



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Case #:** PB 2006-59-R4-02/2017  
**Date:** April 6, 2017  
**Recommendation:** Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** Assembly Row Planned Unit Development Preliminary Master Plan

**Applicant Name:** Street Retail, Inc.

**Applicant Address:** 1626 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852

**Property Owner Name:** Street Retail, Inc.

**Property Owner Address:** 1626 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852

**Agent Name:** Robert A. Fishman

**Agent Address:** 155 Seaport Boulevard, Boston, MA 02210

**Alderman:** Matthew McLaughlin

Legal Notice: The Applicant, SRI Assembly Row B8, LLC, and its Agent, Robert A. Fishman, Esq., seek approval of a Major Amendment of a Preliminary Master Plan (S.Z.O. §16.11.3.1) for a Planned Unit Development (PUD-PMP) approved by the Planning Board on December 14, 2006 and as revised on August 5, 2010 and June 19, 2014 to change the design guideline for Block 8.

The Owners of the parcels within the boundaries of the proposed PUD include Federal Realty Investment Trust, FR Assembly Square, LLC, Street Retail Inc., SRI Assembly Row B7, LLC, SRI Assembly Row B8, LLC, SRI Assembly Row B9, LLC, (Parcels: 86-A-1, 67-A-2, 67-A-6, 67-A-7, 85-A-5, 85-A-8, 85-A-9, 85-A-10, 85-A-11, 85-A-12, 85-A-13, 85-A-14, 85-A-15, 85-A-16, 85-A-17, 85-A-18, 99-A-8, 99-A-13, 99-A-14, 99-A-15, 99-A-16, 99-A-17, 99-A-18). Conveyed to MBTA: 85-A-19, 99-A-10a, 99-A-19. Department of Conservation and Recreation: Parcel 67-A-6, 67-A-7, 85-A-17, & 85-A-18.

Assembly Square Mixed Use District (ASMD); Planned Unit Development Overlay District - A (PUD-A). Ward 1.

Dates of Public Hearing: April 6, 2017



## **I. PROPOSAL**

The request of Federal Realty Investment Trust is to edit a condition of the Assembly Row Planned Unit Development Preliminary Master Plan approval to remove the requirement to submit a design guideline for development on Block 8.

The Planning Board granted the Planned Unit Development-A-Preliminary Master Plan (PUD-PMP) approval on December 14, 2006, subject to certain conditions (PB2006-59). On August 5, 2010 (PB2006-59-R-0710), June 19, 2014 (PB2006-59-R2-0514), and March 1, 2016 (PB2006-59-R3-01/2016), the Board granted revisions to the PUD-PMP. Subsequent minor amendments and subdivisions have been filed that do not substantially impact this site.

Condition 39.2 of the 2016 revision to the Master Plan approval states:

*“Design Guidelines for Blocks 5, 7, 8, and future phases of block 11 excluding the daycare shall be reviewed by the DRC and reviewed and approved by the Planning Board prior to the Planning Staff entertaining the SPSR-A applications for these blocks.”*

The request is to strike “Block 8” from this condition and add page 3.15 to the Design Guidelines.

## **II. SZO REGULATIONS**

Section 6.4.10.F.4 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, identifies that for modifications to approved PUDs in the Assembly Square Mixed Use District, the provision of Section 6.4.10.F shall apply and shall govern over any other provisions of the Ordinance that may require permit approvals in addition to those stated. Section 6.4.10.F.3 identifies that the site plans, grading/drainage plan, landscaping plans, utility plans and/or other plans approved in connection with an Approved PUD may be modified as specified in Section 16.11.3. Section 16.11.3 sets parameters for major and minor changes and Staff determined that a substantive change to a condition is a major change that needs to be reviewed by the Planning Board.

## **III. BACKGROUND & COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS**

Design guidelines were adopted as part of the Preliminary Master Plan (PMP) approval for the blocks in the PMP to lay out the form and key elements of the Blocks. The PMP condition requiring design guidelines for future development was originally written with the understanding that detailed guidelines would be submitted as the program and designs were refined for each block.

The proposed guideline for Block 8 is shown on the plans entitled “Assembly Row Block 8” created by Federal Realty/VHB/Street-Works Studio and dated February, 2017 to be included in the “Assembly Row Design Guidelines” as Section 3.15. The detailed plans for the design will be attached to the subsequent SPSR-A application.



The block is designed as one large development with two residential buildings and an interlocking parking structure immediately adjacent to the T-station. Given the highly visible position of these buildings, the façade treatment and material quality is high for all sides of the building.

Design Review Committee (DRC) reviewed the current design guideline to ensure that it fits into the context of the Master Plan at their meeting on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The northwestern corner is the main focal point of the block at the intersection of Assembly Row and Foley Streets at Assembly Line Park. The Designated Significant corners are required to carry a higher level of detail and character to respond to the adjacent open space (Assembly Line Park) including building detail, awnings, canopies, signage and lighting. The low-rise portion of the block is limited to 84'-4" in height (approximately 7-stories) and forming the streetwall to define the civic space. The residential lobbies will be located on Assembly Row and Foley Street to take advantage of the T-station and the pedestrian activity.

The residential tower is located on the northeast corner of the site opposite the station on Great River Road and evoked the most comments. The DRC recommended that the level of detail and depth or articulation of the tower be studied as the architectural design is advanced. As the design is finalized, they also requested that the primary and secondary elevations along Great River Road and Revolution Drive be brought down to the ground, rather than terminating at the parking garage.

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant and the information and findings above, the Planning Staff recommends adding the design guideline for Block 8 in condition 39.2 of the PUD PMP (PB2006-59-R3-01/2016). The findings and conditions previously established remain unchanged and applicable.

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.