



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Case #:** PB 2016-21  
**Date:** December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016  
**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** NorthPoint – Parcel JK Design & Site Plan Review

**Applicant Name:** DW NP Property, LLC  
**Applicant Address:** One Kendall Square, Suite B3201, Cambridge, MA 02139  
**Owner Name:** DW NP Property, LLC  
**Owner Address:** One Kendall Square, Suite B3201, Cambridge, MA 02139  
**Agent:** Thomas N. O'Brien  
**Agent Address:** One Congress Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02114  
**Alderman:** Matthew McLaughlin

Legal Notice: NorthPoint Parcel J/K: (Case # PB 2016-18) Applicant/Owner DW NP Property LLC requests a Special Permit under §6.6.10.G for four loading docks on the secondary front lot line as part of a Commercial Office, R&D/Laboratory, or Other Use on Parcel JK within the overall NorthPoint development site. North Point Special District (NPSD). Ward 1.

Dates of Public Hearing: December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**1. Subject Property:**

“NorthPoint” refers to an area of land along the north bank of the Charles River, over sixty acres in total, inclusive of the area north of Msgr. O'Brien Highway from the MBTA's Fitchburg line right-of-way to the Charles River, on both sides of the Charlestown Avenue (Gilmore) Bridge.

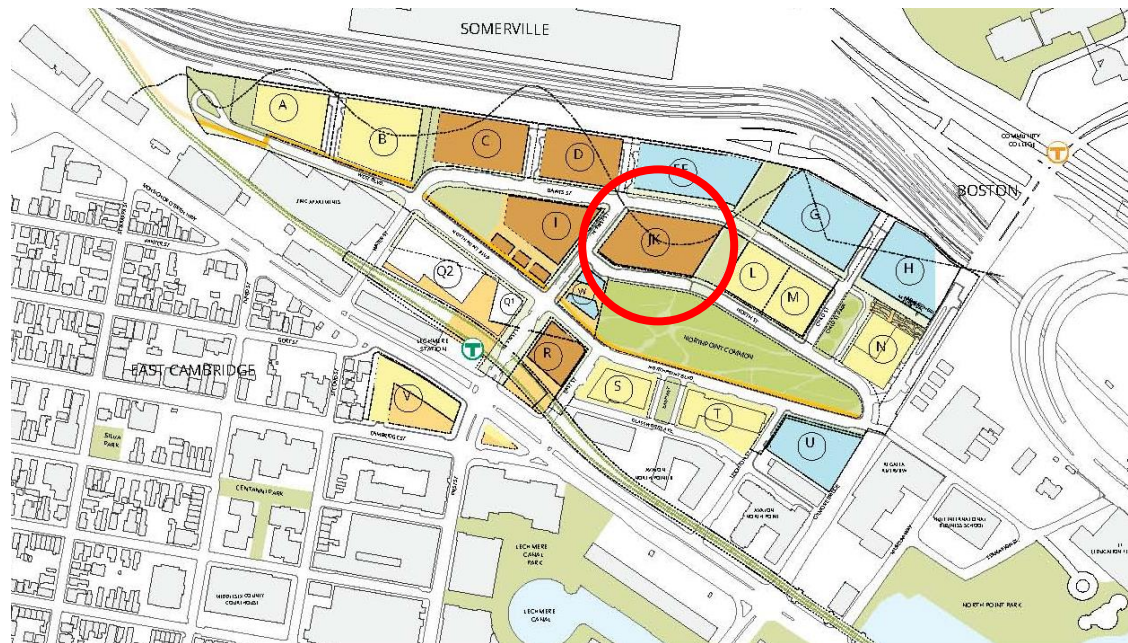
The Site is currently undeveloped vacant former railroad land. It is one of twenty (20) building parcels in the NorthPoint mixed-use development. To date, condominium buildings on Lot S and Lot T, a rental residential building on Lot N, Northpoint Common, Child Street Park and related

infrastructure and other public amenities (including the Brian P. Murphy Memorial Staircase) have been constructed in NorthPoint. The proposed building on Lot JK will be the first commercial building to be constructed in NorthPoint. The surrounding roadway network is currently undergoing preliminary construction preparation.

## 2. Proposal:

The new Parcel JK building is an approximately 370,000 gross square foot Commercial Building to be used for a combination of Commercial Office, R&D and/or Laboratory, and Retail and Consumer Services uses. The proposed building will be approximately 143 feet high, plus three levels of underground parking containing approximately 348 parking spaces. The Ground Floor includes approximately 15,000 square feet of Retail and Consumer Services, accessed from the street or public area of the building lobby. The Site is located in the middle of NorthPoint and will eventually be surrounded with other commercial and residential uses in the larger mixed-use development. Because of the master planned nature of NorthPoint, the Applicant has a vested interest in ensuring high quality development on all sides of the Site and can control the overall condition in NorthPoint over multiple parcels to create the desired urban streetscape.

Parcel JK is approximately 62,502 square feet, proposed to be located on the south side of Dawes Street with a ground coverage ratio of 79.9% building coverage and 20.1% open space.



## 3. Green Building Practices:

The Applicant has provided detailed information to show that the building design is on track to receive a Silver level certification under LEED v4 for Core & Shell Development.

## 4. Comments:

As the majority of the required utility and infrastructure is under the purview of the City of Cambridge, the package was shared with the technical departments but no comments were received at the time of this report.

The Design Review Committee discussed the proposal at the November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting. A quorum was present and the committee was supportive of the Neighborhood Development Plan Amendment, the Special Permit application for the loading docks on Dawes Street, and the conceptual building design. They requested that the project's elevations, and/or renderings, be presented to the committee at the time of Building Permit application for initial review of material specifications. The project will be reviewed a one final time for color and texture palette, via an on-site mock-up panel or sample materials board, prior to material installation. These conditions will be added to this Design and Site Plan approval.

## **II. FINDINGS FOR DESIGN & SITE PLAN REVIEW (SZO §6.6.3.B & 6.6.9):**

Based on review of the submitted Design & Site Plan Review Application, Staff finds that the proposal meets all of the requirements outlined in §6.6.3 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through the findings required by §6.6.3.B in detail.

### ***Design and Site Plans.***

#### ***1. Submittal and Review.***

The submittal package includes all the required information. This review of the Design & Site Plan meets the procedural requirements of Section 5.4 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.

#### ***2. Scope.***

The application included the entire site and building design information as required, even though only a portion of the site is within the City of Somerville.

#### ***3. Findings and Compliance.***

This section of the report goes through the findings required by §6.6.9-11 in detail.

### ***6.6.9. Building Types.***

#### ***A. General.***

##### ***1. Facades shall be built parallel to a front lot line or to the tangent of a curved front lot line.***

The Dawes street façade is built parallel to the front lot line.

##### ***2. Height limits do not apply to mechanical penthouses; cellular, radio, and internet transmission equipment; or vents or exhausts.***

The proposed building is 142'-3" high, measured from the mean grade, which is within the 150' height limit for a Commercial Building Type.

##### ***3. The floor plate of any story shall not be larger in area than the story below.***

No floorplate is larger than the story below it.

#### ***B. Residential High-Rise.***

Not applicable.

#### ***C. Commercial High-Rise.***

Not applicable.

#### ***D. Commercial Building.***

##### ***Form***

##### ***a. Minimum of 80% of the façade must be within the façade build out area.***

100% of the Dawes Street façade is within the Façade Build-Out area.

*b. Floor plates may be a maximum of 50,000 SF.*

The largest floor plate is Level 2 which is a total of 48,958 SF.

*c. Minimum Height = 4 Stories. Maximum height = 150 feet.*

The building is 9 stories and 142'-3" to the penthouse measured from the mean grade.

*d. Continuous façade.*

No particular length of the Dawes Street façade is greater than 100' in horizontal width.

*Fenestration*

*Ground Floor; Secondary 50% min.*

*Upper Floors 30% min. - 50% max.*

*Blank Wall 20 feet max.*

The Dawes Street façade complies with the listed requirements - Ground Floor at 53.8% glazing and Typical Floors at 32.9%. The facade does not include any blank walls.

*Development Standards.*

*a. A minimum of 60% of the ground floor frontage shall be occupied by active uses.*

The Applicant has received a Special Permit to allow the loading docks to be located on a secondary frontage (Dawes Street) due to the constraints of the site. A Variance from this active use requirement is also requested as case #ZBA2016-137 due to the necessary location of the loading docks and service spaces.

*b. Ground floor uses shall be limited to 200' of frontage for each use.*

Each of the ground floor uses is less than 200' of frontage. However, it should be noted that the active uses of retail and tenant space are accessed from the Cambridge sides of the building.

*c. Ground floor uses shall have individual entrances with access directly onto a sidewalk for each use.*

The ground floor uses that are located on the Dawes Street façade have individual entrances onto the sidewalk as practical. Many of the uses are "back-of-house" and service functions that are accessed internally for security reasons.

*d. Upper story uses shall be accessed by a prominent common lobby entrance.*

The common lobby to access upper story uses is located on the south side of the building facing North Street and the NorthPoint Common in Cambridge.

*e. Fenestration shall be calculated for the wall area of each floor.*

The Dawes Street façade complies with the listed requirements. See above.

**E. Design Standards for All Building Types.**

*1. Facade Articulation.*

*a. Building facades shall be articulated vertically with a rhythm of bays to create an equal, central, and/or ends focused composition.*

The Dawes Street façade has been designed with an equal composition.

*b. Facades greater than 100' in horizontal width shall have a change in vertical plane that divides the building form into distinct massing elements that break up its apparent mass.*

The Dawes Street façade has been designed with 3 projecting bays at 66'-6" in horizontal width with 28' spacing between the bays to break up the apparent mass.

*c. Building facades shall be articulated with clearly defined base, middle, and top.*

The Dawes Street façade has been designed with a base defined by the podium level, a middle defined by the tenant floors, and a top defined by the two story penthouse.

*2. Fenestration.*

*a. All openings shall be square or vertical in proportion, excluding windows for first floor Retail and Consumer Service or Commercial Office uses.*

The Dawes street façade features vertically proportioned fenestration.

*b. Each horizontal element of a building (base, middle, and top) shall have a fenestration pattern that is aligned vertically and horizontally.*

The Dawes street façade features vertically & horizontally aligned fenestration.

3. *Towers*

Not applicable.

**6.6.10. Parking and Loading.**

**A. Motor Vehicle Parking.**

*1. Development proposals will not be required to provide off-street motor vehicle parking, but may elect to provide off-street motor vehicle parking according to Table 6.6.10.*

This project includes a total of 15,000 GSF of retail space and 336,000 GSF of Office/Lab space, requiring between 0 to 475 spaces per Table 6.6.10, and will provide a total of 348 spaces.

**B. Bicycle Parking.**

*1. Short term outdoor bicycle racks shall be provided near the main entrances of any Retail & Consumer Service uses.*

Per Table 6.6.10, 15 spaces minimum are required. The project will provide 42 Short-Term Spaces.

*2. Sheltered, long-term bicycle parking shall be provided internal to a building for all other use categories.*

Per Table 6.6.10, 68 spaces minimum are required. The project will provide 110 Long-Term Spaces.

**C. Parking Location.**

*1. All off-street parking spaces shall be located in underground parking structures, except lots abutting rail rights-of-way.*

All off-street parking spaces are located underground.

**D. Parking Management.**

Not applicable. All parking management will be reviewed and administered by the City of Cambridge.

**E. Parking Access.**

*1. A minimum of one pedestrian exit from any parking lot/structure shall lead directly to a public sidewalk except underground levels which may be exited directly into a building.*

The underground garage has exit stair discharging directly to the sidewalk at the corner of Dawes and North First Streets.

*2. Vehicular entrances to parking lots or parking structures shall not be permitted along any primary front lot line.*

The entrance to the below grade parking has been located along Dawes Street which is not the building's primary front lot line.

*3. Vehicular entrances to parking lots, parking structures, loading docks, and service areas shall be no wider than twenty-four (24) feet along any front lot line.*

All entrances to loading docks and to the below grade parking are 12'-0" wide.

**F. Above-Ground Parking Structures.**

Not applicable.

**G. Loading Docks and Service Areas.**

*1. Loading docks and service areas shall not be permitted along front lot lines except by special permit.*



Because all sides of the project's lot are considered either primary or secondary front lot lines, this project has been approved for a special permit to allow the loading docks to be located along Dawes Street.

#### 6.6.11. Environmental Performance.

The Applicant has provided detailed information about the anticipated environmental performance of the building. The submitted package includes a Wind Speed Study including documentation of a wind tunnel study model, a report detailing the air intake and exhausts for the specialty lab uses, a narrative regarding noise mitigation, and Shadow Studies (Net and Cumulative). Staff finds the information provided meets the intent and requirements of this section.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

#### Design & Site Plan Review under §6.6.3.C & §6.6.10.G.1

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 submitted **DESIGN & SITE PLAN**.

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 for the NorthPoint Parcel JK Design & Site Plan Review application for a 370,000 gross square foot Commercial Building spanning the boundary of Somerville and Cambridge. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	DSP/BP/CO	Planning/ISD					
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>September 28, 2016</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office including all appendices</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	September 28, 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office including all appendices
	Date (Stamp Date)				Submission			
September 28, 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office including all appendices							
Any changes to the approved special permit that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive approval from the Planning Board.								
Design								
2	The project’s elevations, and/or renderings, shall be presented to the DRC for review and approval at the time of Building Permit application for initial review of material specifications.	BP	Planning					
3	The project shall be presented to the DRC via an on-site mock-up panel or sample materials board and reviewed for color and texture palette during construction but prior to material installation.	Construction	Planning/ISD					