



City of Somerville

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals
FROM: OSPCD Staff
SUBJECT: 75 Myrtle Street, ZP26-000013
POSTED: July 09, 2026

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with Conditions

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 Special Permit application submitted for 75 Myrtle 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 completed on May 26, 2026, and is scheduled for a public hearing on July 15, 2026. 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

Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless proposes the installation of a building-mounted wireless communication facility in the Urban Residence (UR) zoning district which requires a Special Permit.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless is proposing to construct a building-mounted wireless communication facility at the roof of the apartment building located at 75 Myrtle Street. The proposed development will have three (3) sections (Alpha, Betta and Gamma) with four (4) antennas each.

- Alpha will be located at the side facing north along Myrtle Street.
- Betta will be facing south at the intersection of Florence Street and Pearl Street.
- Gamma will face southwest at the intersection of Myrtle Street and Pearl Street.

Each of these sections will be concealed in screen walls that match the existing façade color.

BACKGROUND

75 Myrtle St. is a five (5) story apartment building located in the 0.5-mile Transit Area in the Urban Residential (UR) zoning district in the East Somerville neighborhood

represented by Ward 1 Councilor Matthew McLaughlin. Establishing a wireless communication facility in the UR district requires a Special Permit. The Zoning Board of Appeals is the decision-making authority for all development or modification of wireless structures discretionary permits required for the UR zoning district per Section 10.10 Development Standards – Wireless Communication.

ANALYSIS

The proposed work will be located at the roof of 75 Myrtle Street (apartment building), there is no existing wireless equipment in this building. As indicated above, the proposed development will have three (3) sections labeled as Alpha, Betta and Gamma (see figure 1) with four (4) antennas each, additional each sector will include two (2) remote radio heads and two (2) overvoltage units, all of these equipment along with the screen walls matching the façade color will be attached to a 12' x 12' ballast frame. Additionally, there will be smaller equipment throughout the roof to complement each of the sections.

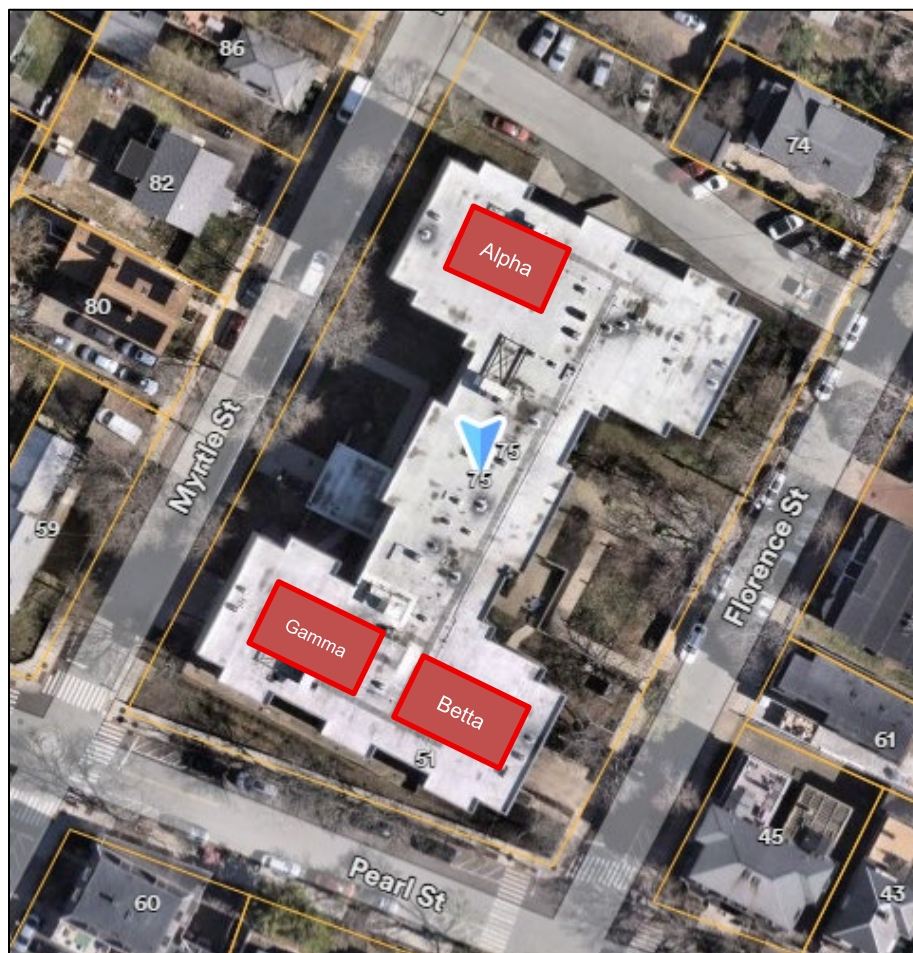


Figure 1 - 75 Myrtle Street satellite image with diagram of proposed wireless facilities sections.

The plans submitted by the Applicant have been reviewed by the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) and all comments have been addressed in the April 14, 2026, revised

plan. Upon analysis of the material submitted by the Applicant, Planning Staff does not believe that granting the Special Permit Findings would cause a substantial detriment to the public good or nullify or substantially derogate from the intent and purpose of the Urban Residential (UR) district.

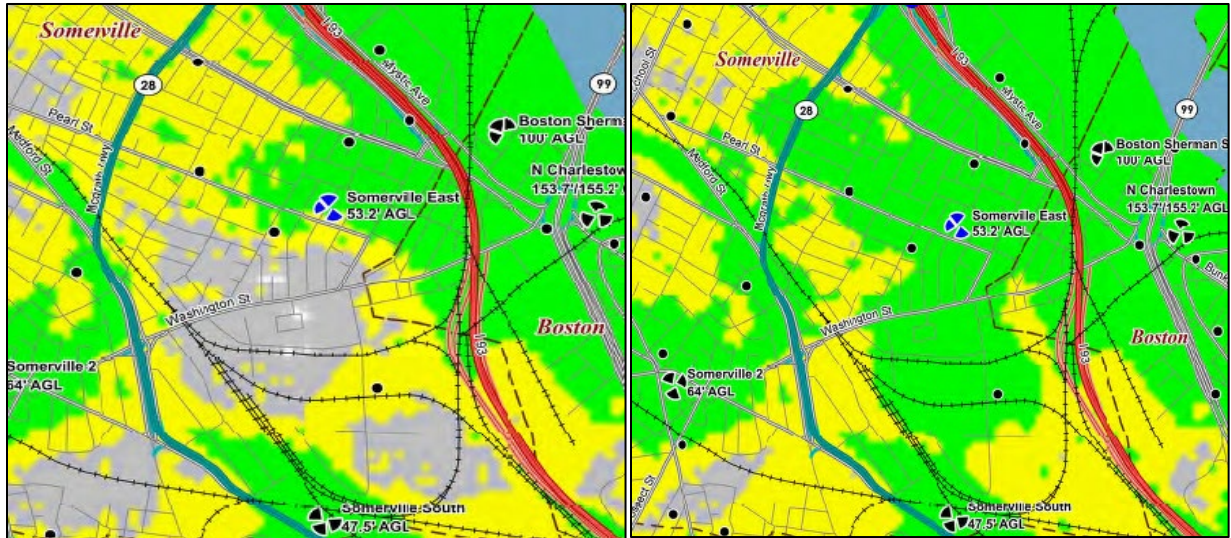


Figure 2 - Exhibit B - Verizon Coverage map showing current (left) and proposed conditions (right).

CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS

The Zoning Board of Appeals 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.

Special Permit 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. *Suitability of nearby, existing sites and/or the feasibility of alternative technologies.*
4. *Height and design of proposed tower or antenna, with particular concern for design solutions that reduce or eliminate visual impact.*
5. *Compatibility with the uses associated with surrounding properties and proximity of the proposed tower or antenna to properties in residential use.*
6. *Topography, on-site vegetation, and the prominence of proposed facility.*
7. *Proposed ingress and egress for maintenance.*

Information relative to the required considerations is provided below:

Special Permit

1. The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.
 - a. Staff believes that this project supports the goals laid out in SomerVision 2040, the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, including the following:
 - i. Affirm our responsibility to current and future generations through continued INNOVATION in business, technology, education, arts and government.
2. The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.
 - a. The intent of the UR zoning district is in part: "To implement the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Somerville."
3. *Suitability of nearby, existing sites and/or the feasibility of alternative technologies.*
 - a. The applicant has indicated that the proposal will provide coverage to the East Somerville area delineated by Broadway, McGrath highway and Washington Street (See figure 2 and Exhibit B). Staff believe that the information shown in Exhibit B of the application package does indicate the suitability of the site for the proposed sites.
4. *Height and design of proposed tower or antenna, with particular concern for design solutions that reduce or eliminate visual impact.*
 - a. Staff believe that the proposed screen walls matching the color of façade of the existing building will reduce visual impact. Additionally, the proposed equipment meets SZO 10.10.5.a. Wireless Communication Antennas – Development Standards.
5. *Compatibility with the uses associated with surrounding properties and proximity of the proposed tower or antenna to properties in residential use.*
 - a. The surrounding properties are predominantly residential uses. Staff believe that the proposed use of wireless communication facilities will not signify a detriment to its immediate surrounding, and it will be a compatible use.
6. *Topography, on-site vegetation, and the prominence of proposed facility.*
 - a. Due to the proposed location for the wireless facilities in the roof of 75 Myrtle Street, there is no topography or on-site vegetation concerns. Staff

believe that the proposed location for this use does not create any concern.

7. Proposed ingress and egress for maintenance.

- a. There is an existing access point to the roof for maintenance, staff does not identify any concern with this consideration.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the required Special Permit to establish a Wireless Communication use under SZO Planning Division Staff recommend the following conditions:

Should the Board approve the required Special Permit for a Recreational Service use in accordance with Special Permit under SZO 10.10 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, Staff recommend the following conditions:

Permit Validity

1. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.

Public Record

2. A copy of the recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted for the public record. Materials must be submitted in accordance with the document format standards of relevant Submittal Requirements.