



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

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

TO: Planning Board
FROM: OSPCD Staff
SUBJECT: 16 and 20 Medford Street, P&Z 23-011 and P&Z 23-012
POSTED: July 13, 2023

RECOMMENDATION: No change

This memo is supplemental to the Staff Memos for P&Z 23-011 and P&Z 23-012, both dated May 25, 2023, associated with 16 and 20 Medford Street.

This memo summarizes follow-up information requested by the Planning Board ("the Board") at the June 1, 2023, Planning Board meeting and feedback from a neighborhood meeting held on June 28, 2023.

BACKGROUND

There are currently two (2) applications in front of the Board for 16 and 20 Medford Street: P&Z 23-011 is a Major Amendment application to a previously approved Site Plan Approval and Special Permit and P&Z 23-012 is a Special Permit application for parking relief from the minimum parking requirements. At the June 1, 2023, Planning Board meeting the Board required the Applicant to hold an additional neighborhood meeting with the community. The Applicant coordinated a meeting with Ward 2 Councilor JT Scott, which was held on June 28, 2023.

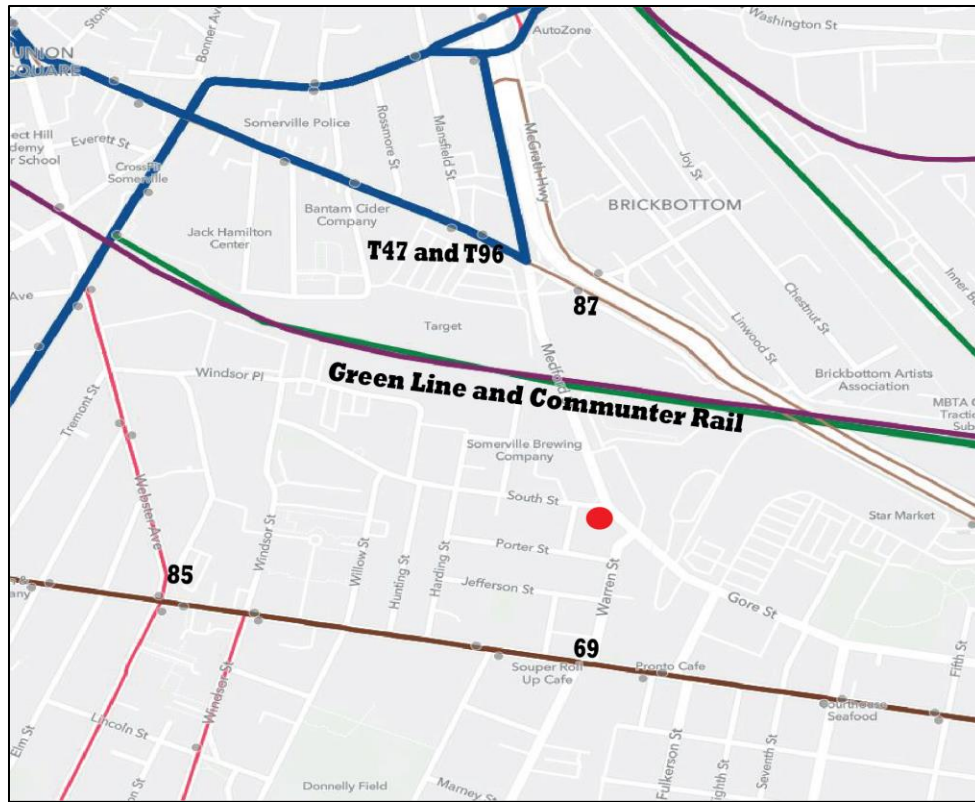
ANALYSIS

Staff Follow-Up:

At the June 1, 2023, Planning Board meeting, the Board inquired about several items that necessitated follow-up research and conversations with the Mobility Division. The Board asked how the bus routes within a ¼-mile walkshed to the site are impacted by the proposed revised MBTA bus route network (Fall 2022). Staff were able to examine a publicly available map of the proposed bus network, which depicts several changes to nearby bus services:

- Bus routes 87, 88, & 80 in Somerville are proposed to be changed to just the 87 bus route. This bus service will be every 25-90 minutes during the week and every 50-90 minutes on the weekend. Wait times depend on the time of day.
- The 69 bus route in Cambridge will remain and be every 30 minutes or better during the week, and every 25 to 45 minutes on the weekends. Wait times depend on the time of day.
- Two new bus routes, the T47 and T96, are proposed with two bus stops close by in Somerville. Both bus services are proposed to be every 15 minutes or less.
- Bus route 85 is proposed close by in Cambridge which, will provide service on the weekdays every 30-90 minutes. Wait times depend on the time of day.

This image below depicts bus services within ¼-mile of 16 and 20 Medford Street (red dot) with proposed MBTA bus route network:



The Board also asked for Staff to follow-up with the Mobility Division regarding the plans for the intersection at Warren Street and Medford Street. After consulting with Mobility Staff, it has been determined that at this time, there are no active projects to change the configuration of the intersection. However, Mobility envisions that intersection to remain one lane for turning left and right onto Medford Street and will prioritize the SomerVision 2040 goal of improved pedestrian safety over vehicular level-of-service.

Neighborhood Meeting Feedback:

At the meeting, the Applicant presented a revised unit matrix, which included the addition of two (2) 2-bedroom units. To support the addition of these 2-bedroom units, one (1) 1-bedroom unit and two (2) studio units were eliminated. The revision of the unit matrix results in a total of 50 dwelling units.

At the meeting, members of the Public expressed the following comments, questions and concerns:

- Support for increase in number of family sized units.
- How will the property be maintained?
- Traffic concerns at the intersection of Warren Street and Medford Street.

- What is the anticipated timeline for construction?
- What type of commercial use is proposed at the ground floor?
- Details about how the traffic study for the project was conducted.
- Can visitors get temporary parking passes for on-street parking?
- More information on the project's sustainability and energy profile.
- Inquiries about the possibility for a Community Benefits Agreement to be signed between the Union Square Neighborhood Council and the Applicant.
- Will the project provide additional affordable workforce housing above what is required by zoning?
- Inquiries about what the typical rent will be for a studio unit.

The Applicant has provided a neighborhood meeting report that details responses to community member input from the meeting. Staff will note that if the Board conditions the project to be ineligible to participate in the City's on-street parking program, all types of parking permits will be prohibited, including visitor parking passes. The only way a permit can be sought is if a person obtains a waiver from the Housing Division (ADU units only) or ADA sign-off for their vehicle only.