



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

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Date: January 22, 2013

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Subject: Forest City / Millennium Pharmaceuticals Zoning Petition

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Recommendation: The Planning Board recommends **ADOPTION** of the petition.

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To the Honorable, the City Council,

Upon consideration of the zoning petition presented by Forest City Commercial Group and Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company and public testimony heard on January 8, 2013, the Planning Board recommends adoption of the petition.

The Petition proposes to change the boundaries and certain requirements of the Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District (CRDD) to enable the construction of a new building with approximately 246,000 square feet of Gross Floor Area at 300 Massachusetts Avenue, consisting of office and laboratory uses with ground floor retail along the Massachusetts Avenue frontage.

Our positive recommendation is supported by our finding that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the recommendations of the year-long Central Square Planning Study (C2 Study). The C2 Study recommendations incorporate the block encompassing the proposed rezoning area in the Osborn Triangle Zoning Overlay District. The Petition proposes that the CRDD zoning district be expanded to incorporate the Rezoning Area.

The C2 Study Recommendations state that the Osborn Triangle area is expected 'to evolve to include a mix of uses including residential, office and lab uses, with active ground floors.' The dimensional requirements proposed by the C2 Study for the Osborn Triangle area are noted in the table below.

### C2 Study Dimensional Recommendations for the Rezoning Area

	<b>Non-Residential Use</b>	<b>Residential Use</b>
<b>FAR</b>	2.75	4.0
<b>Maximum Height</b>	100 ft	160 ft (with restrictions on height over 100')

The C2 Study recommendations also allow transfer of development rights across areas of common ownership as a way to encourage mixed-use development that locates lower-scale residential uses closer to established neighborhoods and allows larger-scale commercial and residential uses away from neighborhood edges. Although the C2 Study area does not include the entire CRDD, it is important to consider this concept when evaluating the Petition because the CRDD is a master planned mixed-use development area under common ownership.

Under the proposed zoning, the total effective FAR across the CRDD would be 2.47, and the FAR for non-residential uses would be 1.77, with larger buildings (including the proposed building at 300 Massachusetts Ave) separated from lower-scale residential uses. The petition also proposes a maximum height of 95' on the 300 Massachusetts Avenue site, which is similar to the 100' limit recommended by the C2 study for non-residential use.

The Petition proposes further limiting the part of the frontage permitted to extend to the maximum district height to 2/3 of the building frontage, and requires a cornice at 65 feet with a step back of 15 feet from the Massachusetts Avenue property line. These requirements are consistent with the urban design goals of the C2 Study. The Petition also makes development in this area subject to existing and future urban design guidelines for the area, which would include the Central Square Design Guidelines developed through the C2 Study.

The C2 Study recommendations emphasize creation of active ground floors along Massachusetts Avenue, particularly retail. The Petition is consistent with this recommendation by requiring ground floor retail with an average depth of 40 feet along 75% of the building frontage on Massachusetts Avenue.

The ability of the proposed Forest City project to take advantage of existing structured parking spaces shared with other uses, with no new parking developed, is positive and consistent with the transportation and sustainability goals and recommendations of the C2 Study. The C2 Study proposes setting maximum parking limits for all uses, eliminating minimum parking requirements, and requiring analyses to evaluate the potential for shared parking. The Petition also requires that new bicycle parking be provided, which supports the C2 Study goal of improving bicycle amenities in the area. Additionally, Forest City has stated its willingness to incorporate the C2 Study recommendations for non-residential buildings to exceed the City's green building requirements by making commitments to meet LEED criteria at the Gold level, track the building's energy use, and report energy use to CDD on an annual basis for 5 years after the building is occupied.

An active public realm, retail diversity, affordable and middle income housing, and creation of outdoor and/or indoor public spaces and connections were key goals of the C2 Study. In support of these goals, the study identified enhanced public benefits as key considerations for the City Council when evaluating requests for additional density and height on a case by case basis over and above the C2 recommendations. These include impact on neighborhood edges and residential neighborhoods (the site of the new building enabled by this Petition is away from the neighborhood edges identified in the C2 Study) and the nature and amount of benefits such as significant public space (indoor or outdoor), increased middle income and/or affordable housing,

enhanced retail support (e.g., fitout assistance or reduced rents for a minimum time period), and reduced rents for non-profits.

The Petition, coupled with the letter of commitment and the conceptual site plan presented to the Planning Board, proposes several such enhanced public benefit provisions. Principal among these are commitments to extend the affordability of all existing affordable units in University Park for the duration of Forest City's leasehold interest, to create 20 additional affordable units off-site or contribute \$4,000,000 to the Affordable Housing Trust, to contribute \$1,078,680 in community funds, to create retail space that can easily be divided to appeal to diverse tenants, to create and implement a marketing plan for retail spaces that emphasizes local, independent retail tenants, and to create plaza spaces at either end of Blanche Street that would support adjacent retail space, improve the connection to the grocery store, and enhance the character and walkability of Blanche Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

From an urban planning perspective, it is the Planning Board's view that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the policies and goals of the City and the C2 Study in particular. The Board supports the efforts of the Council to evaluate the aforementioned public benefits in the context of what it feels is appropriate for the City, given the scope of the requested rezoning and the needs of the community. In particular, the Board encourages the Council to seek clarification on the circumstances under which affordable housing will be provided as set forth in Section III of the Letter of Commitment attached to the petition, and how the inclusionary housing provisions of Section 11.200 would apply under those circumstances.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Russell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hugh Russell, Chair.