

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
ORDINANCE NO. 2026-
IN CITY COUNCIL: _____, 2026

Be it ordained by the City Council, in session assembled, that Sections 2.1.1 and 3.1.12 of the Zoning Ordinances of the City of Somerville are amended as follows by deleting the ~~struckthrough~~ text and adding the underlined text.

Approved:

President

Approved:

Mayor

2.1.1 General

a. The following words, phrases, and terms in this Ordinance are defined in this Section.

(Ord. 2024-13, 11/26/2024; Ord. 2024-14, 11/26/2024; Ord. 2024-15, 12/12/2024; Ord. 2025-02, 02/27/2025; Ord. 2025-09, 06/12/2025; Ord. 2025-10, 06/12/2025; Ord. 2025-11, 06/12/2025; Ord. 2025-15, 06/26/2025; Ord. 2025-16, 06/26/2025)

Accessory Dwelling Unit

A small floor plate accessory building type which provides space for one (1) small dwelling unit. Accessory dwelling units are referenced as Backyard Cottages in § 3.1.12.

Building

Any structure, either temporary or permanent, pre-fabricated or built on site, having a roof or other covering, and designed or used for the shelter or enclosure of any person, animal, or property of any kind, including tents, awnings, or vehicles situated on private property and used for purposes of a building.

3.1.12 Backyard Cottage

A small floor plate, ~~detached~~, accessory building type typically providing space for one (1) small accessory dwelling unit, a home occupation, a playhouse for children, or vehicular parking on the same lot as a principal building type.

The following images are examples of the Backyard Cottage accessory building type and are intended only for illustrative purposes.



a. Lot Standards

b. Building Placement

i. General:

a. Unless otherwise specified, new construction of accessory buildings is permitted as specified in the first column of the Building Setbacks table.

ii. Renovation of Pre-Existing Structures:

a. The construction of accessory buildings via the renovation of a pre-existing structure, including but not limited to a carport, is permitted only as specified in the second column of the Building Setbacks table.

b. An accessory building must be set back a minimum of three (3) feet from any side or rear lot line unless constructed of fireproof materials.

c. An accessory building must be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the principal building unless retrofitting an existing structure already attached.

Lot Dimensions	
A Lot Width (min)	–
No Driveway Access	32 ft
Side or Rear Driveway Access	32 ft
Front Driveway Access	34 ft

Building Setbacks	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
A Primary Front Setback (min/max)	60 ft	<u>10 ft/20 ft</u>
B Secondary Front Setback (min/max)	10 ft	<u>10 ft</u>
C Side Setback (min)	3 ft	<u>0 ft</u>
E Rear Setback (min)	3 ft	-
Alley	3 or 20 ft	<u>3 or 20 ft</u>
No alley	3 ft	<u>0 ft</u>
E Building Separation (min)	10 ft	<u>0 ft</u>

Lot Development	
C Lot Coverage (max)	Per Principal Building
D Green Score	Per Principal Building

c. Massing & Height

Main Massing	
A Width (max)	24 <u>28</u> ft
B Depth (max)	32 <u>40</u> ft
C Floor plate (max)	576 <u>800</u> ft
<u>Gross Floor Area (max)</u>	<u>1,200</u> ft
D Story Height (max)	12 ft
E Number of Stories (max)	1.5 <u>2</u> stories
Roof Type	Flat, Gable

d. Uses & Features

Facade Composition	
A Ground Story Fenestration (min/max)	–
Residential Use	15% 50%
Vehicular Parking	0% 50%
B Upper Story Fenestration (min/max)	15% 50%
Use & Occupancy	
Dwelling Units (max)	1

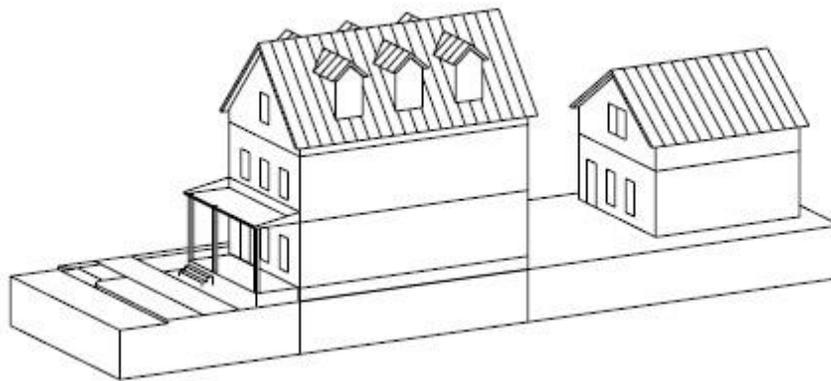
e. Housing

- i. Reserved

f. Design Standards

- i. A three (3) foot wide paved walkway capable of allowing an ambulance cot to be wheeled to and from the Backyard Cottage is required.
- ii. Utility services for the Backyard Cottage must be buried underground.
- iii. By order of the Fire Prevention Bureau, Backyard Cottages occupied by any permitted Residential principal use must have an automatic sprinkler system unless they are on a corner lot, a lot with a driveway leading to the Backyard Cottage, or a lot abutting an alley.

Figure 3.1.8 DU Orientation Examples



(Ord. [2023-23](#), 11/21/2023)