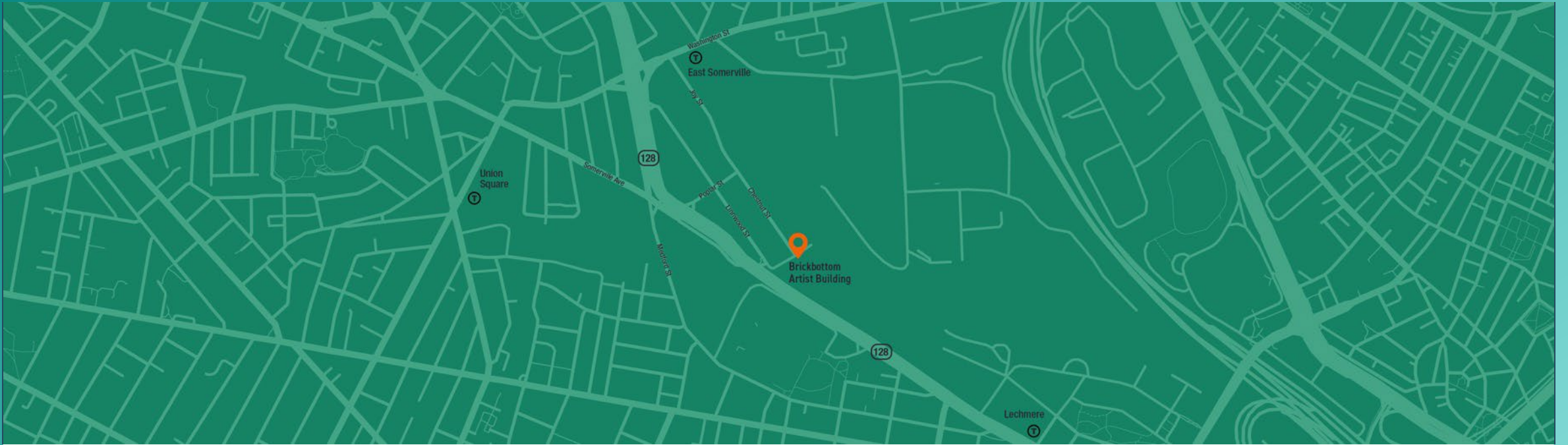
FOUR MAJOR ISSUES:

4. Gaps in the Process

- Brickbottom has seen years of visioning meant to create the conceptual basis for the neighborhood, but this process has been paused, while 200 McGrath is fully proceeding, and its development will permanently shape and impact our neighborhood, even though physically it is out of the scope of our zoning
- No record of the 4 previous meetings in the developer document, but the staff report references the 5 community meetings
- The initial process: the reserve status zoning for Union Square East (USQE) Sub-Area was changed to its current overlay status without public input
- Lack of response to the city about issues.
 - Bill Valetta's letters detailing issues that were wrong with the application are unanswered
 - No reaction from the planning board/staff on all our comments.
 - Letters written to the planning staff meet no response.
 - The development has been opposed by the abutters from the beginning. Many were told that the project wouldn't go forward in its current form by the staff. The positive-to-the-developers staff report, therefore, was unanticipated and had no reflection of the concerns brought up by the residents
 - Brad Rawson hasn't responded about mobility changes to our area, particularly the elimination of residential parking on the odd side of Chestnut St. We are an established residential community and don't fall under the new development rules of on-street parking.

We are actively engaged, but our efforts are sidelined by the city's process, and our ability to have significant input become limited. The neighbor concerns are siloed to discussions only with developers in the preliminary meetings, limiting their impact on the city planners. A cautionary note: The current mixed-use development of Assembly Row came about because of the efforts, and ultimately lawsuit, filed by the Mystic View Task Force. **There should be a better process for engagement and transparency that encompasses smart growth.**





Thank you



City of Somerville

PLANNING & ZONING DIVISION

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

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Planning & Zoning Staff
DATE: August 24, 2022
RE: 200 McGrath Hwy Neighborhood Meeting

This memo summarizes the neighborhood meeting for a Master Plan Special Permit (MPSP) for 200 McGrath Hwy, which will include two new buildings and two new thoroughfares. The neighborhood meeting is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.

This neighborhood meeting was held on August 24, 2022, at 6:30pm. The meeting was held virtually using Zoom. The following individuals from the applicant team were present:

- Greg Karczewski (US2)
- Daniel St. Clair (Spaulding & Slye Investments)
- B.K. Boley (Stantec)
- David Lunny (Stantec)
- Louis Kraft (Stantec)
- Shauna Gilles-Smith (Ground, Inc.)
- Hugh Hahn (VHB)

The following individuals from the City were present:

- Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen
- Planner Charlotte Leis

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to minutes, the Director of Planning & Zoning shall keep a public record of the neighborhood meeting that includes, but may not be limited to:

- Copies of all materials provided by the applicant at the meeting
- A list of those persons and organizations contacted about the meeting and the manner and date of contact
- A roster or signature sheet of attendees at the meeting (see attendees below)

MINUTES

Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen welcome everyone to the meeting and reviewed the MPSP process. Daniel St. Clair provided introductions and an update on the proposed schedule. B.K. Boley gave an overview of the proposed project and how the buildings have been reduced in size, and reviewed portions of the shadow study. Shauna Gilles-Smith reviewed the proposed open space on the eastern portion of the property.

Following the Applicant's presentation, the following comments, questions, and concerns were discussed at the meeting. Please note that the comments have been organized by topic.

General/multi-topic comments

- Andrew Greenspon stated that several of the items noted as “community benefits” are required by zoning or other law.
- Heather Van Aelst states she is happy to see the reduction in massing and parking spaces and increase in open space.
- Kim Schmahmann asks about Parcel C. The Applicant team states that the goal is to allow Parcel C to be flexible, and that the City is planning to have a larger park in that area with a reorganization of streets. The Applicant team decided to remove a building from that lot to allow the City to make changes to the area in the future. The Applicant team showed the Urban Design Framework thoroughfare diagram and how it intersects with the site.
- Adelaide Smith asked how the images relate to the actual plan. The Applicant team responded and described how the land organization and site design will remain the same, although the images of architecture are aspirational and used to create dialogue, and that each building will have to go to the UDC with three massing and three façade options.
- Jacob Blum stated the June 21 shadow studies are not useful, as that is when the shadows are shortest.
- Kim Schmahmann cited SZO article 15 and stated that this is supposed to be a community event, that there hasn't been enough dialogue with attendees, and that there are still issues that the community has mentioned before that haven't been addressed. They referenced traffic flow and “Scary Way” entering Brickbottom, and requested solutions to traffic concerns. They noted several traffic concerns and options, and stated that they believe the intent of the area was to have a maximum of 10 stories with mechanicals on top. They stated that they believe the proposed buildings are too large and out of context and spirit with the intent of SomerVision and the SZO, and that the open space is a joke. The Applicant team responded that they will be working with MassDOT on the grounding of the highway, and they provided a review of the traffic design and how the project complies with zoning.
- Alyson Schultz stated she agrees with Kim and requested a larger conversation with the community and a more comprehensive traffic plan. She stated the area is supposed to be transit focused, while the proposal includes too much parking. She stated that the zoning of this parcel was a last-minute change that was approved without any community involvement and that the project doesn't align with SomerVision. She voiced additional concerns about traffic. The Applicant team responded and noted the existing street parking on Somerville Ave Extension, and that the buildings have both minimum and maximum setbacks. They stated they will discuss massing for specific buildings once they attend the UDC.
- Jacob Blum stated there is insufficient open space and that the buildings are too tall.

- Andrew Greenspon stated he is the co-chair of the Union Square Neighborhood Council (USNC), and asked who owns the property. He stated that USNC worked with Capital Hall, who agree to negotiate a CBA with USNC. He asked if US2 plans to negotiate a CBA. The Applicant team stated an affiliate of US2 owns the property, and that while they are willing to discuss and consider comments from the community, they are not planning to do a CBA. Mr. Greenspon responded that the community has a wide range of concerns that could be addressed by a CBA, and stated that they want to ensure benefits are provided to the immediate community.
- Councilor Ewen-Campen noted the difficulty of communicating in virtual meetings, particular about projects of this scale, and encouraged the community members to organize so developers can hold in-person meetings.
- Jill Slosburg-Ackerman asked about the timeline for construction and full occupancy. The Applicant team responded that there are several permitting steps before construction, and reviewed the steps.
- Michele Hansen asked if Capital Hall is no longer involved. The Applicant team responded that there is still some level of involvement, but they are bound by some confidentiality. Ms. Hansen asked if the team needs to start the process over again, and the Applicant team responded no, they do not. Ms. Hansen stated that the neighborhood has been told several times that Capital Hall would agree to a CBA, and since the Applicant team is not starting the process over, they should be held to that promise. She supported having an in-person meeting.
- Councilor Ewen-Campen reviewed what is required related to CBAs, and noted that projects of this scale have found that having a CBA can improve community support.

Building Design

- Alyson Shultz asked why no views of the building from Brickbottom were shown.
- Jacob Blum asked if building heights include mechanical penthouses. The Applicant team responded that they do not, but the shadow studies include the penthouses, and that mechanicals for each building are approximately 18 feet in height.
- Ann Camara stated the shadows are on top of the Brickbottom Artists Loft, but don't show the sides of the building. The Applicant team responded that only the 6pm shadow impacts Brickbottom, and it only clips the bottom portion of the Artists Loft.
- Kim Schmahmann asked how much building height is allowed. The Applicant team responded that the zoning allows unlimited height, but they reduced the height of the proposed buildings.
- Randal Thurston voiced concern about the building setbacks and stated there is currently a building under construction at the intersection of Somerville Ave and Prospect that has no setback, and that construction barriers have taken over the parking and sidewalks in the area.
- Kim Schmahmann continued to discuss the height of the buildings, and stated that the current zoning did not go through a public process. They proposed Somerville Ave Extension could be shifted.

- Alyson Schultz asked how much of the site will be devoted to ACE space, and what the rents would be. The Applicant team stated that 5% of the proposed area is approximately 50,000 square feet. They stated the exact spaces will be designed later, and that some buildings in Union Square are getting tenants but don't have leases yet. Ms. Schultz stated that \$13/SF is the ceiling for ACE space, and noted uses included in ACE spaces. The Applicant team replied they don't have a specific commitment for the amount of ACE space at this phase of the plan. Councilor Ewen-Campen stated they are working on addressing ACE space requirements.

Landscaping/Public Realm

- Tori Antonino stated that community space should be part of the project. She also stated her appreciation of the bioswales and the green wall.
- Tori Antonino stated she might be able to support the project if Parcel C could be an accessible Miyawaki forest, and that there is a need for green space, particularly if development will be taller. She stated that all green space needs to support pollinators, and discussed what types of plants they would need to use. She stated there could also be a community center space on Parcel C. The Applicant team responded with additional information about Miyawaki forests.

Traffic & Parking

- Erin Scheffler asked how the changes will impact traffic flow, and whether Somerville Ave Extension will be a two-way street or continue to empty traffic into Linwood and Brickbottom.
- Heather Van Aelst asked if the traffic flow would be the same as previous versions.
- The Applicant team responded and stated the traffic flow is the same as previous versions of the application.
- Bonnie Borthwick requested a clear plan of how Somerville Ave Extension will be impacted during construction.
- Ramon Bueno stated he lives on the other side of the highway and that there are only two entrances/exits from the area. He stated that the vision for Brickbottom includes cars, and believes Brickbottom will be used as a cut-through area. He stated his concern about non-stop congestion and implications for emergency access.
- Alden Zecha asked the Applicant team to consider where construction workers will park and how they will get to and from the site during construction. He stated the neighborhood is already seeing pressure from existing construction.
- Adelaide Smith asked for a site walk to understand how the site will work. The Applicant team responded that they will reach out after the meeting to discuss this, and that the proposed development may be difficult to imagine in a site walk due to existing conditions.
- Julian Hess asked if it would be possible to reverse the flow of traffic on Somerville Ave Extension to require those exiting the garage to take McGrath. The Applicant team responded they will review whether that is an option.
- An unknown participant voiced a concern that the City has not developed a master traffic plan but are letting developers drive the process. They asked if

there is a master sequencing of projects that will allow residents to maintain a quality of life.

- Councilor Ewen-Campen stated it would be helpful to have someone from the Mobility Division attend the next meeting.

Bike Infrastructure

- Alden Zecha asked if the cycle track along Somerville Ave Extension will be 2-way or 1-way.
- Paul Morgan states he appreciates the bike infrastructure and would like to see the project move forward. He noted that the site needs improvement, and it isn't good for the neighborhood in its current state.

ATTENDEES

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Linda Irwin | 29. Charlotte Leis | 58. Dave Dash |
| 2. Adelaide Smith | 30. Justin Kunz | 59. Adam Leveille |
| 3. Robert Goss | 31. Laura Evans | 60. Lana Camiel |
| 4. Jill Slosburg-Ackerman | 32. Cosmo Di Schino | 61. Julian Hess |
| 5. Bonnie Borthwick | 33. Heather Van Aelst | 62. Jon Jachimowicz |
| 6. Courtney Pollack | 34. Stephen Adams | 63. William Dean |
| 7. Dave Athey | 35. Richard Stein | 64. Derrick Rice |
| 8. Andrew Greenspon | 36. Chris Mesarch | 65. W Gavin Robb |
| 9. Alyson Schultz | 37. Chris LaRoche | 66. Ellen Young |
| 10. Michele Hansen | 38. Bill Shelton | 67. Jonathan Wyner |
| 11. Jacob Bloom | 39. Jim McGinnis | 68. Martha Podren |
| 12. Bill Pino | 40. Ginger Desmond | 69. Lauren Mreschi |
| 13. Mary Cassesso | 41. Kim Schmahmann | 70. Joan Liu |
| 14. Crystal H | 42. Alden Zecha | 71. Joanne Johnson |
| 15. Mark Staloff | 43. Tori Antonino | 72. Chris Gunadi |
| 16. Michael Katz | 44. Janine Fay | 73. Jaclyn Pillitteri |
| 17. Robin Bradshaw | 45. Erin Scheffler | 74. Amelia Sorensen |
| 18. Deborah Davidson | 46. Charlotte Kaplan | 75. Aaron Weber |
| 19. Marsha Goldberg | 47. Linda Pinkow | 76. Cassie Mann |
| 20. Jessica Eshleman | 48. Mary Napolitano | 77. Debbie Musnikow |
| 21. Tom Macone | 49. Paul Morgan | 78. Joe Blossom |
| 22. Paul Scapicchio | 50. Brian Mochleutner | 79. Blake Evitt |
| 23. Marya Gottlieb | 51. Ramon Nueno | 80. Sam Engelstad |
| 24. Jim Kiley | 52. Pauline Lim | 81. Jon Link |
| 25. Annann Camara | 53. Ben George | 82. Michael DeBurro |
| 26. Cindy Larson | 54. William Kipp | 83. Karl Alexander |
| 27. Sarah Murphy | 55. Tim Magner | 84. Carly Bobinsky |
| 28. Cheryl B | 56. Ben Baldwin | 85. Chris Stock |
| | 57. Randal Thurston | 86. Tim Kiley |



Joseph A. Curtatone
Mayor

George J. Proakis
OSPCD Executive Director

CITY OF SOMERVILLE

Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Planning & Zoning Division
DATE: March 12, 2020
RE: DRA #2020-0144, Address
Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

This memo summarizes the neighborhood meeting 200 McGrath Highway, that is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.

Meeting Date: February 24, 2020

Meeting Time: 6:00 pm

Meeting Location: Public Safety Academy Room

Attendees from the Applicant Team: Johanna Schneider, Hemenway & Barnes; Brad Hall, Capital Hall, Tom Macone; B.K. Boley, Stantec

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to minutes, the Director of Planning & Zoning shall keep a public record of the neighborhood meeting that includes, but may not be limited to:

- Copies of all materials provided by the applicant at the meeting
- A list of those persons and organizations contacted about the meeting and the manner and date of contact
- A roster or signature sheet of attendees at the meeting

The aforementioned are an appendix to this report. Additional information includes:

- Advertising Flyer

MINUTES

93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143
(617)-625-6600 ext.2500
TTY: (617) 666-0001
www.somervillema.gov
www.somervillezoning.com

The project was presented by the Applicant team (see presentation material in appendix). The development includes an office and lab building and hotel. It is expected there would be roughly 2,500-3,000 employees on site. After the presentation, there was a question and answer portion. The meeting

adjourned and informal small group discussions took place. A group of interested residents viewed the live sketchup model to see the shadow analysis.

The following is a summary of the comments and questions that arose at the meeting.

There was ample discussion and questions regarding parking and access.

- Can the parking be adaptively reused?
- Could there be less parking?
 - By occupancy, it's anticipated that 1 in every 4 tenants would drive to the site or .65 spaces per 1,000 SF
 - Employees of these type of tenants have clusters of talent in the north and west
- Could parking be available to the neighborhood
- How much does parking cost? Investment might be better made in GLX stop.
- The project should include connectivity of all modes

Use

- What is the process for vetting lab uses?
 - Many lab tenants are classified in the building code as "business occupancy."
- Is there demand for lab space in this area?
 - The industry is one of the fastest growing industries. Boston is 1 of 3 markets in the country for this type of lab space.
- Is there opportunity for small businesses?

Building/Site Design/Project Constraints

- This development should be a jewel since it's so visible.
- One comment regarding height/density
- Open Space is not well developed enough
- There is a high water table here. How will parking be designed to stay dry and will sub grade development impact abutters?
- What is the expectation for improvements around the site, in particular, 'Scary Way.'

Outside of Zoning

- Would the developer be interested in a Community Benefits Agreement?

Takeaways

- Project team offered meeting with small business owners to learn about what spaces they need
- Project team to follow up with lab sector demand data