



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

June 24, 2010

Honorable Alderman Thomas Taylor
City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: Board Order #188944
Status of Report on RA and RB zoning districts

Alderman Taylor:

Please be advised that OSPCD is in receipt of your Board Order #188944, dated March 11, 2010, which requested that the Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development "provide the Board with an update on the review of RA & RB districts . . . addressing such concerns as neighborhood character, congestion, impact on the quality of life and encroachment."

OSPCD staff is in the process of preparing a comprehensive report on the RA and RB zoning districts, and challenges with appropriate infill development, preservation, and protection of neighborhood within those districts. In addition to the work of Planning Staff on this report, the Neighborhoods Committee of the SomerVision comprehensive planning process has also been discussing many of these issues and the policies and actions necessary to address them.

Staff has found that the RA and RB zoning districts differ significantly from the actual character of the neighborhoods within these districts. For example:

- 98.4% of RA lots and 94.8% of RB lots are non-conforming with respect to minimum lot size;
- 94.3% of RA lots and 95.1% of RB lots are non-conforming with respect to a yard setback; and,
- 79.1% of RA lots are non-conforming with respect to the 35 foot height limit. Only 21.9% of RB lots are non-conforming with respect to the higher 40 foot height limit in the RB district.

The report on RA and RB districts will quantify and map discrepancies between the zoning and built environment and identify land use strategies that address this issue while protecting neighborhood character. We expect to have a complete report in the early fall. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact George Proakis, Planning Director at 617-625-6600 x 2504.

Respectfully,

MONICA R. LAMBOY
Executive Director