



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

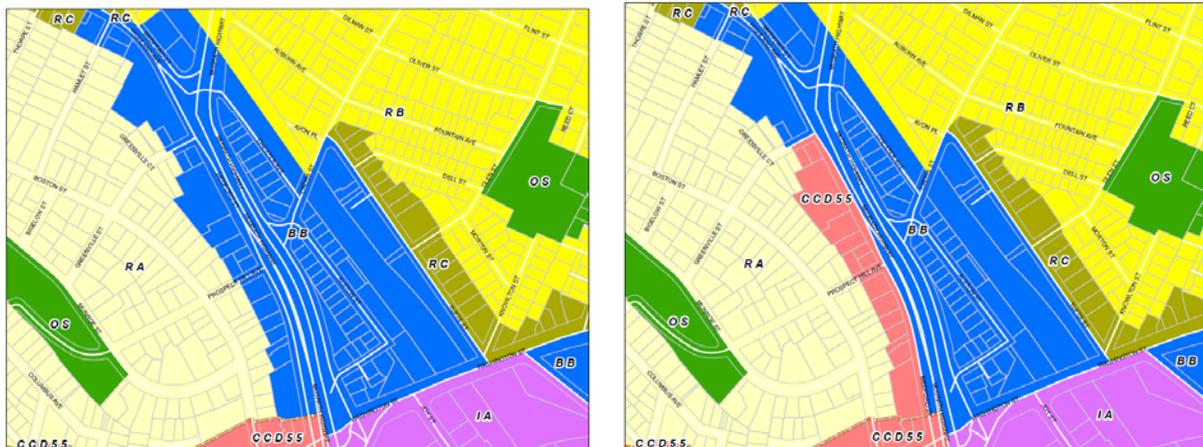
MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION

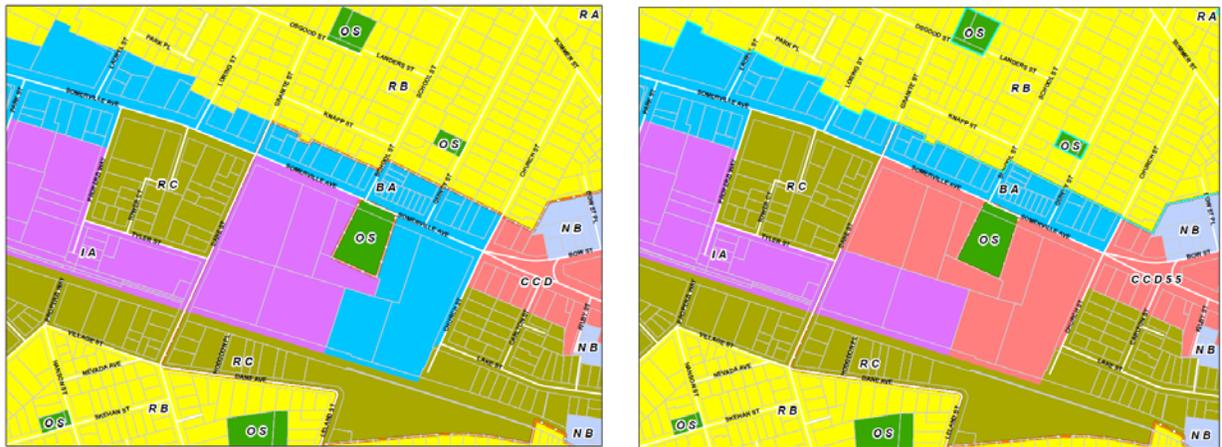
TO: Planning Board
FROM: Lori Massa, Planning Staff
DATE: August 21, 2013
RE: An ordinance amending the zoning map to place additional land in Union Square and on Prospect Hill into the CCD-55 zoning district. This amendment, submitted by Sunoco Inc., and Kristco Realty LLC, will change the zoning of parcels along the western side of McGrath Highway from Washington Street to Greenville Street from Business B CCD-55 and along the south side of Somerville Avenue from Church Street to Dane Street from Business A and Industrial A to CCD-55.

The Planning Board is evaluating proposed zoning amendments to extend the CCD-55 zoning districts along the west side of McGrath Highway from Washington Street to Greenville Street and along south side of Somerville Avenue from Church Street to Dane Street. Owners of the properties at 434 McGrath Highway, the Sunoco Gas Station, and 444 Somerville Avenue, the Maaco site, submitted the zoning changes. The current zoning districts for these sites and the proposed map changes can be found below. A staff report dated May 16, 2013 explains the proposals in detail.

McGrath Highway Zoning Map Amendment: Existing (left), Proposed (right)



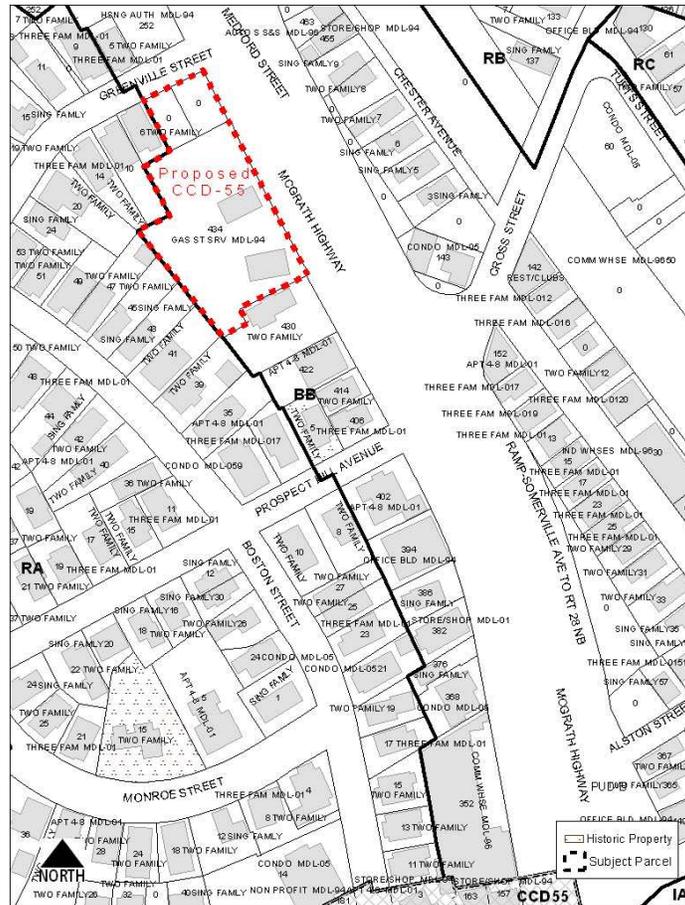
Somerville Avenue Zoning Map Amendment: Existing (left), Proposed (right)



The Planning Board and Board of Alderman Land Use Committee had a public hearing regarding the amendments on May 16, 2013. The Boards received some negative comments particularly in regards to the extent of the proposal along McGrath Highway. Since that hearing a potential developer of the Sunoco site met with the neighborhood. As a result of those meetings, nine neighbors have sent supportive letters to rezone the 434 McGrath Highway site (the Sunoco Site) only and approximately 85 neighbors signed a supportive petition.

Planning Staff have evaluated the idea of rezoning the property at 434 McGrath Highway and removing from the proposal the area from Washington Street to 434 McGrath Highway. The resulting map change proposal can be seen in the map below.

Staff recommended revision to zoning map change proposal along McGrath Highway



The parcels that comprise 434 McGrath Highway are key redevelopment parcels that are distinguishable from neighboring properties. These parcels are significantly larger than the parcels surrounding them. The size of the property would allow for a development that could create a significant improvement for the neighborhood and the City. The site is located at the bend in McGrath Highway, giving it prominence. The site not only differs in size and prominence from its neighbors, it also differs in land use. The last use of the site was a gas station and the business is closed. The site differs from the surrounding land uses which are primarily residential.

Rezoning these parcels would further the goals of the Somerville Comprehensive Plan, SomerVision, by establishing a zoning district on the property that allows the site to be developed in a way that is called out in the Plan. Two of several goals of the Plan that tie with the proposed development site are the following: (1) facilitate transit-oriented, neighborhood in fill development when it enhances the lively, human-scaled and walkable character of Somerville blocks and neighborhoods and (2) 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.

More specifically, the Future Land Context Map in SomerVision calls for the Sunoco site to be Urban Residential. The intent of the land defined as Urban Residential is to “[c]reate, maintain, and enhance areas that are appropriate for multi-unit, mid-rise residential uses in locations with good access to transportation and other services.” The CCD-55 district would allow structures and uses to be developed in accordance with the future land context map. The purpose of the proposed Corridor Commercial District-55 (CCD-55) is consistent with the intent of creating an appropriate multi-unit, mid-rise residential building with access to services. The district recognizes corridors that present opportunities for an active mix of uses while also addressing development challenges including nearby existing residential development.

It would serve the best interests of the community as a whole to rezone the property at 434 McGrath Highway. Planning Staff recommend that the Planning Board forward a positive recommendation to the Board of Alderman with a change to the proposal along McGrath Highway to limit the map change to the property at 434 McGrath Highway.