



City of Somerville
PLANNING BOARD
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

DECISION

2026 JUL 28 P 2:42

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1 McGrath Highway
CASE NUMBER: ZP25-000115
OWNER: Somerbridge Hotel LLC
OWNER ADDRESS: 10 Cabot Road, Suite 209, Medford, MA 02155
APPLICANT: Somerbridge Hotel LLC
APPLICANT ADDRESS: 10 Cabot Road, Suite 209, Medford, MA 02155
DECISION: Approved with Conditions (Special Permit – Formula Business)
DATE OF VOTE: July 16, 2026
DECISION ISSUED: July 28, 2026

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
SOMERVILLE, MA

This decision summarizes the findings made by the Planning Board (the "Board") regarding the Plan Revision application submitted for 1 McGrath Highway.

LEGAL NOTICE

Somerbridge Hotel LLC proposes to establish a Formula Business in the High-Rise (HR) zoning district, which requires a Special Permit.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

On June 18, 2026, the Planning Board held a public hearing advertised in accordance with M.G.L. 40A and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. Present and sitting at the public hearing were Board Members Chair Michael Capuano, Clerk Jahan Habib, Board Members Michael McNeley, Lynn Richards, Alternates Luc Schuster and Coralie Cooper. The Applicant team presented a revised proposal for a six (6) story hotel for a previously approved development project, and two (2) special permit requests, one for a Hotel Use and one for a Formula Business. The Applicant team provided a brief overview of the previously approved permits and explained the reason for the revision of case # P&Z 21-028 was due to changes in the timeline for the development of the proposed abutting (15 McGrath) lab building. The Applicant team explained that the major changes were to the scale of the project, and a new parking layout which required two (2) Hardship Variances that were approved at the June 17, 2026, Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) meeting. The Chair opened public comment, and three (3) members of the public provided comments. Comments included the importance of the pedestrian connection to the community path network at the back of the proposed project and raised concerns about the parking lot and amount of green score on site. The Chair closed public comment and indicated that the project cannot be voted on at this hearing as the 20-day appeal period for the approved variances was still in effect. The Board continued the public hearing to the July 16, 2026, meeting.

On July 16, 2026, the Board resumed the public hearing. Present and sitting at the public hearing were Board Members Chair Michael Capuano, Clerk Jahan Habib, Board

Members Michael McNeley, Lynn Richards, and Alternate Luc Schuster. The Applicant team, represented by attorney Adam Dash, noted that since the last hearing they submitted an updated landscape plan for Somerville's PSUF (Public Space and Urban Forestry) Division to review required updates to comply with the Green Score requirements. Attorney Dash also indicated that the supplemental memo dated July 10, 2026, included revised language to condition #13 of the previous June 12, 2026 staff memo and explained that they have communicated with staff to suggest additional language to this condition. Planning staff confirmed that they agree with the proposed language and the additional changes can be recorded as amended with the Applicant's suggestion if the Board chose to approve the proposal. The Board indicated that they received one (1) written comment past the deadline, though it was received and reviewed by the Board. The Board had one clarifying question about the amount of parking.

PLANS & DOCUMENTS

Application plans, documents, and supporting materials submitted and incorporated are identified below.

Document	Pages	Prepared By	Date	Revision Date
Narrative	17	Adam Dash, Esq. 48 Grove St #304 Somerville, MA 02144	March 24, 2026	N/A
Site Plan	7	Allen & Major Associates, Inc. 400 Harvey Road Manchester, NH 03103	October 15, 2025	N/A
Illustrative Site Plan	1	Allen & Major Associates, Inc. 400 Harvey Road Manchester, NH 03103	November 24, 2025	N/A
Landscape Plan	33	Allen & Major Associates, Inc. 400 Harvey Road Manchester, NH 03103	October 15, 2025	July 9, 2026
Architectural Plans	16	Jason T. Diorio Auburn, NH	November 25, 2025	N/A
Shadow Study	8	JAL Hospitality Design LLC 10 Cabot Road, Suite 209 Medford, MA 02155	October 15, 2025	N/A
Stormwater Compliance Report	152	Allen & Major Associates, Inc. 400 Harvey Road Manchester, NH 03103	November 5, 2022	October 14, 2025
Context analysis 1 & 2	18	Jason T. Diorio Auburn, NH	October 15, 2025	N/A
Neighborhood Meeting Report	3	Adam Dash, Esq. 48 Grove St #304 Somerville, MA 02144	March 24, 2026	N/A
Previous Recorded Decision	20	City of Somerville 93 Highland Ave. Somerville MA 02143	May 23, 2026	N/A
Transportation Access Plan	41	Allen & Major Associates, Inc. 400 Harvey Road Manchester, NH 03103	October 15, 2025	April 1, 2026
Supplemental Transportation Impact Study Information	35	VHB 99 High Street, 13 th Floor Boston, MA 02110	November 14, 2025	N/A
Transportation Impact Study	97	VHB 99 High Street, 13 th Floor Boston, MA 02110	September 14, 2022	N/A
Transportation Impact and Access Study - Appendix	280	VHB 99 High Street, 13 th Floor Boston, MA 02110	September 14, 2022	N/A

Mobility Management Plan	7	City of Somerville 93 Highland Ave. Somerville, MA 02143	May 29, 2026	N/A
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SPECIAL PERMIT FINDINGS

In accordance with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, the Board may approve or deny a special permit upon making findings considering, at least, each of the following:

- 1. The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.*

The Board believes that this project supports the goals laid out in SomerVision 2040, the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, including the following:

- Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces car dependence, and is accessible, inviting, and safe for all pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.
- Invest in the growth of a resilient economic base that is centered around transit, generates a wide variety of job opportunities, creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses, and secures fiscal self-sufficiency.

- 2. The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.*

The intent of the HR zoning district is, in part: "To accommodate the development of areas appropriate for an intense mix of multi-story multi-unit, mixed-use, and commercial buildings; neighborhood-, community-, and region-serving uses; and a wide variety of employment opportunities."

Additionally, the Board believes that granting the requested Site Plan Approval and Special Permits would support the broader intent of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- To permit development and redevelopment according to plans that are collaboratively developed with the Somerville community.
- To preserve and enhance the design of Somerville's public realm.
- To increase commercial tax base in support of the fiscal health of the City.
- To protect and promote a diverse mix of businesses.
- To capture a fiscal return on investments made in transportation infrastructure by locating higher intensity development, employment opportunities, and a broad mix of uses along major corridors and within walking distance of transit stops.

3. *The existing concentrations of formula businesses within the neighborhood.*

The neighborhood currently hosts various formula businesses; therefore, Staff believe that the proposed Formula Business will positively impact the existing neighborhood context.

4. *The availability of other similar uses and the maintenance of a diverse blend of uses within the neighborhood.*

There are three (3) other hotel formula businesses in the area, however, given its location and proximity to other cities, the proposed business will support the existing hospitality industry in the area, without negative impact. Furthermore, the Applicant has indicated that this Formula business will target a "youth oriented" audience, which will positively contribute to diversify lodging options in the area.

5. *The compatibility of the proposed formula business with the existing architectural and aesthetic character of the neighborhood.*

As mentioned above, the neighborhood currently hosts various formula businesses, historically the area has a primary industrial character, and in recent years there has been a transition to a more commercial focused area, therefore the proposed business along with its architecture will not negatively impact the aesthetic of the neighborhood.

6. *The proposed uses contribution to the nationwide trend of standardized offerings that detracts from the uniqueness of Somerville's neighborhoods.*

Staff believe the proposed use will not detract from the uniqueness of Somerville's neighborhoods, as the immediate area is composed of various formula business. The proposed use and its architecture will not negatively detract architecturally or aesthetically from the neighborhood.

7. *The existing non-residential vacancy rates within the neighborhood.*

As mentioned within the background of this project, the permitting history of this neighborhood through the last years, and the changes with the abutting parcel project on hold, have made the immediate area maintained vacant for several years, after the closure of the car wash. Other non-residential vacancies may exist in the Twin City Plaza. Development in the proposed area will be beneficial to continue to reduce the non-residential vacancy rates.

DECISION

Following public testimony, review of the submitted plans, and discussion of the statutorily required considerations, Chair Michael Capuano moved to approve the Special Permit to establish a Formula Business in the High-Rise (HR) zoning district with the conditions included in the staff memo dated June 12, 2026, and supplemental memo July 10, 2026. Jahan Habib seconded. The Board voted **5-0** to approve the permit, subject to the following conditions:

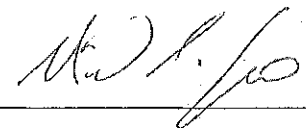
Permit Validity

1. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
2. A written narrative or descriptive checklist identifying the completion or compliance with permit conditions must be to the Inspectional Services Department at least ten (10) working days in advance of a request for a final inspection.

Public Record

3. If the Board requires any changes to the submitted plans, digital copies of all applicable application materials reflecting those changes must be submitted to the Planning Division for the public record. Materials must be submitted in accordance with the document format standards of relevant Submittal Requirements.
4. One (1) digital copy of all required application materials reflecting any physical changes required by the Board, if applicable, must be submitted to the Planning Division for the public record. Materials must be submitted in accordance with the document format standards of relevant Submittal Requirements.
5. A digital copy of the recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted to the Planning Division for the public record.

Attest, by the Planning Board:



Michael Capuano, *Chair*

Jahan Habib, *Clerk*
Michael McNeley
Lynn Richards
Luc Schuster, *Alternate*

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

Any appeal of this decision must be filed within twenty days after the date this notice is filed in the Office of the City Clerk, and must be filed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40A, sec. 17 and SZO sec. 15.5.3.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, no variance shall take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and no appeal has been filed, or that if such appeal has been filed, that it has been dismissed or denied, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title.

Also in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, a special permit shall not take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and either that no appeal has been filed or the appeal has been filed within such time, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title. The person exercising rights under a duly appealed Special Permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone.

The owner or applicant shall pay the fee for recording or registering. Furthermore, a permit from the Division of Inspectional Services shall be required in order to proceed with any project favorably decided upon by this decision, and upon request, the Applicant shall present evidence to the Building Official that this decision is properly recorded.

This is a true and correct copy of the decision filed on _____ in the Office of the City Clerk, and twenty days have elapsed, and

FOR VARIANCE(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ any appeals that were filed have been finally dismissed or denied.

FOR SPECIAL PERMIT(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ there has been an appeal filed.

FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ there has been an appeal filed.

Signed _____ City Clerk Date _____