



City of Somerville Zoning Overhaul

Zoning Workshop #1 **Public Space**

Board of Alderman – Land Use Committee Meeting
11.30.15

Agenda

- Overhaul Process
- Review SomerVision Objectives
- Getting to 125 Acres
- Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)
- Public Feedback
- Proposed Adjustments
- Summary

Process

Winter
2015

Submitted
Proposed
Ordinance

Planning Board
& BOA Land Use
Committee
Hearings

Spring
2015

Ward Meetings

BOA Land Use
Committee
Meetings

Summer
2015

Requested
Zoning
Studies/Analysis

Responses to
Comments on
Proposed
Ordinance



Process

Fall
2015

Finish Requested
Analysis/ Studies

Finish Response
to Comments on
Draft #1

Winter
2016

Subject Matter
Workshops

BOA Land Use
Committee
Meetings

Case Studies &
Coffee Hours

Spring
2016

BOA Land Use
Committee
Meetings Recap

Submit Draft #2

Public Review /
Open Comment

Ward Meetings

Formal
Submission
of Revised
Code

Process

Subject Matter Workshops

- Public Space 11.23.15
- Arts & Creative Economy 12.7.15
- Attainable Housing 1.11.16
- Residential Neighborhoods 1.25.16
- Mobility 2.8.16
- Economic Development 2.22.16
- Process 3.7.16

Process

Subject Matter Workshops

- **Public Space** 11.23.15
- Arts & Creative Economy 12.7.15
- Attainable Housing 1.11.16
- Residential Neighborhoods 1.25.16
- Mobility 2.8.16
- Economic Development 2.22.16
- Process 3.7.16

SomerVision

584 Goals, Policies & Actions

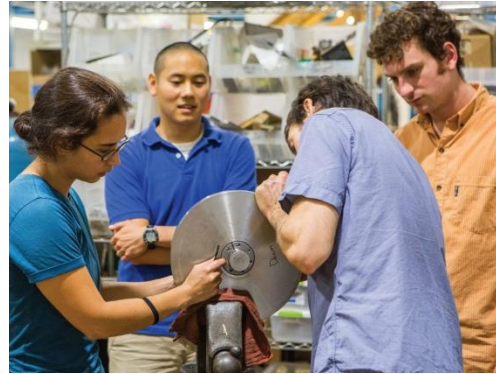


182 Implemented by the Zoning Ordinance



SomerVision

146 Mobility,
Parking & Access



79 Arts &
Creative Economy
104 Economy



77 Sustainability
and Open Space

59 Zoning for
Business

20 Administration



39 Signs, Lighting &
Site Development

46 Building Types



SomerVision

Objectives for Open & Civic Space

- Improve our shared neighborhood **environmental quality**

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*

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*

SomerVision

Objectives for Open & Civic Space

- Improve our shared neighborhood **environmental quality**
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 - *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*
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 - *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*



SomerVision

125 new acres of publically accessible
open space

“high-quality & well programmed community space”



Getting to 125 Acres

1. Space built or planned since 2010

- On-Site Open Space (Existing Zoning)
- City Created Spaces

2. Spaces Created by Zoning

- On-Site Open Space in Mixed-Use Districts
- Land Purchases (via payments in lieu of on-site open space)
- New Civic Spaces in Special Districts
- New Pedestrian / Public Realm Amenities

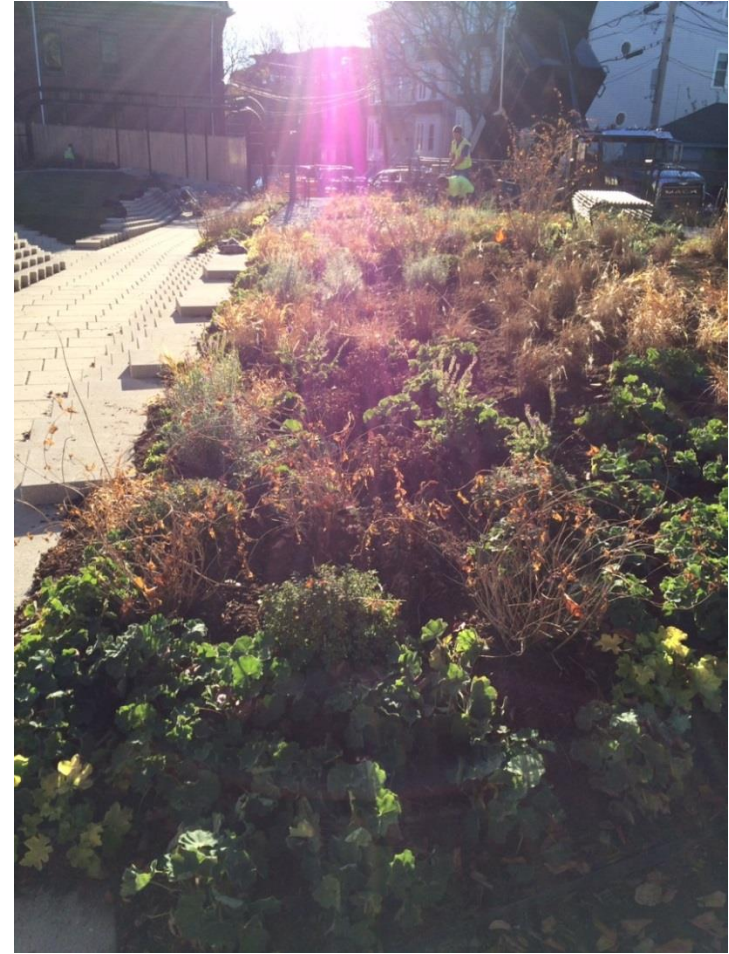
3. Spaces Created Outside of Zoning

- City Created Spaces
- New / Adapted Shared Streets



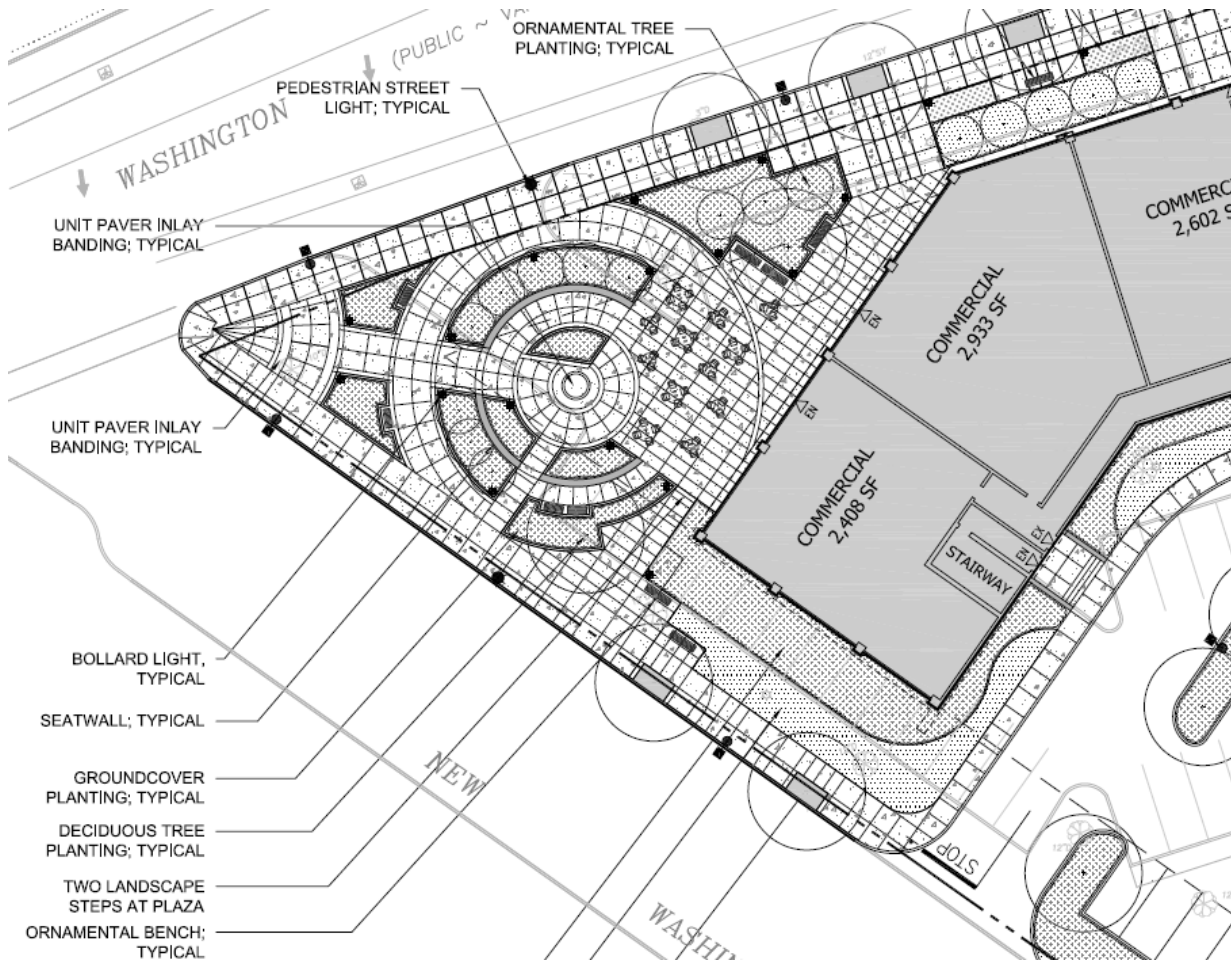
Getting to 125 Acres

City Created Space : Symphony Park



Getting to 125 Acres

Space Created by Zoning: 90 Washington St



Getting to 125 Acres

City Created Space: Chuckie Harris Park



Getting to 125 Acres

Space Created by Zoning: Baxter Riverfront Park



City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

Mayor Joseph A Curtatone
Office of Strategic Planning
& Community Development

Getting to 125 Acres

Space built or planned since 2010...

North Street Veterans Park	0.10 acres
New Chuckie Harris Park	0.38 acres
Zero New Washington	0.55 acres
Symphony Park	0.19 acres
Baxter Park (reclaimed)	6.10 acres
Community Path (Cedar/Lowell)	1.50 acres
Maxwell's 'Green'	0.50 acres
Assembly Row/Partners	13.00 acres
90 Washington St	0.18 acres (planned)
Powderhouse School Public Space	0.75 acres (planned)
Community Path to North Point	5 acres (planned)
McGrath Boulevard Parks	4 acres (planned)
Total:	approx. 32 acres

Getting to 125 Acres

Setting Targets:

Acres

Created through Zoning:

On-Site Open Spaces in MU Districts:	6-12	
Spaces Purchased & Built by Payment in Lieu:		28-30
Special District Civic Spaces:	30-35 (50-65)	
New Pedestrian / Public Realm:	10-15	

Created Outside of Zoning:

City Created Spaces:	2-5	
New / Adapted Shared Streets:	8-10	

Total: **88-107**

(+ Space Built or Planned Since 2010) 32


TOTAL: 116-139

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Public Benefit



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Public Benefit



Landscape Standards

- Landscaping
- Pervious Area

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Public Benefit



Outdoor Amenity Spaces

Landscape Standards

- Landscaping
- Pervious Area

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Public Benefit



On-Site Open Space

Outdoor Amenity Spaces

Landscape Standards

- Landscaping
- Pervious Area

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)



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Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Landscape Standards

Landscaping

- The improvement of land, generally for use as passive outdoor space, through the planting and maintenance of live plants that are native or adaptable to the urban climatic conditions of Somerville.
 - Can include some natural or manufactured materials (reflecting pools, works of art, walkways, screens, walls, fences, and benches or street furniture).
 - Up to twenty-five percent (25%) may include other non-living materials (rocks, pebbles, sand, bark mulch, landscape pavers, earthen mounds).
 - Landscaping excludes curbing and pavement for vehicular use.



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

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 - Landscaping excludes curbing and pavement for vehicular use.

Pervious Area

- Requires the use of paving materials that permit the infiltration of storm water instead of causing it to run off.

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Landscape Standards

Building Type	Landscaped Area %	Pervious Area %
Residential Building Types	25*	35*
Apartment Building	25*	35 - UR* 10 - all MU
Shop House	-	35*
Neighborhood Store	-	10
Mixed Use Building	-	10
Commercial Buildings (Prod. & Fab Buildings)	-	10

* Same as existing ordinance

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Outdoor Amenity Space

“Features of a building and/or outdoor areas designed for the comfort and/or convenience of residents.”

Purpose: Provide a small outdoor space for each new unit to partially mitigate the limited amount of existing public space

Standard: One (1) outdoor amenity space per dwelling unit

- Must be directly accessible by a doorway from a habitable room within the unit
- At least twenty-four (24) sq. ft. of unobstructed area

Types: Balcony, Deck, Patio, Porch, Roof Deck/Roof Terrace, Yard

Building Type	Outdoor Amenity Space
Residential Building Types	1/DU
Apartment Building	1/DU
Shop House	1/DU
Neighborhood Store	-
Mixed Use Building	1/DU
Commercial Buildings (Prod. & Fab Buildings)	-

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Outdoor Amenity Space

Shared Amenity Space: “Rooms and/or facilities designed for the comfort and/or convenience of residents of a multi-unit building.”

Can be provided for Apartment Buildings and Mixed Use Buildings

- Must have all required area (sq. ft.)
- Outdoor amenity space required for units on the 10th floor and above must be provided as shared amenity space

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

On-Site Open Space

“Land area accessible to and designed for public use or gathering.”

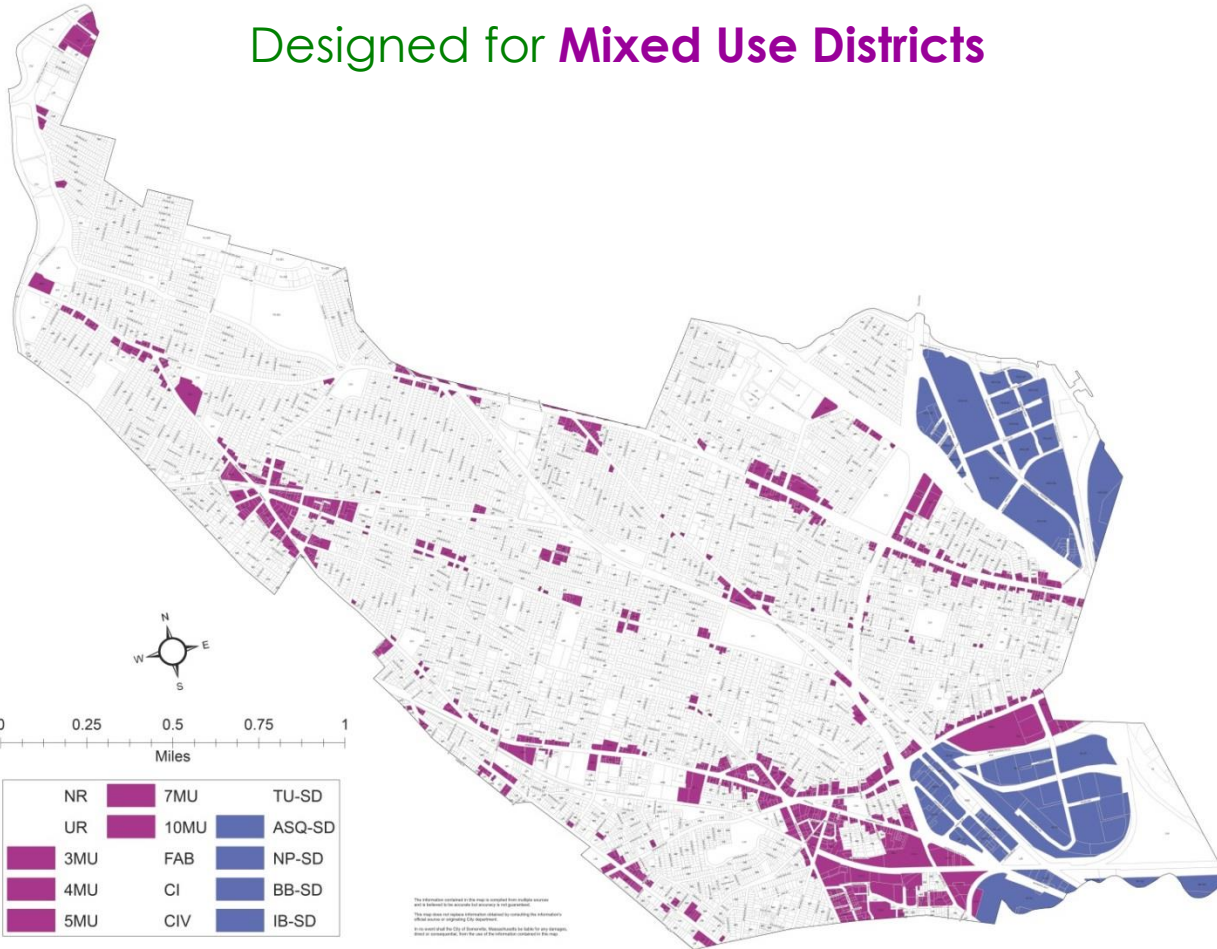
Purpose: To improve public access and/or create new public spaces on sites that are large enough to improve the public realm or appropriate to host a public space.

Standard: Require a percentage of lot area to be designed as publicly accessible on-site open space.

Types: Widened public sidewalks, mid-block public passage, forecourt or courtyard (30% landscaped min.), outdoor recreation area (public use permitted), a civic space.

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Designed for **Mixed Use Districts**



Building Type	On-Site Open Space %
Residential Building Types	-
Apartment Building	15% 7MU & 10MU
Shop House	-
Neighborhood Store	-
Mixed Use Building	15% 7MU & 10MU
Commercial Buildings (Prod. & Fab Buildings)	15% 7MU & 10MU

15% in 7MU & 10 MU

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Civic Space

“Open space designed to support social and recreational activities.”

Purpose: To create new civic and recreation spaces in transformational areas identified in SomerVision.

Standard: Require a percentage of each development site to be designed as one or more types of civic space.

Types: 12 different types

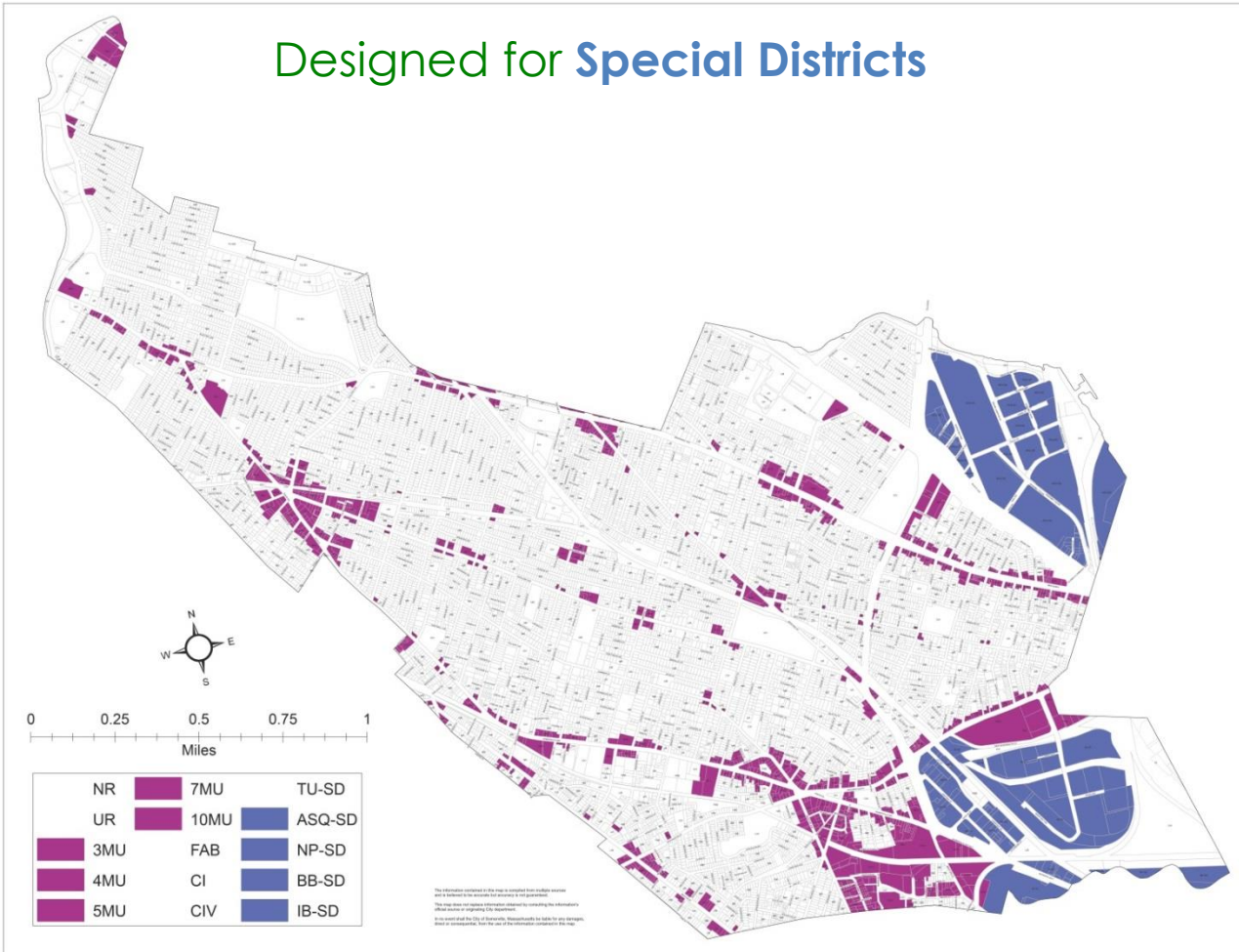
•Each defined by the interrelationship between intended use, size, landscaping, and abutting uses.

•Standards:

- Size
- Seating
- Number of Trees
- Required % of Permeable Surface
- Required % of Landscape
- Development Standards (Physical Design)
- Design Guidelines (Qualitative Design)

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Designed for **Special Districts**



Building Type	On-Site Open Space %
Assembly	12.5
Brickbottom	12.5
Grand Junction	5
Inner Belt	12.5
North Point	5

Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Regional Park

“A civic space type designed for active and passive recreation with features and facilities that have a regional draw.”

Examples:

Alewife Brook Reservation

Dilboy Field

Foss Park

- Size: 10 acres
- Trees: 1/200sf
- Permeable: 85%
- Landscape: 70%



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Community Park

“A civic space type designed for active and passive recreation with features and facilities that support the community as a whole.”

Examples:

Hodgkins-Curtin Park

Conway Park

Prospect Hill Park

- Size: 2-10 acres
- Trees: 1/200sf
- Permeable: 85%
- Landscape: 60%



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

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
- Trees: 1/350sf
- Permeable: 85%
- Landscape: 50%

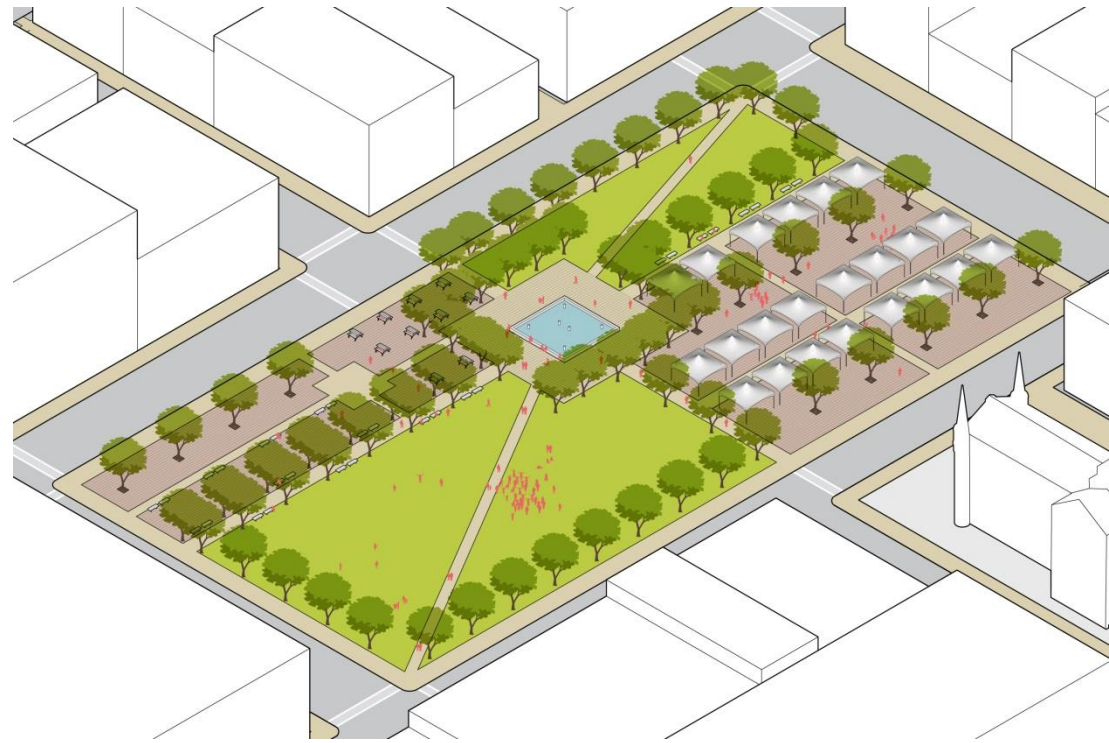


Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Public Common

“A civic space type for active and passive recreation and civic purposes. A public common is a free standing site with thoroughfares on all sides and landscape consisting of naturally disposed lawns, paths, and trees.”

- Size: 20,000 sf-8 acres
- Seating: 1 linear ft/400 sf
- Trees: 1/2,000sf
- Permeable: 85%
- Landscape: 60%

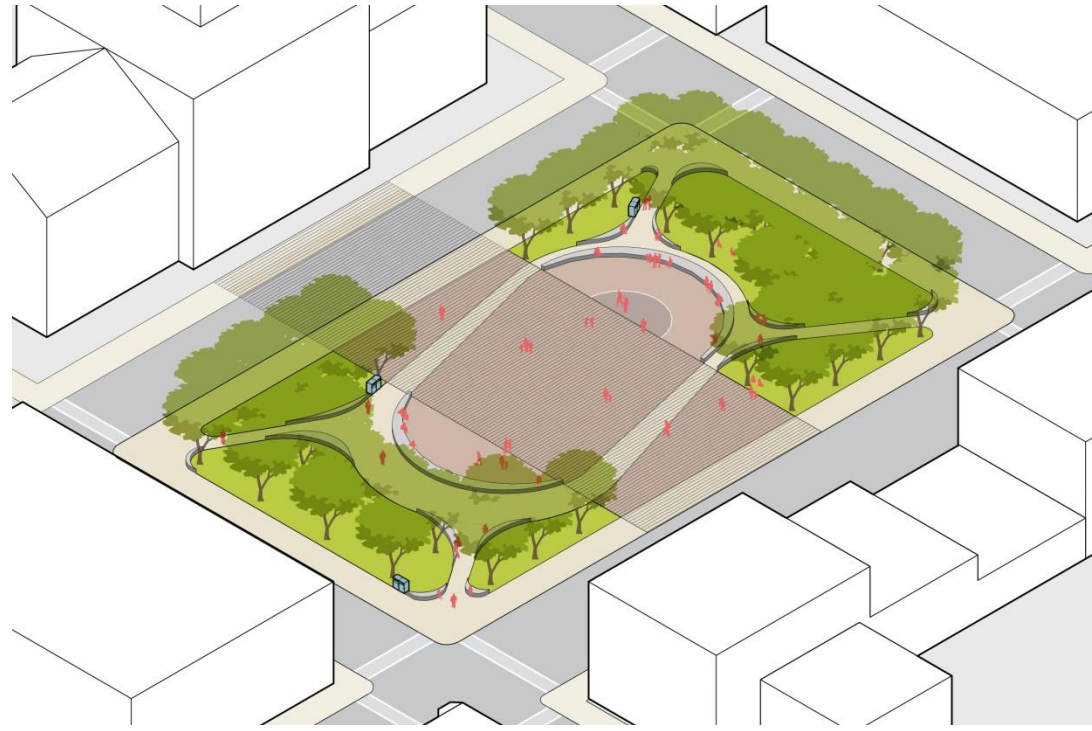


Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Public Square

“A civic space type designed for passive recreation and civic purposes. A public square is a free standing site with thoroughfares on all sides and landscape consisting of formally disposed lawns, paths, and trees.”

- Size: 8,000sf-2 acres
- Seating: 1 linear ft/275 sf
- Trees: 1/2,000sf
- Permeable: 85%
- Landscape: 60%



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Plaza

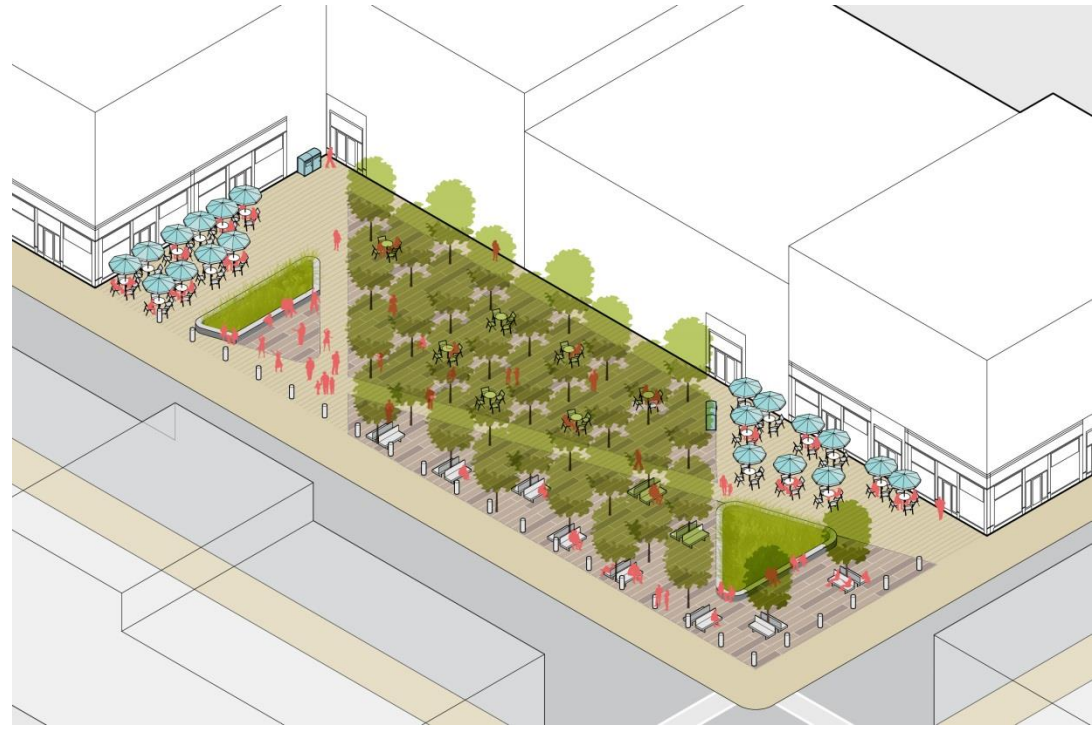
“A civic space type designed for passive recreation, civic purposes, and commercial activities, with landscape consisting primarily of hardscape. Plazas are generally located in activity centers or the nexus of major circulation routes.”

Examples:

Statue Park Plaza

Union Square Plaza

- Size: 8,000sf-1.5 acres
- Seating: 1 linear ft./30 sq. ft.
- Tables: 1 per 4 movable chairs
- Trees: 16 + 4" caliper/1,000 sf
- Permeable: 70%
- Landscape: 30%



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

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
- Seating: 1 linear ft./50 sq. ft.
- Tables: 1 per 3 movable chairs
- Trees: 1/200sf
- Permeable: 85%
- Landscape: 30%



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Recreation Fields

“A civic space type designed for active recreation, athletic activity, and competitive sports. Recreation fields may be freestanding or incorporated as a subordinate feature of a regional park or community park.”

Examples:

Trum Field

Glen Park

Tufts University Fields

- Size: 7,500 sq. ft. - 20 acres



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

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
- Seating: 1 linear ft./300 sq. ft.
- Trees: 1/500sf
- Permeable: 85%
- Landscape: 30%



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Dog Park

“A civic space type designed for the active recreation of dogs and their owners. Dog parks may be freestanding or incorporated as a subordinate feature of a regional park, community park, or neighborhood park.”

Examples:

Zero New Washington
Nunziato Field Off Leash Area

- Size: 10,000 sf
- Seating: 1 linear ft./275 sq. ft.
- Trees: 1/30 sq. ft.
- Permeable: 100%
- Landscape: 10%



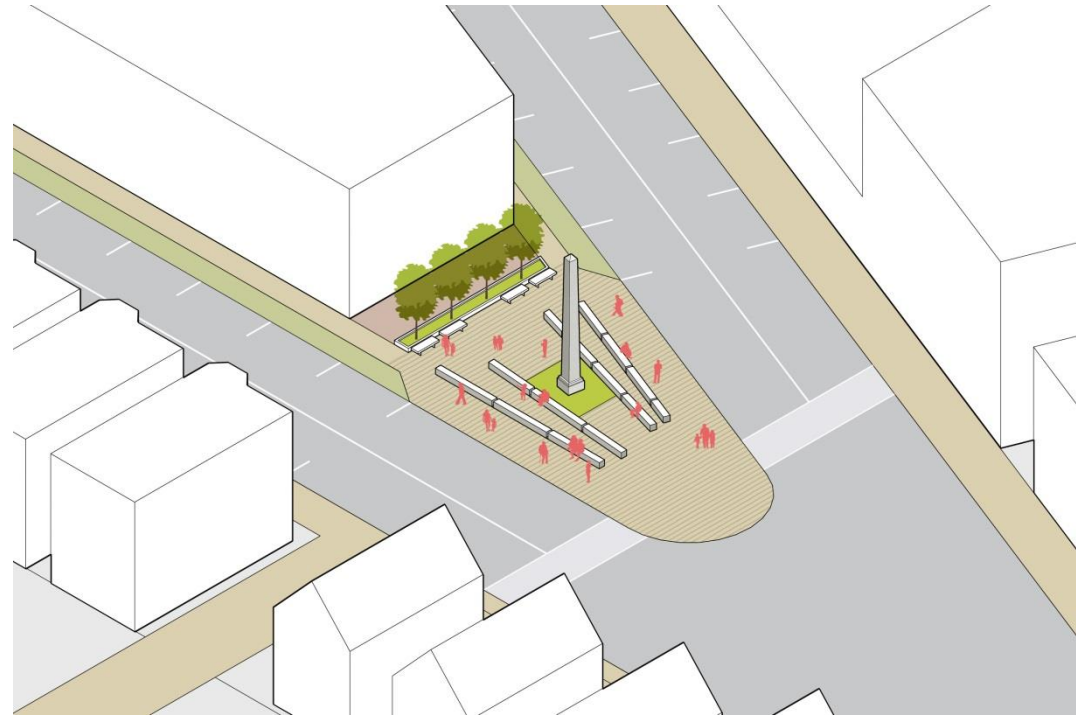
Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

Landmark

“A civic space type designed to commemorate an important event or important person in the history of the City of Somerville. Landmarks may be freestanding or incorporated as a subordinate feature of any other type of civic or recreation space.”

Examples:

Paul Revere Park



Proposed Regulations (Jan 2015)

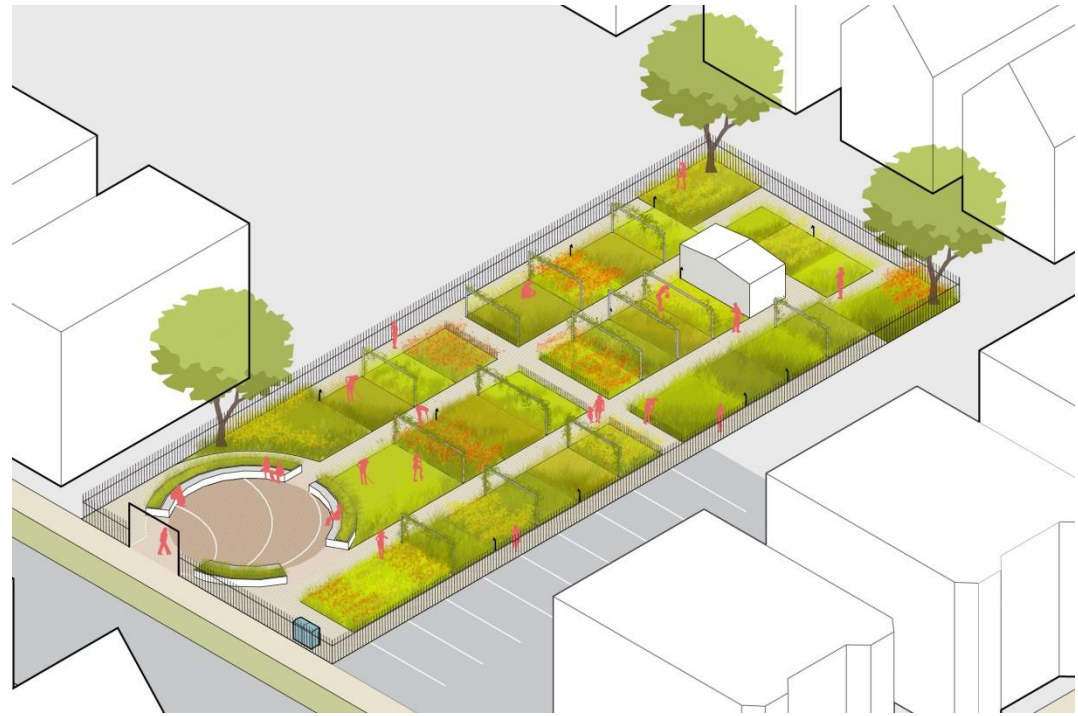
Community Garden

“A civic space type designed as individual garden plots available to residents for urban agriculture purposes, including storage facilities for necessary equipment. Community gardens may be freestanding or incorporated as a subordinate feature of a community park, neighborhood park, or pocket park.”

Examples:

Albion Community Garden
South Street Farm

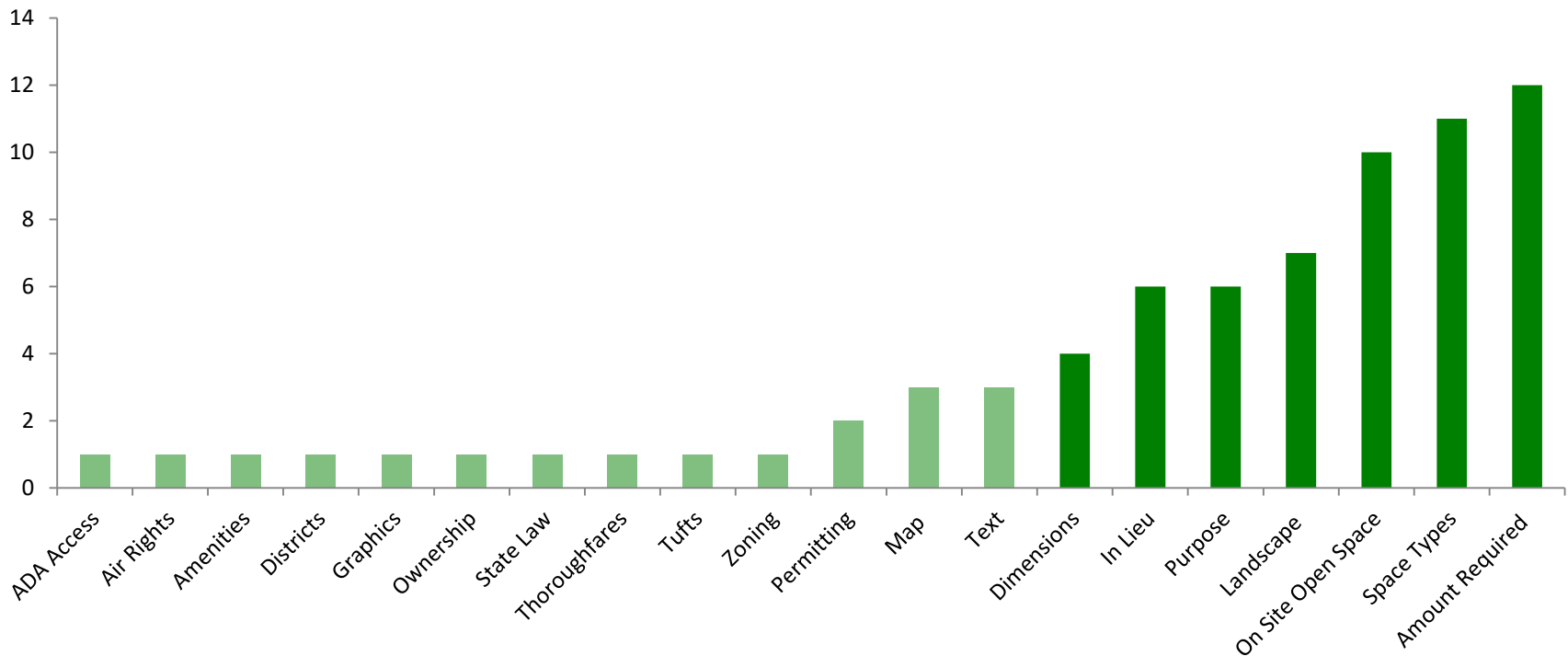
- Size: 5,000-15,000 sq. ft.
- Permeable: 85%



Public Feedback

Public Feedback

Major Topics



Public Feedback

1. The amount of space required was insufficient
2. Differentiate between types of space; prioritize types that are more “green”; certain types in certain places
3. Need to produce properly sized spaces; aggregate/consolidate into larger spaces (see #4)
 1. Provide a payment In Lieu of on-site open space
 1. Public opens spaces should include a green / landscape percentage
 1. Are the sizes right for each type?

Proposed Adjustments

Landscape Standards

1. Adopt Green Area Ratio (a better landscape requirement)

On-Site Open Space

1. Require On-Site Open Space in ALL mixed-use (MU) districts
2. When required space is less than a certain size, allow an in-lieu payment.
3. 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.
4. When required space is more than a certain size, require it be designed as a civic space type.

Civic Space

1. Increase Civic Space requirements in Special Districts
2. Require certain types and a diversity of type in Special Districts



Proposed Adjustments

Landscape Standards

What is Green Area Ratio?

- GAR is a Zoning Regulation, that sets minimum lot-coverage standards for landscape and site design features, to minimize negative environmental consequences of new development.
- The GAR concept was developed and implemented in Washington D.C. by the Department of Energy & Environment, beginning in 2013.
 - GAR scores are weighted based on types of landscape and site design features.
 - The minimum GAR score needed to reach compliance differs by zoning district.
 - A GAR plan must be submitted as part of the building permit application for new construction and additions costing more than 100% of assessed building value.



Proposed Adjustments

On-Site Open Space

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Proposed Adjustments

On-Site Open Space

1. Require On-Site Open Space in ALL mixed-use (MU) districts

Building Type	Landscape Area %	Pervious Area %	Outdoor Amenity Space	On-Site Open Space %
Residential Building Types	25*	35*	1/DU	-
Apartment Building	25*	35 – UR* 10 - MU	1/DU	15% All MU Districts
Shop House	-	35*	1/DU	-
Neighborhood Store	-	10	-	-
Mixed Use Building	-	10	1/DU	15% All MU Districts
Commercial Buildings	-	10	-	15% All MU Districts

Proposed Adjustments

On-Site Open Space

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

- Somerville Parks & Open Space Department recommends 8,000 square feet minimum
 - Smaller spaces not viable when built by a developer
 - Need for spaces 8,000 sq. ft. and larger
 - Don't want playgrounds and pocket parks in random locations (better when City built)



Proposed Adjustments

On-Site Open Space

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

How much does public space cost?

- 1 acre of public space
 - \$2 million avg. to acquire land
 - \$2 million avg. to design and construct

How much should we charge?

- \$45 per sq. ft. to acquire land; or
- \$90 per sq. ft. to acquire land and design/build

Proposed Adjustments

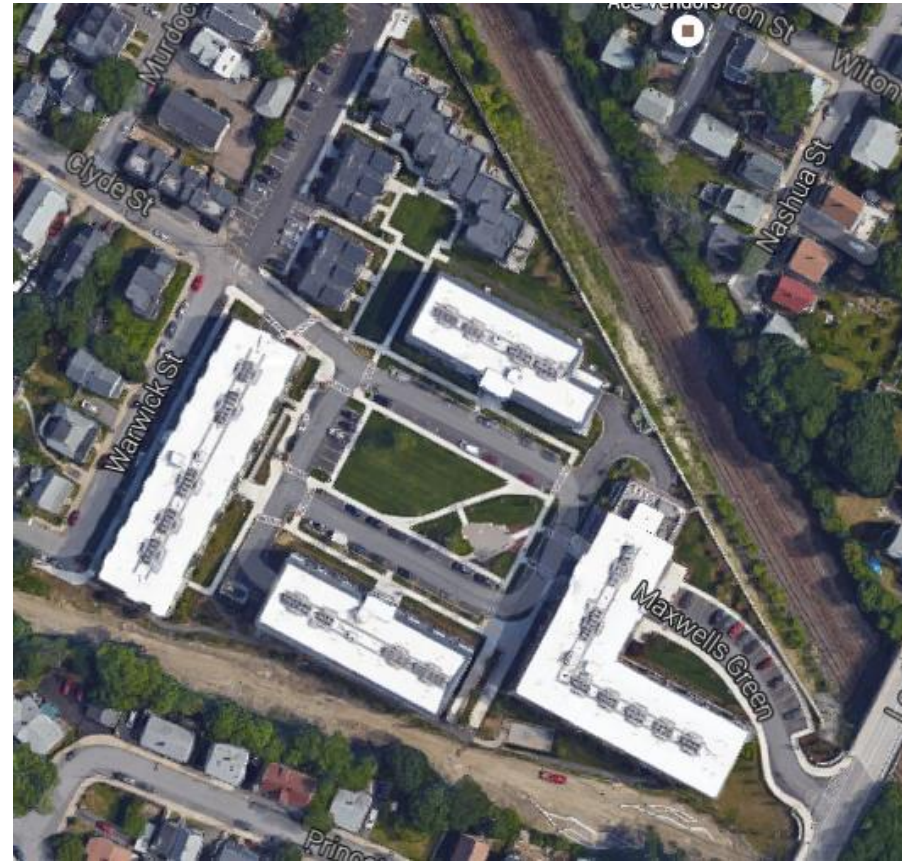
How much \$\$ would that generate?

- At **15% on-site open space** requirement, with a \$45-\$90 payment **in lieu for spaces under 8,000 sf**:
 - Looking at 161 parcels most likely to be redeveloped:
 - 13 new civic spaces (7.5 ac; 6.0% of SomerVision)
 - \$120-\$240 million for 30+ acres off-site (24% of SomerVision)

Proposed Adjustments

On-Site Open Space

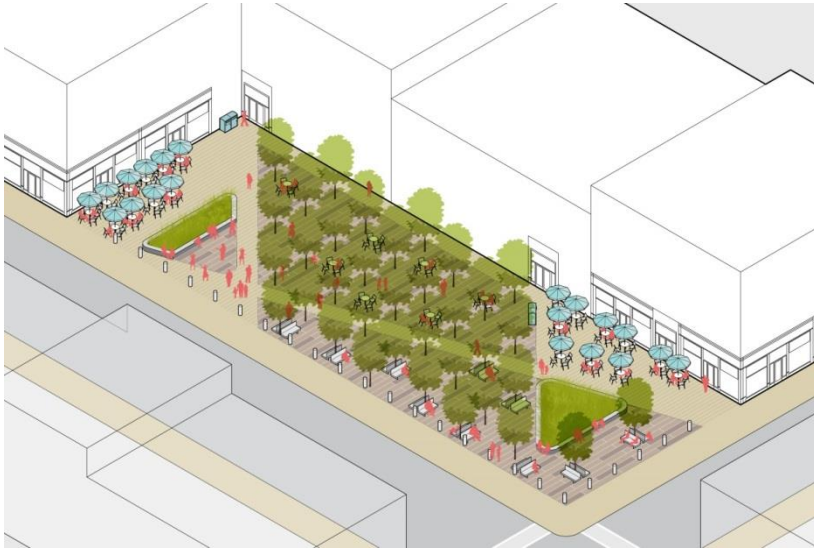
3. When required space is less than a certain size, allow sites to consolidate required space from multiple sites as a larger space located at a different site.
- Must demonstrate site control
 - Requires a Special Permit



Proposed Adjustments

On-Site Open Space

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



Plaza?



Neighborhood Park?

Proposed Adjustments

Civic Space

1. Increase Civic Space Requirements in Special Districts
2. Require certain types and a diversity of type in Special Districts

Getting to 125 Acres

Setting Targets:

Acres

Created through Zoning:

On-Site Open Spaces: 6-12

Spaces Purchased & Built by Payment in Lieu: 28-30

Special District Civic Spaces: 30-35

New Pedestrian / Public Realm: 10-15

28-30



Created Outside of Zoning:

City Created Spaces: 2-5

New / Adapted Shared Streets: 8-10

Total:

88-107

(+ Space Built or Planned Since 2010) 32

TOTAL: 116-139

Getting to 125 Acres

Special District Civic Space Target: 30-35 Acres

• Assembly Square:		
➤ FRIT	4.94 ac	
➤ Future Projects	10.60 ac	
• North Point	.575 ac	
Subtotal	16.115 ac	
Still Needed	18.885 ac	
• Boynton Yards	3.0216 ac	(15% of area)
• Grand Junction	3.3993 ac	(14% of area)
• Brickbottom	3.0216 ac	(15% of area)
• Inner Belt	9.4425 ac	(14% of area)
<hr/> TOTAL	35 Acres	

Getting to 125 Acres

Special District Civic Space Target: **50-65 Acres**

• Assembly Square:		
➤ FRIT	4.94 ac	
➤ Future Projects	10.60 ac	
• North Point	.575 ac	
Subtotal	16.115 ac	
Still Needed	48.885 ac	
• Boynton Yards	7.8216 ac	(38% of area)
• Grand Junction	8.7993 ac	(37% of area)
• Brickbottom	7.8216 ac	(38% of area)
• Inner Belt	24.443 ac	(37% of area)
<hr/> TOTAL	65 Acres	

Proposed Adjustments

Civic Space

1. Increase Civic Space Requirements in Special Districts

Special Districts	Civic Space%
Assembly Square	12.5
Brickbottom	15
Boynton Yards	15
Grand Junction (Twin City Plaza)	15
Inner Belt	15
North Point (significant open space in Cambridge)	5



Proposed Adjustments

Civic Space

2. Require certain types and a diversity of types in Special Districts

Examples:

- At least one public common must be provided in Inner Belt.
- A playground must be provided within 1000 feet walking distance to each dwelling unit.
- No less than three types of civic space must be provided in any Special District.
- One community garden must be provided for every 100 dwelling units.

Summary

Landscape Standards

1. Adopt Green Area Ratio (a better landscape requirement)

On-Site Open Space

1. Require On-Site Open Space in ALL mixed-use (MU) districts
2. When required space is less than a certain size, allow an in-lieu payment.
3. 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.
4. When required space is more than a certain size, require it be designed as a civic space type.

Civic Space

1. Increase Civic Space requirements in Special Districts
2. Require certain types and a diversity of type in Special Districts



Summary

Building Type	Landscaped Area %	Pervious Area %	Outdoor Amenity Space	On-Site Open Space %
Residential Building Types	25*	35*	1/DU	-
Apartment Building	25*	35 – UR* 10 - MU	1/DU	15% in MUs
Shop House	-	35*	1/DU	-
Neighborhood Store	-	10	-	-
Mixed Use Building	-	10	1/DU	15% in MUs
Commercial Buildings (Prod. & Fab Buildings)	-	10	-	15% in MUs

* Same as existing ordinance

Summary

Special Districts	Civic Space%
Assembly Square	12.5 (25 open space)
Brickbottom	15
Boynton Yards	15
Grand Junction (Twin City Plaza)	15
Inner Belt	15
North Point	5



City of Somerville Zoning Overhaul

