



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Planning Staff
SUBJECT: 8 Medford St, ZP24-000091, ZP24-000092
POSTED: August 13, 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 Strategy and Development Staff to the Review Board members.

This memo summarizes the Site Plan Approval and Special Permit applications submitted for 8 Medford 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 August 3, 2026, and is scheduled for a public hearing on August 20, 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

ZP24-000091

The Law Offices of Richard G. DiGirolamo on behalf of Medford Properties, LLC proposes to establish a residential housing use in the Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) zoning district, which requires a Special Permit.

ZP24-000092

The Law Offices of Richard G. DiGirolamo on behalf of Medford Properties, LLC proposes to develop a General Building in the Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) zoning district, which requires Site Plan Approval.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Medford Properties, LLC is proposing to construct a 4-story general building. The proposed development will produce 2,329 square feet of commercial space, 18 dwelling units of which 3.6 are affordable units, 19 long-term bicycle parking spaces, 4 short-term bicycle parking spaces, and the proposed landscape will earn a Green Score of 0.259. No motor vehicle parking is proposed as part of this application.

BACKGROUND

8 Medford Street is located on a Pedestrian Street in the Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) zoning district in the Boynton Yards neighborhood represented by Ward 2 Councilor JT Scott. Establishing a general building in the MR4 district requires Site Plan Approval. Site Plan Approval is the administrative review and approval of conforming development to address any potential impacts as necessary. Establishing a Residential Housing use in the MR4 district requires a Special Permit. The Planning Board is the decision-making authority for all (non-variance) discretionary or administrative permits required for the MR4 zoning district.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

The first neighborhood meeting was hosted by Ward 2 Councilor J.T. Scott and the applicant on October 25, 2021. The applicant answered questions from abutters regarding traffic, trash pick up, the commercial area, and the permitting process.

A second neighborhood meeting was hosted by Ward 2 Councilor J.T. Scott and the applicant on June 27, 2022. The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the Traffic Study Report.

A second neighborhood meeting was hosted by Ward 2 Councilor J.T. Scott and the applicant on March 13, 2023. The applicant gave a presentation showing the updates from the Urban Design Commission. Community members asked questions regarding traffic, parking, pedestrian safety, green space, and the façade of the proposed design.

DESIGN REVIEW

The proposal was reviewed by Somerville Urban Design Commission via the GoToWebinar meeting platform on October 25, 2022 and November 22, 2022. The Commission provided its official recommendation on December 13, 2022. Recommendations from the Commission included adding the neighborhood context to the renderings, further exploration of the elevated masonry bays, and direction to discuss public improvements with Public Space and Urban Forestry Staff.

The UDC recommended modifications regarding pursuing a stacked window look, matching the streetscape palette to match that of nearby properties to provide a cohesive streetscape experience, and continuing the façade materials to the ground or sidewalk with no exposed concrete or insulation. The UDC recommended one condition that Certificate of Occupancy be contingent upon the Applicant following those detailed plans with façade materials continuing to the ground.

ANALYSIS

Building/Land Use

The proposed general building is a four (4) story mixed-use building. Eighteen (18) residential units and one (1) commercial unit are proposed. The residential units are a mix of studio, 1- and 2- bedroom units. Inspectional Services Department Staff have identified two outstanding items to be resolved before this plan is considered zoning compliant.

Per SZO 4.2.8.d commercial entrances must be no greater than 30 feet apart. Staff have recommended a condition of approval that requires this standard to be met before a building permit can be approved.

A lighting plan demonstrating Lumen counts and BUG ratings for proposed luminaires is required to verify compliance with SZO 10.6. This can be addressed at the Building Permit stage, and staff have provided conditions to mitigate this.

Common space is provided on the roof of the building. The applicant has signed an Affordable Housing Acknowledgement (AHA) and will provide 3 affordable units and a 0.6 fractional payment.

Mobility

Mobility Staff have left the following comment on this proposal: Mobility is supportive of the proposed loading zone given that a zero-parking building is likely to generate a significant number of delivery, loading, and ride-hail trips which will generate new trips on Medford and Warren Street.

Per City Traffic regulations, parking is not permitted within twenty feet of a crosswalk. Mobility proposed mitigation in the form of a curb extension that will improve traffic safety for pedestrians crossing Warren Street, allow the implementation of a new multipurpose loading zone to serve the site, and mitigate impacts of additional delivery, loading, and ride-hail trips. Mobility also notes that additional coordination regarding the final streetscape design may be needed with the relevant city departments prior to building permits to ensure that all city standards for streetscape are included.

Several conditions of approval related to Mobility have been provided below.

Public Space and Urban Forestry

The proposed landscaping and site design will earn a GreenScore of 0.259, where the minimum is 0.25 and the target score is 0.3. PSUF Staff have provided the applicant with comments regarding tree removal and preservation to be addressed at the building permit stage.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Division is supportive of the proposed plan. The proposed development will activate the ground floor spaces and facades - through a focal point

and commercial entry at the intersection of Medford and Warren Streets, and improve the interplay of ground floor space and civic space - through increased glazing on the ground floor façade and wider 12-foot sidewalks with new street trees, foliage, bike racks and decorative pavers on Medford and Warren Streets.

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.

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.

Information relative to the required considerations is provided below:

Site Plan Approval and Special Permit

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

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

- Increase the housing supply.
- Encourage commercial development.

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

The intent of the MR4 zoning district is, in part: "To create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for smaller scale, multi-use and mixed-use buildings and neighborhood serving uses."

Staff believe that this proposal meets the intent of the MR4 Zoning District, as well as the broader intent of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, including the following:

- To develop and maintain complete, mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented, and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods that foster a strong sense of community throughout the city.
- To encourage the use of public transportation, bicycling, and walking in lieu of motor vehicle use when a choice of travel mode exists.

Site Plan Approval Specific

3. Mitigation proposed to alleviate any impacts attributable to the proposed development.

Staff believe that the proposed conditions mitigate any impact attributable to the proposed development. Specifically, the conditions related to mobility will improve and mitigate any pedestrian-related safety concerns.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the required Site Plan Approval for the 4-story general building, Planning Staff recommend the following conditions:

General

1. Utility and mechanical equipment is not permitted on any facade or within the frontage area of the lot.
2. Electrical transformers and other mechanical equipment are not permitted above ground within the frontage area of any lot.
3. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
4. 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, Preservation & Zoning 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, Preservation, & Zoning Division for the public record.
6. Construction documents must be substantially equivalent to the approved plans and other materials submitted for development review.
7. 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.
8. A Digital Massing Model of only the building's massing, in SketchUp format (.skp), that is to scale and properly geo-located and oriented for use in placing and viewing the project within the City's digital model of existing buildings in the city must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. The model should be the main mass only and

should not include any detailed architectural features of the proposed building, including building components or materiality.

9. Alterations to the design or location of the transformer is a major amendment to the approved plans and requires board review.

Construction/Engineering

10. Material specifications from suppliers must be submitted to confirm fenestration glazing is compliant with the VLT and VLR ratings required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.
11. An outdoor lighting plan and supplier cut sheet specifications of chosen lighting fixtures must be submitted to confirm compliance with Section 10.6 Outdoor Lighting of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The site photometric plan must include a keyed site plan identifying the location of all luminaires; total site lumen limit table (calculations from the SZO); lighting fixture schedule indicating the fixture type, description, lamp type, lumens, color temperature, color rendering index, BUG rating, mounting height, and wattage of all luminaires; and notation of any timing devices used to control the hours set for illumination.
12. The Applicant shall submit a Construction Management Plan (CMP) for Engineering and Mobility Division review and comment twenty-one (21) days prior to submission of the Foundation Permit. Zero lot line construction on an Urban Principal Arterial street will require engineered site logistic plans to minimize construction impacts to the high-volume public right of way.
13. Inflow & Infiltration sewer mitigation is required for all projects that increase sewer flows to the City wastewater system. By City ordinance & policy, the City only accepts I&I mitigation via fee. This program is managed by the Engineering Division. See Somerville's Sewer, Drain, and Infiltration/Inflow Policy for more information.
14. The Applicant should be advised that a large diameter, brick MWRA sewer main is present in Warren Street. Any work within the MWRA easement will require a MWRA 8(m) permit for state facility encroachment. 8(m) Permit may be required prior to cutting and capping existing water, sewer, and drain services. Applicant's utility subcontractors must apply for any applicable MWRA Permit.
15. Current site plan will require a Medium Site Construction Permit (ESC) review.
16. Project must be in compliance with Engineering Site Construction Rules and Regulations and implement stormwater management BMPs to meet runoff requirements as necessary. Any piped, direct connection to the City sewer and drainage system will automatically classify this project as a Large Project Review per the regulations.
17. All unused sidewalk curb cuts must be closed.
18. Final sidewalk design must provide sufficient width to guarantee at least 5' clear width of cement concrete surface for ADA/MAAB access. The 5' width may be combined by land in public right of way and private land dedicated via a public access easement. Establish easement line parallel to Medford Street and Warren Street side lines. Submit easement plans for City review providing the City and general public 24/7/365 access to sidewalk are on private property adjacent to

Medford Street and Warren Street, as necessary. Executed easement is required prior to Certificate of Occupancy.

Housing

19. A deed restriction limiting the sale or rental of all affordable dwelling units to eligible households in perpetuity must be executed and recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
20. An affordable housing implementation plan (AHIP) must be submitted to the Director of Housing for review and approval prior to applying for a Building Permit.
21. The Applicant or their successor in interest shall make a fractional buyout for 0.6 ADUs not provided.

Mobility

22. Prior to applying for a certificate of occupancy, the applicant or their successor will coordinate with the Mobility Division to apply to the Somerville Traffic Commission for implementation of the loading zone specified in the Transportation Access Plan. Applicant or their successor will provide a signage plan to the Mobility Division and will be responsible for the cost of signage installation per city specifications.
23. To mitigate transportation impacts, the applicant or their successor will construct a curb extension on the east side of Warren St at the crosswalk across Warren St. Curb extension shall extend south down Warren St to physically prevent parking within 20 feet of the crosswalk per Somerville Traffic Regulations. Design shall be approved prior to the issuance of a building permit. Construction shall be complete prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
24. Prior to issuance of Building Permit, the applicant or their successor shall coordinate with the relevant departments on the final streetscape design.

Urban Design

25. The Certificate of Occupancy will be contingent upon the Applicant following detailed plans with the façade materials continuing to the ground.

Should the Board approve the required Special Permit to establish residential housing use, Planning Staff recommends the following conditions:

1. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
2. 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, Preservation & Zoning Division for the public record. Materials must be submitted in accordance with the document format standards of relevant Submittal Requirements.
3. A digital 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.

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