



**City of Stamford
Zoning Board**

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SUBJECT: **ZB #224-08 & 224-26 1600 Summer Street, Zoning Map Change & Zoning Text Amendment**
APPLICANT: Summer Street Equity, LLC, Richard W. Redniss, 22 1st Corp.
DATE: July 08, 2024
MASTER PLAN: Master Plan Category 9 (Urban Mixed Use)
ZONING: R-MF (Residential Multi Family), C-L (Limited Commercial)

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

224-08	Zoning Map Change	Requesting a zoning map change from RM-F and C-L to C-G.
224-26	Zoning Text Change	Amending Appendix A to add a footnote.

Introduction

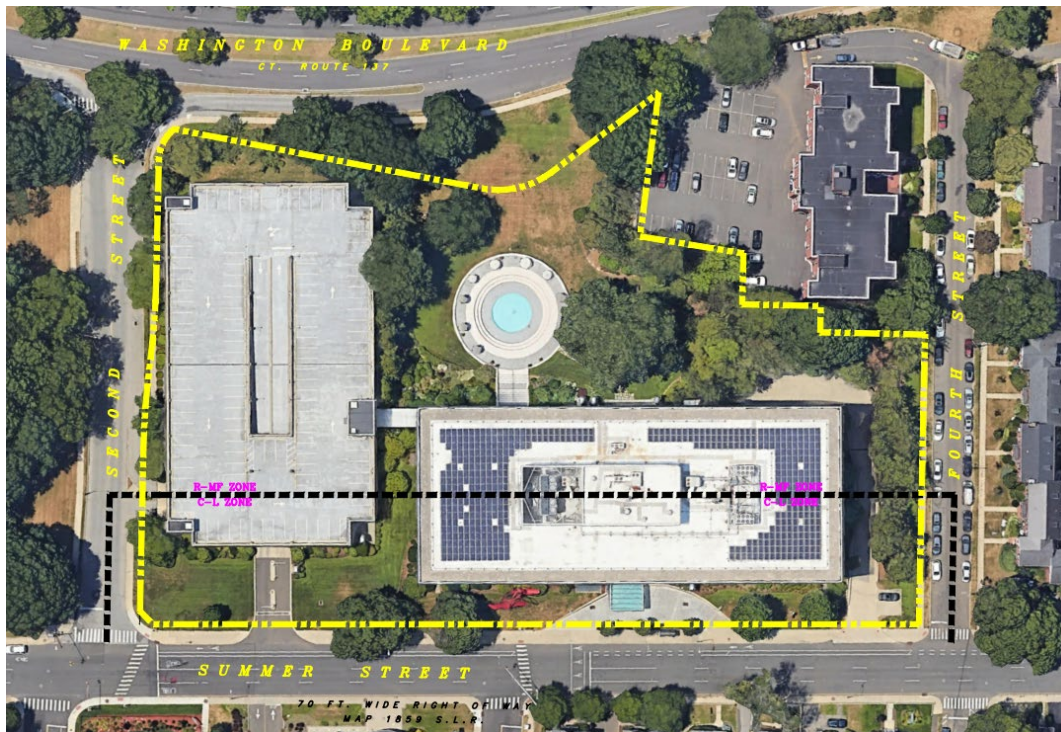
The Applicant requests a change in the Zoning Map for the property located at 1600 Summer Street to the C-G zoning district along with a related Zoning Text amendment to the C-G district standards. The property 1600 Summer Street is currently occupied by an office building which is currently vacant. There has been a decline in the demand for office space in Stamford which follows the regional and national trend. It is important for the City to allow the office buildings which are already vacant or facing imminent vacancy to be eligible for a wider variety of uses

including residential to ensure they remain productive for the City’s economy and keep the neighborhoods active.

The proposed map and text change will allow the building to be positioned for a conversion to residential use along with supporting retail uses.

Zoning Map Change

The proposed map change from RM-F and C-L to C-G will allow the entire site to be in the C-G zoning district thus eliminating the split zone condition. The site contains two buildings, the 272,800 sf office building and the 6 story parking garage which are both currently legally non-conforming. The building was constructed under older C-L and RM-F regulations along with Variance approval. The proposed C-G map change will remove the non-conformities of the existing building thus making it easier to reuse the building/site.



Zoning Text Amendment

The proposed changes, serve to limit the intensity of the C-G north of Downtown. Proposed changes include:

- a. Requiring Special Permit review for individual uses north of North Street that exceed 10,000sf of floor area (Art Gallery, Art or Antique Shop, Bed & Breakfast, Book Store, Camera Shop,*

Clothing Store, Confectionery Store, Custom Tailor, Dressmaker, Milliner, Dry Goods, Notions Store, Florist Shop, Gift Shop, Hotel, Hotel, Boutique, Hotel, Extended Stay, Inn, Jewelry Store, Retail and/or Repairs, Motel, Museum, Non Profit, Music Store, Newsstand, Variety Store, Pet Stores; Including Food & Accessories, Photographic Studio, Shoe Stores, Sporting Goods Store, Retail, Stationery Store, Tailor Shop, Textile Goods, Retail, and Theatre).

The proposed change will limit the size of the uses listed above. This will ensure that while the areas outside of Downtown have a variety of retail uses large format retail is subject to Zoning Board Special Permit review. The Zoning Board may also consider reviewing these projects through Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses or Administrative Review process versus Special Permit.

b. Amending Appendix B, footnote 4 (which permits premium density) to apply only to properties south of North Street.

While the base C-G district requires 1000 sf of lot area per family Footnote 4 allows higher densities for buildings with residential buildings with R-MF uses (500 sf of lot area per family) and mixed use buildings in Master Plan Category #11 (400 sf of lot area per family) by Special Permit. The proposed text will only allow the base residential density for C-G zoned property north of North Street. Staff supports this amendment which will limit the C-G located north of North Street to the base density standard to allow a transition in density.

c. Amending Appendix B, footnote 13 (which permits premium FAR & Height) to apply only to C-G properties south of North Street.

The last amendment is to limit the premium density and premium height to C-G properties south of North Street. Staff is ok with the amendment which is in line with the overall vision for the C-G district. Staff recommends that the applicant add the language “These standards shall only apply

to C-G parcels located south of North Street.” In the body of the footnote 13 paragraph rather than an asterix to the table showing Premium FAR and Premium Height.

The chart below included in the application materials shows a comparison of the permitted intensity of the C-G district within Downtown and outside.

C-G Intensity Comparison

	Downtown	Text Change/ "North" Area	Difference
1. Max. Building Height	150'	100'	-33%
2. Max. Building Coverage	80-100%	80-90%	-10%
3. Max. Floor Area Ratio	2.2	1.8	-18%
4. Max. Density (DU/Acre)	197	115	-42%

Notes

1. Footnote 13 permits Premium Height of up to 150'. Text would limit areas north of North Street to base height.
2. Footnote 7 permits up to 100% coverage for Downtown sites. Base standard is 80% and 90% for corner lots.
3. Footnote 13 permits Premium FAR up to 2.2. Text would limit areas north of North Street to base FAR.
4. Footnote 4 permits 400sf of lot area per family + commercial floor area trade-in + BMR bonus. Text would limit areas north of North Street to base of 1,000 sf per family (trade-in and BMR premiums still apply but are reduced).

Referral Comments

Planning Board

In a letter dated March 4, 2024 the Planning Board voted to recommend approval of the Zoning Map Change application found the request in general harmony with Master Plan Category 9 Urban Mixed Use. They also noted that the proposal aligned with the following Master Plan policies & strategies:

Strategy 3.A.3: Increase economic resiliency and diversity by encouraging modernization of office space and allowing for adaptive reuse.

Strategy 3.B.4: Manage growth by encouraging the reconfiguration of existing office and retail space to accommodate market trends and potential new users.

At a meeting held on June 25, the Planning Board reviewed the text amendment application and made a recommendation to approval the proposed text amendment application.

Environmental Protection Board

Robert Clausi, Executive Director, Environmental Protection Board in a memo dated February 22, 2024 noted EPB has no objections with the proposed map change. Further he provided a memo dated June 18, 2024 noted EPB has no objections with the text change.

Engineering Bureau

In a letter dated February 26, 2024, Willetta Capella noted the Engineering Department had no objections with the Zoning Map Change application 224-08.

Willetta Capella in a memo dated June 21, 2024 noted that the Engineering Department had no issues with the proposed text amendment application 224-26.

Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau

Frank Petise, Transportation Bureau Chief and Jianhong Wang, Transportation Planner in a letter dated February 25, 2024 noted that they do not have any comments on the Zoning Map Change application 224-08.

Summary

Staff believes that the proposed Zoning Map Change and Text Change will be beneficial for the City by allowing the potential conversion/redevelopment of the building located at 1600 Summer Street to other uses. These changes will promote housing production and enhancement of a site along the Summer Street corridor.