



City of Somerville

# OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**TO:** Mayor Curtatone  
**FROM:** Charlotte Leis, MAC Liaison  
**DATE:** July 27, 2021  
**RE:** Botanica, 620 Broadway, Application Revision

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The Marijuana Advisory Committee (MAC) reviewed a proposed revision to Botanica's application which had previously been recommended for a Host Community Agreement (HCA) and subsequently offered one. The MAC's thoughts on their review of the proposed revision to this application are below.

## Botanica, 620 Broadway

Botanica submitted an application for a Host Community Agreement in October 2019 and was recommended for an HCA as part of Round 3. Botanica's proposal included redeveloping the existing gas station into a new multi-story building with the cannabis retail sales use occupying the first floor of the new building, and office space on the upper stories. The MAC gave this application a score of 13 out of 15 possible points.

Since Botanica was recommended for and received their HCA they have been investigating the feasibility of constructing the building. They have discovered that, due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are unable to find institutions to financially back the construction of office space on the upper stories of the proposed building or to assist in finding prospective tenants for the space, were it to be built. They have submitted to the MAC letters from two institutions attesting that office uses are not viable at this location at this time.

Therefore, Botanica is proposing a phased approach to their multi-story development. The first phase would be a one-story building for the cannabis retail sales use; the one-story building would be designed to support the future addition of upper stories with only limited renovations to the ground floor. The second phase, to be done once financing becomes available for the proposal, would be to add two or more stories of office space on top of the existing first floor cannabis retail sales use.

The applicant has assured the MAC that this proposal is viable from a zoning perspective without the need for Hardship Variances but the MAC does not evaluate zoning matters beyond confirming that the category of cannabis use proposed is permitted in the zoning district. A phased approach to development does not change the aspects of the proposal that the MAC considers, and so this change does not affect the MAC's opinion on the proposal.

The MAC reaffirms its recommendation for Botanica's proposal for the reasons identified in the Round 3 recommendation.