



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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July 18, 2014

The Honorable Board of Aldermen
City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: An ordinance amending the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, Section 7.13.A, to require a Special Permit to establish ground floor office uses in the corridor commercial and transit oriented districts.

Dear Honorable Board of Aldermen:

In keeping with its lawful responsibilities, the Planning Board submits to your Honorable Board its recommendation on an ordinance to limit ground floor office uses in Commercial Corridor and Transit Oriented Districts (CCD and TOD respectively). This amendment was addressed in a staff report provided to your honorable board dated July 10, 2014

On July 10, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. the Planning Board and Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen jointly held a duly advertised public hearing in the Aldermanic Chambers in City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit public comments on the proposed amendments and to evaluate the amendments in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the Planning Staff.

This report from the Planning Board to the Board of Aldermen will focus on the discussion at the July 10, 2014 meeting and its final recommendation.



DISCUSSION DURING HEARING

At the public hearing on July 10, 2014, George Proakis, Director of Planning, explained the proposal as outlined in the staff report. Planning Staff recommended approval of requiring first floor office uses in COD and TOD districts to require a Special Permit instead of being by-right. The Special Permit process will allow Staff and the Planning Board to evaluate if the use will add to the walkability and streetlife of the district.

The Board spoke in support of the proposal and anticipates the new zoning ordinance. The Board agreed with Alderman White’s suggestion for more clarity which is noted below.

TABLE 7.13—TABLE OF USE CLUSTERS		
Use Cluster	Principal Uses "SP" indicates special permit required for a use to be established or expanded	By-Right Allowance
A. Office/R&D Use	Office, other than medical (<u>except as noted below</u>) Medical office, medical or health clinic (<u>except as noted below</u>) Office of veterinarian (may board animals with SP) (<u>except as noted below</u>) Laboratory engaged in research, experimental and testing activities which may include the development of mockups and prototypes but not the manufacture of finished products (SP) Radio or television studio without transmitting or receiving towers	15,000 n.s.f
	<u>Office, medical office, medical or health clinic, office of veterinarian, when located in the first occupied story of a multi story building or when located in a single-story building, regardless of size (SP)</u>	0 n.s.f.

No constituents appeared to speak during the public hearing.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Following due consideration, Kevin Prior made a motion to **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** the proposed amendment as laid out in the Planning Staff Report of July 10, 2014. Joe Favaloro seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.

The Land Use Committee closed the written record on July 10, 2014.

Sincerely,

Kevin Prior
Chair