



Joseph A. Curtatone  
Mayor

George J. Proakis  
OSPCD Executive Director

# CITY OF SOMERVILLE

Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development

**TO:** Zoning Board of Appeals  
**FROM:** Planning & Zoning Division  
**DATE:** 14 August 2020  
**RE:** DRA #2020-0134, 374a Medford Street

This memo summarizes the development review application submitted for 374a Medford Street, 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 3 August 2020 and is scheduled for a public hearing on 19 August 2020.

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Rachel Murphy of REMBRAND LLC and BISL Bakehouse is proposing to establish a Bakery, Café, or Coffee Shop use in a Neighborhood Residence District with a Small Business Overlay. The proposed development will reuse an existing storefront which is currently vacant but which was previously occupied by a restaurant. Beyond the change in use, no further development or construction is proposed for the location.

## LEGAL NOTICE

Rae Murphy seeks a Use Special Permit to establish a Bakery, Café, or Coffee Shop in a Neighborhood Residence District with a Small Business Overlay.

## REQUIRED FINDINGS

In its discretion to approve or deny a Special Permit required by this Ordinance in §15.2.1.e, the review board shall make findings considering, at least, each of the following:

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

93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143  
(617-625-6600 ext.2500  
TTY: (617) 666-0001  
www.somervillema.gov  
www.somervillezoning.com

The SomerVision 2030 Plan and the Gilman Square Station Area Plan are applicable to this application.

SomerVision offers the following goals in the Neighborhood and Commercial Corridors District sections:

- Strengthen and support neighborhood commercial centers that integrate residential uses, offer lively destinations and contribute to Somerville's unique identity.
- Protect and promote a diverse, interesting mix of small-scale businesses in Somerville's neighborhoods.
- Facilitate thoughtfully-designed, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development and reuse opportunities in commercial corridors, squares and around transit stations that are sensitive to neighborhood context, and serve existing and future residents and businesses.

Additionally, the Gilman Square Station Area Plan identified a goal of recruiting businesses that cater to local residents' daily and weekly shopping and service needs to locate in the core of Gilman Square.

Staff finds that the proposal is consistent with SomerVision and the Gilman Square Neighborhood Plan. The proposal would provide an active use in a currently vacant storefront, enlivening and maintaining the retail character of a reasonably well-designed and preserved example of Somerville's 'shop house' building type, blending residential and small-scale commercial space. The use type proposed is compatible with the activity and services of a neighborhood center and transit station area, and is one which is appropriate to the daily needs of both residents and commuters moving to and from the future Gilman Square MBTA station.

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

The Small Business Overlay district expands on the intent of the Neighborhood Residence district in areas where neighborhood planning has supported an intent to "create, maintain, and enhance locations appropriate for neighborhood- and community-serving businesses."

Staff finds that the proposal is consistent with the purpose and intent of the Small Business Overlay for the Neighborhood Residence district. The proposal would offer baked goods and beverages for retail sale and onsite consumption in a neighborhood currently characterized by personal service businesses and convenience stores primarily offering prepackaged goods.

**NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS**

A neighborhood meeting was hosted by Ward 4 Councilor Jesse Clingan on 21 July 2020 at 5:30pm.

