



City of Somerville
Zoning Amendment

Union Square
Zoning Amendment

Meeting #5

12.13.16

Presentation Topics

1. Website information
2. List of outstanding items/topics for January meetings
3. Updated maps
4. Presentation on open space



Printed Document Package

1. Website information
2. List of outstanding items/topics for January meetings
3. Updated maps
4. Presentation on open space
5. Updated fiscal impact analysis
6. Updated slides on old/new Zoning from 11.29, with corrections and cross references
7. Identification of items changed between July draft and November draft that were requested by Aldermen
8. Setback for sites abutting residential neighborhoods
9. Topographic Illustration from the Neighborhood Plan, showing views from Prospect Hill
10. Information regarding infrastructure/DIF and zoning





City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

1. Website Information



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

All Union Square Zoning
information is now available at:

<http://www.somervillema.gov/unionsquarezoning>



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

2. Topics For January Meetings

Meeting Topics & Pending Items for January

1. Items for further discussion/presentations:

- Community Benefits Strategy
- Off-site compliance for affordable housing
- Incorporating all D-parcels in the Neighborhood Development SP
- Family housing units
- Fiscal impacts/MMUR

2. Items for further drafting/development by staff:

- Formula business special permit
- Illustration of buildout under current and proposed zoning

3. Items for legal review:

- Affordable commercial space (legal review)
- Collecting and enforcing developer contributions





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3. Updated Maps

Updated maps

Handout maps have been provided to you tonight, as follows:

1. Current Zoning

- Base zoning map
- Map with landmarks (buildings and D parcels)

2. Proposed Underlying Zoning

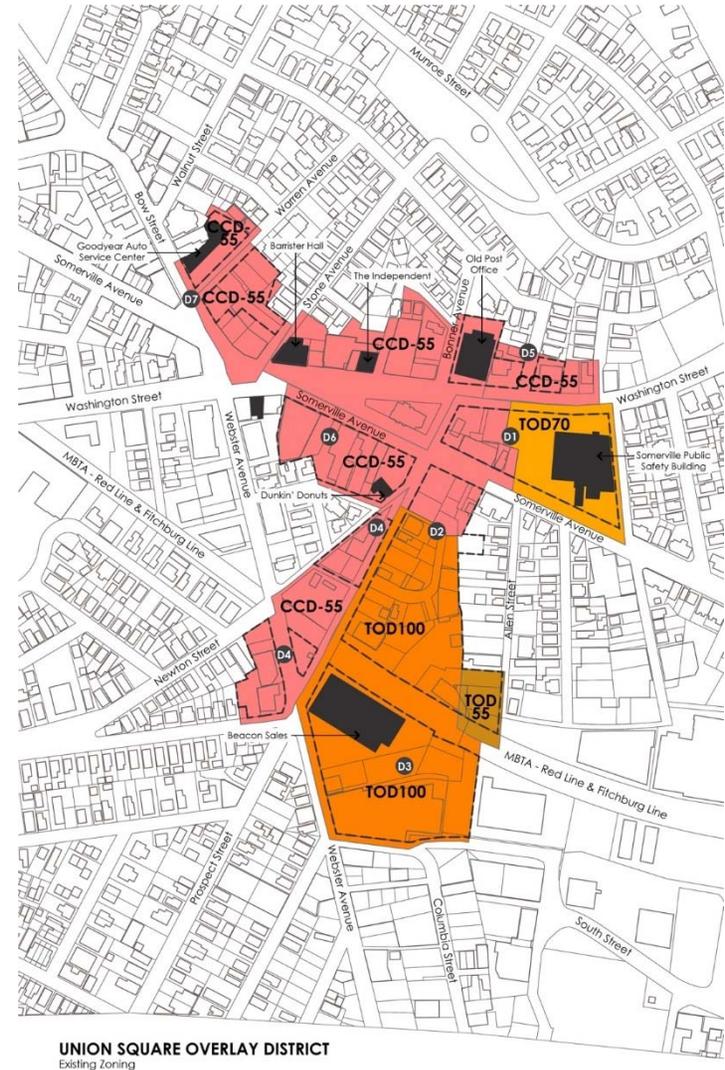
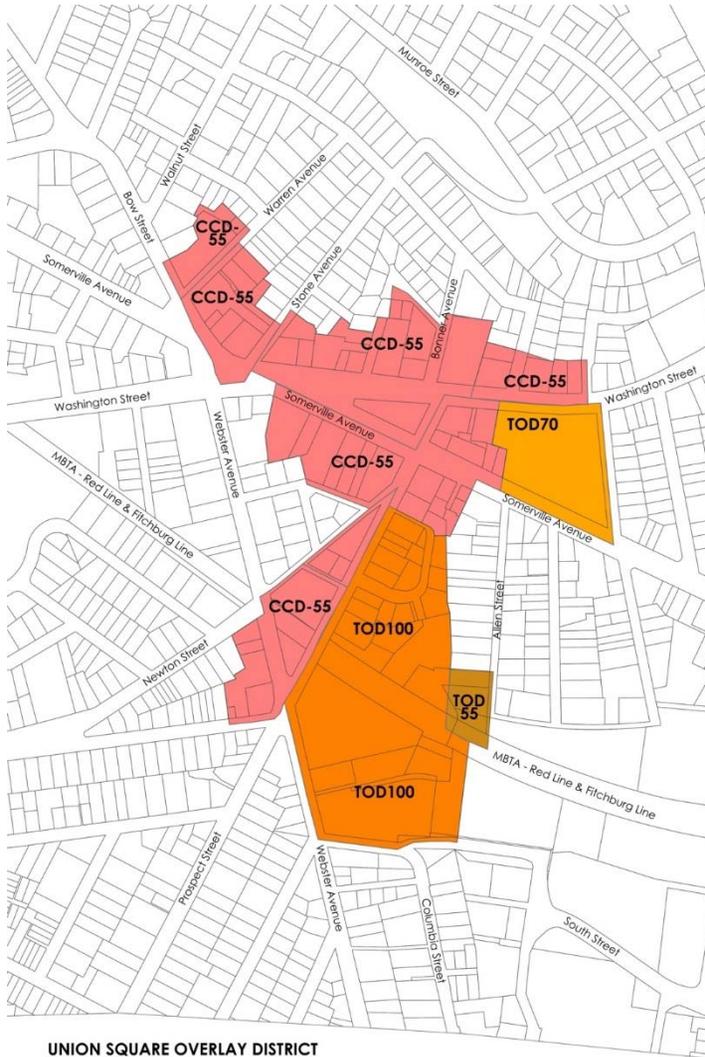
- Base zoning map
- Map with landmarks (buildings and D parcels)

3. Proposed Overlay

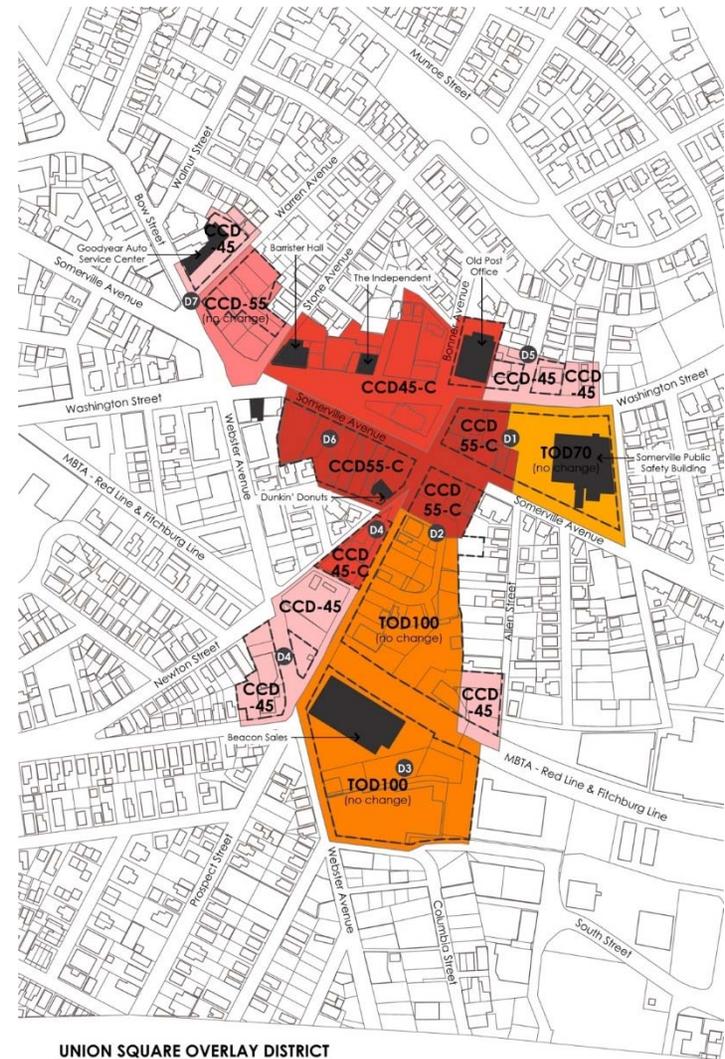
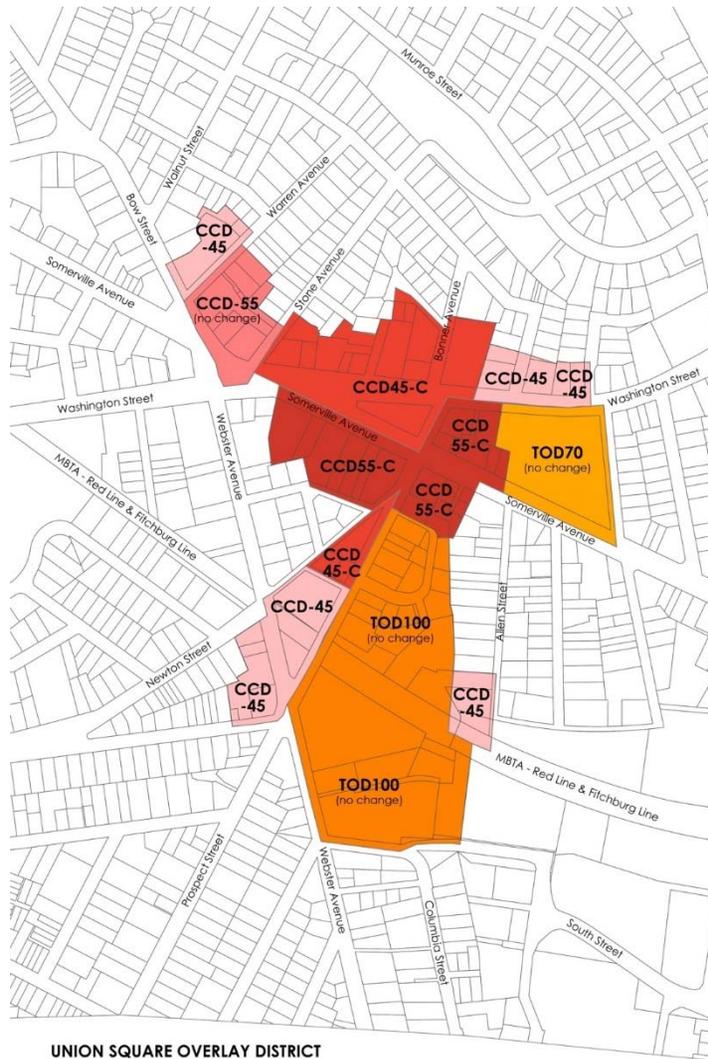
- Base zoning map
- Map with landmarks (buildings and D parcels)



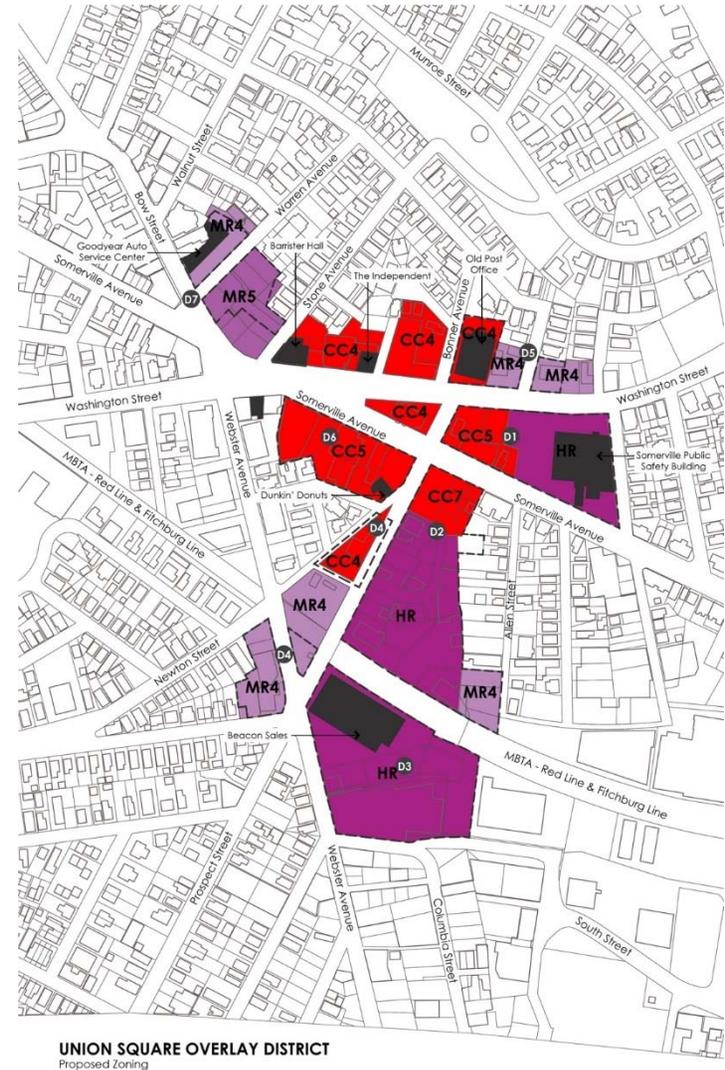
Current Zoning



Proposed Underlying Zoning



Proposed Overlay





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4. Open Space

Open Space

What's really important?



Open Space

What's really important?

A. What makes great urban places



Open Space

What's really important?

A. What makes great urban places

AND

B. What achieves our SomerVision goal



Open Space

What's really important?

A. What makes great urban places

AND

B. What achieves our SomerVision goal

While we also worry about meeting other development goals, including new tax revenue and the GLX payment, this is NOT the primary driver of the Open Space number.



Open Space

What's really important?

A. What makes great urban places

AND

B. What achieves our SomerVision goal

While we also worry about meeting other development goals, including new tax revenue and the GLX payment, this is NOT the primary driver of the Open Space number.

But...



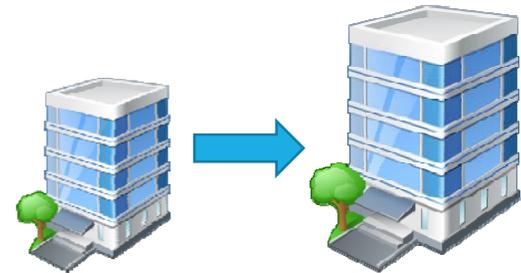
Open Space

The Problem with Increasing open space

If we increase open spaces beyond the Neighborhood Plan recommendation, we either need to:

A. Increase height and bulk of remaining buildings

Add stories to each tower and office/lab building



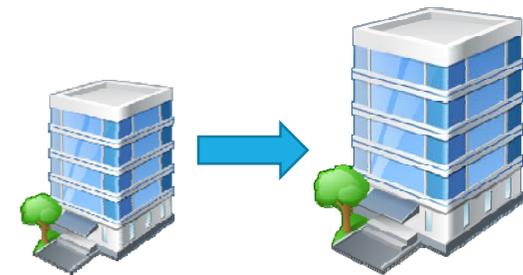
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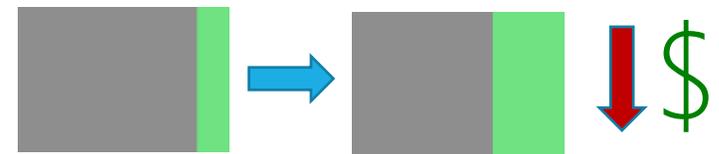
A. Increase height and bulk of remaining buildings

Add stories to each tower and office/lab building



OR

B. Remove development capacity from the plan, therefore reducing our tax revenue and developer contributions to public benefits



Reduce total development value by some %



Open Space

The way we discuss open space

Open space

As defined in most commercial mixed-use developments includes:

- High quality public spaces
- Landscape areas on site
- Public sidewalks created / improved by developers

In some cases also includes:

- Rooftop gardens
- Green roofs
- Civic buildings
- Bodies of water



Open Space

The way we discuss open space

Civic Space

This is our own creation for high-quality publically accessible spaces:

- Includes a percentage of green area
- Required amount of plantings
- Seating requirements
- Etc.

Nothing like this exists in our code today.

Or, as far as we know, any other code of it's type.



Example Civic Spaces

Neighborhood Park

A civic space type designed for active and passive recreation with features and facilities that support the immediate neighborhood.

Examples:

Perry Park
Albion Street Park
Walnut Street Park

- Size: 8,000 sf-2 acres



Example Civic Spaces

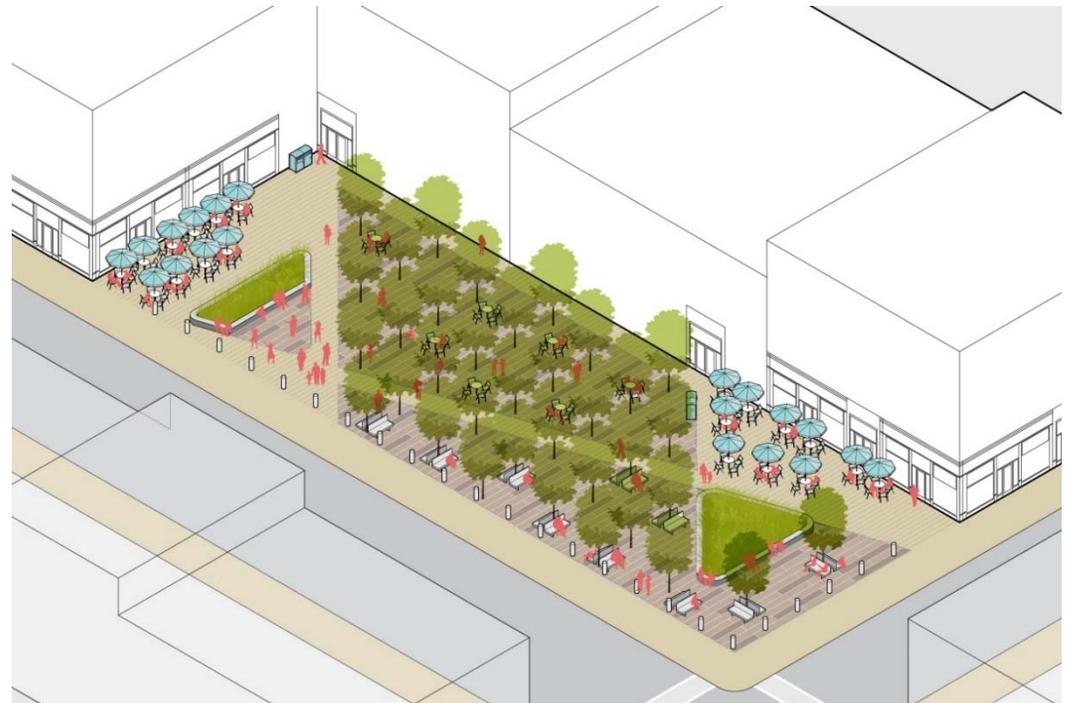
Plaza

A civic space type designed for passive recreation, civic purposes, and commercial activities, with landscape consisting primarily of hardscape. Plazas are generally located in activity centers or the nexus of major circulation routes.

Examples:

Statue Park (Davis Sq.) Plaza
Union Square Plaza

- Size: 8,000 sf-1.5 acres



Example Civic Spaces

Pocket Park

A civic space type designed for passive recreation consisting of vegetation and a place to sit outdoors.

Examples:

Quincy Street Park
Symphony Park
Stone Place Park

- Size: 800-10,000sf



Example Civic Spaces

Playground

A civic space type primarily designed as a play area for children. Playgrounds may be freestanding or incorporated as a subordinate feature of a regional park, community park, neighborhood park, or public common.

Examples:

Walnut Street Playground
Grimmons Park
Chuckie Harris Park

- Size: 2,500 sf-25,000 sf



Open Space

The way we discuss open space:

Pedestrian circulation space

This is our REQUIRED METRIC in the July 2016 Union Square zoning – as submitted:

- Includes some pedestrian areas on the private lots
- Includes some areas that are landscaped but not necessarily civic spaces
- Includes civic spaces

In the July 2016 draft, this metric was set at 15%



Open Space

Three Different Metrics, Equal Area

Civic Space
(quality public
spaces only) – 8.2%



Open Space

Three Different Metrics, Equal Area

Civic Space
(quality public
spaces only) – 8.2%



Equivalent Pedestrian
Circulation Space
(when including publicly
accessible landscape
areas and sidewalk
additions) – 15%



Open Space

Three Different Metrics, Equal Area

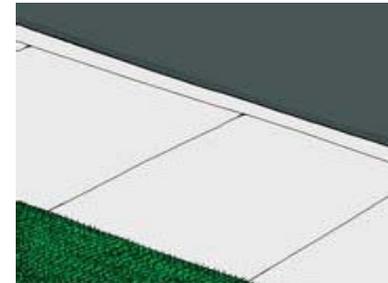
Civic Space
(quality public
spaces only) – 8.2%



Equivalent Pedestrian
Circulation Space
(when including publicly
accessible landscape
areas and sidewalk
additions) – 15%



Equivalent Open Space
(when also including
private landscaping areas
and full sidewalks) – 30%



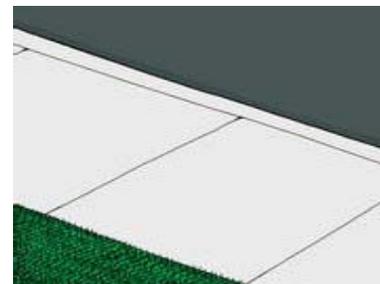
Open Space

Increasing Civic Space to 15%

Civic Space (quality public spaces only) – 15%



Equivalent Open Space (when including all landscape areas, sidewalk additions and full sidewalks) – 33%



Open Space

Increasing Civic Space to 15%

Results:

Turn lots 5.2 and 5.3 into open space

- Remove 50k sf commercial space
- Remove 55k sf residential space





Union Square development with current Civic Space requirement

- Bright green areas represent Civic Space
- Dark grey and dark green areas show buildings and landscaping/access areas



Same Union Square development increasing Civic Space requirement to 15%

- Areas outlined in red are converted to Civic Space
- Two lots (shown above) at Washington St. need to be converted to Civic Space



Open Space

Increasing Civic Space to 15%

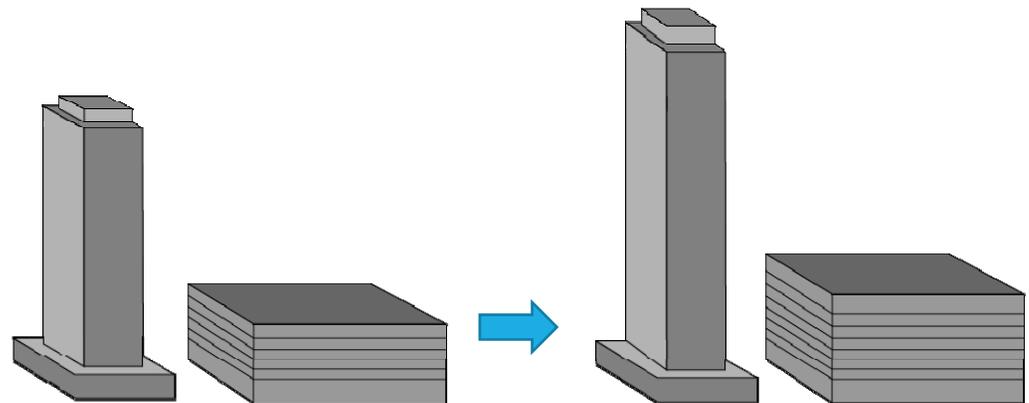
Results:

Turn lots 5.2 and 5.3 into open space

- Remove 50k sf commercial space
- Remove 55k sf residential space

To make up this space, and pay for it to be created, it would require:

- Adding 8 floors of residential tower (capped at 20 normally)
- Adding 2 floors to D6 office (normally 6)

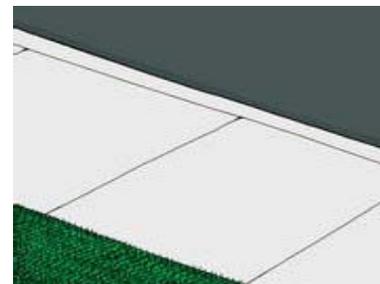


Open Space

Increasing Civic Space to 20%

Civic Space (quality public spaces only) – 20%

Equivalent Open Space (when including all landscape areas, sidewalk additions and full sidewalks) – 37%



Open Space

Increasing Civic Space to 20%

Results:

Turn lots 5.2, 5.3, 4.1 and 4.3 into open space

- Remove 118k sf commercial space
- Remove 137k sf residential space





Union Square development with Civic Space requirement increased to 15%

- Areas outlined in red are converted to Civic Space
- Two lots (shown above) at Washington St. need to be converted to Civic Space



Same Union Square development with Civic Space requirement increased to 20%

- Two additional lots (shown above) at Prospect St. and Webster Ave. need to be converted to Civic Space



Open Space

Increasing Civic Space to 20%

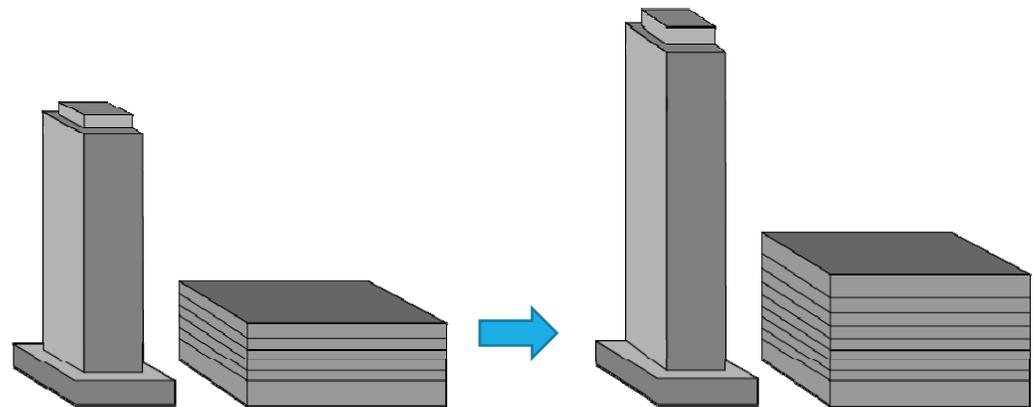
Results:

Turn lots 5.2, 5.3, 4.1 and 4.3 into open space

- Remove 118k sf commercial space
- Remove 137k sf residential space

To make up this space, and pay for it to be created, it would require:

- Adding 8 floors to EACH residential tower
- Adding 3 floors to D6 office



Open Space

Updates

Questions to answer:

1. What metric(s) do we want to use?
2. What is the number we want to achieve?
3. Does it help us reach our objectives:
 - Making Great Urban Places
 - Meeting SomerVision Goals



Open Space

Updates

Tools to address these answers:

1. Maps and information about existing places
2. Maps with information about the impacts of the different options in Union Square
3. Information about the impacts of the trade-offs of different open space metrics

