



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: **PB2018-04**
Date: ~~April 5th, 2018~~ **May 3rd, 2018**
Recommendation: **Conditional approval**

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 2 Earle Street – Boynton Yards Building 2

Applicant Name: RECP V Boynton Yards Owner LLC
Applicant Address: 1123 Broadway, Suite 201, New York, NY 10010
Owner Name: RECP V Boynton Yards Owner LLC
Owner Address: 1123 Broadway, Suite 201, New York, NY 10010
Agent Name: Sean O'Donovan
Agent Address: 741 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02143
Alderman: J. T. Scott

Legal Notice: 2 Earle Street (A.K.A. MBL 97-B-26 subplot of 153 South Street) – Boynton Yards Building 2 (PB2018-04): Applicant & Owner, RECP V Boynton Yards Owner LLC, seeks a Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §5.2 to replace an existing gravel storage lot with an 8-story commercial building containing 224,300sf of office/ R&D uses and 10,700sf of retail/arts-related uses with parking relief under §9.13, a waiver under §9.17 for shared loading docks is also requested. A Variance from the ZBA under SZO §5.5 for reduced parking is separately requested (ZBA2018-21). Zone TOD-135. Ward 2.

Dates of Public Hearing: April 5th, 2018, April 19th, 2018, **May 3rd, 2018**

This staff report has been updated to include information about recent collaboration efforts. Updated portions of this staff report have been **highlighted in yellow**. Portions which no longer apply ~~have been struck~~.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: Boynton Yards is bounded by the train tracks to the north, Medford Street to the east, the Cambridge city line, and Prospect and Webster Streets. The sub-area of the Union Square neighborhood plan is 34 acres. The majority of the land area is industrial including automotive uses,



moving vehicle storage and dispatch, and commercial laundry services. The SomerVision map identified the vision for future development in Somerville and the entirety of Boynton Yards is in the transform area. The transform areas are anticipated to absorb 85% of new development. The Union Square Neighborhood Plan also anticipates a significant amount of development in this area to create an urban employment center.



The neighborhood is almost hidden as the street network doesn't connect through Boynton Yards and the residential on the east and west edges mask most of the industrial uses. There is an existing pocket neighborhood Boynton Yards East which is a mix of one- to three-family structures, warehouse buildings, and parking lots. Similarly, the western edge has the 80 Webster condominium development and supporting parking garage. The existing location of South Street and its angle makes it undesirable in every redevelopment scheme. The Union Square Neighborhood Plan recommends new streets to address this lack of connectivity.

The other obstacle to development in Boynton Yards is that the only separated sewer is under the existing South Street. The sewer does not have enough capacity to support more than some preliminary development - no further development would be possible until more capacity was added to the system by adding another separated sewer. As part of the new streets, the Neighborhood Plan also incorporates new infrastructure to support the projected development.

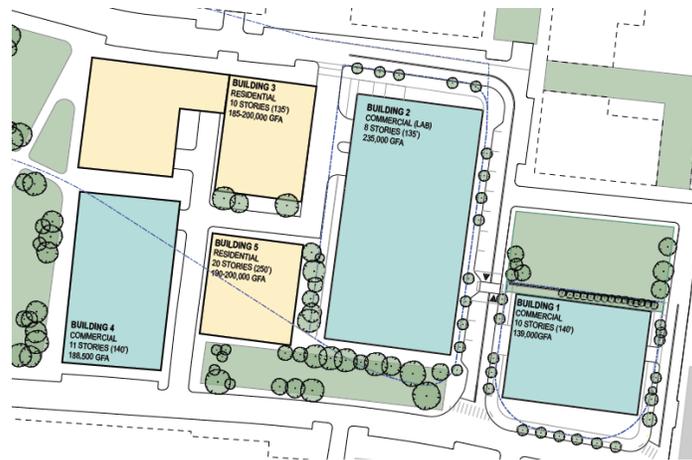
This application is bound by Windsor Street, Windsor Place, Earle Street, Harding Street, and South Street. The 3.44 acres are currently home to surface parking, an unpermitted construction equipment storage lot, and two one- and two-story concrete block commercial buildings totaling 25,000 gross square feet (GSF).

2. Proposal: With the arrival of the Green Line Extension and both public and private investments in redevelopment, the eastern portions of Union Square and Boynton Yards are envisioned as an Urban Center focused primarily on employment. A dense mix of employment, residential, retail, and entertainment uses and destinations would attract residents from surrounding neighborhoods and will be positioned to attract employers seeking to benefit from locating their business within this type of station area. A new street network is envisioned by the Union Square Neighborhood Plan to provide access to development sites with appropriately sized blocks that fit commercial building types to fulfill market need to make development viable. After a street network is established, the Complete Street

Ordinance ensures that new streets are safe and designed for all users giving priority to pedestrians, transit, cyclists, and then cars.

The mixed-use, transit-oriented development will include commercial space for cutting-edge labs, modern offices, innovative startups, and arts uses, as well as both neighborhood convenience and destination retail offerings, with open space to promote interaction between tenants, residents, and the community. The future residential component of the development will include 20% affordable units and a wide range of unit sizes and types to accommodate families, single professionals, empty nesters, roommates, artists, and others. Publicly accessible and sustainably designed open spaces will benefit the wider neighborhood as well as the project's tenants and residents.

This project will be the first step in transforming Boynton Yards. The buildings presented in the two current applications will be 100% commercial - 374,000 GSF of Class A lab and life sciences space, flexible, modern office space, and research/development spaces. This will provide a crucial first step towards achieving the 60/40 commercial/residential mix and the future development will involve residential uses. Both buildings will be within walking distance of the proposed Union Square Green Line Station. A four-level, below-grade parking garage will provide approximately 301 automobile spaces and 140 bike spaces will be provided to serve Buildings 1 and 2.



Building 2, this proposal, is an eight-story lab building aggregating 235,000 GSF. The development also includes four levels of underground parking providing approximately 233 parking spaces as well as approximately 98 bike parking spaces. The garage and loading docks will be accessed by a single curb cut on Windsor Place just west of Building 2.

The first floor accommodates 10,700 GSF of retail space, a mid-block pedestrian connection, three loading docks, tenant storage, a 1,500 GSF lobby, and utility connections. The building offers 224,300 GSF of lab and office space on floors two through eight. A landscaped roof deck is also contemplated for commercial tenant use. The goals of the Neighborhood Plan are not compromised by this development under the existing zoning ordinance or the proposed overlay in the overhaul.

On April 18, 2018, the Zoning Board of Appeals approved the Applicant's request for a Variance to reduce the amount of parking provided for commercial office and lab or R&D uses. This approval permits the applicants to use the parking below this building as a commercial parking garage to serve this building, the adjacent building 1, and other uses now or in the future in Boynton Yards.

3. Green Building Practices: Building 2 is requesting a density bonus as permitted in TOD-135 (1.0 FAR increase in the TOD135 and 15 foot increase in maximum height to 150 feet) with a building certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as LEED Gold or better. The scorecard for LEED v4 for Core and Shell is included in the submission package (Attachment 2) showing a Silver rating. To reach the Gold level, a LEED Plan Review certification with a narrative explaining how the rating will be reached shall be required prior to issuance of a building permit. Post-construction commissioning at the certificate of occupancy for the final tenant space shall be the subject of a condition of approval to receive the incentive.

4. Comments:

Fire Prevention: None at this time.

Traffic & Parking: None at this time.

Wiring Inspection: None at this time.

Lights and Lines: None at this time.

Engineering: Careful coordination is required with the Engineering Department to size and locate all new stormwater, water, sewer, and other underground utilities that are intended to serve the larger development potential in the Boynton Yards area.

Historic Preservation: Not applicable. The nearest historic feature to the site is the Koenig-McCue House at 26 South Street, about 200 feet east of the site on South Street, and the nearest building over 50 years old is at 561 Windsor Street, about 600 feet to the northwest.

Design Review Committee: The committee suggested that the team investigate more orientation toward Windsor Place as entry to the site from the station is key. They also recommended possibly incorporating a little of the brick being proposed for Building 1 on Building 2. They generally liked the simplicity of materials on each building - the purity of the idea of familiar materials used in singular ways. Detailed elevations are necessary to be reviewed at another meeting at a later date.

The Applicant revisited the Design Review Committee on March 29th, 2018. The explorations that incorporated similar brick as Building 1 into the façade of Building 2 were presented and discussed. The committee felt that the incorporation of brick, as shown, was not an improvement to the design so the façade should remain aluminum panels resembling stacked I-beams and glass. Conditions will be added to the approval for further review at Building Permit application (for any design changes during construction documents and material specification samples) and review of an on-site mock-up panel prior to ordering materials during construction.

Ward Alderman: I'm fully in favor of moving forward with it.

Public: A neighborhood meeting was held on March 22nd, 2018. The neighbors in attendance had a few questions but did not raise any objections to the project. A second, additional, neighborhood meeting was held on April 16th, 2018. Unfortunately, Planning Staff and the Alderman were not present at this

meeting but the Applicant reported that they were able to answer questions from neighbors and the meeting went well.

During the public hearings, there was concern about the design of Building 2. The large mass and the dark color were cited as dislikes, and the lack of expression at the top of the building was also mentioned.

As the staff was preparing for the ZBA hearing, concerns were expressed to the staff from the owners of two neighboring commercial properties:

1. The owners at 561 Windsor expressed concern at first, but have now indicated to staff that they have worked with DLJ and they are now in favor of the project.
2. The owners of the Gentle Giant Moving Company indicated that they were concerned about operational issues during construction while their business would be operating adjacent to the site. The staff was able to work with the applicant and the Gentle Giant team to add conditions to the ZBA approval. These conditions are also included in the recommended conditions for the Planning Board.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW (SZO §5.2):

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.”*

Nature of Application: TOD-135

This higher-density, taller sub-district shall provide the largest economic development opportunities, while being strategically located to minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods. This sub-district is intended to promote those developments that further the City's stated goals of improving its commercial tax base and bringing good quality jobs to the City. To accomplish these goals, this sub-district should be predominantly dedicated to uses such as office, research and development, and life sciences. Residential development, however, may be allowed provided that it is secondary and complementary to commercial development. To offset higher density, increased provision of public open space is expected in this area.

TABLE 6.5.F—TOD Dimensional & Use Standards

The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the following dimensional requirements:

Dimensional and Use Standards	TOD-135	Existing	Proposed	Comment
Minimum lot size (s.f.)	50,000	43,087	43,087	non-conforming

Minimum lot area/dwelling unit (s.f.)	450	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maximum ground coverage (%)	80	0	71.4	complies
Landscaped area, minimum percent of lot (%)	20	6.2	19.1	non-conforming
Floor area ratio (FAR)			235,000sf	
Minimum FAR	N/A	3.1	n/a	n/a
Maximum FAR	4.5 5.5 Green	4.5 5.5 Green	5.5	complies
Maximum height (ft)	120 135 Green	0	135	complies
Minimum front, side, rear yard (ft)	0	n/a	5', 3'/11', 12'	complies
Minimum frontage (ft)	140	±250	±250	complies
Permitted Use Clusters	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K	equipment storage	A, B, C, D, G, H, J, K	complies
Arts Related Uses Requirement	5% of gsf	0	11,750sf	complies
Inclusionary Housing Requirement	17.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tapering Height (ft)	NA	n/a	n/a	n/a
Upper Level Setback (ft)	NA	n/a	n/a	n/a
Upper Level Maximum Floorplate (%)	NA	n/a	n/a	n/a
Usable Open Space Requirement (%)	15%	0	±6700	complies

§ 6.5.G.18 - Reduction of Minimum Lot Area.

The parcel, 43087sf, is an existing subplot (MBL 97-B-26) to the adjacent land at 153 South Street (MBL 97-B-23). Rather than subdivide at this time, the Applicant is providing access to the rear of the building via the land under their ownership on the main part of the property. As proposed, the access easement is 32' wide and 140' long and is entirely contained within private land owned by the Applicant. If this driveway area were added to the Building 2 parcel, the lot area would comply with the minimum 50,000sf. The intent is that the driveway will become part of a shared alley serving additional development on the parcel and will be subdivided in a later phase.

6.5.G. Development Standards for New Development in TODs. All new developments shall meet the following standards:

1. Transportation Analysis. Applicants shall provide a Transportation Study and a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan tailored to the proposed site and mix of Use Clusters. The scope of the document will be prepared in consultation with the Director of Traffic and Parking and may include a project description and a description of the existing conditions of the transportation network in the vicinity of the Development Site. The following items may be required as part of a Transportation Study:
 - Counts of existing traffic volumes.

- *Projected traffic volumes for the proposed Development based on accepted engineering standards and adapted to local conditions.*
- *Projected size of delivery vehicles, and frequency and days/hours of delivery.*
- *Reviews of accident history trends in the vicinity of the Development Site.*
- *Analyses of the Development impacts on the transportation network in the vicinity of the Development Site.*
- *Examination of transportation by all feasible modes, including automobile, transit, bicycle and pedestrian.*
- *Explanation of consistency with City transportation plans.*

If the impact analyses indicate that safety or capacity will be adversely affected by the proposed Development, the Applicant will indicate appropriate mitigation measures, subject to the approval of the Director of Traffic and Parking, prior to the granting of a special permit.

The transportation analysis has been performed in general conformance with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EEA)/Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) guidelines. It also has been prepared to be consistent with the goals and overall vision of the Union Square Neighborhood Plan.

The Applicant is committed to being an active member of any Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) formed in the future. In conjunction with the initial phase of development, an overall on-site TDM coordinator will be designated to oversee all TDM programs for each building of the Proposed Project, and the Project Site in its entirety. The person(s) in this role will coordinate with organizations within the area evaluated in the Union Square Planning Study to help promote a reduced reliance on single-occupant motor-vehicle travel to the Project Site.

2. *Incentives for Green Building. Buildings certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as LEED Gold or better shall receive the following bonuses (after comparison, the Mayor of Somerville may determine in writing that an alternate sustainable development rating system is equal or better than LEED Gold and that system may be substituted):*
 - a) *0.5 FAR increase in the TOD70 and TOD100;*
 - b) *1.0 FAR increase in the TOD135; and,*
 - c) *15 foot increase in maximum height in the TOD70, TOD100 and TOD135.*

LEED (or certified equivalent) Plan Review certification shall be required prior to issuance of a building permit and post-construction commissioning shall be the subject of a condition of approval to receive the incentive.

Building 2 is requesting a density bonus as permitted in TOD-135 (1.0 FAR increase in the TOD-135 and 15 foot increase in maximum height to 150 feet) with a building certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as LEED Gold or better. The scorecard for LEED v4 for Core and Shell is included in the submission package (Attachment 2) showing a Silver rating. To reach the Gold level, a LEED Plan Review certification with a narrative explaining how the rating will be reached shall be required prior to issuance of a building permit. Post-construction commissioning at the certificate of occupancy for the final tenant space shall be the subject of a condition of approval to receive the incentive.

3. *Credit for Provision of Land for Public Infrastructure. Where land is to be dedicated to the City of Somerville for public infrastructure (including roadways, sidewalks, public paths, parks, and other public infrastructure), the area of dedicated land shall be applied to calculations for dimensional requirements except for setback requirements. Upper level setbacks shall be*

measured from the original property line (pre-dedication) and other setback requirements shall be measured from the newly created property line (post-dedication).

No land on the Building 2 site will be devoted specifically to public infrastructure. However, the Applicant's larger master plan for the area and the City's vision for this district include considerable public infrastructure improvements. The Applicant will make substantial improvements to the infrastructure as part of the first phase of development (Buildings 1 and 2) including:

- Defining and reconfiguring the curbs along South Street
- Rebuilding the sidewalk and streetscape along South Street
- Building the improved section Earle Street between the two buildings
- Striping the intersection of South and Earle Streets with crosswalks
- Adding a raised crosswalk between the buildings for pedestrian safety

It is the intent of the City to create a district-wide balancing between the owners within Boynton Yards. The amount of infrastructure and open space that is required by the neighborhood plan will require a fair valuation of development and equitable contributions by all. This Applicant is aware of these intentions and has been very cooperative while the details are still being studied and negotiated. The Applicant has provided for an engineering study that will be credited as a contribution when the amounts of required commitments are finalized.

4. *Credit and Height Bonus for Provision of Dedicated Parkland. Where a minimum of forty thousand (40,000) square feet of land is to be improved and dedicated to the City of Somerville for public open space in the TOD135, a bonus of a fifteen-foot increase in maximum height (to a maximum of one hundred fifty (150) feet) may be granted. The area of dedicated land shall be applied to calculations of FAR and any upper level setbacks shall be measured from the original property line (pre-dedication). Public open space shall not be required on premises, but the maximum residual ground coverage shall not exceed ninety (90) percent and minimum landscaped area shall not be below ten (10) percent of residual lot area. All other dimensional standards shall be applied to the remaining parcel.*

The Building 2 site is zoned TOD-135 and is eligible for a bonus but the project will not provide any dedicated parkland.

5. *Transition to Abutting Residential District. No minimum side or rear yard setback is required for parcels that immediately adjoin a lot in a residential district (RA, RB, or RC) where a solid masonry wall is to be built on the property line. Where a masonry wall is not proposed, the minimum side or rear yard setback is twenty (20) feet, with the setback to consist exclusively of vegetative landscaping. However, no building or portion of building within forty (40) feet of a lot in a residential district (RA, RB, or RC) shall be higher than twenty-four (24) feet.*

The Building 2 site does not abut residential uses.

6. *Upper Level Open Space. Area within Upper Level Setbacks may be used to provide usable or private open space, including residential balconies, and shall not be counted toward Floor Area Ratio.*

None. Building 2 is proposed as a lab building so the entire roof will need to be used for venting and mechanical systems.

7. *Wind and Shadow Effects. Buildings shall be designed to minimize shadow and wind impacts to open space and residential areas especially between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. in the winter.*

Wind and shadow effects shall be demonstrated in technical studies.

Attachment 13 provides a full, graphical analysis of shadows from Building 1 and a full computer model study of pedestrian level winds. Neither shows any substantial impact to open space, nor any impact to residential areas.

8. Landscaping and Usable Open Space Requirements. *Developments shall conform to the applicable landscaping requirements set forth in Table 6.5.F, Article 10 and Article 17. Open spaces shall be contiguous to the extent practical in the opinion of the SPGA; however, in certain circumstances it may be preferable to provide Usable Open Space in unique locations, such as atria, winter gardens, and accessible roof decks or gardens. Hours of operation, signage, entrance location, and ADA compliance shall be taken into account when considering whether atria, winter gardens, and roof decks or upper level gardens truly will be accessible to the general public. Landscaping strips required in parking areas (per Article 10) shall not apply to Usable Open Space calculations.*

Building 2 is slightly under the landscaping requirements of 20% of the lot area under the TOD-135. Keeping in mind that the lot area is slightly below the minimum, it is not surprising that the landscape and usable open space areas are lower than the required percentages. Staff is in support of the lower amount of landscaping on this particular parcel due to the future open space envisioned throughout the district by the Union Square Neighborhood Plan.

In the short-term, a small plaza is being provided on South Street that will be a pervious surface paved with light colored stone. It will have integrated planting beds with ground cover and trees to provide shade as well as benches for public seating. The north side of the building along Windsor Place will also have a small public space that will be predominantly planted area. Using the calculations for a Commercial Building in the High Rise District of the proposed zoning, the application reaches a Green Score of 0.153 with the amount of pervious paving and planted area. This is under the 0.2 that would be required.

To ensure the quality of open space and landscaping, Staff recommends adding a condition to any approval that requires submission of detailed landscape plans with the Building Permit application. The Green Score must be met to the satisfaction of Planning Staff, Transportation & Infrastructure Department, and the City Arborist prior to any permit for construction is granted by Inspectional Services.

9. Payment in Lieu of Open Space. *For any new development(s) within the TOD 70 and TOD 100, the SPGA may approve either a cash payment in lieu of providing the required usable open space, or a partial cash payment combined with a partial provision of the required usable open space. SPGA approval should be based on the finding that the proposed development site truly cannot produce open space that would be of a size, location, or configuration that would enhance the community. Applicants wishing to make use of this option are strongly encouraged to meet with the Planning Director prior to formal submission of an application to help determine project compliance.*

Minimum landscaped area and maximum ground cover may be modified by the equivalent area for which an in-lieu payment is made, with a maximum ground coverage allowance of ninety (90) percent and a minimum landscaped area of ten (10) percent of lot area. Any further relief from these requirements shall require a variance.

For payments made in lieu of the Usable Open Space required, the developer must designate, in coordination with the City and the Planning Director, a site to which those

contributions shall be applied. Optimally, the open space will be within a quarter-mile of the subject property. Such payments shall be made to the City of Somerville. The City shall hold such payments in a stabilization fund dedicated to land acquisition, design, and construction of public open space in the catchment area defined in the Rules and Regulations of the Special Permit Granting Authorities. This may include repayment of any debt incurred by the City for capital costs associated with land acquisition, design, and/or construction of public open space.

For each square foot of usable open space for which the cash payment is proposed in substitution, the applicant shall pay:

- *The assessed value per square foot of the development parcel (not including buildings) established by the City of Somerville Assessor's Office for the fiscal year during which the applicant has filed for SPSR for said development parcel; plus*
- *The cost per square foot to design and construct a public park in Somerville (including but not limited to lighting, plantings, paving, and street furniture), as designated in the Rules and Regulations of SPGAs. This number shall be updated not less than every two (2) years and shall reflect the average cost per square foot of city parks in prior years. If the designated park has a specified cost, the actual development costs will apply.*

No certificate of occupancy shall be issued unless and until all deeds, covenants, contractual agreements, and other documents necessary to ensure compliance with this Article have been submitted to and approved by the SPGA's designee and all cash payments have been made.

Since Building 2 meets the landscaped area requirements, no payment in lieu of open space is proposed.

10. *Pedestrian Connections. Continuous pedestrian connections shall be supported between all major points of pedestrian activity on the Development Site, including, but not limited to, connections to all public and private ways abutting the Development Site and any transit stops. Development(s) shall support improved access to surrounding neighborhoods by means of sidewalk connections, crosswalks, landscaping, traffic signalization and traffic calming methods as appropriate.*

The mixed-use, transit-oriented development will include commercial space for cutting-edge labs, modern offices, innovative startups, and arts uses, as well as both neighborhood convenience and destination retail offerings, with open space to promote interaction between tenants, residents, and the community. The project will connect the Union Square neighborhood to Inman Square to the south and Medford Street/McGrath Highway corridor to the east. The project also is designed to strengthen the connection between Union Square and Kendall Square to the south.

There will be a pedestrian-priority and bike-friendly streetscape in order to improve the walkability of the neighborhood for nearby residents, tenants, and mass-transit commuters accessing the future Green Line Extension. New and improved sidewalks will be provided along the perimeters of both Phase 1 buildings. Areas for tree pits, pavers, and street furniture will be provided, and there will be an Earle Street mid-block crossing constructed as a raised walkway. This traffic-calming will cause Earle Street traffic to reduce its speed to help maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Staff recommends and a condition to any approval that requires more detailed plan drawings and sections with material and landscape specifications be submitted with the

Building Permit application for review and approval by Planning, Transportation & Infrastructure, the Department of Public Works, and Traffic & Parking.

11. *Pedestrian Oriented Requirements. To promote pedestrian activity, buildings shall be designed with separate front entrance doors to lobbies, cultural spaces, retail and business, and other sources of pedestrian activity. These entrances shall be oriented to existing or proposed public sidewalks, paths, and other open space (as opposed to a central "mall" entrance).*

The building has both a main lobby entrance to the offices and entrances to individual first floor retail spaces. These have been designed to be visible and inviting from the public sidewalks surrounding the site on the three street sides.

12. *Parking Design. Refer to Section 9.17 for parking requirements. Parking and loading areas shall be hidden from view from public ways. Parking shall not face the street edge(s) of the parcel and shall be suitably screened both visually and acoustically from the street and abutters (sufficient to conform to the City's Noise Ordinance during operation). Parking structures shall contribute to, and not obstruct, pedestrian activity in the vicinity. The exterior facade shall maintain a horizontal line throughout; the sloping interior necessary in parking structures shall not be repeated on the exterior facade. A wall or other screening of sufficient height and depth to screen parked vehicles and visually pleasing character shall be provided. Any views into parking structures shall be minimized through use of landscaping or architectural treatment.*

All parking is to be located in a four level underground garage structure and will not be visible from the street or any abutters. The parking ramp and loading docks are accessed via an alley on the west side of the building from Windsor Place.

13. *Parking Optimization Plan. Applications shall include a Parking Optimization Plan illustrating how management and pricing strategies will encourage shared use and reasonable turnover of parking spaces, and discourage structures' use as "Park and Ride" facilities.*

Attachment 12 contains the required Parking Optimization Plan, aimed at reducing the number of parking spaces required and fostering the maximum use of alternative forms of access. This Applicant fully intends to actively participate in transportation demand management and a future Transportation Management Association for the district. Ample secured bicycle parking will be provided within the individual buildings along with outdoor bicycle racks near the building entrances and potential bike share stations at key points.

The proposed parking supply will be kept to the minimum levels needed to satisfy tenant, and future resident needs, while being low enough to help promote travel by biking, walking, or using MBTA transit service, including the planned MBTA Green Line Station which is expected to be operational in 2021.

14. *Service Areas and Loading Spaces. Ground level mechanical equipment, utility and trash enclosures, loading docks and other utilitarian and service elements shall not abut the street edge(s) of the parcel and shall be visually and acoustically screened (sufficient to conform to the City's Noise Ordinance during operation). Access to these areas shall not interrupt pedestrian and sidewalk treatments. The SPGA may limit the hours of delivery so as to minimize any adverse impacts the service and loading aspects of proposed use may have on the surrounding neighborhood. Generally, loading times should take local traffic patterns into consideration.*

The original application set shows the electrical and fire service area on the Earle Street elevation which is the front of the building. However, "Ground level mechanical equipment, utility and trash enclosures, loading docks and other utilitarian and service elements shall not abut the street edges of the parcel and shall be visually and acoustically screened (sufficient to conform to the City's Noise Ordinance during operation)." Staff recommends adding a condition to any approval that those utility and service functions be moved to the west side of the building and accessed from the driveway (future alley) that also provides entrances to the loading docks and parking garage.

15. *Lighting. Lighting shall be appropriate to the historic and pedestrian-oriented character of surrounding neighborhoods and buildings, and shall enhance safety and security while minimizing glare and light trespass.*

Lighting shall be appropriate to the pedestrian-oriented character of the intended mixed-use transit-oriented employment district and will ensure sufficient light for safety while minimizing glare and light trespass. Staff recommends adding a condition to any approval that requires detailed fixture and lumen specifications be submitted with the Building Permit application.

16. *Properties Adjoining Railroad Rights-of-Way. Properties directly adjoining railroad rights-of-way shall not be subject to additional City-imposed setbacks. However, any application for a project on such a parcel shall demonstrate coordination with the appropriate rail agency and assume full responsibility for gaining all required permissions therefrom.*

This site does not abut a railroad right-of-way.

17. *Penthouses and Mechanical Equipment. All elevator and stairwell penthouses, roof-mounted mechanical equipment (including enclosure, if any) and other similar rooftop installations shall be set back behind a plane inclined at forty-five (45) degrees from the vertical, beginning at the maximum height of the building, along all street lines and rear lot line and shall be screened pursuant to the screening provisions in Section 14.3. Ventilation for restaurants and other businesses producing odors should vent away from residential districts. Equipment shall be designated to comply [with] the City's Noise Ordinance during operation. The first fifteen (15) feet in height of such equipment shall be exempt from the calculation of maximum height; if such equipment is greater than fifteen (15) feet in height, the additional height shall count toward the building's height.*

All roof top mechanicals and other similar rooftop installations shall be set back behind a plane inclined at forty-five (45) degrees from the vertical, beginning at the maximum height of the building, along all street lines and rear lot line. Furthermore, the building façade is extended vertically to eliminate the appearance of a penthouse and incorporate it in the overall design of the building.

18. *Reduction of Minimum Lot Area. Where the SPGA makes the following findings, the minimum lot area may be reduced from the requirements of Section 6.5.F:*

- a) The applicant has demonstrated that good faith efforts have been made to acquire additional land and have been unsuccessful;*
- b) The project would have sufficient lot area to ensure compliance with all other dimensional and development standards;*
- c) Quality of usable open space would not be compromised by the reduced lot area;*
- d) Design guidelines would not be compromised by the reduced lot area; and*

e) Development of the site may not result in a lost economic opportunity that would have been feasible on a lot meeting the minimum requirement. The reduced lot area may not be used as a justification for a reduced scale of development or for a mix of uses that does not achieve the purposes of the district, including increasing commercial development in appropriate areas.

The Building 2 site is just over 43,000 square feet. A reduction from the required 50,000 square feet is sought. This reduction does not compromise compliance with the other dimensional requirements, usable open space requirements are met, design guidelines are not compromised, and the project does foster the desired development of commercial space for this site.

Section 9.13. - Exceptions, Special Permits.

The current ordinance requires Building 2 to provide 232 spaces and Building 1 to provide 139 spaces for a total of 371 spaces. (For reference, the proposed ordinance requires Building 2 to have 225-326 spaces depending on the program split between office and lab, and Building 1 to have 133-205 spaces). As this proposal is larger and taller than the current zone allows, a variance has also been requested from the Zoning Board of Appeals (case #ZBA2018-21) to reduce parking.

SZO §9.13 allows for sites with nonconforming parking to apply for a Special Permit to modify parking requirements. In considering a special permit under §9.13 of the SZO “the SPGA may grant such a special permit only when consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 9.1, and upon reaching the findings and determinations set forth in Section 5.1.4”. The Applicant must be able to demonstrate that granting the requested special permit would not cause detriment to the surrounding neighborhood through any of the criteria as set forth under SZO §9.13.

This proposal will include a very large phased four-story underground parking structure that will be under most of the site and will ultimately support all the development proposed by this Applicant. The first phase of the garage will be constructed with the development of Building 2 and will initially provide 233 vehicle spaces and 98 bicycle spaces. The Applicant is asking relief for parking in this first phase. Staff supports this request so the remaining property will not be permanently hampered as future development is planned.

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 purpose of the district, which is, “to encourage mixed-use transit-oriented development with well-designed pedestrian access near transit connections and commercial squares. In response to different neighborhood contexts, TODs have been created featuring various heights, densities, and compatible use mixes. In order to be aesthetically, economically, environmentally and socially beneficial, projects in the Districts shall promote a mix of uses both within buildings and across the districts. Moderate to high-density developments will include commercial, residential, and institutional cores complemented by pedestrian-oriented retail and business services, and in some districts, compatible industrial uses. Parking, where provided, will be housed within structured parking facilities. In a dynamic commercial center, changes in tenancy and use are expected. Therefore, the TODs are designed to be responsive to changing market conditions while maintaining high standards for building

design and construction. As such, development review in these Districts is concerned foremost with appropriateness of building design and broad categories of uses. The major purposes are to:

1. Facilitate development of a mix of uses that contributes to a vibrant business environment and increases street-level activity;
2. Increase real estate investment and strengthen local tax base through intensive commercial development in higher density TOD districts;
3. Create new jobs at a variety of income and skill levels;
4. Redevelop vacant or underutilized land with appropriately dense development;
5. Replace incompatible and environmentally unsound uses with compatible mixed-use development;
6. Increase the supply of affordable housing units within the City of Somerville; and,
7. Encourage sustainable development and the use of green building standards. The TOD is divided into sub-districts, which are distinguished by their respective height and density regulations. These regulations are shown in Table 6.5.F. The Following sub-districts are designated within TOD's."

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".*

Surrounding Neighborhood:

The existing neighborhood is an under-utilized industrial area with a history of slaughterhouses, salvage yards, auto recyclers, and other industries. The only existing building with any visual interest is the building at the corner of Windsor Place and Windsor Street that is home to the Taza Chocolate company. Many of the other structures are low-rise and either haphazard in materiality or stucco with ribbon windows – neither of which provide any direction to guide architectural character or design elements. The Union Square Neighborhood Plan anticipates all of the buildings in the district (except the Taza building) to be replaced.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility):

SZO §6.5.H Design Guidelines for the TODs. These guidelines are not intended to inhibit design creativity or discourage innovative architectural design solutions. Rather, they provide general standards for building massing, siting and articulation. It is understood that Buildings and Structures may not be able to comply with all of the following Guidelines.

1. *Building(s) should complete the streetwall along the primary street edge(s).*

The building completes the streetwall along three primary street edges and provides a defined edge to the future open space to the north.

2. *Massing and height of the building should be articulated in a manner compatible with the physical character of the surrounding districts, particularly where a building abuts a residential or historically designated property. Whenever possible, historical variety in the scale, rhythm, and relationship of buildings to pedestrian public ways should be preserved.*

There is limited building in the existing conditions to provide guidance on the physical character as it relates to height, massing, and even architectural details. The building at xx that is home to Taza Chocolate provides some historical variety in the scale, rhythm, and relationship of buildings to public ways but the existing one-story warehouse-type buildings

are not compatible with the vision for the future of the district.

The massing of the proposed buildings is intended to look forward and spur economic development as envisioned by SomerVision and the Union Square Neighborhood Plan. Building 2's glass and metal façade is designed as a modern reference to the neighborhood's industrial past and the stacking of materials.

3. *A transition in height should be established where new development adjoins low-rise residential districts or historically designated properties.*

This site does not abut any low-rise residential districts or historically designated properties so a transition in height is not necessary.

4. *Thirty-foot-wide commercial bays with independent entrances onto the street are typical in Somerville and should be repeated in new developments to create visual and pedestrian interest. Varied architecture should be created and flat facades avoided by using recessed or projected entryways, bays, canopies, awnings, residential balconies on 2nd floor or above, and other architectural elements. Non-residential ground floor façades should have a minimum seventy-five (75) percent transparent material, and second floor facades should have a minimum of forty (40) percent transparent material. These openings should provide views into the building and should not be blocked by interior storage, nonartistic displays, or greater than thirty (30) percent internally mounted signage. (Compliance or noncompliance with this guideline must be documented in plans' dimensional tables.)*

The ground floor retail has been designed to be as adaptable as possible, with a street wall dominated by glazing totaling 75% of the façade on both the first and second levels. The retail can be broken up into the thirty-three-foot-wide commercial bays typical to Somerville and entries can be positioned anywhere along the façade. In a multi-tenant setting, they can easily be provided with independent entries spaced 30' apart each leading onto the street.

5. *Exterior building materials for all visible portions of the building should be high quality, durable, and aesthetically appropriate. Particular attention should be paid where properties abut residential districts and historically designated property. Predominant exterior building materials should include an appropriate combination of brick, glass, wood, artistically used metal, stone, or stucco. Precast concrete panels, EIFS-type finishes, and large expanses of glass or corrugated sheet metal are generally discouraged. Bare or painted concrete as the only exterior facade material shall not be allowed.*

Exterior building materials will be high quality, durable, and aesthetically appropriate to the industrial history and the vision for the district. The building façade is largely glass and metal, befitting its intended use as a split laboratory/office building. In order that the glazing not overtake the façade, thick bands of metal panels separate each floor, with the added effect of concealing the structure and mechanical zones. Metallic louvers are also added to provide shade and texture to the facades.

6. *Visible rear and side façades should maintain a similar character to the front façade of the building and the intended character of the surrounding district.*

This building is very visually prominent and essentially has four primary facades. As such, all façades are very similar to the front façade of the building on Earle Street and the intended character of the surrounding district.

7. *Signage and awning design should respect buildings' context (design, style, colors, materials), be oriented to pedestrians, and be subordinate to the overall building composition. Creative shapes must be carefully designed and coordinated with the overall appearance of the building. The design should also maintain an existing "signage line" and respect the character, scale, and locations of adjacent signs and awnings. Large, interior-lit or back-lit*

signs or awnings, neon "open" signs, vinyl or plastic materials and overly bright colors are generally discouraged. To add interest and character to the retail environment signs or awnings may convey interesting elements or logos without excessive wording. They should be limited to advertising the business name and its main goods or services, with minimal or no national brand names or logos. Type styles should enhance readability of the sign and provide information simply and legibly. Use awnings to create pleasant shaded spaces in front of a building. Signs and awnings should enhance important architectural details and not concealed or obliterate them. Internally illuminated "bubble awnings" and box signs are inappropriate.

Signage and awning design will respect the building's context (e.g., scale, design, style, colors, materials), be oriented to pedestrians, and be subordinate to the overall building composition. All signs will enhance important architectural details and not conceal or obliterate them. Any and all signage will require a separate Special Permit application.

8. *Major entrances should be located on public streets, and at or near corners wherever possible. Entrances should relate well to crosswalks and pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations.*

Major entrances will be located on Earle Street for the offices and labs. All retail entrances will relate well to crosswalks, sidewalks, and open spaces.

9. *Buildings should have a clearly expressed base, middle, and top. This may be achieved through changes in material, fenestration, architectural detailing, or other elements. Taller buildings should be articulated to avoid a monolithic appearance.*

The base, middle, and top of the proposed building are expressed. This is achieved through changes in material, fenestration, architectural detailing, and other elements to avoid a monolithic appearance. The lower two levels are inset along the south and east facades to clearly delineate a 'base' from the primary 'middle' building mass above, while the façade continues an extra level along the building length to establish a clear 'top' made of solid panels. The building is designed in such a way as to integrate the mechanical floors fully in the overall proportions and character of the building.

10. *The façade below the Tapering Height should exhibit human scale through design elements such as changes in plane, and variety or contrast in form, color, and materials. Architectural elements and setbacks should be used to break up long façades and avoid large areas of undifferentiated or blank building façades.*

Tapering Height requirements are not applicable to this application.

11. *Building elements located above the Tapering Height should be designed to limit impacts from visual massing, obstruction of views, and creation of shadows on public open space, residential districts or public ways. Where practicable, the width and depth of these elements should be limited to one hundred twenty (120) feet and where more than one element exists a minimum separation of fifty (50) feet is encouraged, although other means may be more appropriate on odd-shaped lots or lots adjoining highways or railroad rights-of-way.*

Tapering Height requirements are not applicable to this application.

12. *All rooftop-building systems, including wireless communications facilities, should be incorporated into the building form in a manner integral to the building architecture, including screening with materials that harmonize with buildings' exterior finishes.*

The rooftop mechanicals are split over two levels, as the Laboratory use requires a large amount of mechanical floor-space. To incorporate this large penthouse in a manner integral to the building architecture, the southern façade has been extended in order to screen the majority of the first penthouse level. The remainder of that level and the second penthouse

level above is then setback from the building face in order to minimize its visibility from the street.

13. *Individual Artist Live/Work Spaces should be designed as closely as possible in accordance with the "Design Guidelines for Artist Housing" produced by the Somerville Arts Council.*

Individual Artist Live/Work Spaces are not applicable to this application.

14. *A sidewalk depth of at least fifteen (15) feet from the street curb to building is strongly encouraged for developments fronting major streets.*

A sidewalk depth of at least twelve (12) feet from the street curb to building is shown on all surrounding streets as envisioned by the Union Square Neighborhood Plan.

15. *On-site, off-street parking should be accessed from either a side street or an alley. Where this is not possible, vehicular access should be provided through an opening, no wider than twenty-five (25) feet in the street level façade of the building. Such entrances should be designed to minimize conflict with pedestrians.*

Building 2 provides underground off-street parking that is accessed from an alley. Vehicular access will be provided through an opening, no wider than twenty-five (25) feet in the street level façade of the building.

16. *Above ground structured parking should be lined with active uses (shops, cafes, etc.) along major public streets. Upper levels and facades along smaller public streets shall be screened and include architectural design elements such as windows, bays, etc. such that the space's use for parking is not immediately apparent. Large horizontal openings are strongly discouraged. Direct pedestrian access to the street and/or to a public area should be provided by all garages serving non-residential uses.*

There will be no above-ground structured parking associated with this application.

17. *Usable Open Space should be located to support public gathering. To the extent possible, usable open space should be designed to appear as an extension of existing public space, through consistency in design and materials. The provision of an interconnected series of open space to support pedestrian movement is encouraged.*

Usable open space has been provided along the southern edge of the building, expanding the sidewalk into a 'front yard' space. Further spaces designed to support pedestrian movement are proposed along the eastern edge, setting the first two levels back fifteen feet with the upper floors suspended over them, and through an interior pedestrian passage cutting east-west through the building.

There are currently no nearby usable open spaces. However, the Union Square Neighborhood Plan shows a future green space to the east of the property (north of Building 1 on the present Gentle Giant parking lot) as well as a large public plaza, largely on this Applicant's property, to the west. The Applicant has agreed to collaborate with the City and fellow developers for these district-wide improvements.

18. *Installation of public art is encouraged in order to add visual interest and distinguishing features to landscaped or other public areas.*

Public art is not considered with the first phase of the intended master plan as the usable open spaces on South Street will be reconfigured when the re-alignment occurs. Locations for public art installations will be identified in future phases.

19. *Properties abutting the MBTA right-of-way are strongly encouraged to place pedestrian unfriendly uses such as parking, loading, and trash collection along the right-of-way. However, given that the MBTA right-of-way represents a gateway into the City, these facilities shall be screened and the architectural design of façades facing the right-of-way shall be of equal or better quality to façades elsewhere in the building.*

This project does not abut the MBTA right-of-way.

20. *Utilities and wiring shall be placed below ground. Transformers and trash facilities may also be required to be located underground.*

Utilities and wiring will be placed below ground as the infrastructure requires upgrading and rebuilding. Transformers and trash facilities are shown on the ground level but will be designed as integral with the architectural character of the building and not visible from any public right-of-way.

5. Functional Design: *The project must meet “accepted standards and criteria for the functional design of facilities, structures, and site construction.”*

The 224,300gsf of lab and office space will exist on column-free floor plates of approximately 30,000gsf. The building is being designed on an 11-foot module as is desirable for high-end lab facilities. Based on current lab usage trends, the Applicant anticipates approximately 50% of each tenant’s space will be designated for lab use with the remaining 50% set aside for supporting office uses. This purpose-built lab layout will attract both established life sciences companies unable to find space to expand elsewhere and young companies unable to pay Class-A lab rents.

Slab to slab heights of 15’ and finished ceiling heights of 11’, purpose-built HVAC systems, superior load levels, column-free floor plans, dock-height loading access, first-floor secured storage, and an oversized service elevator are all designed to fulfill the needs of demanding life sciences and biotech companies. Once fully occupied, Building 2 is expected to be home to nearly 1,000 full-time jobs.

6. Impact on Public Systems: *The project will “not create adverse impacts on the public services and facilities serving the development, such as the sanitary sewer system, the storm drainage system, the public water supply, the recreational system, the street system for vehicular traffic, and the sidewalks and footpaths for pedestrian traffic.”*

Any redevelopment of the Boynton Yards district requires significant impacts on the public systems. This Applicant has been working closely with Engineering to determine the necessary investments and upgrades to allow this area of the city to be redeveloped. New infrastructure costs are anticipated to be shared among all developers within this district. An equitable division is under negotiation at this time for utility, roadway, and open space contributions that will create fiscal benefits for landowners and the city.

7. Environmental Impacts: *“The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.”*

The site is subject to an Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) under MGL Chapter 21E, which generally limits the property use to commercial and/or industrial activities and requires that any invasive activities be performed to defined soil management and health and safety plans. The site may be developed in accordance with the conditions of the AUL; however, the Applicant intends to remediate the site in conjunction with the project plan. At completion, the site condition is intended to maintain a condition of “no significant risk” without the need for the AUL.

8. Consistency with Purposes: *“Is consistent with: 1) the purposes of this Ordinance, particularly those set forth in Article 1 and Article 5; and 2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit with site plan review which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those at the beginning of the various sections.”*

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to provide for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

9. Preservation of Landform and Open Space: *The Applicant has to ensure that “the existing land form is preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing grading and the erosion or stripping of steep slopes, and by maintaining man-made features that enhance the land form, such as stone walls, with minimal alteration or disruption. In addition, all open spaces should be designed and planted to enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Whenever possible, the development parcel should be laid out so that some of the landscaped areas are visible to the neighborhood.”*

Not applicable. There are no land forms or open spaces on the site.

10. Relation of Buildings to Environment: *The Applicant must ensure that “buildings are: 1) located harmoniously with the land form, vegetation and other natural features of the site; 2) compatible in scale, design and use with those buildings and designs which are visually related to the development site; 3) effectively located for solar and wind orientation for energy conservation; and 4) advantageously located for views from the building while minimizing the intrusion on views from other buildings.”*

There has not been any natural environment in the Boynton Yards district for a very long time due to the history of industry here. The buildings currently proposed have been sited in such a way as to allow for the most radical change proposed in the Union Square Neighborhood Plan – the realignment of South Street – to be undertaken in the future. The buildings relate to the existing street network, but they have been designed so that they will fit in, contribute to, and benefit from the future arrangement proposed by the Somerville Planning Department.

11. Stormwater Drainage: *The Applicant must demonstrate that “special attention has been given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Storm water shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, and powered area, and routed through a well-engineered system designed with appropriate storm water management techniques. Skimming devices, oil, and grease traps, and similar facilities at the collection or discharge points for paved surface runoff should be used, to retain oils, greases, and particles. Surface water on all paved areas shall be collected and/or routed so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved area. In larger developments, where practical, the routing of runoff through sheet flow, swales or other means increasing filtration and percolation is strongly encouraged, as is use of retention or detention ponds. In instances of below grade parking (such as garages) or low lying areas prone to flooding, installation of pumps or other devices to prevent backflow through drains or catch basins may be required.”*

Both Earle Street and South Street contain existing water and sanitary sewer and storm drainage facilities with ample capacity to serve the first phase of development (Buildings 1 and 2). There are outdated storm drainage connections within Earle Street to an existing combined sewer.

Storm drainage will be separated from the combined sewer as part of the improvements, and a new 16" water main will be installed. The Applicant will also replace the existing 15" sewer main in Earle Street. The building will connect water, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage to the proposed facilities in Earle Street. Building 1 will also have a storm drain connection directly to South Street.

Staff recommends including a condition to any approval for this project to include further detailed coordination with the Engineering Department and Transportation & Infrastructure to ensure that the infrastructure design is appropriately sized to provide ample capacity for the anticipated future growth of the area, and infrastructure costs are shared by the Applicant and others in Boynton Yards.

12. Historic or Architectural Significance: *The project must be designed "with respect to Somerville's heritage, any action detrimental to historic structures and their architectural elements shall be discouraged insofar as is practicable, whether those structures exist on the development parcel or on adjacent properties. If there is any removal, substantial alteration or other action detrimental to buildings of historic or architectural significance, these should be minimized and new uses or the erection of new buildings should be compatible with the buildings or places of historic or architectural significance on the development parcel or on adjacent properties."*

Not applicable. There are no structures on the site.

13. Enhancement of Appearance: *The Applicant must demonstrate that "the natural character and appearance of the City is enhanced. Awareness of the existence of a development, particularly a non residential development or a higher density residential development, should be minimized by screening views of the development from nearby streets, residential neighborhoods of City property by the effective use of existing land forms, or alteration thereto, such as berms, and by existing vegetation or supplemental planting."*

As the Boynton Yards district is intended to be a transform area with high density development encouraged, there will be no screening between buildings or between streets and buildings. All development will be reflective of the urban patterns of the rest of the city with buildings located on the street frontage. There will not be any berms.

The Union Square Neighborhood Plan proposes a series of public spaces throughout Boynton Yards. The Boynton Yards District Development Map proposed in the zoning overhaul identifies the current public space proposals. The Applicant is offering in-principle support for the most significant of these ideas: a large park/plaza positioned along the western quarter of the properties. This large public space will be of great benefit to the neighborhood and is envisioned as a significant park for gathering that provides identity and plantings to Boynton Yards and Union Square.

14. Lighting: *With respect to lighting, the Applicant must ensure that "all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be adequately lit and designed as much as possible to allow for surveillance by neighbors and passersby."*

Site lighting on the South Street Plazas for both buildings will include pedestrian-scale post-top fully-shielded LED fixtures and low brightness LED fixtures incorporated seating/planters. Low-brightness decorative lighting bollards will be integrated with the landscaping to light walkways around both buildings where required for security and comfort.

Building-mounted exterior lighting will include recessed low brightness LED down lights will be incorporated into the exterior soffit along the retail edges of the building. Fully shielded low power LED fixtures will be wall mounted at any egress doors as required by code. There is no building mounted exterior lighting planned for the loading dock opening.

While conceptual lighting design has been considered by this proposal, more detail specifications will be required. Staff recommends adding a condition to any approval that requires detailed fixture and lumen specifications be submitted for Planning Department approval with the Building Permit application.

15. Emergency Access: *The Applicant must ensure that “there is easy access to buildings, and the grounds adjoining them, for operations by fire, police, medical and other emergency personnel and equipment.”*

Building 2 is surrounded by public streets on three sides – Earle Street, South Street, and Windsor Place – so there is easy access by emergency personnel. The fourth side, to the west, remains an adjacent parking lot in the short-term with an alley accessing the parking and loading which also allows direct access to the building.

16. Location of Access: *The Applicant must ensure that “the location of intersections of access drives with the City arterial or collector streets minimizes traffic congestion.”*

The parking ramp and loading docks are accessed via an alley on the west side of the building from Windsor Place. The centerline of the access drive is approximately 150' from the intersection of Windsor Place and Earle Street and is unlikely to cause traffic congestion on arterial or collector streets.

17. Utility Service: *The Applicant must ensure that “electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment are placed underground from the source or connection, or are effectively screened from public view.”*

Although existing water and sanitary sewer and storm drainage facilities have ample capacity to serve the development, the Applicant intends to upgrade and improve water, sewer, and storm water infrastructure at and near the Building 1 site as part of its infrastructure contribution to the city. These improvements will serve not only Building 2, but also the remainder of Boynton Yards.

18. Prevention of Adverse Impacts: *The Applicant must demonstrate that “provisions have been made to prevent or minimize any detrimental effect on adjoining premises, and the general neighborhood, including, (1) minimizing any adverse impact from new hard surface ground cover, or machinery which emits heat, vapor, light or fumes; and (2) preventing adverse impacts to light, air and noise, wind and temperature levels in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development.”*

There is not any detrimental impact expected on adjoining premises. At this point in time it is unknown what businesses may occupy the building, but any fumes or vapors will be carefully vented to all required code standards. Mechanical equipment will be specified at a reduced noise level with the understanding that there could be adjacent residential buildings.

19. Signage: *The Applicant must ensure that “the size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall reflect the scale and character of the proposed buildings.”*

Signage communicating the building identity/address on Earle Street will be located on the main lobby entrance doors. This may be in the form of letter and number graphics on the lobby

glazing (above or next to main doors). First floor pedestrian/biker signage will be small and indicate the location of the elevator lobby for pedestrian/bicycle access to the bike parking in the basement.

First floor retail tenants will incorporate individual signage and entrance design following designated zones (clerestory of the glass bays) on the façade. The loading dock entrance on Harding Street will be a small sign integrated in the metal paneling to identify an opening. First floor utilities will have small signs to identify the purpose of openings in the metal paneling (i.e. Eversource alcove, Main Electrical vault, Trash/Recycle room) as will the fire exits.

All signage will require detailed submissions for Special Permit under future applications.

20. Screening of Service Facilities: *The Applicant must ensure that “exposed transformers and other machinery, storage, service and truck loading areas, dumpsters, utility buildings, and similar structures shall be effectively screened by plantings or other screening methods so that they are not directly visible from either the proposed development or the surrounding properties.”*

Building 2 proposes a single curb cut and access driveway has been provided on Windsor Place for the Building 2 garage and loading docks. The access driveway has been designed to reduce vehicular speeds. The surface of the access driveway will be finished with plaza pavers. The surface of the access driveway has been designed to be flush with the adjacent sidewalk and pedestrian areas.

Any doors, overhead doors, and louvers necessary for all service functions such as loading docks, garage entrance, electrical equipment, and trash facilities will be designed as integral with the architectural character of the building so as not to be readily visible from any public right-of-way or future open space.

21. Screening of Parking:
 Building 2 proposes a single curb cut and access driveway has been provided on Windsor Place for the Building 2 underground garage and will not be readily visible from any public right-of-way or future open space.

21. Housing Impact: *Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.*
 Not applicable. There is no housing in this proposal.

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 Applicant has carefully designed this project, and the eventual full build-out, to meet or exceed the goals of SomerVision and the Union Square Neighborhood Plan.

<u>SomerVision Summary</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
<u>Dwelling Units:</u>	0	0

<i>Affordable Units:</i>	0	0
<i>Commercial Sq. Ft.:</i>	0	235,000
<i>Estimated Employment:</i>	0	1,000
<i>Parking Spaces:</i>	0	233
<i>Publicly Accessible Open Space:</i>	0	6,700

23. **Impact on Affordable Housing:** *In conjunction with its decision to grant or deny a special permit for a structure of four or more units of housing, the SPGA shall make a finding and determination as to how implementation of the project would increase, decrease, or leave unchanged the number of units of rental and home ownership housing that are affordable to households with low or moderate incomes, as defined by HUD, for different sized households and units.*

This phase of the project does not add any residential, only commercial uses.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §5.2

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff **recommends** ~~has no recommendation at this time~~ **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW** with the attached conditions titled "Appendix A: Boynton Yards Building 2 – CONDITIONS". The Staff Report will be amended to reflect Conditional Approval prior to the April 19th Hearing in order for public comments and condition language to be incorporated.

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.