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CITY OF SOMERVILLE

Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development

TO: Somerville Planning Board
FROM: Planning & Zoning Division
DATE: October 9, 2020
RE: MPSP #2020-0002, 101-153 South Street

This second memo for 101-153 South Street provides analysis of the proposed Master Plan in relation to the statutorily required considerations for issuing a Master Plan Special Permit and Staff recommended conditions for approval of the MPSP. The application was first heard at a public hearing on September 3, 2020 and was continued to October 1, 2020. The applicant submitted a written request to continue until October 15, 2020.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Additional information has been provided to supplement the application. The Applicant requests a Lab Building (instead of a General Building) on Lot B3.2. It will be 30,000 SF and LEED Platinum certifiable.

ANALYSIS

In the hearing on September 3, 2020, the Applicant provided additional information showing the view of Prospect Hill Monument from Civic Space 1. The adjoined buildings 4A, 4B, and 4C do not interfere with the view towards the monument.

FINDINGS CONSIDERATIONS

Per Section 15.2.2 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board is required, at minimum, to make findings considering the following review criteria to approve or deny a Master Plan Special Permit.

a). The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.

The proposed Master Plan achieves a number of objectives from SomerVision 2030 and other policy plans and standards by:

1. contributing toward the transformation of Boynton Yards into dynamic, mixed-use, and transit-oriented districts established by SomerVision;
2. contributing toward the evolution of Union Square, Boynton Yards, and Union Square East into an Urban Employment Center focused on

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- commercial development and the creation of new employment opportunities established by the Union Square Neighborhood Plan;
3. reducing the urban heat island effect detailed in the Climate Vulnerability Assessment;
 4. helping Somerville meet its carbon neutrality by 2050 goal with LEED Platinum lab buildings and all other buildings being net zero ready;
 5. providing for the required thoroughfares in the Urban Design Framework.

b). The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.

Implementing SomerVision, the Union Square Neighborhood Plan, and the Boynton Yards Urban Design Framework are the intent of the MPD overlay district. The proposed Master Plan meets the key objectives of SomerVision for transformational redevelopment in Boynton Yards; contributes toward the evolution of Union Square into an Urban Employment Center identified as a goal of the Union Square Neighborhood Plan; and supports the street network, civic spaces, and commercial building objectives of the Boynton Yards Urban Design Framework.

The goals of the “Vision for Development” section of the Union Square Neighborhood Plan need further study with the current form of the general buildings 4A, 4B, and 4C. Although general buildings are supported for this type of development, a proposed condition of this MPSP, is to further study views from Prospect Hill Monument into the Boynton Yards sub-area especially for Buildings 4A, 4B, and 4C. The mid-rise podium tower would also be an acceptable building type if needed. Further study will inform the permit granting authority as to whether subsequent approvals will meet the “Vision for Development” section and increase visibility into the development site from Prospect Hill Monument and create a more interesting skyline for the Union Square plan area.

c). The proposed alignment and connectivity of the thoroughfare network.

The Master Plan’s proposed new thoroughfare extends Windsor Place to Harding Street consistent with the alignment and connectivity of the desired future condition street network contemplated in the Union Square Neighborhood Plan and required by the Boynton Yards sub-area of the MPD overlay district and the Boynton Yards UDF.

The Transportation Impact Assessment shows 6,000 new trips associated with this development. The infrastructure mitigation includes new streets in the district. The application also includes improvement to existing streets. However, transportation impact mitigation is necessary beyond the development site boundary to make pedestrians and cyclists comfortable choosing these modes of transportation over vehicular trips. There are several proposed conditions related to improving the pedestrian and vehicular networks included in this staff memo.

d). The gross floor area allocated to different use categories.

The proposed Master Plan allocates 75% of the total build out to non-residential uses, of which 10% will be provided as arts & creative space, and includes the maximum sized community center required by the BY sub-area of the MPD overlay.

e). Mitigation proposed to alleviate any adverse impacts on utility infrastructure.

Implementation of this proposed master plan would not be possible without significant subsurface infrastructure investment. The developer has agreed to sign a covenant with the City outlining the proportional infrastructure investment through payments or in-kind projects. In-kind projects should be coordinated with the recommendations of the utility reports and with the Engineering department. In addition, a proposed condition is that green infrastructure be considered to the greatest extent possible in any new thoroughfares and redesign of existing streets to further reduce impacts on the City's infrastructure.

f). Proposed development phasing.

The applicant is proposing a four phase project. A proposed condition of approval is that the applicant will provide a schedule of community benefits to be delivered in each phase with the intent that benefits are delivered roughly proportional to the work completed in each phase. As required by Article 15.2.2.g.i a condition of this report is that the Applicant will provide documentation of the required performance bond equal to 125% of the cost of civic space, infrastructure mitigation, and transportation mitigation that are a part of the master plan.

g). Proposed on-street parking to address demand by customers of Retail Sales, Food & Beverage, or Commercial Services principal uses.

The Mobility Division estimates that the demand for on-street parking attributable to the proposed full build out of the Master Plan will be satisfied by the proposed number of on-street parking spaces on a typical day.

h). Considerations indicated elsewhere in this Ordinance for the required Master Plan Special Permit.

The SZO does not identify any additional considerations for the Master Plan Development overlay district or the Boynton Yard sub area of the MPD overlay.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS

Should the Planning Board approve this Master Plan Special Permit, the Planning & Zoning Staff recommends the following conditions:

Mitigation

1. Infrastructure
 - a. None.
2. Transportation
 - a. The Applicant will design and implement a redesign of the intersection of South and Harding Streets. The design should connect the proposed two way protected bike facilities further east on South St and the proposed one way pair of protected bike facilities further west on South St. The final design to be approved by the Director of Mobility.
 - b. The Applicant will design and implement a redesign of the intersection of Ward and Harding Streets that takes into consideration the design of the extension of Harding Street to Thoroughfare 1. Design to be approved by the Director of Mobility.

- c. The Applicant will construct and implement the City's conceptual design for the conversion of South Street to one way eastbound between Harding and Medford Streets.
 - d. The Applicant will construct and implement the City's conceptual design for safety improvements at the intersection of Medford and South Streets.
 - e. The Applicant will construct and implement the City's conceptual design for safety improvements at the intersection of Ward and Medford Streets.
3. Community Impact
- a. No recommendations at this time.

Phasing

- 1. The Applicant must provide a performance bond for 125% of the estimated costs to design and construct the proposed civic spaces of Lots C1, C2, and C3 and all infrastructure and transportation mitigation identified above prior to applying for any building permit, thoroughfare permit, or civic space permit for development subject to this MPSP decision.
- 2. The 20,000 SF community center and 102,700 arts and creative enterprise space must be provided by the completion of Phase 3. The Applicant may allocate these spaces throughout Phases 1, 2, and 3 as desired.

Legal Agreements

- 1. Development must comply with the Development Covenant by and between the City of Somerville and Boynton Yards LandCo, LLC dated [Month XX, 2020], as amended.
- 2. Thoroughfare lot T1 (Thoroughfare 1) lot must be dedicated to the public by a covenant or other deed restriction prior to the issuance of the required Thoroughfare Permit authorizing construction.
- 3. Civic space lot C1 must be dedicated to the public by a covenant or other deed restriction prior to the issuance of the required Civic Space Permit authorizing construction.
- 4. Civic space lot C2 must be dedicated to the public by a covenant or other deed restriction prior to the issuance of the required Civic Space Permit authorizing construction.
- 5. Civic space lot C3 must be dedicated to the public by a covenant or other deed restriction prior to the issuance of the required Civic Space Permit authorizing construction.

Green Infrastructure

- 1. The design of all proposed new thoroughfares and improvements to existing thoroughfares must include measures that use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement or other permeable surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest and reuse, or landscaping to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspire stormwater and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface waters to every extent practicable.

Development Permitting

- 1. This MPSP certifies that development may proceed in accordance with the standards of the Boynton Yards sub area of the MPD overlay district and the superseding zoning districts specified on Map 8.3.12 (a) of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.
- 2. Applying for development review for any proposed thoroughfare, civic space, or building type identified in the submitted Master Plan constitutes substantial use of this MPSP for the purpose of subsequent development entitlement.
- 3. If a period of one (1) year lapses between the approval of the Site Plan Approval required for any thoroughfare, civic space, or building types and the date of decision of the preceding Site

Plan Approval for any thoroughfare, civic space, or building type in the same phase, the Applicant must update the Planning Board on the anticipated schedule of permitting and construction at the next regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting.

4. Except as approved in writing by the Director of Planning, the Applicant may not apply for the development review of any thoroughfare, civic space, or building type in a succeeding phase until all thoroughfares, civic spaces, and building types are under construction for the preceding phase.
5. Except as approved in writing by the Director of Planning, the Applicant may not apply for any Certificate of Occupancy for any building in a succeeding phase until a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for all buildings in the preceding phase.
6. Land parcelization must result in the number and general configuration of lots that is substantially equivalent to the C-101 Preliminary Lotting Plan of the submitted Master Plan.
7. Lots must be development as the types of thoroughfares, civic spaces, and building types identified in Figure 1.13a Phasing Plan – Phase 1, Figure 1.13b Phasing Plan – Phase 2, Figure 1.13c – Phasing Plan – Phase 3, and Figure 1.13d – Phasing Plan – Phase 2.
8. The general alignment, connectivity, right-of-way width, and geometry of thoroughfares must be substantially equivalent to the thoroughfares of the submitted Master Plan.
9. Changes to the number or general configuration of lots; the proposed types of thoroughfares, civic spaces, or building types; and the percentage of commercial floor area, arts and creative enterprise space, and the community center provided is a major amendment to the previously approved Master Plan and is permitted only as a revision to this MPSP.
10. The development review application for Building 4A must include perspective views oriented from vantage points at the Prospect Hill Monument looking toward Boynton Yards and beyond for consideration by the Planning Board.
11. The development review application for Building 4B must include perspective views oriented from vantage points at the Prospect Hill Monument looking toward Boynton Yards and beyond for consideration by the Planning Board.
12. The development review application for Building 4C must include perspective views oriented from vantage points at the Prospect Hill Monument looking toward Boynton Yards and beyond for consideration by the Planning Board.

Mobility

1. The property owner(s) and all applicable future tenants must comply with the Master Mobility Management Plan dated July 2020, as approved and conditioned by the Director of Mobility's Final Approval dated August 24, 2020.
2. Portions of South Street and Windsor Street within the development site must be designed to include a curb separated, sidewalk level protected bikeway or a substantial equivalent. Design to be approved by the Director of Mobility. The Applicant shall maintain any sidewalk level protected bicycle facility, including but not limited to snow clearance, debris removal, and replacement of markings and delineators as needed, for any portions of the facility along the frontage of the development site that are not at street level.
3. The intersection of South and Windsor Streets shall be designed with protected or dedicated bike intersection treatments or similar. Design to be approved by the Director of Mobility. The Applicant shall maintain any sidewalk level protected bicycle facility, including but not limited to snow clearance, debris removal, and replacement of markings and delineators as needed, for any portions of the facility along the frontage of the development site that are not at street level.