



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Union Square Zoning Amendment

An Update

10.25.16

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)
2. Permit the Union Square Master Developer to execute a strategy to implement their portion of the plan
3. Make related changes to underlying zoning to protect the neighborhood from undesirable one-off proposals
4. Allow for a development program that can generate benefits:
 - Tax revenues
 - General Fund
 - DIF for local area infrastructure
 - Developer contributions
 - To GLX
 - To area infrastructure
 - To public benefits



Tonight's Agenda

Updates on Union Square Zoning

1. Review of priority topics and areas for further conversation
2. Schedule of topics for forthcoming meetings
3. Tonight's priority topics:
 - Percentage of open space
 - Percentage of commercial / residential





City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

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



Fiscal Impacts

A few notes

- Appendix A of the Union Square Plan identifies fiscal impacts (page 254 of the plan summarizes Appendix A)
 - Average of \$5.14 million per year in NET new fiscal benefit from the Union Square side of the plan over 30 years
 - Assumes that ALL infrastructure costs are covered by taxes from new development (no developer payments / state grants / etc.)
 - Incorporates extensive analysis of school costs and city service costs
- **Carson Bise from TischlerBise is available to join us on November 1, 2016**



Union Square Zoning Update

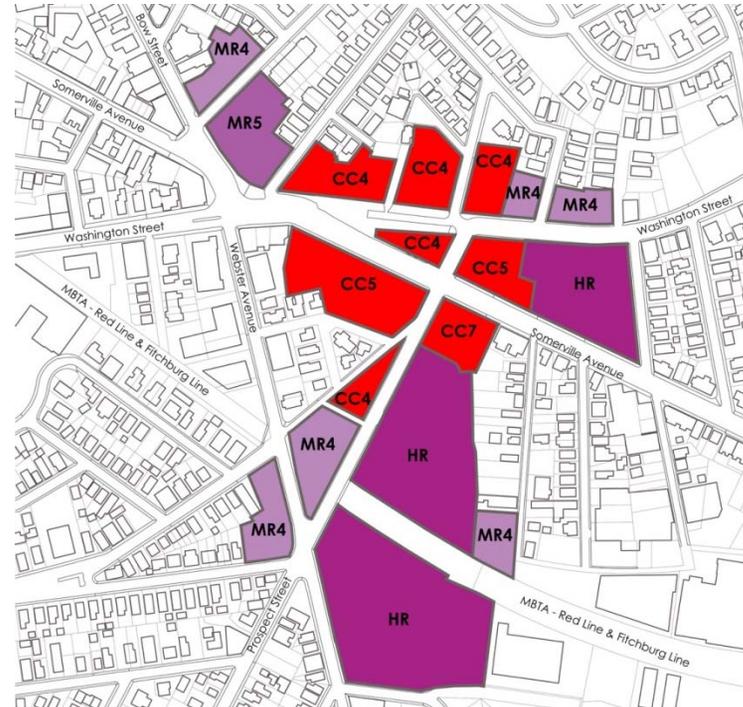
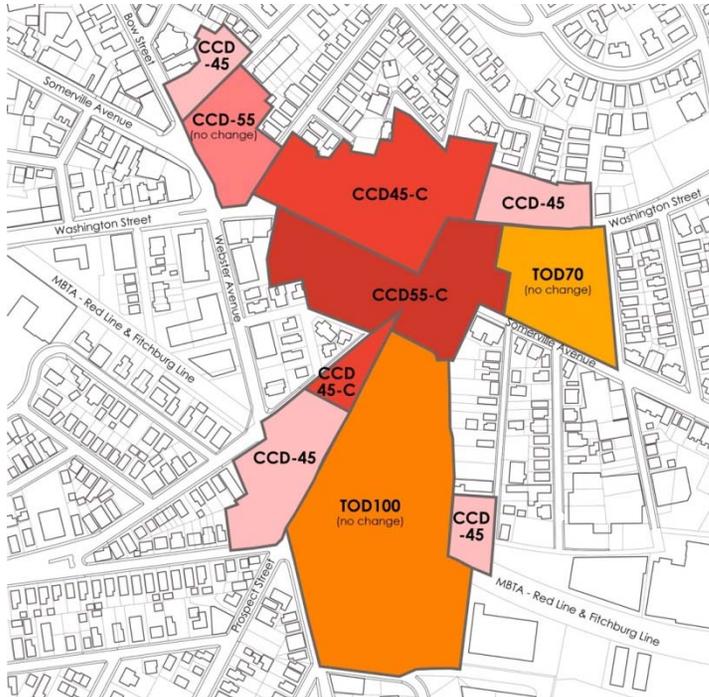
Areas for Further Conversation

1. Clarification of zoning language in a number of areas
2. Maximum size of retail spaces
3. Coordinated Development review process by Planning Board
4. Use of SRA "D-blocks" in a Coordinated Development Plan
5. Building design standards and guidelines / process for design review
6. Methods for achieving commercial growth
7. Family housing units
8. Adequacy of maps



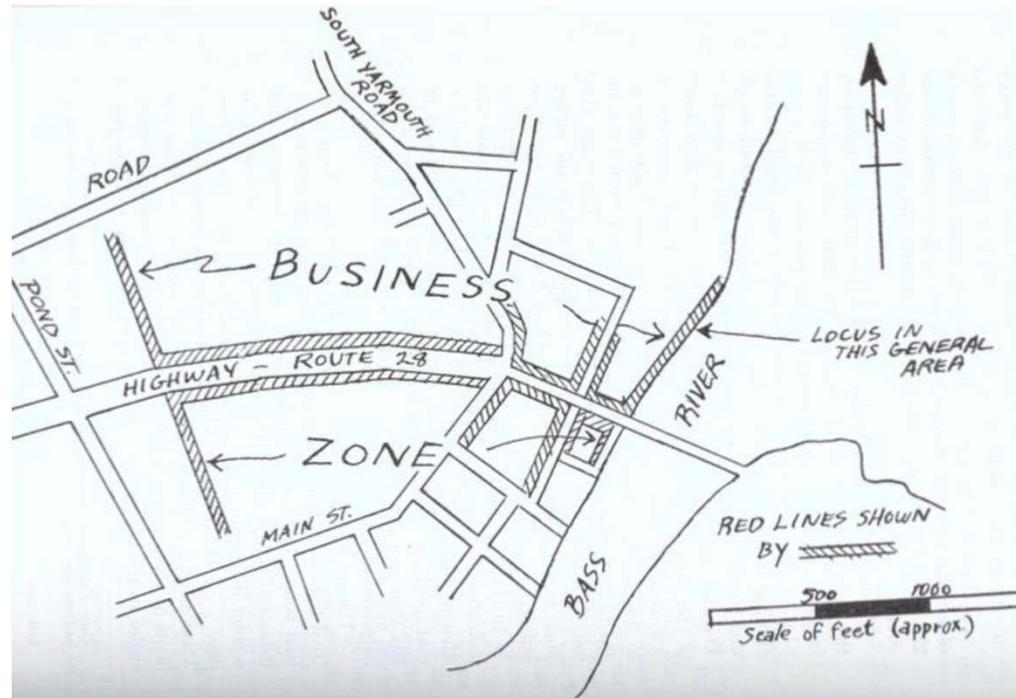
Adequacy of Maps

Base District & Overlay



Adequacy of Maps

Maki vs. Yarmouth (340 Mass. 207)



Mass appeals court:

"We conclude, nevertheless, that the intention of the draftsman, adopted by the town in the by-law, with respect to the locus can be sufficiently ascertained."



Union Square Zoning Update

Overhaul topics

1. Formula business requirements
2. Jobs Trust and Jobs Linkage
3. Green Area Ratio





City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Topics for Forthcoming Meetings

Forthcoming Meetings

Today – Land Use Committee

- Percentage of open space required
- Percentage of commercial/residential split

November 1, 2016 – Land Use Committee

- Fiscal Impacts (Carson Bise)
- Introduction to proposed amendments
- Updates on public benefits programs

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 29, 2016 - Land Use Committee

- Page by page review of ordinance





City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Tonight's Priority Topics



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Open Space

Open Space

Current Types of Open Spaces

Definitions:

Landscape: The improvement of land as passive outdoor space, through the planting and maintenance of live plants . . . may include some natural or manufactured materials including . . . walkways, screens, walls, fences, benches . . . may also include other non-living materials used as components of a plan for improving outdoor space, such as rocks, pebbles, sand, bark mulch, landscape pavers . . .

Open Space: Area uncovered by buildings, roads, driveways and parking areas, or other accessory manmade structures not meeting the definition of landscaping.

Pervious Area: The area of a lot covered by surfaces or materials that allows for the movement or passage of water into soils below.

Useable Open Space: Open space accessible to and designed for use by the public and limited to use as landscaped area and/or non-profit recreational uses.



Open Space

Proposed Types of Open Spaces

Definitions:

Pedestrian Circulation Space - Lot space that is used for:

- Increased sidewalk width
- Mid-block passage
- Pocket parks
- Publicly-accessible courtyards
- Outdoor recreation

Civic Space - An outdoor open space designed for to support social and recreational activities. Civic space types are defined by the combination of certain characteristics, including the interrelationship between intended use, size, landscaping, and abutting uses.



Open Space

How Overlay Open Space Works

Each lot provides 15% of lot as Pedestrian Circulation Space

If space required is greater than 6,000 square feet (sf), it must be in the form of a 'civic space'

If space required is less than 6,000 sf an applicant may:

1. Provide on-site 'pedestrian circulation space'
2. Move it to a receiving lot, to provide a high quality space
3. Make a payment in lieu of open space



Open Space

Current & Proposed Requirements

Area	Landscaped Area %	Pervious Area %	Useable Open Space	Pedestrian Circulation Space
RA and RB Zone	25%	35%	none	-
NB and BA Zones	10%	none	none	-
TOD Zones	10%-20%	none	0%-15%	-
CCD Zones	10%	none	none	-
Assembly Square	25%*	none	12.5%*	-
Union Overlay-MR4/MR5	25%	10%	-	15%
Union Overlay-CC/HR	none	none	-	15%

*ASQ open space is permitted on development lots OR elsewhere in the PUD area, while all other districts require open space to be in the development lot area.



Open Space

Current & Proposed Requirements

Area	Landscaped Area %	Pervious Area %	Useable Open Space	Pedestrian Circulation Space
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TOD Zones	10%-20%	none	0%-15%	-
Assembly Square	25%*	none	12.5%*	-
Union Overlay-CC/HR	none	none	-	15%

*ASQ open space is permitted on development lots OR elsewhere in the PUD area, while all other districts require open space to be in the development lot area.



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

OR

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



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 built of remaining buildings

Add 10 stories to each tower & 2 stories to each office/lab building

OR

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

Estimated reduction of total value = 18%



Open Space

The Totals

Union Square / Boynton Yards:

12.32 acres of NEW public space PLUS the shared streets

Plus existing public space (13.48 acres in the Union Square neighborhood):

Union Square Plaza	0.54 acres
Osgood Park	0.40 acres
Quincy Street Park	0.12 acres
Nunziato Field	1.48 acres
Walnut Street Park	0.29 acres
Prospect Hill	2.30 acres
Milk Row Cemetery	0.69 acres
Perry Park	1.27 acres
Lincoln Park	6.21 acres
Stone Place Park	0.18 acres



Open Space

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AND

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Open Space

What's really important?

A. What makes great urban places

Are we getting it right?



Open Space

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)



Kendall Square



KENDALL SQUARE, CAMBRIDGE, MA

Commercial	2,642,000 sq ft
Housing	1,400 Units
Civic Space	11%
Commercial/Residential Split	63/37



Navy Yard



NAVY YARD, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Commercial	2,200,000 sq ft
Housing	2,800 Units
Civic Space	14%
Commercial/Residential Split	41/59



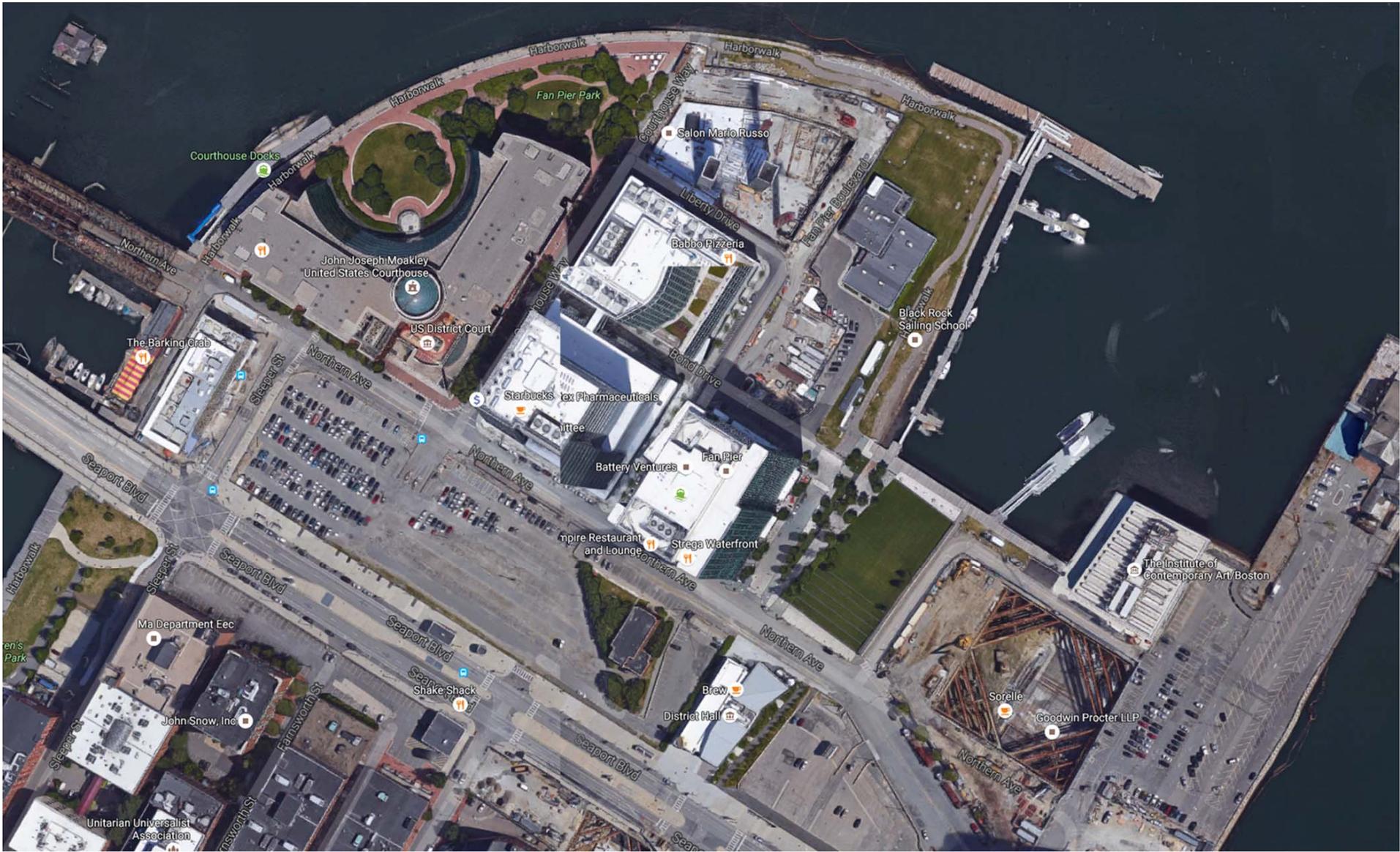
Pearl District



PEARL DISTRICT, PORTLAND, OR

Commercial	450,000 sq ft
Housing	1,700 Units
Civic Space	17%
Commercial/Residential Split	19/81









South Boston Waterfront

Open space = 19.8%

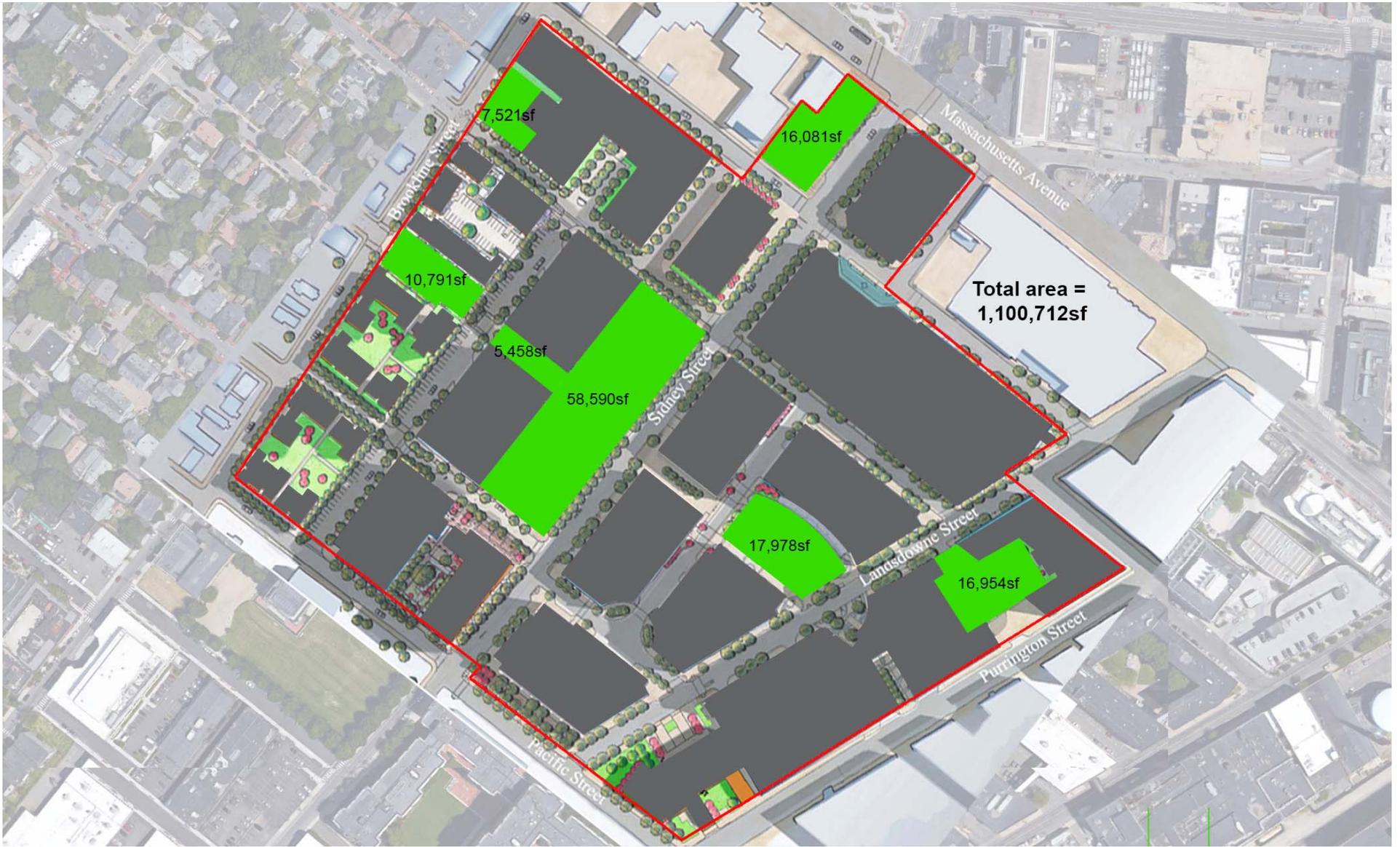




City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

Mayor Joseph A Curtatone
Office of Strategic Planning
& Community Development





University Park in Cambridge

Open space = 12.1%

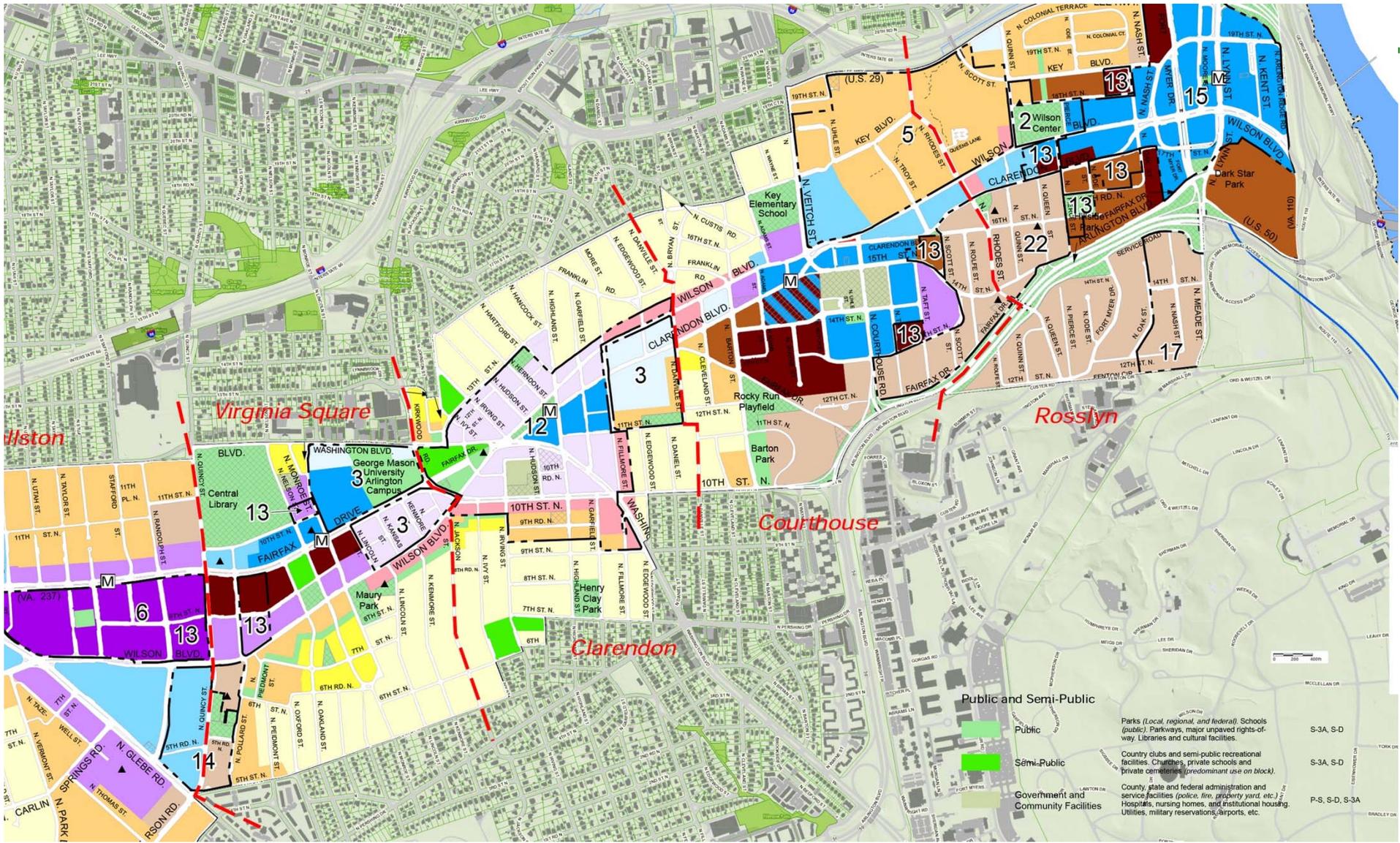


Rosslyn / Ballston Corridor



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Can We Have Too Much Open Space?



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Can We Have Too Much Open Space?



Photo: [Deividi Correa](#)



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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?

B. What achieves our SomerVision goal

Are we getting this right?



SomerVision

Objectives for Open & Civic Space

- Improve our shared neighborhood **environmental quality**
- Approach our **waterfront as a regional ecological resource**, balancing community access and ecological health
 - *The City, in partnership with DCR, EPA and others, should improve the water quality and expand the recreational use of the Mystic River and the Alewife Brook corridors*
- Create and program a **network of vibrant public open spaces and shared use paths** throughout the city that are multi-purpose, promote healthy living, and reflect changing recreational interests and cultural opportunities
 - *The City should partner with local neighborhood organizations on the design, programming, and increased volunteer participation in public parks and open spaces*
 - *The City should design new and renovated public open spaces using green technologies and methods that increase permeability, reduce energy costs and conserve public resources*
- Design and maintain a **healthy and attractive public realm** that fosters community connection
 - *The City should plan public realm renovations with attention to energy efficiency, environmental design, visual clarity and ease of maintenance*
 - *The City should continue to increase opportunities for urban agriculture*



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125 new acres of publically accessible
open space

“high-quality & well programmed community space”



City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

Mayor Joseph A Curtatone
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& Community Development

Meeting SomerVision Goals

Categories of Open Space: Getting to 125 Acres

1. Spaces produced by new zoning
 - On-Site publicly accessible open space in mixed-use projects
 - Land purchased with off-site open-space payments
 - “Civic Space” in special districts

2. Spaces produced outside of new zoning
 - Space built, reclaimed or planned since 2010 (prior to new zoning)
 - City investment in new recreation areas and open space
 - New Pedestrian / Urban Realm and New / Converted shared streets



Built, Reclaimed or Planned since 2010

Total Space Built, Reclaimed, or Planned

North Street Veterans	0.10 acres
Chuckie Harris:	0.38 acres
Zero New Washington:	0.55 acres
Symphony:	0.19 acres
Baxter Park (reclaimed):	6.10 acres
Community Path Extension:	1.50 acre
Maxwell's 'Green':	0.50 acres
Assembly Row/Partners:	13.00 acres
Draw 7 (reclaimed):	9.00 acres (planned)
Total:	31.3 acres



Meeting SomerVision Goals

Built / Planned Since 2010 31.30 acres

Created Through New Zoning:

On-Site Open Spaces: 10-12 acres

Civic Spaces: 30-35 acres

Land Purchased (Payment in Lieu): 30 acres

Created Outside of New Zoning:

City investment in new Open Space 0 acres

New Pedestrian / Urban Realm: 12 acres

New / Converted shared streets: 8 acres

Total: 125 acres



On-Site Open Space

1. When required space is less than a certain size, allow an in-lieu payment.
- Smaller spaces not as viable when developer built
 - Need for spaces 6,000 SF and larger



On-Site Open Space

1. When required space is less than a certain size, allow an in-lieu payment.

Cost:

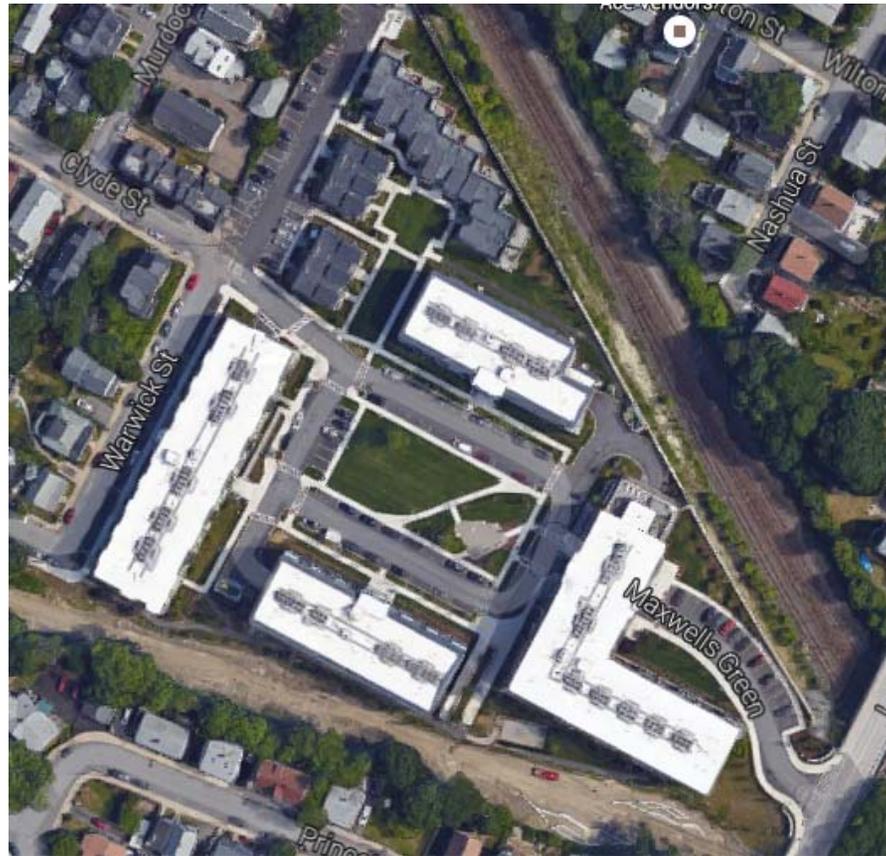
1 acre of public space

- \$2 million avg. to acquire land
- \$2 million avg. to design and construct
- About \$45 per square foot for each; \$90 total



On-Site Open Space

2. When required space is less than a certain size, allow sites to consolidate required space from multiple sites as a larger space located at a different site.



On-Site Open Space

3. When required space is more than a certain size, require it be designed as a civic space type.



Plaza



Neighborhood Park



Civic Space

Civic Space is “open space designed for to support social and recreational activities.”

Different Types of Civic Space

1. Definition: defined by the interrelationship between intended use, size, landscaping, and abutting uses.
2. Dimensional Standards
 - Size
 - Trees
 - Permeable
 - Landscape
3. Development Standards (Physical)
4. Design Guidelines (Qualitative)



Civic Space Types

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



Civic Space Types

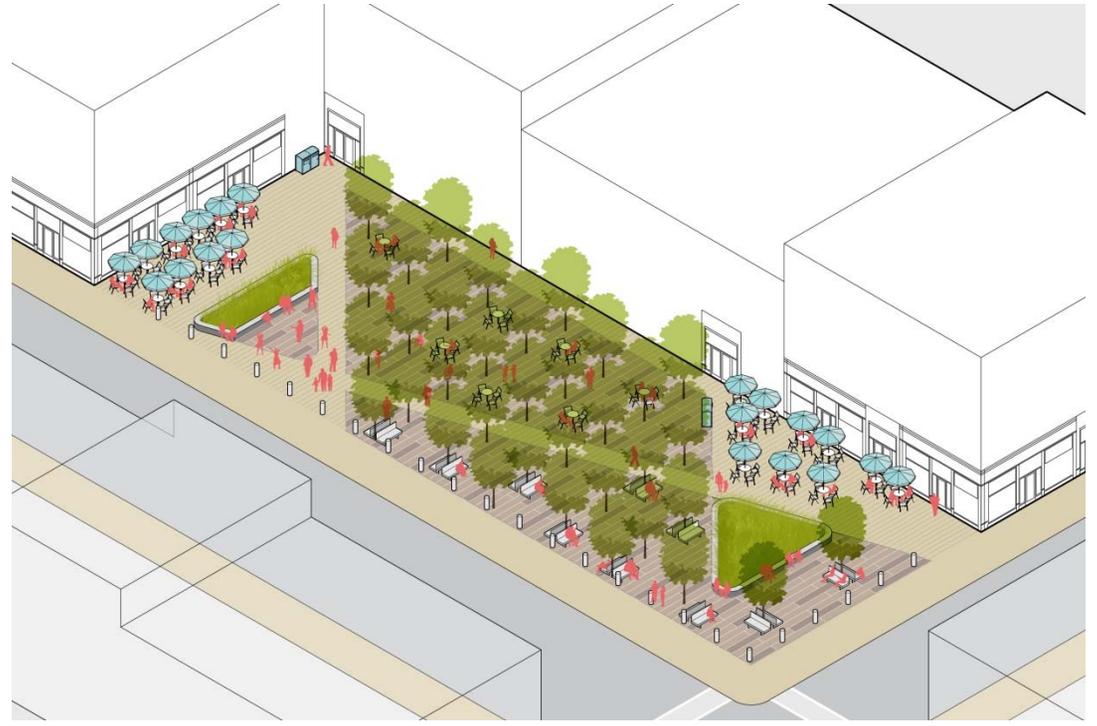
Plaza

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



Civic Space Types

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



Civic Space Types

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: 2,500sf-25,000sf



Meeting SomerVision Goals

Built / Planned Since 2010 31.30 acres

Created Through New Zoning:

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Total: 125 acres





City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

**Residential
Commercial
Percentages**

SomerVision

SomerVision:

- 30,000 jobs
- 6,000 housing units

Assumptions:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| • 350 sf per job | 10,500,000 sf (61%) |
| • 1100 sf per housing unit | 6,600,000 sf (39%) |

Divisions:

- 85% across the 'transformational' districts – allocated proportionally
- No particular instructions fro post-2030 development



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Appendix 2

The SomerVision Numbers: Areas to Transform

Areas to Transform

What's it all about?

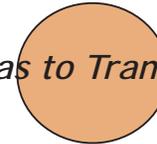
Industrial districts on the eastern and southern edges of Somerville represent a major opportunity for our City to achieve its goals of job growth, open space creation, and housing development. By improving infrastructure and updating zoning regulations, the City can help property owners in these areas to realize the full value of their land while steering development pressure away from other parts of Somerville.



Waste Transfer site in Brickbottom

Page 142

Areas to Transform



Assembly Square	125 acres
Inner Belt	115 acres
Brickbottom	65 acres
Boynton Yards	35 acres
Union Square	25 acres
<hr/>	
Total	365 acres

SomerVision - Somerville's Comprehensive Plan



SomerVision

Appendix 2 The SomerVision Numbers: Share of City Growth

Where does it All Go?

The SomerVision Numbers were developed in a series of meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The process began with land area. In places like Assembly Square, roughly 80% of the total land area can be used for buildings, with 20% reserved for roads, sidewalks and other infrastructure. Based on this buildable area, a proportional share of growth was calculated. These shares add up to 85% of the total citywide growth for 2010 to 2030.

	<i>Land Area</i>	<i>Buildable Area</i>	<i>Share of City Growth</i>
Assembly Square	125 acres	100 acres	29% of growth
Inner Belt	115 acres	92 acres	26% of growth
Brickbottom	65 acres	52 acres	15% of growth
Boynton Yards	35 acres	28 acres	8% of growth
Union Square	25 acres	20 acres	6% of growth
Total	365 acres	292 acres	85% of growth



Assembly Square, prior to construction of Assembly Row



Boynton Yards



Brickbottom



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Balance Jobs to Housing Ratio

Appendix 2

The SomerVision Numbers: Share of Job Growth

Job Growth

What's it all about?

Successful cities have a balance between jobs and residents. Today Somerville has 45,000 workers, but only 20,000 jobs. The SomerVision Plan sets a goal of creating 30,000 new jobs to bring these numbers into better balance. Benefits of job growth include adding daytime customers for our great local small businesses, and reducing the tax burden on Somerville's homeowners. Growth will depend on economic factors, as well as needed infrastructure improvements in our Areas to Transform.

Page 144

How Much Space per Job?

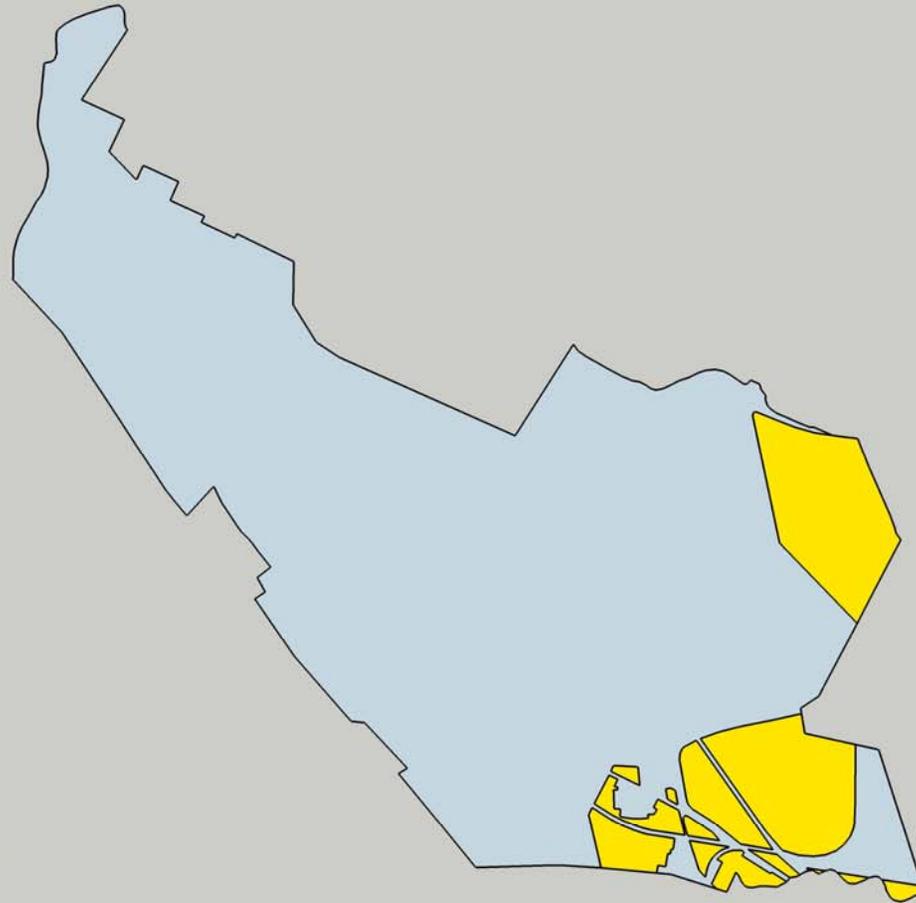
On average, commercial buildings require about 350 square feet of space per job. Using this conservative estimate, we can calculate the space needed to meet the SomerVision target of 30,000 jobs (roughly 10.5 million square feet). Approximately 9 million square feet should be located in the Areas to Transform. For comparison, University Park in Cambridge currently has roughly 4,000 jobs (2 million commercial square feet) and 400 housing units on 25 acres of land.

	Share of City Growth	New Jobs	New Commercial Square Feet
Assembly Square	29%	8,500 jobs	3 million
Inner Belt	26%	8,000 jobs	2.8 million
Brickbottom	15%	4,500 jobs	1.6 million
Boynton Yards	8%	2,500 jobs	0.9 million
Union Square	6%	1,800 jobs	0.6 million
Total	85%	25,500 jobs	9 million

SomerVision - Somerville's Comprehensive Plan



SomerVision



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Zoning Overhaul

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What has changed:

1. Acres available are smaller than estimated (75-85% of total estimate)
2. Average housing units are smaller than estimated (900sf average instead of 1100)
3. Floor area per job is smaller (250sf instead of 350sf)
4. Timeframe for development is not linear (infrastructure coming to Union Sq)



SomerVision

What has changed:

1. Acres available are smaller than estimated (75-85% of total estimate)
2. Average housing units are smaller than estimated (900sf average instead of 1100)
3. Floor area per job is smaller (250sf instead of 350sf)
4. Timeframe for development is not linear (infrastructure coming to Union Sq)

Jobs and Housing:

$30000/6000 = 5$ jobs per housing unit

5 jobs = 1250 sf

1 housing unit = 900 sf

Therefore for every 2150sf of development, a minimum of 1250 (58.13%) should create jobs



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Jobs and Housing:

$30000/6000 = 5$ jobs per housing unit

5 jobs = 1250 sf

1 housing unit = 900 sf

Therefore for every 2150sf of development, a minimum of 1250 (58.13%) should create jobs

IF we offset due to current construction, AND need 6 jobs/housing unit

Therefore, for every 2400sf of development, a minimum of 1500 (62.5%) should create jobs



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Therefore we have::

- A need for 60% commercial development / 40% residential development
- A need for 5:1 jobs/housing ratio



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What can we count on:

- A need for 60% commercial development / 40% residential development
- A need for 5:1 jobs/housing ratio

What does that mean:

- Development over all districts from 2010-2030 should reflect these ratios



SomerVision

What can we count on:

- A need for 60% commercial development / 40% residential development
- A need for 5:1 jobs/housing ratio

What does that mean:

- Development over all districts from 2010-2030 should reflect these ratios

What does that NOT mean:

- We need to meet these ratios on every lot
- We need to meet these ratios in every zoning district



SomerVision

What does that mean:

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SomerVision

What does that mean:

- Development over all districts from 2010-2030 should reflect these ratios

What does that NOT mean:

- We need to meet these ratios on every lot
- We need to meet these ratios in every zoning district

What else should it mean:

- Development post-2030 should retain the same ratios
- Some areas could be more residential or more commercial
- Large-scale development areas should imbed these strategies in zoning



Commercial/Residential Splits

Questions about strategy?

- a. The 60% commercial includes:
 - a. Office
 - b. Lab
 - c. Retail (capped at 10%)
 - d. Hotel
 - e. Maker space
 - f. Arts work space
 - g. Industrial Space
- b. The 60/40 split is required over areas with coordinated development planning, which typically requires multiple lots
- c. Underlying zoning in most of these areas will not permit ANY residential
- d. The 60/40 number is ambitious, but the development community remains engaged in achieving it through Union Square and Boynton Yards.





City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

**Residential
Commercial
Percentages**