



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF

GEORGE PROAKIS, *DIRECTOR OF PLANNING*
LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*
ETHAN LAY-SLEEPER, *PLANNER*
SARAH WHITE, *PRESERVATION PLANNER*
DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

Case #: ZBA 2007-63-R3 (2/2016)

Date: March 10, 2016

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 70 Inner Belt Road

Applicant Name: CoreSite Real Estate 70 Inner Belt, LLC

Applicant Address: 1001 17th Street, Suite 500, Denver, CO 80202

Property Owner Name: CoreSite Real Estate 70 Inner Belt, LLC

Owner Address: 1001 17th Street, Suite 500, Denver, CO 80202

Agent Name: David Hopper

Agent Address: 250 Summer Street, Boston, MA 02210

Alderman: Matthew McLaughlin

Legal Notice: Applicant & Owner CoreSite Real Estate 70 Inner Belt, LLC seek a revision to Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) (ZBA2007-63) under SZO §5.3.8 in order to alter the site plan for mechanical equipment. The original SPSR was for the expansion of an existing 22,667 sf data storage use (§7.11.15.1.c) within the second floor of an existing building for a total of 61,436 s.f. Prior revisions include ZBA 2007-63-R0308, ZBA 2007-63-R0808 & ZBA 2007-R2(8/2011) which consisted of increasing the use by approx 141,000 sf and altering the site and façade. IA zone. Ward 1.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals March 16, 2016

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The site is located in southeastern Somerville in the Inner Belt industrial district. The subject property has an area of 321,424± square feet and is zoned Industrial A (IA). There is an existing two-story, 40' high masonry building containing 279,522 gross square feet¹. The footprint of

¹ This includes a mezzanine level between the first and second floors, containing approximately 10,000 square feet. This area was not included in the property description in the 2007 SPSR, which described the structure as containing 269,098 square feet.



the building is approximately 134,471 square feet. Originally built as warehouse space, the ZBA granted a Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) (ZBA 1999-17) to allow 119,000 square feet of the site to be used for light industrial and office use and to provide 92 additional parking spaces in 1999. The site is landscaped with grass and a variety of understory trees in accordance with the 1999 SPSR approved plan.

In December of 2007, the Applicant received a SPSR (ZBA 2007-63) under SZO §7.11.15.1.c for the expansion of an existing 22,667 square foot Co-Location Data Center use within the second floor for a total of 61,436 square feet. In March of 2008, the Applicant received a revision (ZBA 2007-63-R0308) for an additional 3,793 square feet for electrical/mechanical space within the existing first floor as part of the data facility, bringing the existing use to a total of 65,229 square feet.

In September of 2008, the Applicant received a revision to the SPSR (ZBA 2007-63-R0808) to add 141,252 additional square feet of the data center use (including support areas such as offices and conference rooms within the mezzanine). With the new tenant fit-out, the entire building area would be permitted for the data center use. The approval included adding nine large pieces of additional machinery next to existing generators and permanent utility trailers to support the expansion of the existing use. The approval also included reducing the number of parking spaces at the site, adding and modifying landscaping, screening existing generators, and altering signage and the façade.

In April of 2010 the Applicant received administrative approval to make minor changes to the site plan and elevations and divide the site work up into two phases.

Finally, in September of 2011 the Applicant received another revision to the SPSR (ZBA 2007-63-R2-8/2011) to expand upon the exterior improvements that were previously approved to substantially renovate the building façade. A metal panel system would be applied to much of the Inner Belt Road and Third Avenue facades and a narrow metal band would continue along the top of the two other sides of the building that are not very visible. The existing brick that is exposed will be painted a gray color to complement the metal panel color. A different color metal panel will be applied between the windows and in a regular rectangular pattern to break up the long façade. Shade devices will project out from the windows and the long rectangular panels to add some depth and interest to the building. The blue pole-like structural element at the front entrance will be removed. A flat canopy will be added to the front entrance and the wall-like entrance structure will be attached with perforated metal to the façade of the building so that it does not appear to be floating. Translucent glass will be installed in the openings of the front entrance structure and the glass will be back lit. The façade changes have not yet been implemented.

The facility is open 24 hours and regularly has 30 full time occupants who are primarily there during the day. The maximum occupancy once all of the areas are renovated will be 105 and a maximum of 50 visitors are anticipated at any one time. Future maximum occupancy for the building is 155.

Some of the interior and exterior renovations are underway. Construction is complete in the following areas of the building:

A data center for another tenant (Internap) on the second floor = 138,270 SF

Mezzanine Area = 10,580 SF

Office / Security / Sales Area = 8,870 SF

Electrical Equipment Rooms = 7,089 SF

Existing Mechanical/Circulation = 9,353 SF

Subtotal of CoreSite's space = 35,892 SF

Remaining Area of data center use on first floor = 105,360 SF

A 18,055 SF area on the first floor was under construction during the last special permit revision process. The remaining area that can be built out on the first floor is 87,305 SF.

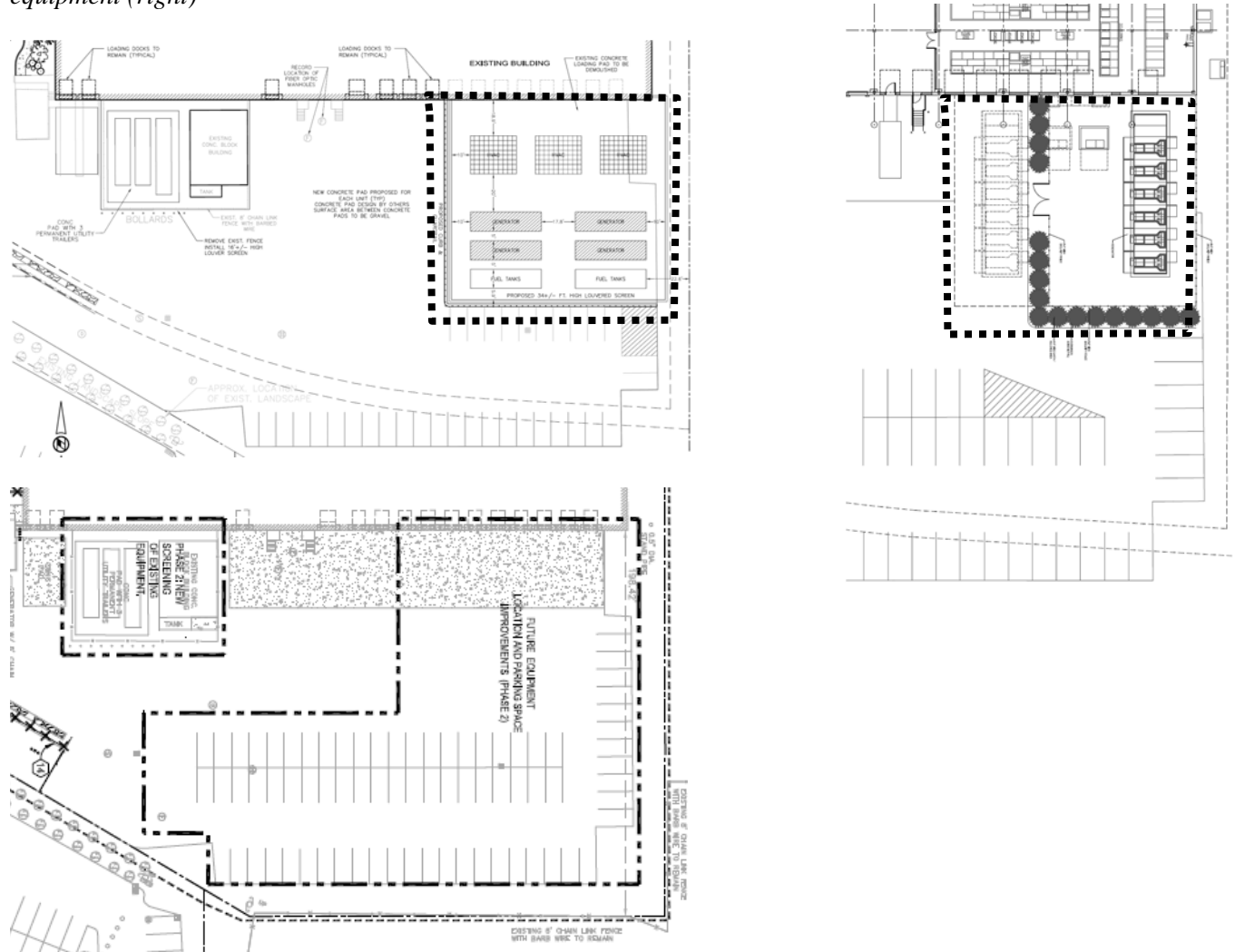


70 Inner Belt Rd: View of the location of the proposed mechanical equipment from Inner Belt Road (above) and from an aerial view (below).



2. Proposal: The 2008 and 2011 approval included exterior improvements including equipment screening that is being proposed to change. The prior approvals did not have details associated with the proposal and the height of the equipment, height of the fence, and screening materials were not provided. The proposal includes changing the size and type of exterior equipment, an eight foot fence and the design of the screening.

2008 approval – area of proposed change is dashed (top), 2011 approval (bottom) & 2016 proposal for equipment (right)



In the revised proposal the generator is the tallest equipment and is depicted on the submitted elevation as "generator beyond". The generator is 14'-2" tall and sits on a concrete slab that is 6" above existing grade for a total height of approximately 14'-8". There would be an 8 foot fence and evergreen trees surrounding the equipment to protect and screen it.

The project will happen in two phases. The site plans shows one generator which is what is planned to be installed this year. The future plan is to add one more generator in this area in 2018. This equipment area and screening would extend 40 feet to the west.

In terms of parking, both the current and future equipment areas described above are a smaller footprint than the equipment area that was previously approved for this location in the 2008 Special Permit. As part of the 2008 Special Permit, the reduction in parking was approved. Since the size of the equipment area now planned for this location is smaller, the new site plan actually provides more parking than what was previously permitted.

The proposed new generator will have exhaust emissions when in use. The equipment is designed to meet the requirements of the EPA and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and will be permitted in accordance with their regulations.

3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application form.

7. Comments:

Wiring Inspector: The wiring inspector will need detailed plans at time of the building or electrical permit.

Ward Alderman: Alderman McLaughlin was informed of the proposal.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT REVISION (SZO §5.3.8):

In order to grant a special permit with site plan review, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.2.5 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.2.5 in detail.

The following findings are relevant to the proposed mechanical equipment alteration.

1. Information Supplied: The Staff find that information provided by the Applicant complies "with the information requirements in Section §5.2.3." The information provided by the Applicant allows for a comprehensive review of the proposed development and is in general compliance with the requirements set forth under §5.2.3 of the SZO.

2. Compliance with Standards: The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit with site plan review."

Revisions to Special Permits may be sought before the final Certificate of Occupancy is issued for a project that received a special permit. The proposed revision is not deemed de minimis because the changes would be noticeable to persons generally familiar with the plans.

Per SZO §5.3.8, revisions that are not de minimis are subject to the full notice and hearing provisions of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The proposal complies with the standards for issuing a revision to the special permit. The final Certificate of Occupancy has not yet been issued, the proposal otherwise is in accordance with the originally approved plans and conditions, and notice has been given for the public hearing.

3. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "[i]s designed in a manner that is compatible with the existing natural features of the site and is compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding area, and that the scale, massing and detailing of buildings are compatible with those prevalent in the surrounding area."

The surrounding area is industrial in nature and the mechanical equipment will not be detrimental to the existing neighborhood. On the other hand, the Inner Belt neighborhood is an area that is marked as an area to transform in SomerVision and new development should be designed with future change in mind. The mechanical equipment will be quite large and tall. Substantial evergreens will soften the edge of this equipment area. The 8 foot fence is setback from the street, will serve a security purpose and will be located behind the trees. The height of the fence should be allowed as part of this special permit revision

per SZO §10.7.1. The mechanical equipment that is currently on the site is more visible from the street than the proposed equipment. This existing equipment should be screened as was stated that it would be on the plans for the 2011 approval.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Revision to Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §7.11.15.1.c & 5.3.8

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **REVISION TO SPECIAL PERMIT WITH SITE PLAN REVIEW**.

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.

(Deletions ~~struck~~, additions underlined)

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes						
1	This approval is for the revision to Special Permit 2007-63 to make equipment location and screening changes as shown in the following materials submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.							
	<table><tr><th>Plan Date</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>Feb 11, 2016</td><td>Application Form</td></tr><tr><td>Feb 11, 2016</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (C1 Site Demolition, Site Plan for Phase 2, C2 Generator Enclosure Elevations)</td></tr></table>				Plan Date	Submission	Feb 11, 2016	Application Form	Feb 11, 2016	Plans submitted to OSPCD (C1 Site Demolition, Site Plan for Phase 2, C2 Generator Enclosure Elevations)
	Plan Date				Submission					
	Feb 11, 2016				Application Form					
Feb 11, 2016	Plans submitted to OSPCD (C1 Site Demolition, Site Plan for Phase 2, C2 Generator Enclosure Elevations)									
The conditions of this approval shall supersede any conditions attached to prior zoning approvals. Any changes to the presently approved use or site plan that are not <i>de minimis</i> or specifically delegated to staff review below must receive ZBA approval.										
2	Prior to the issuance of the CO, all of the building's devices shall be tied to the new fire alarm panel, and the old panel will have to be removed.	CO	FP							
3	A Project Mitigation Contribution (PMC) (linkage) agreement will be signed and payments made for the area in the building that does not yet have a certificate of occupancy for the data center use by the time of this approval (September 2011). This includes the 18,055 sf that is under construction currently (September 2011) labeled Phase 3A in	<u>Document progress of buildout and linkage payments prior to</u>	ISD/Housing							

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes
	the attached floor plan and the remaining 87,305 sf that is anticipated to be built out as a data center. Linkage payments will be made for each phase of the build out before a certificate of occupancy is issued for each phase, as specified in the agreement.	<u>permit for exterior equipment</u>		
4	If swing gates at the entrances and exits of the site are included in the final design, these facilities will require approval by the Planning Staff as well as the Fire Prevention Bureau.	BP	PLNG/ FP	
5	<i>De minimis</i> changes to the building and site will be subject to Planning Staff review and approval; and it is further recommended that Planning Staff review and approval be required for subsequent additional signage.	BP/CO/ Perpetual	PLNG	
6	Planning Staff approval will be required for the final landscaping plan and plant list; additional trees along the Third Avenue frontage are encouraged.	CO	PLNG	
7	Lighting design shall limit light trespass, sky-lighting, and glare from the site.	BP/CO/ Perpetual	ISD/ PLNG	
8	Site work must be complete 12 months after this special permit revision is issued. After the 12 month period, no building permits or certificates of occupancy will be issued until the site work is complete.	BP/CO	PLNG	
9	The mechanical equipment that exists on the south side of the building at the time of this approval (March 2016) shall be screened when the screening for phase 1 of the mechanical equipment as part of this approval is installed. The screening material shall be evergreens of at least a 3 inch caliper.	Final Signoff on electrical permit	PLNG.	
10	If the phase 2 of the mechanical equipment installation shall be screened with evergreens of at least a 3 inch caliper.	Final Signoff on electrical permit	PLNG.	
11	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final sign-off on the building permit to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	CO	PLNG.	

