



City of Somerville

# PLANNING BOARD

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

**TO:** Planning Board  
**FROM:** Planning & Zoning Staff  
**SUBJECT:** 872 Broadway, P&Z 20-026  
**POSTED:** August 22, 2021

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve with Conditions (SPA)

Staff memos are used to communicate background information, analysis, responses to public comments, review of statutory requirements and other information from the Planning & Zoning staff to the Review Board members.

This memo summarizes the development review application submitted for 872 Broadway, identifies any additional discretionary or administrative development review that is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and provides related analysis or feedback as necessary. The application was deemed complete on August 10, 2021 and is scheduled for a public hearing on October 7, 2021. Any Staff recommended findings, conditions, and decisions in this memo are based on the information available to date prior to any public comment at the scheduled public hearing.

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

872 Broadway, LLC is proposing to construct a 3-story Net Zero Ready general building. The proposed development will produce 2,878 square feet of commercial space, 12 dwelling units of which 2 are affordable units, 0 motor vehicle parking spaces, 12 long-term bicycle parking spaces, 3 short-term bicycle parking spaces, and the proposed landscape will earn a Green Score of 0.59.

## LEGAL NOTICE

872 Broadway, LLC proposes to construct a 3-story Net Zero Ready general building in the MR3 district which requires Site Plan Approval.

## ADDITIONAL REVIEW NECESSARY

872 Broadway is located in the 0.5mi Transit Area in the Mid Rise 3 (MR-3) zoning district in the Davis Square neighborhood represented by Ward 6 Councilor Lance Davis. General Buildings are permitted by Site Plan Approval in the MR3 district. A Special Permit for the Household Living Use is not required because the use is already established on the site. Site Plan Approval is the administrative review and approval of conforming development to address any potential impacts as necessary. The Planning Board is the decision-making authority for all (non-variance) discretionary or administrative permits required for the MR3 zoning district.

## **DESIGN REVIEW**

The proposal was reviewed by Somerville Urban Design Commission via the GoToWebinar meeting platform on March 23, 2021. The Commission provided its official recommendation on April 15, 2021.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS**

The first neighborhood meeting was held virtually by Ward 6 Councilor Lance Davis and the development team on March 9, 2021. The second neighborhood meeting was held virtually by Ward 6 Councilor Lance Davis and the development team on April 12, 2021.

## **ANALYSIS**

The proposed building at 872 Broadway will result in an increase of eleven residential units on the site and create a new ground story commercial space that will extend the existing commercial strip on Broadway. The Applicant has suggested that a café or restaurant will occupy the commercial space; both uses are permitted in this district by-right, and if any changes to the signage or storefront building component are necessary when a tenant has been found, those changes can be addressed through Minor Site Plan Approval.

At both required neighborhood meetings for the building, residents expressed concerns or raised questions about parking for this project. In particular, concerns were raised about the impact this proposal will have for on-street parking availability as the existing building is one residential unit with a multi-car driveway, and the new building will have twelve studio units and no motor vehicle parking spaces. However, as this property is within the 0.5mi transit area, the residential units in the new building will not be eligible for on-street residential parking passes. The Applicant is also providing long-term bicycle parking spaces that can be utilized by tenants. The proposal will also have short-term bicycle parking spaces located within the frontage area of the lot.

The exact number of long-term bicycle parking spaces ranges from 12 to 14 depending on the document reviewed, and the number of short-term bicycle parking spaces is listed as 3 despite each bicycle parking rack providing two spaces. The project is required by the Ordinance to provide at least 12 long-term bicycle parking spaces for the residential units; the number of short-term bicycle parking spaces required will depend on the use established in the ground story commercial space, but 3 bicycle parking spots is anticipated to be more than sufficient to satisfy the Ordinance.

The Applicant also received feedback from the Urban Design Commission, some of which they have incorporated into the design and some of which they have chosen not to. Of note is the Applicant's decision to not accept the Commission's recommendation to incorporate a cornice into the final design. The Applicant explains that they prefer the look of the building without the cornice, but Staff believes that the addition of a cornice as recommended by the Commission improves the design by creating a visual

termination of the façade and completes the tripartite architectural definition of the top of the building.

The Applicant proposes to establish six balconies on the façade which will project slightly over the public way. This projection is permitted if the balconies comply with other relevant City Ordinances. In this case, Sec. 12-14 of the Somerville Code of Ordinances requires that structures like this receive approval from the City Council to project over the public way. If the City Council were to not approve that request, the Applicant can submit a Plan Revision at a later date to address any changes that may need to be made to the drawings as a result of that.

## **CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS**

The Planning Board is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to deliberate each of the following considerations at the public hearing. The Board must discuss and draw conclusions for each consideration, but may make additional findings beyond this minimum statutory requirement.

### Site Plan Approval Considerations

1. The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.
2. The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.
3. Mitigation proposed to alleviate any impacts attributable to the proposed development.

Information relative to the required considerations is provided below:

### Site Plan Approval

1. *The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.*

The proposal will help to achieve the following from SomerVision, the comprehensive Master Plan of the City of Somerville:

- Strengthen and support neighborhood commercial centers that integrate residential uses, offer lively destinations and contribute to Somerville's unique identity.
- Facilitate transit-oriented, neighborhood infill development when it enhances the lively, human-scaled and walkable character of Somerville blocks and neighborhoods.

2. *The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.*

The proposal is consistent with the intent of the MR3 zoning district which is, in part "[t]o create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for smaller scale, multi-use and mixed-use buildings and neighborhood serving commercial uses."

3. *Mitigation proposed to alleviate any impacts attributable to the proposed development.*

As conditioned, the proposal does not produce any impacts that require mitigation.

## **PERMIT CONDITIONS**

Should the Board approve the required Site Plan Approval for the 3-story Net-Zero General Building, Planning & Zoning Staff recommends the following conditions:

### Conditions

- A written narrative or descriptive checklist identifying the completion or compliance with permit conditions must be submitted to the Inspectional Services Department at least ten (10) working days in advance of a request for a final inspection.

### Construction Documents

- Material specifications from suppliers must be submitted to confirm fenestration glazing is compliant with the VLT and VLR ratings required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.
- An outdoor lighting plan and supplier cut sheet specifications of chosen lighting fixtures must be submitted to confirm compliance with Section 10.7 Outdoor Lighting of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The site photometric plan must include a keyed site plan identifying the location of all luminaires; total site lumen limit table (calculations from the SZO); lighting fixture schedule indicating the fixture type, description, lamp type, lumens, color temperature, color rendering index, BUG rating, mounting height, and wattage of all luminaires; and notation of any timing devices used to control the hours set for illumination.

### Housing

- A deed restriction limiting the sale or rental of all affordable dwelling units to eligible households in perpetuity must be executed and recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds
- An affordable housing implementation plan (AHIP) must be submitted to the Director of Housing prior to applying for a Building Permit.

### Parking

- Formal acknowledgement that residents are ineligible for on-street Residential Parking Permits, subject to the regulations of the Somerville Traffic Commission, must be filed with this Decision.
- Dwelling units must be advertised as ineligible for on-street Residential Parking Permits, subject to the regulations of the Somerville Traffic Commission.
- All buyers, grantees, lessees, renters, and tenants must be notified in writing prior to sale or lease of any dwelling unit that the residents are ineligible for on-

street Residential Parking Permits, subject to the regulations of the Somerville Traffic Commission.

#### Permit Validity

- This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds prior to applying for a Building Permit.
- Construction documents must be substantially equivalent to the approved plans and other materials submitted for development review.
- Alterations to the design or location of the transformer vault is a major amendment to the approved plans, and is permitted only as a Plan Revision in accordance with Article 15 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.

#### Public Record

- Physical copies of all submittal materials as permitted by the Review Boards must be submitted for the public record in accordance with the document format standards of the ISD/PB/ZBA Submittal Requirements.
- A copy of the Recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted for the public record.

#### Site Design

- Frontage area provided for a widened sidewalk along Broadway must be designed and paved to properly correspond with any sidewalk improvements approved within the public right-of-way and a pedestrian access easement must be provided in perpetuity by a covenant or other deed restriction.
- Utility meters are not permitted on any facade or within the frontage area of the lot.

#### Sustainability

- All Stage 2 documentation required by the Office of Sustainability & Environment's Net Zero Ready Certifiability Requirements for the subject certification program.
- All Stage 3 documentation required by the Office of Sustainability & Environment's Net Zero Ready Certifiability Requirements for the subject certification program.