



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: PB 2014-25
Date: September 11, 2014
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 61 Medford Street

Applicant Name: Matthew Kochaba
Applicant Address: 14 Cambridge Center Cambridge, MA 02142
Property Owner Name: Tim Coskren
Property Owner Address: 205 Newbury St Framingham, MA 01701
Agent Name: Kris Salamon
Agent Address: 25 Birch Street Milford, MA 01757

Legal Notice: Applicant, Matthew Kochaba, and Owner, Tim Coskren, seek a Special Permit with Site Review to establish an approx. 100,000 square foot office use per SZO §7.13.A. TOD-100 Zone. Ward 2.

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board – September 18, 2014

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 101,059 square foot lot (2.32 acres) with a 72,000 square foot office and warehouse building currently occupied by Biogen. There have been several prior approvals for zoning relief. In 2010 they sought approval to remove to parking spaces and install a liquid nitrogen tank on a concrete pad. In 2011, they sought approval to add awnings over the loading docks and the liquid nitrogen tank. Earlier this year, there was an application for site equipment. All appeals have been granted.
2. Proposal: The proposal is for an expansion of office space on the first floor of 9,770 gross square feet. The floor was previously a daycare. The office space will have open office, private offices, and conference rooms. There are no proposed alterations to the exterior of the building.



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

4. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted but has not provided comments at this time.

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted but has not provided comments at this time.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW (SZO §7.13.A):

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.

1. Information Supplied:

The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.2.3 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project.

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.”*

In accordance with SZO Section 7.13.A office uses over 15,000 net square feet require a special permit. Although this use is established, any additional square footage over the threshold requires a special permit. In addition, §15 Linkage of the SZO requires a Project Mitigation Contribution. Commercial uses over 30,000 square feet required this contribution. The expansion of the office use, approximately 10,000 square feet will be subject to this requirement.

In considering a special permit under §7.13.A of the SZO, Staff find that the use proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing use.

6.5.G TOD All new developments shall meet 18 development standards. There are no applicable standards since this is an existing building.

3. Purpose of District: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with the intent of the specific zoning district as specified in Article 6".*

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district, which is, “to encourage mixed-use transit-oriented development with well-designed pedestrian access near transit connections and commercial squares... Therefore, the TODs are designed to be responsive to changing market conditions while maintaining high standards for building design and construction.”

4. 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 the buildings are compatible with those prevalent in the surrounding area”.*

The property is located in the southernmost part of Somerville and near the Cambridge line. There is a cluster of old warehouse/industrial buildings. The property is southeast of Boynton Yards and southwest of the Inner Belt and Brickbottom neighborhood. The area has little neighborhood definition. The largest neighborhood destination is Twin City Plaza, just south of the site, which is partially in Cambridge. There is a small residential pocket of multi-family homes west of the site.

There are little to no impacts of the proposal, there will be no changes to the exterior of the building. The use is changing from a daycare to office. Since no changes have been made to the exterior of the property the TOD design guidelines (SZO Section 6.5.H) are not described in this report.

21. Housing Impact: *Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.*

This proposal will not impact housing in Somerville.

22. SomerVision Plan: *Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan, including the following, as appropriate: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville's neighborhoods, transform key opportunity areas, preserve and expand an integrated, balanced mix of safe, affordable and environmentally sound rental and homeownership units for households of all sizes and types from diverse social and economic groups; and, make Somerville a regional employment center with a mix of diverse and high-quality jobs. The areas in the SomerVision map that are designated as enhance and transform should most significantly contribute towards the SomerVision goals that are outlined in the table below. The areas marked as conserve are not expected to greatly increase the figures in the table since these areas are not intended for large scale change.*

<u>SomerVision Summary</u>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
<i>Commercial Sq. Ft.:</i>	0	9,770
<i>Estimated Employment:</i>	Unknown	58 (workstations provided in new plan)

The project complies with the SomerVision because it expands a commercial use in an existing building.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §7.13.A

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 **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.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes						
1	Approval is to establish an additional 10,000 square feet of office use. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	CO / BP	ISD/Plng.							
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>August 9, 2014</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>October 4, 2014</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Cover, A00-10 Code Compl., A02-0 Demo Plan, A04-01 Construction Plan, A08-11 Furn Plan)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	August 9, 2014	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	October 4, 2014	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Cover, A00-10 Code Compl., A02-0 Demo Plan, A04-01 Construction Plan, A08-11 Furn Plan)
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Any changes to the approved use that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
Affordable Housing/Linkage										
2	Linkage payments will be required to be paid to the Somerville Housing Trust Fund before a CO is issued.	CO	Housing							
Miscellaneous										
3	The Applicant, its successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the building and all on-site amenities, including landscaping, fencing, lighting, parking areas and storm water systems, ensuring they are clean, well kept and in good and safe working order.	Cont.	ISD							
Public Safety										
4	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP							
Final Sign-Off										
5	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.							

