

April 29, 2021 – updated July 19, 2021

Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development – Planning and Zoning
City of Somerville
City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

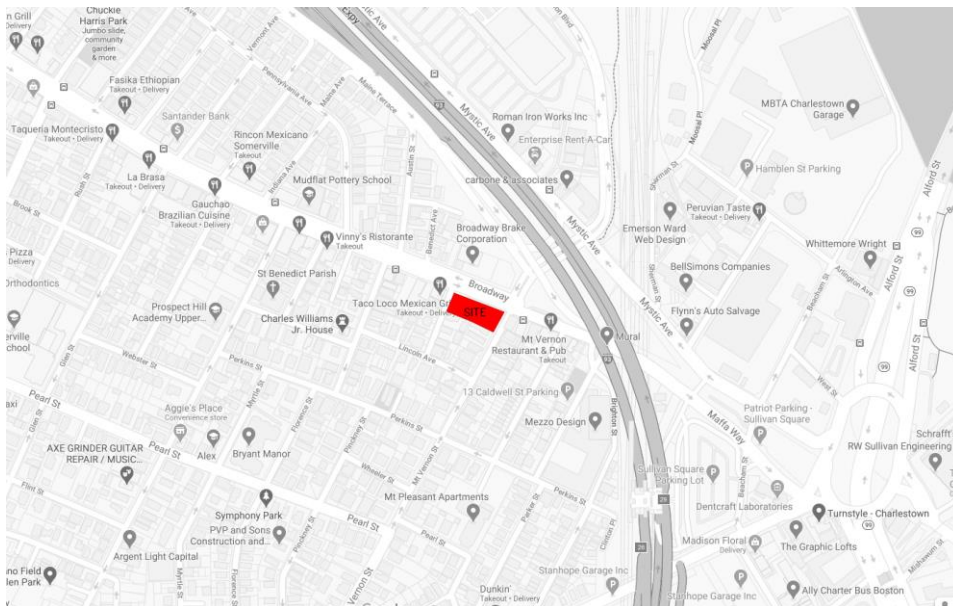
**Re: Design Review Application - Project Narrative
28-44 Broadway, Somerville**

Dear Planning and Zoning,

Lower Broadway Development LLC (the “Applicant”) is proposing a new building at 22-44 Broadway in Somerville (“44 Broadway”, or the “Project”), which will stand as a new gateway building to East Somerville and Broadway. This Project Narrative provides a brief summary and introduction to the Project’s zoning, building design, sustainability, and landscape and public realm design.

I. Zoning

The Project is located in the MR-6 District, along a designated Pedestrian Street portion of Broadway, and is within less than a quarter-mile of the Sullivan Square Orange Line Station (i.e., within a walkshed). *See below Locus Map.* The Project requires Site Plan Approval from the Planning Board for a General Building type, and a use Special Permit for Household Living specific use type.



The Project is a six-story General Building, with (i) one level of underground parking for 26 vehicles and 61 bicycles, (ii) a first floor with an approximately 15,000 sf footprint to be used predominantly for retail use, but also includes storage for 30 bicycles, trash and recycling, and a lobby entrance for the upper-story residences, and (iii) five upper stories (floors two through six) housing 91 residential units, ranging from studios to three-bedroom units. See Architectural Drawing Set, prepared by Balance Architects (the “Architectural Set”), *Sheets A1.0-A1.6*. 44 Broadway is designed to be compliant with the dimensional and design requirements for General Building types within the MR-6 District, as shown on Sheet A0.7 of the Architectural Set.

As for uses, the Project proposes (i) unbundled Vehicle Parking in the underground parking garage, which is an allowed use, (ii) Food and Beverage Service use category, or Consumer Goods specific use type on the first floor, which are permitted uses at Pedestrian Streets, and (iii) Household Living specific use type on floors two through six, which requires a Special Permit from the Planning Board. See *Code, Table 4.4.14*. The Project – and its Household Living specific use – are in line with the City of Somerville’s comprehensive plan and Somervision, as the Project creates necessary market rate and affordable housing, employment opportunities, and first-class commercial space. The residential use will also be a benefit to the neighborhood, and is in-line with the purpose of the MR-6 district to create dwelling units ideal for smaller households within general buildings. See *Code, Section 4.4.3.d*.

Finally, the Project has a long planning and community-engagement history, as over the past four years the Applicant has engaged in multiple meetings and discussions with the community and immediate neighbors, as well as the City’s planning, mobility, and urban forestry departments. The first neighborhood meeting for the Project was held on August 4, 2020, followed by one meeting before the Urban Design Commission on October 27, 2020, and finally a second neighborhood meeting on January 25, 2021.

July 19, 2021 Update: *The Applicant submitted its Design Review Application on April 30, 2021 – within the 120 days of the second neighborhood meeting – as required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. On May 11, 2021, the Planning Department contacted the Applicant indicating that (i) the western building face had to shift slightly to be parallel with the Mt. Vernon Street, and (ii) a landscape buffer along the southern edge abutting the NR district had to be expanded by one foot. The Applicant made these adjustments and submitted revised drawings on June 17, 2021.*

II. Building Design

Overall, the building is designed to provide a new gateway building to East Somerville along Broadway and visible from I-93, while also providing commercial and residential spaces that will have long-term appeal for Somerville residents.



updated 6/17/21

The façade is composed of a variety of materials based on the high-level of pedestrian interaction that will occur on the floor level and the adjacent residential uses so that the building responds at each level to the surrounding neighborhood. Along the ground floor there is a mix of storefront glazing system, grey face brick, ACM black metal panels, architectural CMU, terracotta panels, and phenolic resin panels. On floors two through six, the material palette is limited to phenolic resin panels, terracotta panels, and ACM panels to ensure a cohesive design that is also responsive to the abutting residential neighborhood. *Architectural Set, A2.1.*

The ground floor design engages the streetscape on the three thoroughfares the Project fronts on – Broadway, George Street, and Mount Vernon Street – and wherever possible pushes back-of-house building services away from the most prominent pedestrian areas and outdoor amenity spaces along and near Broadway. See *Architectural Set, A1.1.* The ground floor retail spaces provide high-quality amenities to the surrounding neighborhood, and will engage the streetscape by providing needed landscaped exterior spaces for working, dining and socializing. Moreover, each building corner provides potential space for outdoor seating depending on the needs of the commercial tenant. Finally, while the residential entry is distinct in color and massing from the commercial entries, the building otherwise provides consistency throughout the ground floor through signage and glazing that is organized to create a human scale and rhythm to contribute toward the streetscape.

The upper-story residential floors are designed to provide elegant and comfortable residences with a double loaded corridor leading to all units and all living and bedroom areas have large windows with operable portions for ample light and air. In addition, there are a mix of common and private roof decks starting on the third and fourth floor step-backs that provide inviting exterior spaces for building occupants on the upper floors. *Architectural Set, A0.11.*

III. Sustainability

44 Broadway has been designed to meet a minimum of Platinum “Certifiable” level under the LEED for Homes Midrise v4 program, and is currently targeting a total of 90.5 points. Overall, the Project will

achieve this high-level of certifiability by being designed to favor pedestrian and bicycle activity over automobile use, and will employ a high performance façade.

To achieve LEED Platinum Certifiability, the Project will employ a number of building design and building system technologies, some of which are highlighted here. For building design, the Project will incorporate high-quality windows, which will reduce air leakage and provide thermal bridging and superior sound insulation. For building systems, the building will use a heat recovery fresh air ventilation system for the residential units, state-of-the-art intake air filtering to increase energy efficiency and increase indoor air quality, and MERV 16 filters for balanced ventilation.

IV. Landscape and Public Realm Design

The public realm continues the overall existing streetscape design found along Broadway, such as wide sidewalks and street trees, and re-uses the City Standard paver bands and benches. On Broadway there will be bench seating, a Blue bike rack, personal bike racks, four street trees, pavers along the facade and within the property limit, and potential outdoor seating at both building corners by Broadway. Wherever possible, planter beds have been located between the commercial entries found along Broadway to enliven the streetscape. All landscaping in the planter beds, and along the sidewalks, will be resilient and low maintenance plantings suitable for urban environments.

The Applicant looks forward to continuing the collaborative review process for 44 Broadway as it enters this next stage of review.

Sincerely,

LOWER BROADWAY DEVELOPMENT LLC,
a Massachusetts limited liability company

 /s/ Ben Rogan

Name: Ben Rogan
Title: Manager