



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Union Square Zoning Amendment

Meeting #3

11.1.16

Union Square Zoning

Goals

1. Implement the Union Square core area goals of the Neighborhood Plan
(Other areas of the plan including Boynton and Milk Sq. come later)

Tonight's Agenda

1. Review of USQ Plan Fiscal Impact Study
2. Review of priority topics and areas for further conversation
3. Update on proposed amendments
4. MMUR next steps
5. Schedule of topics for forthcoming meetings



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Union Square Plan

Fiscal Impacts



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Priority Topics & Areas for Further Conversation

Union Square Zoning Update

Priority Topics

1. Quality / quantity / percentage of open space
2. Percentage of residential vs. commercial development
3. Sending and receiving lots for open space, affordable housing and art/creative space
4. Developer contributions to GLX and infrastructure
5. Developer contributions and system for distribution of public benefits
6. Fiscal impacts

Union Square Zoning Update

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Benefits

Public comments:

- We need a CBA

Our notes:

- A plan for the collection and distribution of benefits is forthcoming
- Going forward, zoning for CDSP project will require benefits for:
 - GLX
 - Infrastructure
 - Community benefitsto be addressed prior to approval of the CDSP

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Open Space

Public comments:

- Increase total percentage (to 20%, 25%, 30%, 34%, 35%)
- Define a percentage of space to be green
- Count green roofs
- Remove 'pedestrian circulation' from open space

Our notes:

- We want to simplify this concept of open space and require all open spaces in the CDSP plan area to be 'civic spaces'
- We don't want to count anything but these high quality open spaces
- Civic spaces have a required area of green space
- Our recommended language will show 15% for now
- We are working to address impacts/tradeoffs of higher numbers

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Mixed Use Ratio

Public comments:

- How do we address making sure that they don't build too much housing before building commercial
- How do we make sure land is not developed otherwise under the underlying zoning
- Other comments focused on MMUR ordinance (more info forthcoming)

Our notes:

- The use of a mixed-use ratio is already a significant
- We will increase the minimum area required to apply for a CDSP so that parcels cannot be excluded from it, and therefore not be excluded from the mixed use ratio
- Once land is proposed in a CDSP, it cannot be developed outside of the CDSP plan

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Off-site

Public comments:

- Do not allow off-site affordable housing and open space
- Set compelling reasons for off-site affordable housing
- Encourage off-site open space
- Don't permit off-site compliance beyond the land in the CDSP area

Our notes:

- Off-site compliance has many benefits
 - Better family housing
 - Better spaces for maker/arts uses
 - Larger open spaces (we are actually encouraging this)
- We will provide more guidance for how/when off-site affordable housing should be encouraged
- Civic space rule may actually encourage consolidating open spaces



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6. **Fiscal impacts**

Union Square Zoning Update

Areas for Further Conversation

1. Maximum size of retail spaces
 - Over 10,000 permitted only by special permit
2. Affordable commercial space
 - Legal review underway
3. Use of SRA “D-blocks” in a Coordinated Development Plan
 - Required to achieve a district plan
4. Family housing units
 - Incentives or requirements: for further discussion
5. Adequacy of maps
 - Legal review underway
6. HR district on D1 – neighborhood impacts
 - Neighborhood Plan would not permit it . . . But this is under review



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Other items (from the zoning overhaul)

1. Formula business requirements
2. Jobs Trust and Jobs Linkage
3. Green Area Ratio (along with other sustainability efforts)



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Staff Recommended Amendments

Union Square Zoning Update

Recommended Update

1. Coordinated Development review process by Planning Board
 - Add process explanation
 - CDSP process:
 1. Meeting with staff
 2. Neighborhood meeting
 3. DRC review
 4. Neighborhood meeting
 5. Planning Board hearing for Special Permit
 - Individual buildings require site/design plan review

2. Preliminary Review / Neighborhood Meeting process:
 - Meeting prior to submittal
 - Meeting between DRC review and hearing

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Recommended Update

3. Open Space
 - Require all open spaces as civic spaces – set for now at 15%
 - Adjust tree requirements
 - Further discussion of % required

4. Building design standards and guidelines / process for design review
 - Concern that architectural 'standards' was too prescriptive
 - Shift most design 'standards' to 'guidelines' and require DRC to review projects, compare against guidelines, and determine if the project meets them

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Recommended Update

Complete update should be provided to BOA
on Wednesday or Thursday

Complete update to be reviewed by
Planning Board on Thursday



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MMUR Next Steps

MMUR Next Steps

Our Goals: an Urban Employment Center

- Create a great Urban Employment Center
- Produce maximum tax benefit
- Produce tax benefit in reasonable time
- Support (through tax and/or developer contributions):
 - GLX
 - Infrastructure
 - Community Benefits
- Meet SomerVision goals for jobs
- Create marketable places with day/night activity
- Address housing / affordable housing needs

MMUR Next Steps

Urban Employment Centers

Kendall Square (Cambridge, MA)

Navy Yard (Washington, DC)

Pearl District (Portland, OR)

South Boston Waterfront (Boston, MA)

University Park (Cambridge, MA)

Rosslyn / Ballston (Arlington, VA)

MMUR Next Steps

Items to address:

Leading to answer three questions:

- a. Does a MMUR work?
- b. What is on each side of the ratio?
- c. What is the right ratio?

Impacts to measure?

- Challenges of developing an Urban Employment Center
- Speed of development
- Traffic demand
- Public benefits
- Affordable housing

MMUR Next Steps

Areas of Review

- a. 60% / 68% or another number?
- b. How big a project is necessary to build it as mixed use
- c. Where does retail / hotel / maker/arts spaces
- d. Underlying zoning



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Topics for Forthcoming Meetings

Forthcoming Meetings

November 3, 2016 – Planning Board

- Introduction to proposed amendments
- Recommendation to BOA

November 10, 2016 – Board of Aldermen

- Refer PB recommendation to Land Use Committee

November 16, 2016 – Land Use Committee

- Further discussion of categories of interest
- Review of PB recommendation
- Review of staff recommended amendments

November 29, 2016 - Land Use Committee

- Page by page review of ordinance



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