

Melissa Woods

From: Steven Nutter <snutter@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2018 1:34 PM
To: Board of Aldermen; COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Fwd: New Version of Zoning and Public Hearing Next Week

Dear Aldermen and Planning,

The new zoning is a GREAT process and the staff is doing a really good job. It is a complex task, so hats off to them. Thank you.

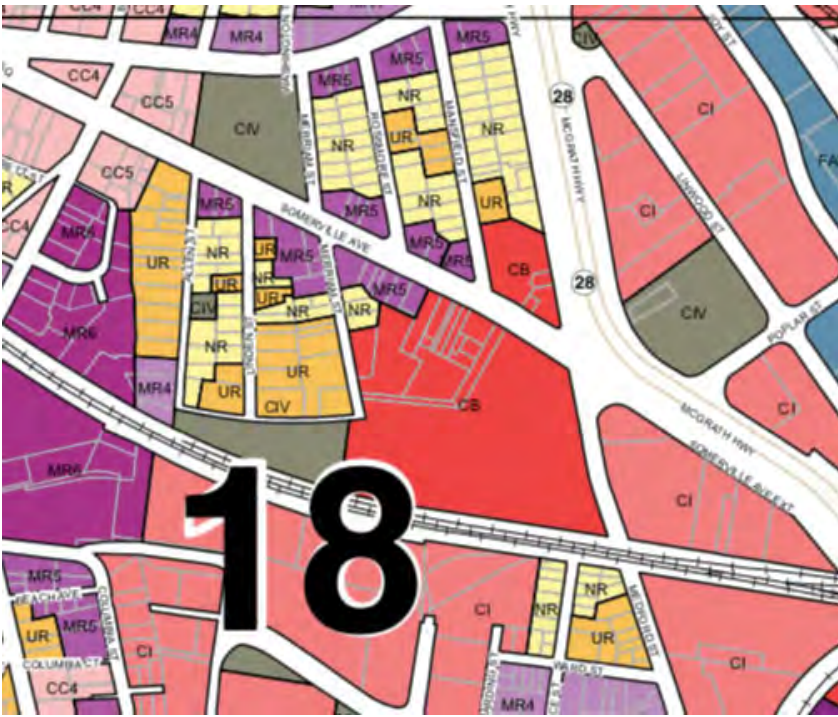
Two things concern me in the revised proposed zoning document submitted to the BOA:

1) The relations between MR5 and NR abutting each other. Having a 5 story building (or more with variances) next to 2 story house would be pretty jarring, both visually and from a livability standpoint. Ensuring that we step up and down between forms is important. Can we get something like an MR3 between these two designations? To note: I've very supportive of larger buildings in our commercial cores. Just be a little more fine grained in how they transition. This zoning will cement (literally!) the coming decades of change in the physical environment of Somerville.

Here's an example:



2) The area around McGrath highway (and future McGrath Boulevard) doesn't quite seem to take into account what a transformation that will be. For example, the area continues to be zoned for industrial and commercial uses as existing (with different development standards of course). But I think we should be more visionary and coordinated in this change. Here's a shot of the proposed zoning for that area:



And here's a plan of what the new Boulevard will look like:



All those trees and parks are AMAZING and sorely needed in order for the city to get its tree canopy and green space goals. It would be a shame to surround them with large, blank industrial and commercial buildings! Mixed use would be much better, at least on the edges near the roadway.

Hope you find these comments helpful.

I'm so excited to see Somerville pull off what so many other cities can't even begin to have a conversation about. What an awesome time to live here--with all of you!

Steven

Dustin J. DeNunzio
3 Park St. Unit 3
Somerville, MA 02143

October 12, 2018

Aldermen Peter Forcellese and Jefferson Thomas Scott
Land Use Committee for the Board of Aldermen
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

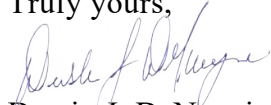
Dear Aldermen Forcellese and Scott:

My name is Dustin J. DeNunzio and I am a Somerville property owner with existing property in the City of Somerville.

I have taken the opportunity to review the proposed new maps for the Zoning changes to be presented before your committee on October 16th. Since I will be travelling and not able to attend and speak at the hearing, I am writing to ask that you please recorded me in support of the latest iteration of the draft zoning overhaul. The changes from the previous draft I reviewed will allow for stronger development in key growth areas of the City, and I am especially supportive of the new HR (high Rise) designation at the eastern entry to the City along McGrath Highway in Ward 2 where I own property (draft Map 19). This area could be as good if not better than some of the contributing development happening next to us in East Cambridge, and I applaud the City for the proposal.

Thank you for considering my input and support.

Truly yours,



Dustin J. DeNunzio

STARL LIQUORS, INC.
D/B/A
SAV-MOR LIQUORS, INC.
13r McGrath Highway
Somerville, MA 02143

October 13, 2018

Peter Forcellese, Land Use Committee

Dear Mr. Forcellese,

My family has been an active business participant in the City of Somerville since 1982. During the past 36 years, Sav-Mor Liquors has been the gateway to Somerville and provided Somerville with alcohol beverages at competitive prices in a responsible, diligent and friendly manner. As the real estate market has evolved and with the arrival of the NorthPoint/Cambridge Crossing project, it has become apparent to my family that the property upon which Sav-Mor Liquors is located and served us well in the past can serve our family even better in the future with a change in the zoning of 13-21 McGrath Highway from an Industrial to the High-Rise Sub-District.

The entire Weiner family ownership of Sav-Mor Liquors advocates for the proposed zoning change. We are eagerly looking forward to changing the image of our property to reflect the growth and vision to which the City is striving.

Sincerely yours,

Ben Weiner
Manager

LABEN REALTY, LLC
15 McGRATH HIGHWAY
SOMERVILLE, MA 02143
617-628-7400

October 12, 2018

Board of Alderman

Peter Forcellese, Land Use Committee

Dear Mr. Forcellese,

My brother Benjamin Weiner and I have been business owners and property owners in Somerville since 1982 operating SAV-MOR Liquors and an Aaron's franchise on our property on McGrath Highway.

Laben Realty owns the 48,438 sf parcels (115-B.06 & 07) at the "Gateway" to Somerville, 13-21 McGrath Highway. We are writing as avid supporters of the rezoning of our property from an Industrial to the High-Rise Sub-District which will allow the best and highest use of this location.

Cambridge has done a great job of development at their gateways and Somerville can do that at this location as well. We appreciate your vision and with the City's help we hope to be a part of that growth.

Yours truly,

Lawrence Weiner

Manager



October 15, 2018

Mr. Peter Forcellese, Board of Alderman Land Use Committee Chair
The Honorable Jefferson Thomas "JT" Scott, Ward 2 Alderman
Mr. George Proakis, Director of Planning
Board of Alderman and Planning Department for the City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue – City Hall
Somerville, Massachusetts 02143

Gentlemen:

My name is Paul Lohnes, and I am a Somerville business owner of an operating data storage facility located at **35 McGrath Highway, Ward 2, Somerville**. I am writing to you today in support of Somerville's zoning overhaul, and more specifically the proposed High-Rise Map #19 for the immediate area along McGrath leading into Somerville (from Cambridge).

Our section of McGrath Highway is essentially industrial by default, and it is certainly not at its best and highest use. The City's proposal to allow for more verticality with new mixed-use residential development in a HR sub-district along McGrath Highway in Ward 2 will help us property owners participate in creating a new and important "gateway" to our City. The proposed new hotel next to us is an important first step in upgrading this underutilized section, and the Land Use Committee's adoption of Map 19 and its High-Rise allowances would help to create a new front door to Somerville – with dynamic and attractive developments of contributing height, scale and uses.

As a property owner in the proposed new Map 19, ***I am pleased to provide my support for its adoption and the new High Rise zoning along our section of McGrath Highway.***

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'P R Lohnes'.

Paul Lohnes
35 McGrath Highway
Somerville, MA 02143

Monique Baldwin

From: Justin Rank <justinrank@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 28, 2018 4:48 PM
To: Board of Aldermen
Cc: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Zoning Feedback

Dear Board of Alderfolks,

I find it extremely concerning that a significant majority of constituents have said through written and verbal testimony during the last zoning proposal that they believe residents should be able to add a third dwelling unit to their home and it was not put in the current zoning proposal.

While I am a supporter of accessory dwelling units, they should not take the place of an actual dwelling unit. They are extremely restrictive and will create situations that will invite violations and displacement of tenants when owner occupants need to relocate. Most of the written feedback that was submitted and verbal testimony at the hearing asked for **both** dwelling units **AND** accessory dwelling units to owner occupied buildings. If the intent of accessory dwelling units are to prevent developers from taking advantage, then there needs to be an **administrative** path for a homeowner to convert an accessory dwelling unit to an actual dwelling unit after xx years.

Therefore, I propose:

Allow the proposed Accessory Dwelling Units in owner-occupied 1, 2 and 3 family homes to have a pathway to administratively convert these ADU's to an "actual" dwelling unit after a period of 3 years. This could be a special permit process that utilizes the residency exemption database.

Also, the addition of a third unit should be allowed by an owner occupant on a property in which **ANY** lot line borders a property that has 3+ units. Not just next door. It's ridiculous that a house could have several three unit buildings directly behind their house and they would not be able to add an additional unit.

Lastly, there should be more density allowed in the transit districts if a homeowner is willing to contribute to affordable housing.

Therefore, I propose:

Allow an extra dwelling unit in the transit residential district to allow for **4** dwelling units by allowing conversion of **two** of the following: a basement, attic, carriage house, or a tiny home **when one of the dwelling units is deeded affordable and doesn't take away the bedroom count of any other units.**

This will allow homeowners who have an abundance of underutilized space to earn some extra income while helping contribute to providing to the City's much needed affordable housing inventory.

Justin Rank
Homeowner
134 Walnut St

Monique Baldwin

From: Sherri G <geldersma@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2018 10:00 AM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Suggested Inclusionary Criteria to be added to the Zoning Overhaul

To the Planning Department:

I am writing to request more inclusive criteria to be used in determining “by-right” residential lots in the “Lot Standards” section of the draft Zoning Overhaul.

This more inclusive criteria would allow properties that conform to the all the current criteria in the “Lot Standards” section as written but allow properties that differ slightly dimensionally from the allowable building lot size. The result would allow Somerville residents to be able to benefit from the highest & best use of their property while encouraging homes that still conform to the intent of the Overhaul.

Please allow me to use my own situation as an example. I am 70 years old and have owned my home in Somerville for over 20 years. As I age my circa 1895 home on its 5992 sq. ft. lot becomes increasingly difficult & expensive to maintain. My dream is to “split” my property into 2 - 2992 sq. ft. lots, sell my older home & with the proceeds build a new sustainable retirement home (with aging in place amenities) on the lot next door. This will relieve me of the burden of a large house & yard to care for & allow me to stay in Somerville, close to friends & family.

The draft Overhaul allows 2,240 sq. ft. lots for “cottages” and 2,800 sq. ft. lots for “detached homes”. However, they are currently calculated only by inflexible dimensions, not by area. As currently written, the “cottage” lot minimum width is 32 ft by 70 ft. deep or 2,240 sq. ft. and the “detached house” minimum width lot is 35 ft. by 80 ft. deep or 2800 sq. ft. My 2 lots would be 50 ft. wide and 60 ft. (59.85ft.) deep or 2992 sq.ft. This is 192 sq. ft. more than currently proposed.

Suggestion:

That an area equivalent be added to the “Standards” if the dimensions of a proposed building parcel vary no more than 20 feet in either wide and/or depth from the dimensions stated in the proposed Overhaul.

An alternative suggestion: Perhaps the ordinance could be amended to state that the minimum width would be 32 feet wide of the lot for “cottages” and 35 feet wide for “detached houses”. As long as the minimum square footages of the lot did not fall below 2,240 s.f. or 2,800 s.f. respectively, the depth of the lot could vary.

Note: Most cities & towns in the country calculate lot size by area.

The following site plan & elevation demonstrates how a home can be designed to adhere to the “intent” & “goals” proposed Overhaul. It proposes a “small to moderate floor plate and it is “detached residential building

type with one unit". According to the Overhaul, My proposal is "the most prevalent building type in Somerville". The first image on page 9 of the "Draft" is an example of the home type I would like to have built. It will have a:

- Small to moderate floor plate (24ft. x 32 ft.)
- One unit
- Prioritize yard space (mine is on the side & the back with proposed green space and a patio and parking with permeable pavers)
- Conserve the already established residential character

Proposed Clifton Street Elevation

Scale: 1"=10 ft



Proposed Schematic Site Plan

Scale: 1"=10 ft



If the Zoning Overhaul doesn't allow this proposed sustainable home "by right", I will not be able to have my retirement home in Somerville. I don't have the financial resources or enough income to qualify for a construction loan to take advantage of the "3rd unit" or carriage house options proposed "by right" in the Overhaul. If this project was approved through the variance process, it would require not one, but 2 variances, 2 surveys and 2 full applications. This could add as much as \$6000-\$8000 in upfront expenses, 4-6 months to prepare an application and an additional 6 months to for the approval process after the Overhaul is approved by the Board of Alderman. So without the flexibility suggested above, at least an year would be added to the building process. At any age, this is a serious consideration, but at 70 it becomes prohibitive.

Should this inclusive modification not be made, my only option will be to sell my house, leave my beloved neighborhood & friends of over 20 years & find somewhere more affordable than Somerville to live. If forced to make this decision, I will be disconnected and won't know anyone. The thought is quite frankly terrifying.

This inclusive criteria modifiwould make an enormous difference in my life and the lives of other Somerville residents who want to age in place and live near their families & friends.

Somerville residents have been waiting for several years for this much needed Zoning Overhaul so, I thank you for your time and consideration. At 70 years old, I understand more clearly than ever that time is of the essence!

Sincerely,

Sherri Geldersma
9 Clifton Street

617-922-3458
geldersma@gmail.com

between the facade of a principal building *and the Primary Front Lot Line(s), extending fully to each Side Lot Line(s) with which the Primary Front Lot Line(s) intersects* and including all built and landscape components.”

Thank you for your ongoing consideration of my comments.

Ulysses Lateiner
15 Chandler Street

Monique Baldwin

From: Ulysses Lateiner <ulysseslateiner@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2018 1:16 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning; Board of Aldermen
Subject: public comment re October 30 Public Hearing on the adoption of a new Somerville Zoning Ordinance

To the Planning Board and Board of Aldermen:

I cannot attend the October 30 Public Hearing on the adoption of a new Somerville Zoning Ordinance, but I would like to hereby submit the following public comment.

I reviewed the September 2018 BOA Submittal and am pleased to see that several concerns I submitted regarding the January 2018 BOA Submittal appear to have been addressed. I have listed each of my remaining concerns as of the latest (9/2018) submittal text below.

- **Article 1.1.3.a.i:** "Real property used or occupied by the City of Somerville is exempt from the provisions of this Ordinance".
 - The real property used or occupied by the City of Somerville is the property of the citizens of Somerville, is maintained with our tax dollars, and is staffed by employees whose salaries are paid with our tax dollars. It is illogical and unjust that these properties should be exempt from the zoning ordinance that the taxpayers themselves are subject to. Please strike this clause.
 - **As of 9/2018 this clause is still present. Please strike this clause.**
- **Article 16:**
 - Article 16 contains only defined terms introduced in the SZO. If the goal is to make the SZO understandable/accessible to lay readers, please also include defined terms of state law (MGL) that are used throughout the document, with an indication that these terms are drawn from MGL.
 - As of 9/2018 I see a single term, "Parties in Interest", for which there is an indication that this term is drawn from MGL. **Please consider adding references to (or preferably, definitions of) other MGL terms that are used throughout the SZO.**
- **Article 16:**
 - **Private Frontage:** "The area of a lot between the façade of a principal building and the primary front lot line, extending fully to each side lot line and including all built and landscape components". This definition is ambiguous as relates to Corner Lots: Corner Lots can have two Primary Front Lot Lines (see Article **2.3.2.b.iii (a)**), in which case the two Primary Front Lot Lines of such a Corner Lot will each intersect with only one Side Lot Line, therefore an argument could be made that such a Corner Lot would not have Private Frontage by this definition.
 - As of 9/2018, a new section **Article 2.3.3.d** has been added to describe Frontage Area: "i. The area of a lot between the façade of a principal building and any front lot line(s) extending fully to each side lot line(s) is the frontage area of a lot. ii. Parking is not permitted in the frontage area and driveways are not permitted in the frontage area between a building and the front lot line." This addition helps clarify the definition of Frontage Area, but **the Article 16 definition of "Private Frontage" should be amended to match Article 2.3.3.d.** A clearer wording would be "The area of a lot

Monique Baldwin

From: Derrick Rice <derrick.rice@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2018 9:23 AM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Feedback and thanks re: zoning overhaul

Hello,

I received an update from Ben Ewen-Campen regarding the zoning overhaul.

I would like to express my appreciation for great allowance of triple deckers and aux dwellings. My largest concern with the zoning overhaul is that it reduces potential housing density in a city where housing is less and less affordable each year.

I feel strongly that we must not put restrictive constraints on our ability to create housing opportunities to meet the market's demand. I am glad to see greater appreciation of the value of triple deckers as part of Somerville's housing landscape.

- Derrick Rice
owner/resident
49 Craigie St, Somerville, MA 02143

October 25, 2018

Board of Alderman Meeting – Zoning Overhaul 10/30/2018

Dear Alderman:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to share feedback related to the proposed Zoning Overhaul.

As a member of the business community and the Somerville Chamber, I want to voice my support for the zoning changes. They seem to align well with the results of the extensive Somervision process that I was fortunate enough to play an active role. It is exciting to see all of that hard work and visioning becoming a reality.

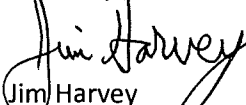
With any process as complex as overhauling the zoning for an entire city there are some areas of concern.

1. The areas of Inner belt, Brickbottom, Twin city, Davis Square, Assembly Row and Union Square which are exempt from this overhaul, concerns are emerging. Some of these areas will be under special permit circumstance for any changes moving forward. This provides an extreme level of uncertainty until the over lay districts for these areas is completed. My suggestion is that we freeze the status quo for zoning in these areas that lack a completed overlay district until such time as the district is created and approved by the Board of Alderman. If this is not an option, then provide hard deadlines as to when the areas will be rezoned to assure property owners.
2. The handling of contaminated sites is another area of concern. Any City with sites of this nature is challenged with turning them into tax generating assets to the community. Zoning should include some incentives or waivers related to the development of clean up lots/sites.

Many changes have taken place recently to support affordable housing goals. As a governmental body you have acted in several ways to positively impact the future of affordable housing. The adoption of the Community Preservation Act, linkage fee increases and the creation of the 20% inclusionary zoning are all intended to achieve positive results.

I strongly recommend the passage of the Zoning Overhaul so that it may act as a catalyst to encourage the development needed to achieve the City of Somerville's Goals. Let's make Somerville an even better place to "Work, Live and Play" than is currently is today.

Sincerely,



Jim Harvey

General Manager

Holiday Inn Somerville
30 Washington Street
Somerville, MA 02143

Monique Baldwin

From: Epstein Household <epsteinhousehold@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2018 8:38 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Comments on proposed zoning

Hi,

As owner-occupants of a 2-family house, we'd like to take the opportunity to provide brief comments on the proposed zoning overhaul.

Generally, we feel it is a thoughtful and significant improvement over both the previous proposal and of course over the status quo. We support passing it, though there are several changes we would like to see incorporated if at all possible:

- Greater upzoning of Davis Square. Currently all "transform" areas are in eastern Somerville, while western Somerville receives few of the benefits (and burdens) of development. This is not equitable. As Davis Square residents we would like to see taller and denser construction in our CBD.
- Greater upzoning of Beacon Street, similar to Somerville Ave or Broadway.
- Allowing 2-to-3 conversions in the NR zone. Otherwise, some 2,000 houses in RB appear to be effectively downzoned when they become NR.
- Allowing accessory dwelling units in all new zones, without onerous restrictions, except that ADUs should not be eligible for on-street residential parking permits. We want more neighbors, not more cars.
- Requiring minimum visibility sightlines (e.g., a 5x5 foot triangle) across all new driveways to reduce blind driveway threats to pedestrians.
- Not tying maximum shed dormer width to window width, because in situations where the dormer setback from the lot line is less than 3 feet, MA building code prohibits new windows; therefore, as written, Article 3 Section L will limit the width of a shed dormer to only 36" (dimension A), even one that has ample skylights. This effectively prohibits new shed dormers where the lot line setback is less than 3 feet. This situation applies to our house, which is very typical of houses and lots in western Somerville.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Alex and Christina Epstein
5 Windsor Road

John Amaral 9 Kidder Ave.

There are at least 4 major biases in the proposed ordinance.

1 Bias against a prime mover of the Massachusetts economy: the employees and students of 100 nearby colleges and universities, particularly their well-behaved grad students, post-doc researchers, faculty and office workers who need realistically affordable housing near the T.

2 Bias against another prime economic mover: highly educated young unmarried adults working nearby who use our good transportation system to commute from Somerville.

These groups would be excluded by the excessive limitation ^{on} unrelated adults per dwelling, driving formerly affordable rents up 25%, pressuring essential people out of Somerville, and lowering property values.

A more reasoned approach when a housing shortage is claimed, would be allow units with at minimum 4 unrelated adults to better serve the community as a whole. A code based on square footage would be even more realistic, fair and tied to the tax basis. The proposed restriction may be nevertheless discriminatory, compared with the proposal allowing unlimited 'related' individuals.

3 Bias against absentee landlord investors, regardless of how excellent they may be; but it's also against current occupant landlords, by draconian restriction of the sale of their accessory dwellings to other occupant landlords thus forcing down sale values while the city maintains sky-high taxes. The remedy is obvious: remove this restriction.

4 The ordinance's reduction in potential units serves to deprive qualifying RB owners of the by-right potential to create three dwelling units; this is their nest-egg and reason for years of struggle. It would be wiser to retain the existing RB rights? The potential loss to owners is in the neighborhood of a billion dollars; bad for all.

Finally, while the clock is ticking for public and written comment, the current rush to "approve now amend later" by some board members does not serve the public interest and these matters should be put before the voters.

- **Residents will never understand extremely complicated new code**
- **Proposed zoning rules effectively block all new “accessory” units**

Submitted by Skip Schloming, former Executive Director (1996-2016), Small Property Owners Association
102R Inman Street, Cambridge MA 02139, 617-354-2358 home, 617-201-5901 cell, skore@comcast.net

Complicated code

After spending 2 days studying the documents at www.somervillezoning.com with little success, I asked the Planning/Zoning department for any document comparing, side-by-side, the existing zoning provisions and the proposed provisions, to understand the changes. No such document exists. The proposed code is so complicated that such a comparison is not possible or far too difficult to do. Consequently, Somerville residents will not be able to understand the proposed changes and make any reasonable judgment on them.

The present code, now in effect, is simple, approximately like this: Each dwelling on a lot (in one district) requires 1,500 square feet of lot area. **Just that one number.** So one unit needs 1,500 sq. ft. of lot, two units need 3,000, three units need 4,500. Owners can understand it.

The proposed code eliminates this formula and replaces it with this: **8 building types** (cottage, detached house, semi-detached house, duplex, detached triple decker, apartment house, apartment building, rowhouses), and **each building type** has a 14-section chart of differing requirements. Lot size by square feet is replaced with maximum and minimum lot dimensions: max and min lot width, max and min lot depth.

That’s four numbers for the required lot dimensions for each of the 8 building types, which equals 32 numbers instead of one or two.

Each building type also has chart of five setbacks required. That 5 times 8 building types equals 40 setback requirements. Only zoning experts would really know what the new code says.

Understand the requirements for one’s own property might, with effort, be possible, **But to understand, for public policy purposes, how and why the code changed** to the new requirements, and **to discover the rationale for having the specific different requirements for each building type in comparison with other building types**—that is a monumental and complex task the zoning people may know. But no one else, Somerville residents and probably not even all the Aldermen and Alderwomen, can really grasp the overall rationales for all the zoning changes.

This new complexity means residents can never understand the proposed code, especially not the rationale for the differing lot dimensions or how the old code has been changed by the new one—critical information for Somerville residents to make an informed judgment. I doubt even the Board of Aldermen fully understand the new code. The Planning/Zoning department becomes, in essence, the boss, the dictatorial decision-makers of the code, to whom everyone (including Aldermen and women) must go to find out exactly the status of any property or property type and what exactly owners can do. If the department makes a mistake, no citizen could read the new code and discover the error. No checks and balances exist.

Suggestion: Send the proposed code back to Planning/Development and tell them to **Make It Simple.**

Accessory apartments effectively blocked (the only part of the proposed code I think I understand)

In light of much discussion about high rents in the Boston area and other cities, smaller-sized, lower-rent accessory apartments are being discussed and gradually implemented nationwide as perhaps the easiest and best response to high rents. They are ideal for single people, graduate students, young professionals, elderly singles or couples, or any couples married or partnered, any of whom would prefer less space and lower rents. A growing supply of accessory units is our future. Moving into accessory units would free up larger, higher-rent units for higher-income households.

The proposed Somerville code, however, would prohibit accessory apartments in all three-unit buildings and, while technically allowed in two-unit buildings, requires that owners (1) must **live on the same lot** as the accessory unit and (2) must get a **special permit**. The rules for special permits are 1½ pages, single-spaced, 10-point type; multiple hearings involved; neighbors invited to object; and given the new code’s

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complexity, will likely require owners to hire a zoning-specialist lawyer.

Given the high cost and code complexity of special permits, virtually no owners will seek them for an accessory unit. **The elderly**, for example, could not, without great difficulty and no assured success, create an accessory unit for themselves and rent their former residence for more retirement income.

DEFINED: ACCESSORY APARTMENTS are smaller-sized, lower-rent units with these characteristics:

1. **Built in unused, presently existing spaces**, in attics, basements, backyards, and by subdividing triple-decker and other large apartments into two smaller units, so long as building code and life safety concerns are met.
2. **Historic neighborhood appearance is preserved** completely or almost completely. They are built inside existing structures or behind them out of sight. Only a few small alterations to the exterior may be necessary in some cases, such as a second means of egress (probably in the rear) or one or two more windows.
3. **Their rents are “naturally” lower because:** (a) They are smaller in size, (b) their locations (attics and basements) are not quite as desirable, (c) much has already been built: floors, walls, ceilings, roofs, and all utilities are already in place and only need to be re-routed or extended. All that is needed is new doors, halls, and perhaps windows, plus small kitchens and baths. Since the cost to build is lower, owners can keep rents lower. **No rent regulation, like rent control, is needed.**
4. **Owners will build them, no taxpayer dollars required, only zoning changes.** Even with lower rents and higher property tax assessments (more \$\$\$ in the city’s treasury), the extra income that owners can expect is sufficient motivation for many to add these units in their properties, **if they can do so “as of right,”** without special hearings, only a building permit.
5. **Smaller-sized units help meet future lifestyles.** Parking requirements need to be waived, but many residents in accessory units will turn to **walking, bicycling, or public transportation**, and will rely more on **online purchasing and delivery services**. These lifestyle changes are what many people already desire for Americans.
6. **A hefty supply of these smaller-sized units is possible.** Consider all the empty spaces that often exist in basements and attics, or in backyards, or all the large apartments, like triple-decker units, that could be subdivided into two smaller units.
7. **Gradual zoning change.** Accessory units could first be zoned in walkable distance from public transportation and retail stores and expanded later as needed.

If the proposed new zoning code effectively blocks accessory apartments, what other specific changes might it make that would be judged not desirable? No one really knows.

What about increased density?

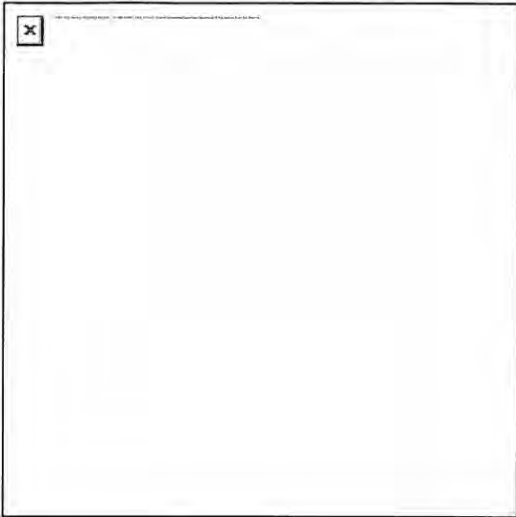
Some increase in population density would result, but would be barely noticeable and far preferable to high-rise luxury developments. An increase in population density for the coastal cities will almost surely happen in the future, anyway. Without additional housing, households likely will double up in large apartments in certain neighborhoods, creating a kind of ghetto—not a desirable outcome. Accessory units are spread out.

Rising rents in the Boston area result from a growing influx of higher-income, tech-oriented people. As a result, moderate- and lower-income residents are pushed out, a major complaint. Instead of pushing these people out, a good supply of smaller-sized accessory units will keep these households around to supply the blue-collar and service workers we will all certainly still need.

The only way to get larger numbers of accessory units built, however, is to allow private owners to build them *as of right*, which the current zoning proposal stops entirely, thus lowering the potential value of all Somerville’s two- and three-unit properties.

Monique Baldwin

From: Somerville YIMBY <jeff@somervilleyimby.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2018 3:35 PM
To: Board of Aldermen; COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Regarding the Proposed Zoning Overhaul



To the Board of Aldermen:

The current version of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance has a great deal to recommend it, and is a major improvement to the current ordinance in terms of its clarity, usefulness, and practicality. We are optimistic that it will be ready to be implemented before the end of the year.

Recognizing that this may be one of the last opportunities to make changes before the initial implementation, we would like to make the following suggestions.

Gross Floor Area to Dwelling Unit Ratios: We are encouraged by the increase in permitted density under the proposed code. However, it still sets a maximum number of units in any building based on its total floor area, a calculation that is not based on safety but on limiting density. Limitations of this sort will reduce the amount of housing that can be created, increase prices, and ensure that new construction continues to be tilted more heavily toward high-priced "luxury" development. Small studio and 1-bedroom apartments and condos are a great match with today's smaller households, and we should not artificially restrict the availability of these modestly-priced, modestly-sized homes. These ratios should be eliminated or reduced further.

Triple-Deckers: We are encouraged by the addition of triple-decker and carriage house types to the NR district. However, we think it would be entirely reasonable to permit the construction of our beloved, iconic triple-deckers by-right in all locations in the NR district.

Accessory Dwelling Units: The rules surrounding ADUs are unnecessarily complex and would be almost certain to stymie the creation of these necessary middle-income homes.

-
- The special permit rule: Moving the special permit requirement from the construction phase to the occupancy-permit phase increases, rather than decreases, the uncertainty in the process.
-

-
- The owner-occupant landlord rule: Advocates for the owner-occupancy rule claim that it promotes individual home ownership, but it actually tilts the benefits of ADU construction to people with enough wealth to own multifamily buildings. The rule also creates a complex enforcement and monitoring burden for the city, one which could become very expensive to administer.
-
-
- Noise and nuisance concerns: Proponents of the owner-occupant landlord rule also cite noise and nuisance problems they claim are allayed by onsite landlord supervision. However, an onsite landlord is no guarantee of tenant behavior. If the city wishes to address noise and nuisance issues, it should use its existing powers to address those issues.
-
-
- Banning subdivision and sale: If the city has a stated goal of promoting homeownership and owner-occupancy, why would we prohibit making an ADU a home that someone could own?
-

Number of Related Residents: The rule is counterproductive in numerous ways. It ignores the complexity of contemporary household formation; it inserts the municipal government into personal relationships in inappropriate ways; it blocks the creation of moderately priced alternative housing; and it creates opportunities for unscrupulous landlords to exploit tenants who fear being evicted if they report safety violations to the city.

Advocates for this rule say it prevents noise and preserves housing for traditional families with children. This is nonsense. If the city wishes to reduce noise, it should enforce the existing noise ordinance. If it wishes to make the city child-friendly, it should offer incentives and benefits directly to families with children. The unrelated-residents rule achieves none of the city's actual goals, while increasing prices and harming people who want to share a home.

Beacon St., Washington St., and Highland Ave Corridors: Significant portions of the Washington Street, Beacon Street, and Highland Avenue corridors need greater height and density. We believe that well-planned upzoning will provide more homes in these areas without threatening their personality.

In particular, we believe that the focus on preserving existing 1-story commercial buildings is misguided. We agree with the city's goal of preserving grocery stores and other valuable neighborhood retail. However, as the Broadway Star Market site shows, a one-story building is not a guarantee that a grocery store will continue to operate. Moreover, there is no reason a grocery store cannot operate in a taller building, as the b.fresh in Davis Square and numerous Star Market locations throughout the Boston area demonstrate. If the city wishes to preserve grocery stores, then it should do so directly, not dictate that the shape of existing grocery store buildings remain unchanged.

Issues of Equity: We should acknowledge that the much of the "conserve" elements of SomerVision, which this zoning ordinance takes as its guidance, are in West Somerville, which has a larger proportion of white residents, while East Somerville appears to receive more of the "transform" and "enhance" elements. Especially glaring is that Davis Square, with the lone Red Line station in our entire city, is not upzoned for considerably greater future development. The city absolutely needs to increase the permitted height and density for locations like Davis Square if it is to avoid disproportionate development impact to minority neighborhoods.

Transit Oriented Development: If the United States is to do its part in mitigating the oncoming disaster that is global climate change, cities need to get people out of cars and onto public transit. That can only happen if people live near transit. Somerville's role is clear: Permit more homes and businesses near Green Line and Red Line stations.

Thank you for your work on this important project. We hope that our contributions are helpful and informative, and we look forward to collaborating with the city on these issues in the future.

Sincerely,
Somerville YIMBY Steering Committee

--
Somerville YIMBY
somervilleimby.org
[@SomervilleYIMBY](https://www.facebook.com/SomervilleYIMBY)
[facebook.com/SomervilleYIMBY](https://www.facebook.com/SomervilleYIMBY)

Monique Baldwin

From: Lynne Thompson <lynne.thompson@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 01, 2018 5:13 PM
To: Board of Aldermen; COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Follow-up to public testimony 10/31

Dear BOA,

I urge the BOA to revisit the RB zoning issue. This was by far the point most speakers focused on at last night's meeting and has received the majority of written comments over time.

After the immense amount of time and effort put into revising zoning, it's more important to try and get it right, than to rush it through and try to adapt later, having more public meetings etc etc.

Some bullet points as a followup

- Minimally there needs to be a provision for owner occupants of 2 families to add a legal 3rd unit. To be grandfathered in, as a right. Or alternatively for owners of 2 families in RB who have owned their properties a specific number of years, say 10. These people are either residents, or, did not buy to flip and make a profit. To downzone small properties owners is extremely damaging to our financial worth. We can ill afford the financial consequences. The BOA should recognize there is a valid difference to those of us whose home is our biggest asset vs developers for which is simply their current 'for profit' flip. They also know going in and can make informed decisions, vs. those of us who bought a two-family long ago with reasonable expectations of RB zoning long in place.
- Winter Hill - the area of the city which has seen the least amount of appreciation - especially the 93 side between Broadway and Mystic Avenue. Also the area with a large swath of RB zoning. Those 2 family owners in this RB zone are disproportionately affected based on less appreciation, and now loss of actual market value if limited to 2 units (or 2 units and an ADU).
- Downsizing in a housing crisis is counter-intuitive. ADUs are convoluted when the idea is simplifying code. ADUs obstruct bringing more rental properties to the market. ADUs encourage subdividing existing square footage. This ADU provision does not help satisfy demand for badly needed additional created housing-additional square footage, additional units. The vast majority of renters in Somerville need more housing - most are singles or young couples. No one speaks for them because they do not get involved in local zoning ordinances, and no housing advocates are representing their interests. Recognize the makeup of our residents and act on behalf of the majority. Legit 3rd units also create 1st time ownership opportunities for this same profile of renter-buyers who do not want a fixer-upper or even a single family. ADU's create the disadvantage of eliminating these opportunities for first time home buyers.
- Density - not a factor, its a false flag. Most speakers called for greater density. Density is not a valid deterrent to Somerville being so desirable. Renters who are the majority, love the urban vibe and proximity to everything!
- Character - also not a factor. My 2-family is 'out of character' in my RB zoned neighborhood. Most are 3 families - and 2 6-family units within a block.
- Parking - many of the members of the Board may not recall what parking was like, before residential permit parking!! Parking today is not a problem. With the implementation of permit parking, large numbers of vehicles disappeared from public streets. People, especially students, could not afford the

high insurance rates. With green line stops coming, a reasonable expectation would be fewer cars. I know my tenants have fewer vehicles than they did 15 years ago. Parking may seem problematic - only because you don't have the same reference point of we long term residents. Seems a non-issue.

- Makeup of residents - Going back to growing up here, irish catholics families had many children. My own family had five. But to 'protect' families which are few and far between in Somerville, and fail to lookout for the majority of people here in somerville, mainly singles and young couples, seems to reek of discrimination. The Board needs to recognize the reality of who is living here and work to benefit the majority, as well as special interests. Everyone needs more affordable housing, which can only happen with creation of more units, and more actual square footage.

Thank you,

Lynne Thompson



Monique Baldwin

From: Andrew Collins <andy@newmarket-properties.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2018 3:53 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Passive House Certification

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Afternoon,

In a previous iteration of the proposed zoning we saw a section that included an incentive if the builder provides a PHIUS+ certified building. It now seems that its been changed to LEED Silver and Gold requirements for buildings of a certain size. I believe PHIUS is the far superior building approach and hope that you include it once again as an alternative to LEED.

Thank You,
Andy

Monique Baldwin

From: surjeet paintal <spaintal@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 08, 2018 10:34 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning; Board of Aldermen
Subject: Zoning Overhaul Written Testimony
Attachments: AHOC Affordable Housing Key Advocacy Points for Fall 2018 Zoning Overhaul.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Board of Alderpeople and Planning Board-

As a homeowner, I've been anxiously waiting for the proposed Zoning Overhaul to be passed. I know a lot of hard work was put into this by the Board(s) and the Planning Department. But I do want to recognize its utility in helping with the housing crisis in the area. Strengthening the affordable housing provision in the zoning seems like a no-brainer to me.

I urge the Planning Board and BoA to adopt the recommendations from the Affordable Housing Organizing Committee (see attached).

Regards,
Surjeet Paintal
16 Princeton Street #2

FROM: Fred Berman (617-501-1404) on behalf of the Affordable Housing Organizing Committee (AHOC)

TO: Interested Persons

RE: Recommendations to Strengthen Affordable Housing Provisions (mostly Article 12) of Proposed Zoning Overhaul

DATE: October 29, 2018 (Revised from a March 8, 2018 memo by Ellen Shachter and Fred Berman to add Item #7.)

=====

1. The proposed Zoning Ordinance limits which buildings are subject to inclusionary zoning requirements. It does this by eliminating buildings undergoing "substantial rehabilitation" from the definition of "Applicability" in Section 12.1.2. **We think substantial rehabilitation should be added back into this definition.**

2. We are very concerned that tenants in inclusionary rental units in buildings converted to condominiums are currently vulnerable to displacement if they cannot afford to purchase their units. Section 12.1.3 should be amended to ensure that **inclusionary rental units in buildings being converted to condominiums must continue to be rented to the existing inclusionary tenants, if the tenant cannot afford to purchase the unit.** (The owner could, however sell the unit to a City-approved buyer that commits to preserving the unit as an affordable rental unit -- or -- if the tenant has the ability to buy the unit, the owner could sell the unit to the tenant at a price based on the income level that the rental unit targeted.) This same amendment, protecting against displacement of tenants in inclusionary rental units converted to homeownership condos, should also be added to Section 12.1.6 "Implementation Plans and Covenants."

3. Inclusionary Zoning typically does not produce many family sized units. The availability of affordable units with three bedrooms or more is critical to keeping families in Somerville and children in our public schools. We are pleased to see that the City proposes, for the first time, to require that some inclusionary units in large developments be required to have three or more bedrooms. However we would like to see this requirement increased. Section 12.1.5 "ADU Development Standards" should be amended to **increase the percentage of affordable units that are targeted for families.** Currently, for every 100 units developed, only four (4) of the twenty (20) inclusionary units are required to be affordable family-sized units. Given the acute shortage of affordable family-sized apartments in Somerville, the requirement should be increased, so that as many as eight (8) of the twenty (20) inclusionary units are for families.

4. The proposed zoning allows developers in some cases to build inclusionary units offsite. We think this should only be allowed if the offsite units would provide greater benefits than if all the affordable units were built onsite. We think Section 12.1.8 "Offsite Compliance" should be amended to require that the **value contributed by offsite Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) equals or exceeds 150% of the value of the onsite inclusionary units that the offsite ADUs would replace,** where that additional value could be the result of creating (a) **more ADUs** than would be required if all the ADUs were onsite, (b) an **increased number of ADUs with three or more bedrooms** than would be required of onsite ADUs, and/or (c) ADUs with **greater depth of affordability** than would be required of onsite ADUs.

5. We want to ensure that inclusionary units are targeted to tenants on the verge of displacement who want to stay in Somerville, but whose buildings are about to be sold, or whose rents have increased to unaffordable levels. We think Section 12.1.7 "Purchase and Tenancy Standards" should be amended to specifically prioritize tenants on the verge of being displaced and tenants who were recently displaced and want to return to Somerville. We appreciate the zoning provisions specifically including tenants who were evicted for no fault of their own, and suggest that in addition, they **include the specific language on priorities developed by the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group.**

6. We believe that in general, developers should not be allowed to make "in lieu payments" instead of creating actual affordable units. However we understand that in limited cases, such payments may make sense, and **we appreciate the proposed increases in the amount of in-lieu payments required,** so as to better address the need for affordable units and to truly cover the cost of developing that housing (and annual operating costs, if it is rental housing). We are concerned, however, that the proposed language does not require payments until the developer gets a Certificate of Occupancy (CoO) for their market rate units. If payment is delayed until CoO, the affordable units won't come online until years after the market units, and the payments will buy much less housing. Inclusionary units should come online no later than the market units, whether they are onsite or otherwise. Please amend 12.1.7 "Buyouts and Payments" to **ensure that in-lieu payments are paid before a developer receives their Building Permit Beyond Foundation.**

7. Inclusionary zoning will not, by itself, add enough affordable housing to meet even existing needs. Development projects consisting of 100% affordable housing are essential to the mix. **We encourage creation of an Affordable Housing Overlay District along transportation corridors** (bus/train routes), making such projects more financially feasible, by allowing higher density and substantially waiving parking requirements (and eligibility for parking permits).

Monique Baldwin

From: Marks, Nisa (HOU) <Nisa.Marks@mahouse.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 09, 2018 5:13 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; COS-Website-Planning
Cc: Tim Snyder; Provost, Denise - Rep. (HOU)
Subject: testimony on zoning amendment
Attachments: 2018Nov_testimony on particulates pollution.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Mr. Clerk and Members of the Planning Board,

Please find attached Rep. Provost's testimony on the proposed zoning ordinance amendment to regulate the siting of housing, schools, preschools, and long term care facilities near heavily trafficked roadways, for entry into the Board of Aldermen's minutes and their consideration.

Thank you,

Nisa Marks

Legislative Aide

Office of State Representative Denise Provost

27th Middlesex District

Room 473-B, State House

Boston, MA 02133-1053

(617) 722-2263 phone

(617) 722-2837 fax



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

DENISE PROVOST
27TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
ROOM 473B, STATE HOUSE
TEL. (617) 722-2263
FAX (617) 722-2837
Denise.Provost@MAhouse.gov

November 9, 2018

Re: 15 registered voters submitting a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment to regulate the siting of housing, schools, preschools, and long term care facilities near heavily trafficked roadways

Honorable Members of the Board of Aldermen:

I wish to weigh in in strong support of the passage of the above-referenced ordinance. For many years, I have filed similar legislation for adoption at the state level.

This effort has not yet resulted in the passage of my bills, yet a growing scientific literature demonstrates that traffic-related air pollution is extremely harmful to human health. Pollution containing tiny particles damages the lungs, worsening diseases like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and, presumably by triggering the body's inflammatory response, heightening the risk of heart attack, stroke, and other illnesses. In 2013, the World Health Organization declared particle pollution – much of which comes from transportation sources – to be a cancer-causing agent.

In addition to lung and heart disease, exposure to ultrafine particle pollution can impair children's development, cause neurological damage, and shorten lifespans. Research at the Harvard School of Public Health links exposure to this kind of pollution with autism in children. In response to the weight of this research, the proposed ordinance sensibly aims to protect the people of Somerville from high levels of exposure to particle pollution.

Some of the best data in the world on the health effects of particulates has been conducted in Massachusetts. For instance, the Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health (CAFEH), run by Dr. Doug Brugge of Tufts University, has documented elevated levels of ultrafine particulate pollution near highways, including elevated I-93 through Somerville. As Somerville considers changes to its zoning ordinance, it would be wise to factor in our knowledge about how motor vehicle pollution damages human health.

Respectfully submitted,


Denise Provost

Cc: Somerville Planning Board

Monique Baldwin

From: Stephanie Hirsch <stephanie@stephaniehirsch.org>
Sent: Monday, November 12, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Peter Forcellese
Cc: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Zoning Comment from Constituent

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello Peter (plus planning department) – A constituent asked that I pass along this feedback to the entire board. Can you please forward it? Thank you! Stephanie

Question and Concern: Can the Alderman review the city statues regarding the number of unrelated persons in an apartment, and **rooms sublet-ted by the lease holder? Absentee landlords** should be encouraged to check on their lease tenant, and who is actually living in their rentals; also, the condition of their rental apartments. Neighbors to a rental property, due to the close proximity of their property, is **negatively impacted**, by poorly maintained **buildings and yards**. Unkempt yards with debris and dog poop attract rats which cause an unpleasant experience, for a homeowner. If there are City Ordinances about the number of **unrelated** people living in a rental or lease holders **subleasing** rooms in a rental apartment, how does the City monitor? You cannot go by names on a mailbox since the "younger" generation do not use "snail mail".

Monique Baldwin

From: Rob Gant <rgant@alum.wpi.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2018 8:26 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning; Board of Aldermen; Mark Niedergang
Subject: Zoning Ordinance

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Today I read the letter sent on October 30th to the Somerville Board of Alderman by the Somerville YIMBY Steering Committee. I agree with all of the sentiments expressed in the letter.

As a resident of Somerville since 2003 and a home owner since 2012 I am pleased to live in a place where my neighbors speak 5 different languages and get together to share food and home brew and camaraderie in our block parties. I cannot even imagine living somewhere without 7 different varieties of food available in Magoun Sq around the corner along with a barber, a butcher, a bakery, and a grocery store. All within a couple minutes walk of my home.

I want more people to have the opportunities that I have enjoy living in Somerville. This means we need denser housing, taller buildings, and mixed use development.

I hope that Somerville Planning and the Board of Alderman take this opportunity to adapt our zoning for a better future.

J Rob Gant
+1-508-345-8013
<https://rob.gant.ninja/>
26 Glenwood Rd, Somerville, MA 02145-3607

Monique Baldwin

From: Tristan Harward <trisweb@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2018 10:32 AM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Zoning Ordinance

To whom it may concern,

I'd like to voice my support for a new zoning ordinance, and hear there's great progress toward it. As a Somerville resident and homeowner, I am both invested in the community and passionate about expanding access and equity to all residents.

Here are some of the things I think should be included in the new ordinance, that I care about and agree with wholeheartedly:

- **Triple-deckers permitted everywhere** in the Neighborhood Residence (NR) districts—this would increase the availability of housing spread out among the whole community without greatly impacting the
- **Simplified rules for building and occupying Accessory Dwelling Units** (aka ADUs or in-law apartments)—I think this is one of the more effective ways to provide additional housing that covers a wider range of needs, from housing elderly family, to renting, and I think residents renting one add-on unit is a great alternative/supplement to larger lessors.
- **More height permitted in Davis Square and on Beacon Street, Washington Street, and Highland Avenue**—This is a no-brainer for me: each of these neighborhood squares are practically urban centers. They deserve to be
- **More attention to equity** between East and West Somerville—the needs and demographics of the two regions differ and they should be treated as such, so that East Somerville can thrive as much as say Davis Square.
- **No floor-area-to-dwelling-unit ratio** restrictions in high rises beyond what's needed for health and safety—If these are unnaturally restricting the number of units possible in a building, they should be reduced to a more reasonable restriction.
- **An end to the rule restricting the number of unrelated residents in a household**—the requirement for the residents to be related is not necessary and restricts the use of the existing housing stock in more creative ways (something Somerville should embrace!)

These important policy decisions would help Somerville thrive and meet the growing need for affordable housing, and housing in general. Thank you for carefully considering all the tradeoffs, and for moving ahead with changes to zoning to help the community!

Thank you,

Tristan Harward
46 Josephine Ave. Unit 1
Somerville, MA 02144

Monique Baldwin

From: Riordan Frost <riordan.frost@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 18, 2018 3:12 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Comments on the proposed zoning ordinance

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello,

I attended the hearing on 10/30/18 and gave comments, and would like to add to them here with three points. I live at 30 Dickinson St in Somerville.

1. The need for new housing is great. According to data from the 2017 American Community Survey (tables B25070 & B25091), 41% of renters in the city of Somerville are cost burdened -- i.e. they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Over half of these (21% of all renters in the city) are **severely cost burdened**, spending more than **50% of their income on housing**. This is not only a renter problem either -- 23% of homeowners with a mortgage in Somerville are cost burdened, and a little less than half of that group are severely cost burdened. This is a crisis that demands action.

2. We need upzoning at Beacon & Washington, and areas like that around Somerville. The argument that I heard at the hearing is that the neighborhood shouldn't change, especially the one-story commercial buildings. The neighborhood needs to change to maintain those beloved shops/cafes/restaurants, because if workers can't afford to live nearby, these places will close. It happened recently with Tupelo near Inman Square, which closed citing a lack of labor, and is happening a great deal in wealthy neighborhoods in NYC.

3. I agree with the Somerville YIMBY letter about by-right triple-deckers, simpler ADU rules, equity, and cutting out the rule of related residents -- that last part is a proxy for other issues that can be addressed without directly regulating who you live with.

Thank you for all your hard work!

Best,
Riordan

--

Riordan Frost, PhD

www.riordanfrost.com

Mrs. Anna Rego
110 Beacon Street
Somerville, MA 02143

November 19, 2018

Dear Planning Board and Board of Aldermen:

I am writing to ask that you zone three corners of Washington and Beacon Street for only one-story high.

I was born in the house where I now live, went to Somerville schools, saw family and loved ones go to war, got married and lived with my husband here, and have seen this neighborhood change from when there was a trolley going down the middle of the street until today. For most of that time, I felt that the City of Somerville listened to us citizens. I am asking that you listen again now.

Our neighbors don't want tall buildings on that corner. The four-story building that is there now is never fully rented, sometimes with whole floors going empty for years. Then they tend to rent to businesses that do not serve the local community. Right now there are two commercial vacancies on the first floor of that big building, even though they have their own parking lot. Conversely, the small buildings and businesses that serve the local community are very successful there. Now we have the restaurant Dali, the Biscuit, the Wine and Cheese Cask, and Beacon Street Pizza. They all do a good business. Before them over the years there were pharmacies, a gas station, and other local businesses. That's what we want.

You know, sometimes people don't appreciate what they have, but in this neighborhood we do. Please don't let new zoning mess it up. Leave our one-story commercial buildings as one-story commercial buildings.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


Anna Rego, 110 Beacon Street

Monique Baldwin

From: etkoury1@verizon.net
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2018 9:21 AM
To: Monique Baldwin
Subject: Re: Letter to Planning Board

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Monique,

Sure. I'll resend the pdf, but just in case it doesn't go through, I have copied the body of the petition below, and all you'll be missing is the signatures. Thanks for taking this seriously. The pdf will be resent in another email. Have a happy Thanksgiving.

Best,
Elaine

To: Somerville Aldermen
Date: March 14, 2018

We the undersigned neighbors ask that the proposed zoning on Beacon Street from Durham Street to the Cambridge city line be changed. We do not want the new zoning to invite developers to destroy the character of our neighborhood by building three- and four-story buildings where now exist one-story commercial buildings that offer important amenities to our neighborhood such as a supermarket, a drug store, and many beloved small businesses, some of which need parking lots to survive financially. Instead we ask for zoning that respects the quality of life of the present residents and preserves the working class history of our street, so important to its character. We therefore request:

- Keeping one-story commercial buildings as one-story commercial buildings.
- Grandfathering all present one- and two-family residences as well as row-houses, classic triple deckers, and tandem triple-deckers as conforming.
- Keeping parking lots attached to businesses.
- Requiring that the style of new buildings blend with the late 1800's and early 1900's working class architecture present on the street.
- Wherever possible yards and green space be preserved.

Signature

Printed Name

Address

-----Original Message-----

From: Monique Baldwin <mbaldwin@somervillema.gov>
To: etkoury1@verizon.net <etkoury1@verizon.net>
Sent: Tue, Nov 20, 2018 9:07 am
Subject: RE: Letter to Planning Board

Hi Elaine,

We appreciate your comments, so thank you for sending.

I am having trouble viewing this pdf as an error message states there is an issue with the pdf. The message says to contact the sender to correct the issue. Is it possible for you to resend the pdf so that I may have it legible for the record?

Thank you,

Monique

From: etkoury1@verizon.net [mailto:etkoury1@verizon.net]

Sent: Monday, November 19, 2018 2:58 PM

To: COS-Website-Planning

Cc: George Proakis; J.T. Scott

Subject: Letter to Planning Board

November 19, 2018

Dear Planning Board Members:

We appreciate that you have been compiling recommendations for new zoning. We ask that you not approve the new zoning as it relates to the corner of Beacon and Washington streets. We want to be sure you know that 265 members of the Beacon Street community have supported a petition sent to the Aldermen asking to zone three corners of Washington and Beacon as one story commercial buildings down to Durham Street. (See attached petition for reference; additional signatures on file with City Clerk.) This would include the buildings that presently house the Biscuit, Dali, Beacon Street Pizza, and the Wine and Cheese Cask parking lot. We are delighted that our Alderman, JT Scott, helped negotiate that both the Whole Foods and Walgreens lots be zoned as one story commercial.

We wanted to remind you of our petition and of the neighborhood's overwhelming advocacy for this corner. We hope you will support the voice of our neighborhood in its clearly stated preference: that the three corners of Beacon and Washington that are not already MR4, remain one-story Commercial including the block on Beacon from Washington to Durham.

When the Planning Department refers to our neighborhood they talk about it as being a "corridor". However, just on the Beacon Street block between Washington and Smith/Calvin there are four families that have lived in the same houses for between 100 and 200 years. We are a neighborhood. We care about each other. And we have history here.

We are not against all forms of change. However, we want our neighborhood to be recognizable to us, and we want to be able to see the sky. As you know, even if the Beacon/Washington corner is zoned for one story Commercial, it will not mean that developers can not ever build higher, it just means that the neighborhood would have input, since they could not go higher "by right".

Please take note of the number of people who signed the attached petition: two hundred sixty-three. (There was a second group of signatories that was delivered later, plus two who sent their intention to be included after the others had been delivered, making 265 in total. City Clerk has additional names.) These are all Somerville residents who either live on or within 750 feet of Beacon, or work on, or regularly frequent this section of Beacon. There are a very small number of people in the neighborhood (you can count them on one hand!) who own multiple lots/buildings who would prefer to see a zoned-up version, but most bought their properties as investments and don't live here, the one who does is planning to cash out, and none of them own buildings on the Beacon/Washington corner. Please give preference to the huge majority of us who signed the petition and who LIVE here. Thank you for your thought and time.

Elaine Koury, for 265 Beacon Street neighbors

Delivered by Ekine Koury

617-547-208
etkoury1@verizon.net

2018-03-14 P 3:28

To: Somerville Aldermen
Date: March 14, 2018

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
SOMERVILLE, MA

We the undersigned neighbors ask that the proposed zoning on Beacon Street from Durham Street to the Cambridge city line be changed. We do not want the new zoning to invite developers to destroy the character of our neighborhood by building three- and four-story buildings where now exist one-story commercial buildings that offer important amenities to our neighborhood such as a supermarket, a drug store, and many beloved small businesses, some of which need parking lots to survive financially. Instead we ask for zoning that respects the quality of life of the present residents and preserves the working class history of our street, so important to its character. We therefore request:



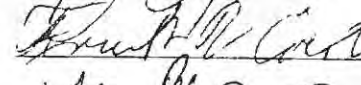
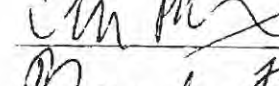
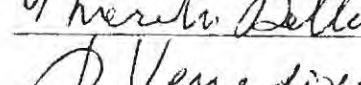
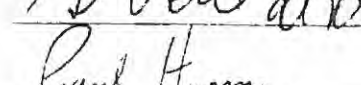
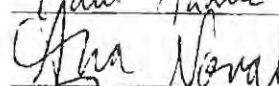
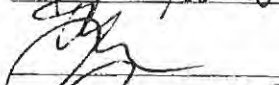

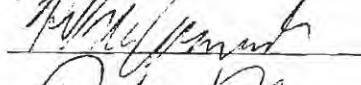
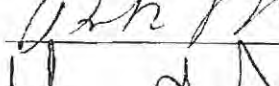




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All addresses in Somerville

Signature

Printed Name

Address

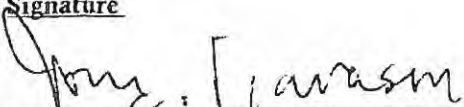

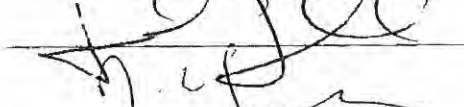
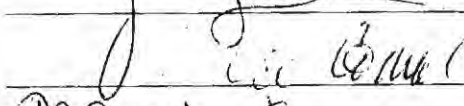
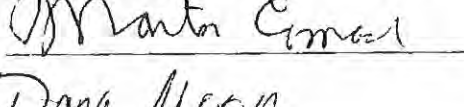
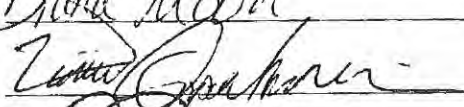

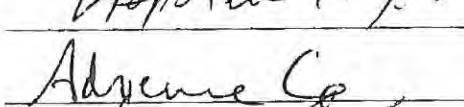

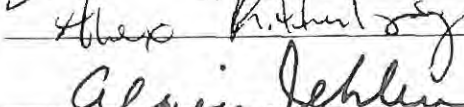
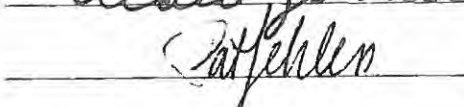


	Robin Oluncky	6 Beacon place
	Joli Gato	99 Beacon St Somerville
	TRANH CHRISTINA	38 HANSON ST
	Chris Belletti	41 Lewis St
	Meredith Belletti	41 Lewis St.
	Dmitry VENEDIKTOV	43 Franklin St #2
	PAUL HANNA	17 CARLTON ST.
	Anna Navak	395 Somerville Ave.
	Olga Prisch	5 Childwell Av Somerville 02145
	Seth Heh	591 Somerville Ave
	Hillary Gospoderek	47 Princeton Street #2
	Ruth Rosen	72 Concord Ave
	Yvonne Filton	25 Pimick St
	Courtney Cooke	43 Heath St 02145
	Ryan Crowell	6 Eliot St #3

To: Somerville Aldermen
 Date: March 14, 2018

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<u>Signature</u>	<u>Printed Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
	JON E. TRAVASSOS	303 Washington St.
	Leon Furchtgott	52 Dimick St.
	JARED SEWELL	52 Hanson St.
	Jessica Sewell	52 Hanson St.
	ALICE COMACK	S HANSON ST ^{AV}
	MARTIN COMACK	S HANSON AV
	DIANA MOON	2 VILLAGE TER #1
	Daniel Oppenheimer	28 Hanson St.
	Evam Greer	30 Hanson St Apt 2
	NAPOLIONE NETO	18 STEPHAN ST #11
	Adrienne Casey	10 Skehan St.
	Jessica Scuto	49 Hanson St
	Alex Rittenberg	41 Dimick
	Alain Jehlen	67 Dane St.
	Pat Jehlen	"

To: Somerville Aldermen
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	Elaine T. Koury	101 Beacon	02143
	KANISHA JOHNSON	341 Washington	02143
	Connor E. Moore	179 Beacon St 412	02143
	Ronald Wagner	14 Waldo Ave	02143
	MARTA MARELLO	17 Buckingham St	02143
	Matthew Sani	47 Calvia St	02143
	Thomas Sayre-McCard	94 Beacon St	02143
	Narges Kaynia	94 Beacon St	02143
	Sofia Escudero ^{dero}	22 MacArthur St #3	02145
	Sarah Boone	10 Harrison	02143
	Danny Solow	10 Harrison	02143
	Kelly Saramago	11 Homer St Apt #2	
	TERESA CAPELA	11 HOMER ST #2	
	ELIZABETH PURCELL	72 BEACON ST #3 SOMERVILLE, MA	02143
	CESAR SALGADO	20 DELAWARE ST. SOMERVILLE	

To: Somerville Aldermen
 Date: March 14, 2018

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	Maria M. Labrad <small>Crosky</small>	106 Beacon St. 2
	Sarah Crois	2 Rose St
	Leslie Gaffney	95 Partridge Ave
	Joshua Travis <small>Bassil</small>	5 Wyatt Circle 94
	Estephan Bassil	94 Beacon st
	Gregory J Vechmanouhian	67 Concord ave
	GABRIELA DOWER	9 Channon st
	WAYNE O'NEIL	11 Village St.
	Tiana Krepchin	7 Waldo Ave #1
	Molly Kate Malteos	370 Washington St
	Caleb Wals	354 Beacon St.
	Lilia Kilburn	71 Prospect #2
	Travis Rutzel <small>Rutzel</small>	376 WASHINGTON ST
	RYAN BIRNBAUM	390 Washington St.
	Laura McKenney	79 Concord Ave.

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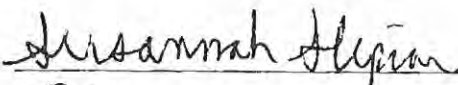
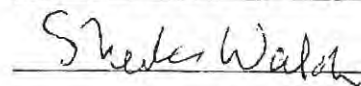
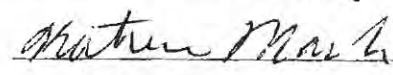

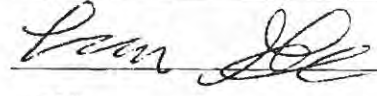
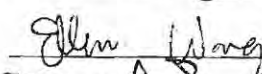
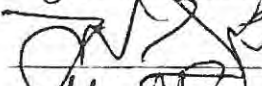

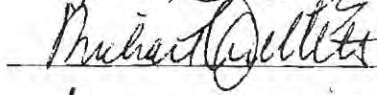
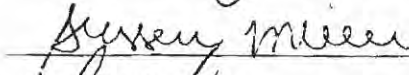

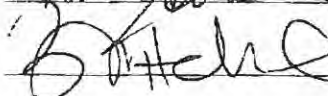
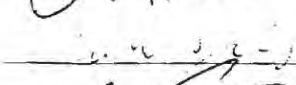
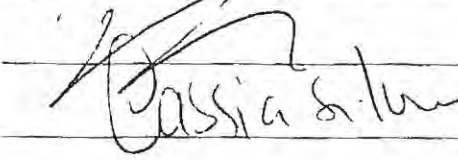
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Printed Name

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	Susannah Slepian	111 Beacon St
	Sheila Walsh	58 Bow St
	Katherine C Marsh	33 Dickerson St
	BEN KELCHLIN	55 GLENWOOD RD
	Joana Goldsmith	20 Central
	Ellen Wang	13 Dove Ave.
	Lucas Wynne	97 Beacon St
	GERALD ZARITZKY	52 LINE ST.
	MICHAEL QUELETTE	56 LINE ST.
	Sussen Miller	31 Walnut St #11
	Laura Stone	48 DIMICK ST.
	Zenah Mitchell	392 Washington St.
	Josh Komarovsky	79 Beacon St
	Cassia Silva	38 Dove St. John Kelly

To: Somerville Aldermen
 Date: March 14, 2018






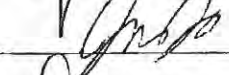


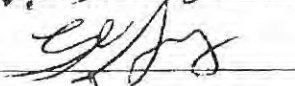
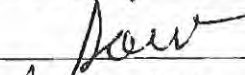
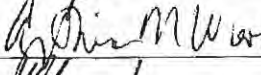
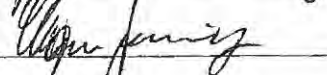
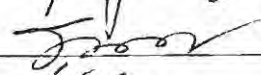


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All addresses in Somerville
Address

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Printed Name

	Melissa Caballero	353 Beacon St.
	EMILY HAUSER	151 BEACON ST.
	SINING Sining Leng	20 School St
	Ana Vila-Santa	127 Elm St
	Alex Papanicolaou	50 Kent St
	Jacob Jaffe	67 Marian St
	Cornma McQueen	12 Buckingham St.
	Rachael Hogan	94 Beacon St.
	Ron Adams	38 Line St
	Zhe Geng	38 Line St.
	Devereau Williams	22 Line St
	Cynthia M Woolley	16 Line St
	Clayton Jennings	10 Line St #2
	Blake Sims	10 Line St @
	Victoria Campbell	31 Haveld St B

To: Somerville Aldermen
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	GAIL E. MERRIAM Darien Call	17 Skehan St., Somerville 02143
	Daren Call	23 Harlow St. Somerville 02143
	Amy Dickson	45 Skehan St. #2 Somerville 02143
	Ryan McNally Soraya	17 Atherton St. #3
	Soraya Limare	28 Houghton
	Marc Amigone	386 Washington St. Apt 2B
	Elizabeth Thompson	23 Spence Ave
	BRIAN LIU	38 CAMERON AVE #2
	DUNCAN SEABEDIAN Haley	15 GIBBENS STREET #1 02143
	Austin Haley	74 Ave St. Apt 1-2 02143
	Rose Mattos	9 Olive Sq. Somerville, 02143
	Shannon Kelliker	9 Gilson Terr #2
	Elizabeth Moore	373 Somerville #
	Hope Schaitkin McLaughlin	69 Beacon St.
	Molly McLaughlin	3 Dove St #3

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	John Blanchette	3 Durham St #3
	Nicki Hoffman	3 Durham St #3
	Edyth Jostoi	108 Beacon St #2
	Katherine Rancano	10 Morgan St #2
	Abigail Weil	89 Beacon #1
	Kristine Rezag	83 Beacon Street #1
	Susan Pacheco	55 Beacon St #1
	Ron Mesard	281 Highland Ave #3
	Daniel Hornsby	54 Beacon St #2
	Ellen Murphy	62 Beacon St.
	STEVE INOSHIMA	52 Beacon St #1
	Jason Julsonnet	30 Beacon St #3
	Martin Caballero	353 Beacon St #1
	DONENE WILLIAMS	17 CEDAR ST WARD 5
	Lisa Xu	83 Beacon St., #3

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	Stephen Cross	27 Joseph St
	Michael Carr	4 Beacon St
	ERIK BROWN	1370 Broadway
	Ed Sandell	19 Buckingham St
	Christine Stott	17 Albion St.
	Lauren Ritter	167 Lowell St.
	Javier Masís	89 Beacon #3
	Aprille O'Neill	251 Beacon St # 2
	Michelle	19 Duro Street
	P. P. Huang	94 Beacon St. #62
	Brandon Migliore	45 Windsor Rd / Beacon St.
	Molly Regan	11 Hillside Park, Somerville
	Michael Russum	108 Beacon Street
	Sophie LaGrèga	105 BEACON ST

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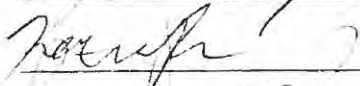
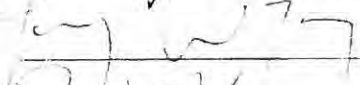
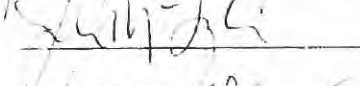
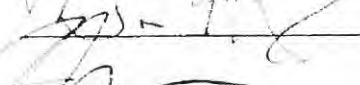


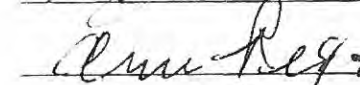
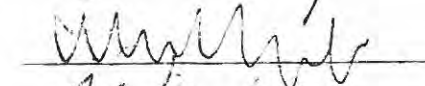
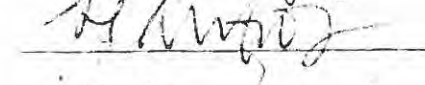
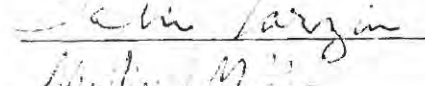




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All addresses in Somerville
Address

Signature

Printed Name

Address

	FELIPE SALGADO	20 Delaware ST Som
	Kate vanRees	14 Lincoln Pkwy. Somerville
	THOMAS LEONARD-ROY	103 MARION ST.
	Julia M Taylor	79 Beacon St Apt 1 Somerville
	William Butt	20 Walds Ave Apt 2
	Michael Riback	71 Beacon Apt 2
	ELISE SYMER	71 Beacon Apt 1
	Hovre Everstman	71 Beacon Apt 2
	Ann REGO	110 Beacon St
	Chingying Ngan	5 Cavaldo Avenue Apt 1
	Haritha Ambius	82 Line St.
	JOHN TARZIAN	31 CALVIN ST
	Bayleigh Hill	101 Beacon St.
	IAN INELLIS	376 WASHINGTON ST.
	STEFANO MANTI	25 AHERTON ST.

To: Somerville Aldermen
 Date: March 14, 2018


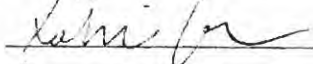
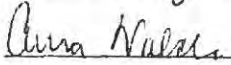


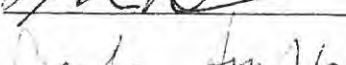
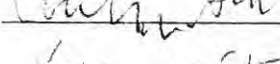
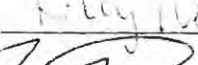

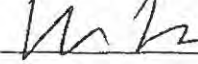


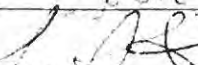
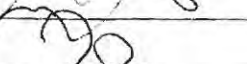
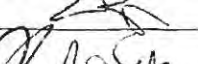
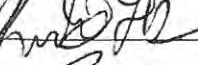
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All addresses in Somerville
Address

Signature

Printed Name

	Rami Elkhalawy	15 Calvin St Apt 2
	Xochil Quekero	95 Beacon St Apt 3
	Anna Waldeck	5 Waldo Avenue Apt 5
	Caroline Nielsen	14 Calvin St. Apt 2
	Meghan Deneen	64 Line St Apt 2
	Caitlyn Smith	12 LOWELL ST
	Kelly Wendi	11 Rose Mt. St.
	Tamara Pice	5 Waldo Ave
	Kevin Doyle	73 Maroon St
	Coppin Georges	5 WALDO AVE
	Celeste Erickson	395 Washington St
	Kinsey Clark	393 Washington St
	Nina Pauline	44 Roscott St.
	Kristen Burns	10 Line St
	Jack Birger	68 R Dane St
	Jack Birger	68 R Dane St

To: Somerville Aldermen
 Date: March 14, 2018

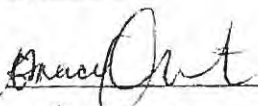
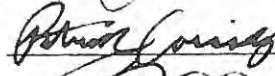



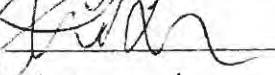
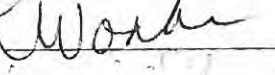
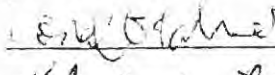
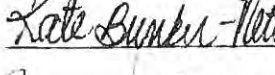
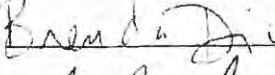
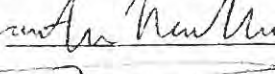


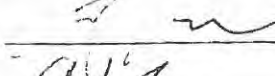

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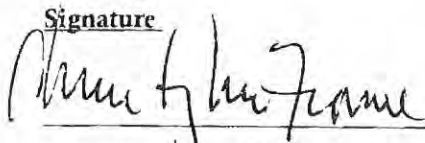
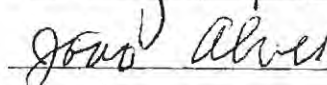
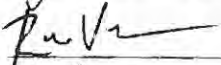
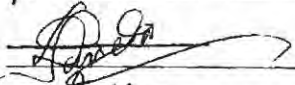

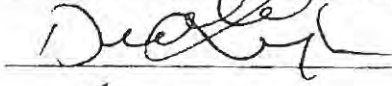
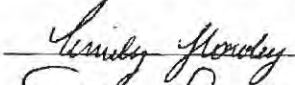
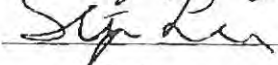
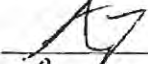

	Grace Ort	22 Beacon Place #2
	PATRICK CASSIDY	83 BONAVILLE ST #2
	James Addison	5 Waldo # 2
	Richard Milbury	7 Waldo # 1
	Stephen Ambra	56B Beacon St.
	Levi Rubeck	45 Concord Ave.
	Kathy Oakley	40 ⁷⁰ Highland Ave
	DONAL PALMER	5 Lewis St #2142
	Kate Bunker-Neto	18 Shepard St. #1
	Brenda Diavelbliss	186 Robbins St #1
	Samantha Namy-Krane	4 Rose Street
	Vasileios Tzoumas	43 Pitman St.
	Christina Maranci	23 Craigie St
	Curtis Fuller	103 Marion St
	Christina Ritchie	53 Beacon St

To: Somerville Aldermen
Date: March 14, 2018

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Address

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Printed Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
	CHRISTOPHER FRAME	400 WASHINGTON ST
	JOAO ALVES	108 LINE ST
	Rucha Vankudre	28 Parkdale St.
	Debjyoti Panda	35 Oxford St. Cambridge
	Priya Patel	10 Magnus Ave
	Deidre Lynch	211 Tremont
	Emily Hawley	20 Marion St.
	Steve Lee	400 Washington St
	Asa Walkridge	15 Elm St #2
	Laurie Bock	278 Beacon Street

To: Somerville Aldermen
Date: March 14, 2018

'Union Square'

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Signature

Printed Name

Address

Katherine Rannetti

7 Laurel Terrace
Somerville

Nathaniel Sabat

100 Alpine St. Somerville

Alexander Camara

53 Hanson St. Somerville

Spencer Camara

53 Hanson St. Somerville

KAREN CESTARO

10 HANSON AVE.

Elaine E. Matthews

51 DAVE ST. Som. 02143

Paul McKinley

30 HANSON ST #3

June Litwinsky

30 Hanson St

VINCENT CRESTA

38 HANSON ST

To: Somerville Aldermen
Date: March 14, 2018

*Signed via email**

** copies of emails available upon request*

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Signature

Printed Name

Address

Elizabeth Henderson

71 Beacon St Apt. #3

Daniel Todd Gewertz

94 Beacon St. #72

Siri Striar

48 Line St.

Jennifer Abramson

65 Beacon St. unit 201

Deborah Pacino

25 Durham St.

Allison Stieber

14 Wyatt St.

Jennifer L. Murphy

13 Smith Ave. Apt. 2

Grant Corvill

9 Smith Ave.

Linda Azar Hill

94 Beacon St. Apt. 32

Deborah Boykan

9 Smith Ave.

Joseph Weinstein

94 Beacon St. Apt. 31

Monique Baldwin

From: Lynda Hill <344hill@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 24, 2018 12:59 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Beacon Street Zoning

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

November 24, 2018

To the Planning Board Members:

I am one of the 265 residents who signed the petition concerning the zoning issue for the Beacon Street neighborhood. I'm emailing you to remind you of our petition and of the neighborhood's complete support for this corner. I sincerely hope you will support our neighborhood's stated preference: that the three corners of Beacon and Washington that are not already MR4, remain one-story commercial including the block on Beacon from Washington to Durham.

The Planning Department calls our neighborhood a "corridor". But just on the Beacon Street block between Washington and Smith/Calvin there are four families who've lived in the same houses for approximately 100 - 200 years. If this isn't a neighborhood, I don't know what is. We care about each other, look out for one another, and help each other.

Our neighborhood isn't against all change. But, we'd like our neighborhood to be recognizable to us. We also want to be able to see the sky, and maintain our green spots.

Please consider the wishes of the residents who live here, who signed the petition, and give preference to us instead of to the incredibly small number of people who purchased property here in order to sell it to developers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynda Azar Hill
94 Beacon St
Somerville, MA

Monique Baldwin

From: Edmond Wong <edmondwong86@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 24, 2018 3:00 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Change zoning for Broadway buildings for Zone 16 in new zoning overhaul

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Sir or Madam;

I am wondering if the Board would consider changing the buildings on Broadway that are close to I-93 that will be zoned as MR5 to possibly something higher to MR6 or HR to reduce the noise pollution that comes from the highway. Currently, the only plots of land that are proposed to be MR6 are a few lots closest to the highway but I think addition taller buildings across the street will benefit the neighborhood and help mitigate the incessant sounds coming from the highway.

Thank you,
Edmond Wong
6 Mt Pleasant St, Somerville, MA 02145



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SOMERVILLE ZONING OVERHAUL
Comments by paolamassoli4@gmail.com
To planning@somervillema.gov

To the Planning Board:

My name is Paola Massoli, and I am a Somerville resident at 47 Pearl Street. I have been in Somerville since 2010, and I am thankful to be part of such unique and diverse community. I work in the field of environmental sciences and I am a member of Mothers Out Front, a grassroots group that advocates for the transition of our energy systems away from fossil fuels. I am also a member of the Climate Coalition of Somerville (CCS), a coalition of advocacy and activist groups invested in driving environmental sustainability in Somerville.

I thank the Planning Board in advance for the opportunity to accept comments to version 3.0 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance presented to the Board of Aldermen on October 16, 2018. I believe this current version of the zoning ordinance greatly improves upon critical areas of sustainable development, making it more aligned with the city's SomerVision plan and with the 2050 carbon neutrality goals set by Mayor Curtatone. Below are specific comments and remarks on a subset of topics that are personally relevant to me.

Section 2. Overview and Guide

In section c, Setbacks Encroachments, points vi and vii introduce changes to allow residents to install HVAC / air exchange pump and exterior insulation. Air exchange pumps are critical to electrify heating and cooling systems, thereby reducing the usage of fossil fuels. In addition, energy efficiency through insulation (weatherization) creates opportunities for Somerville residents to save money on energy costs – I speak for personal experience on this point, having noticed significant reduction in the heating bill after insulating our building through the MassSave program.

I respectfully ask the Board to accept the measures proposed in this section to favor the installation of air pumps and to promote building insulation. The setbacks could be even increased from 2 to 3 feet to make sure that the 2 feet requirement does not restrict heat pump or HVAC of certain sizes.

Section 4. Mid Rise Districts and Section 5. High Rise Districts

Version 3.0 has introduced critically important incentives in the form of density bonuses for “Net-Zero” buildings and affordable houses. These modifications highlight the

importance to move away from business-as-usual when it comes to building design by incentivizing newer practices such as net-zero and passive buildings, which are now at cost parity with traditional ones.

OSPCD has defined “Net-Zero” as:

“Any building that 1) has no on-site combustion for heating and cooking (all electric systems) and 2) has an energy use intensity that is at least twenty-five percent (25%) below ASHRAE 90.1 2010, meets the requirements of Zero Carbon Certification or higher from the International Living Future Institute, or achieves [sic] PHIUS+ Certification from the Passive House Institute U.S.”.

Because “Net-Zero” is a very specific type of building, I’d suggest that this Board change the name from “Net-Zero” to something more generic such as “Net Zero Ready”
The name previously used - “Sustainable” – should also be acceptable

I respectfully ask the Board to support the adoption of these incentives tied to high-performance buildings introduced in version 3.0. These incentives will attract the many developers that are moving towards sustainable designs and may enable the next stock of buildings in Somerville to be designed with the highest possible efficiency standards.

As a side note, I’d like to point out that achieving no on-site combustion may seem arduous, but it has been done even without requiring solar energy generated on site. Buildings can be designed to be extremely efficient and to require little energy; the energy necessary for hot water - typically the largest need - can be provided by geothermal; electricity can feed air exchange heat pumps for heating and cooling; cooking can be done via electric or induction stoves. Passive House buildings (buildings that are designed with a very tight envelope and require little energy input) are now becoming common both worldwide and in Massachusetts. The Distillery North in Boston is one of such examples of highly efficient residential buildings
(<http://www.iconarch.com/distillery-north>)

Section 10. Development Standards

10.3 Landscaping

This section has improved dramatically from the previous version. The replacement of the word “landscape” with “vegetation” is a critical change, because it underscores the importance of increasing natural green space (grass or other forms of natural cover such as coarse mulch). Somerville severely lacks natural, pervious surfaces compared

to other municipalities in Massachusetts; impervious surfaces increase stormwater runoff, and enhances the severity of flooding damage. Anything that can be done to increase natural vegetation and pervious surfaces helps the city with water management and improves the well being of all residents. The provisions on ground treatment listed in section 10.3.5.a (copied below) are also excellent.

- Ground covers appropriate for the location that are sized and spaced to provide at least 50% coverage after first full growing season and complete coverage at maturity.
- Bushes, shrubs, vines, flowers and other horticultural materials that are sized and spaced to provide at least 50% coverage at time of planting with the remaining area covered by coarse grade ground coverage mulch.
- Inorganic surfacing such as crushed stone, gravel, shell, pea gravel, and washed stone covering no more than 10% of uncovered lot area.

10.4 Green Score

The revised section 10.4 defines a strong green score (previously called green factor) and extends it to a variety of vegetative coverages (soils, groundcover, plants, trees, engineered landscapes) that can be used to increase green coverage. The incentives to native species and de-paved areas are a great addition to this section.

I respectfully ask the board to accept the current language and newer provisions in landscaping (10.3) and green score (10.4), as they can truly make a difference when applied to city-wide scale.

10.9 Sustainable Development

1. Green Buildings

The current zoning states that:

- a. New construction or alterations between 25,000 and 50,000 SF of gross floor area must be LEED Silver certifiable.*
- b. New construction or alterations greater than 50,000 SF of gross floor area must be LEED Gold certifiable.*

According to the Greenhouse Gases (GHG) inventory produced by the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), buildings are one of the largest sources of emissions in Somerville (58% of the city's emissions). As such, it would be appropriate to extend the LEED Silver standards in a) to new buildings or alterations with smaller square footage than the current 25,000 sq. ft. (for example, starting at 15,000 sq. ft). Alternatively, the footage requirement could be left unchanged, but the standard should be raised from LEED Silver to LEED Gold for buildings larger than 25,000 sq. ft as well.

I also urge the Planning Board to consider adding that LEED certifiable projects should “achieve a minimum of 6 points under LEED’s Optimize Energy Performance credit and the requirements of the Enhanced Commissioning credit to ensure superior energy efficient design and operation” similarly to what described in the Cambridge Net Zero plan. If this addition cannot be included at the moment and requires the Board of Alderman to pass a Net Zero ordinance, Mothers Out Front and the Climate Coalition will be happy to support the Planning Board and advocate for such ordinance.

Finally, I recommend the Planning Board to introduce options to have LEED certified neighborhoods (LEED ND), as a more holistic approach to city planning - and could include provisions for mobility, housing affordability and other sustainable measures.

2. Green Roofs and Storm Water management

The phrasing “to every extent practicable” leaves ample room for interpretation and would likely lead to very little improvement in the realm of stormwater management. Can this Board establish a minimum mandatory fraction of water re-use for irrigation, especially for buildings with large lawns (where “large” would correspond to a certain amount established by OSPCD and this Board)?

3. Heat Island Reduction

The current version of this section aligns better with the most recent LEED certification, and it has many interesting provisions to reduce the heat island effect. These provisions are critical given the number of days with temperature higher than 90F and outstanding humidity that the city has already experienced in recent summers. Such number is predicted to increase in the next decade because of climate change. I trust this Board to support the current language in this section 3.0.

Section 11. Parking and Mobility

I strongly support the provisions described in section 11.2.3 to increase the requirements for electric vehicles (EV) chargers in both accessory and commercial parking. I encourage the Board to increase the percentage to 35 or 40% in residential parking and apply 25% to commercial parking. The number of EVs is predicted to increase in the future AND lack of chargers is the main current barrier for EV adoption

Proposed Amendments

I strongly encourage this Board to consider and support the adoption of the amendment

Item 205244 => A proposed zoning ordinance to regulate the siting of certain facilities near heavily trafficked roadways.

in discussion at the Land Use Committee on 11/27/2018, agenda item 2
http://somerillecityma.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=2770

The proposed amendment to the Article 7 of the zoning ordinance, Section 7.16, would introduce important measures to limit and mitigate personal exposure to toxic gases and ultrafine particles (UFP) for residents living near busy roadways in Somerville. Such measures would be achieved through appropriate building siting and design, including the installation of adequate air filtration systems to improve indoor air quality.

It is fundamental for the health and well-being of the many Somerville residents living in highly polluted areas that this Board supports such amendment

Finally, I encourage the Board to support the revision of the building Design Process that planner Daniel Bartman discussed at the 10/16/2018 presentation, citing the city of Seattle as a model example of 1) early review of multiple building designs and 2) inclusion of community input early in the process. Somerville does not engage in such early design review practices, and this creates delays and extra costs for developers, in addition to conflicts with the public opinion. We see this happening time and time again, most recently with the decisions around the design of the D2 parcel in the Union Square redevelopment. This Board should advocate for a change in legislation to improve the practices associated with building design and planning as recommended by OSPCD,

I hope that this Board will consider the comments I made and will readily approve the changes to the ordinance that I pointed out in this document, as they truly represent a real opportunity to modernize the current zoning and enable the modernization of future developments in our city.

Thanks for listening, and for working to make Somerville a better place.

Best regards,

Paola Massoli
47 Pearl Street
Somerville, MA 02145

Monique Baldwin

From: Paola Massoli <paolamassoli4@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 25, 2018 11:09 PM
To: COS-Website-Planning
Subject: Comments to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance version 3.0
Attachments: COMMENTS FOR CITY PLANNING BOARD, ZONING OVERHAUL Nov 26 2018.docx;
COMMENTS FOR CITY PLANNING BOARD, ZONING OVERHAUL Nov 26 2018.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To the Planning Board:

Please find below comments to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (version 3.0). For your convenience, I attach the same comments in the form of both word and pdf documents.

Thanks in advance and best regards

Paola Massoli
47 Pearl Street
Somerville, MA 02145
(720-206-9982)

To the Planning Board:

My name is Paola Massoli, and I am a Somerville resident at 47 Pearl Street. I have been in Somerville since 2010, and I am thankful to be part of such unique and diverse community. I work in the field of environmental sciences and I am a member of Mothers Out Front, a grassroots group that advocates for the transition of our energy systems away from fossil fuels. I am also a member of the Climate Coalition of Somerville (CCS), a coalition of advocacy and activist groups invested in driving environmental sustainability in Somerville.

I thank the Planning Board in advance for the opportunity to accept comments to version 3.0 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance presented to the Board of Aldermen on October 16, 2018. I believe this current version of the zoning ordinance greatly improves upon critical areas of sustainable development, making it more aligned with the city's SomerVision plan and with the 2050 carbon neutrality goals set by Mayor Curtatone. Below are specific comments and remarks on a subset of topics that are personally relevant to me.

Section 2. Overview and Guide

In section c, Setbacks Encroachments, points vi and vii introduce changes to allow residents to install HVAC / air exchange pump and exterior insulation. Air exchange pumps are critical to electrify heating and cooling systems, thereby reducing the usage of fossil fuels. In addition, energy efficiency through insulation (weatherization) creates opportunities for Somerville residents to save money on energy costs – I speak for

personal experience on this point, having noticed significant reduction in the heating bill after insulating our building through the MassSave program.

I respectfully ask the Board to accept the measures proposed in this section to favor the installation of air pumps and to promote building insulation. The setbacks could be even increased from 2 to 3 feet to make sure that the 2 feet requirement does not restrict heat pump or HVAC of certain sizes.

Section 4. Mid Rise Districts and Section 5. High Rise Districts

Version 3.0 has introduced critically important incentives in the form of density bonuses for “Net-Zero” buildings and affordable houses. These modifications highlight the importance to move away from business-as-usual when it comes to building design by incentivizing newer practices such as net-zero and passive buildings, which are now at cost parity with traditional ones.

OSPCD has defined “Net-Zero” as:

“Any building that 1) has no on-site combustion for heating and cooking (all electric systems) and 2) has an energy use intensity that is at least twenty-five percent (25%) below ASHRAE 90.1 2010, meets the requirements of Zero Carbon Certification or higher from the International Living Future Institute, or achieves [sic] PHIUS+ Certification from the Passive House Institute U.S.”.

Because “Net-Zero” is a very specific type of building, I’d suggest that this Board change the name from “Net-Zero” to something more generic such as “Net Zero Ready” The name previously used - “Sustainable” – should also be acceptable

I respectfully ask the Board to support the adoption of these incentives tied to high-performance buildings introduced in version 3.0. These incentives will attract the many developers that are moving towards sustainable designs and may enable the next stock of buildings in Somerville to be designed with the highest possible efficiency standards.

As a side note, I’d like to point out that achieving no on-site combustion may seem arduous, but it has been done even without requiring solar energy generated on site. Buildings can be designed to be extremely efficient and to require little energy; the energy necessary for hot water - typically the largest need - can be provided by geothermal; electricity can feed air exchange heat pumps for heating and cooling; cooking can be done via electric or induction stoves. Passive House buildings (buildings that are designed with a very tight envelope and require little energy input) are now becoming common both worldwide and in Massachusetts. The Distillery North in Boston is one of such examples of highly efficient residential buildings (<http://www.iconarch.com/distillery-north>)

Section 10. Development Standards

10.3 Landscaping

This section has improved dramatically from the previous version. The replacement of the word “landscape” with “vegetation” is a critical change, because it underscores the importance of increasing natural green space (grass or other forms of natural cover such as coarse mulch). Somerville severely lacks natural, pervious surfaces compared to other municipalities in Massachusetts; impervious surfaces increase stormwater runoff, and enhances the severity of flooding damage. Anything that can be done to increase natural vegetation and pervious surfaces helps the city with water management and improves the well being of all residents. The provisions on ground treatment listed in section 10.3.5.a (copied below) are also excellent.

- *Ground covers appropriate for the location that are sized and spaced to provide at least 50% coverage after first full growing season and complete coverage at maturity.*
- *Bushes, shrubs, vines, flowers and other horticultural materials that are sized and spaced to provide at least 50% coverage at time of planting with the remaining area covered by coarse grade ground coverage mulch.*
- *Inorganic surfacing such as crushed stone, gravel, shell, pea gravel, and washed stone covering no more than 10% of uncovered lot area.*

10.4 Green Score

The revised section 10.4 defines a strong green score (previously called green factor) and extends it to a variety of vegetative coverages (soils, groundcover, plants, trees, engineered landscapes) that can be used to increase green coverage. The incentives to native species and de-paved areas are a great addition to this section.

I respectfully ask the board to accept the current language and newer provisions in landscaping (10.3) and green score (10.4), as they can truly make a difference when applied to city-wide scale.

10.9 Sustainable Development

1. Green Buildings

The current zoning states that:

a. New construction or alterations between 25,000 and 50,000 SF of gross floor area must be LEED Silver certifiable.

b. New construction or alterations greater than 50,000 SF of gross floor area must be LEED Gold certifiable.

According to the Greenhouse Gases (GHG) inventory produced by the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), buildings are one of the largest sources of emissions in Somerville (58% of the city's emissions). As such, it would be appropriate to extend the LEED Silver standards in a) to new buildings or alterations with smaller square footage than the current 25,000 sq. ft. (for example, starting at 15,000 sq. ft). Alternatively, the footage requirement could be left unchanged, but the standard should be raised from LEED Silver to LEED Gold for buildings larger than 25,000 sq. ft as well.

I also urge the Planning Board to consider adding that LEED certifiable projects should “achieve a minimum of 6 points under LEED’s Optimize Energy Performance credit and the requirements of the Enhanced Commissioning credit to ensure superior energy efficient design and operation” similarly to what described in the Cambridge Net Zero plan. If this addition cannot be included at the moment and requires the Board of

Alderman to pass a Net Zero ordinance, Mothers Out Front and the Climate Coalition will be happy to support the Planning Board and advocate for such ordinance

Finally, I recommend the Planning Board to introduce options to have LEED certified neighborhoods (LEED ND), as a more holistic approach to city planning - and could include provisions for mobility, housing affordability and other sustainable measures.

2. Green Roofs and Storm Water management

The phrasing “to every extent practicable” leaves ample room for interpretation and would likely lead to very little improvement in the realm of stormwater management. Can this Board establish a minimum mandatory fraction of water re-use for irrigation, especially for buildings with large lawns (where “large” would correspond to a certain amount established by OSPCD and this Board)?

3. Heat Island Reduction

The current version of this section aligns better with the most recent LEED certification, and it has many interesting provisions to reduce the heat island effect. These provisions are critical given the number of days with temperature higher than 90F and outstanding humidity that the city has already experienced in recent summers. Such number is predicted to increase in the next decade because of climate change.

I trust this Board to support the current language in this section 3.0.

Section 11. Parking and Mobility

I strongly support the provisions described in section 11.2.3 to increase the requirements for electric vehicles (EV) chargers in both accessory and commercial parking. I encourage the Board to increase the percentage to 35 or 40% in residential parking and apply 25% to commercial parking. The number of EVs is predicted to increase in the future AND lack of chargers is the main current barrier for EV adoption

Proposed Amendments

I strongly encourage this Board to consider and support the adoption of the amendment

Item 205244 => A proposed zoning ordinance to regulate the siting of certain facilities near heavily trafficked roadways.

in discussion at the Land Use Committee on 11/27/2018, agenda item 2
http://somervillecityma.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=2770

The proposed amendment to the Article 7 of the zoning ordinance, Section 7.16, would introduce important measures to limit and mitigate personal exposure to toxic gases and ultrafine particles (UFP) for residents living near busy roadways in Somerville. Such measures would be achieved through appropriate building siting and design, including the installation of adequate air filtration systems to improve indoor air quality.

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I hope that this Board will consider the comments I made and will readily approve the changes to the ordinance that I pointed out in this document, as they truly represent a real opportunity to modernize the current zoning and enable the modernization of future developments in our city.

November 26, 2018
Planning Board
City of Somerville
99 City Hall
Somerville, MA 02143

To the Planning Board,

We need a city-wide design of our civic spaces, indoor and outdoor, across all overlay districts and transformative zones. Before zoning is passed the city needs to provide the plan to achieve the 125 new acres of open space, where it will be and how we will pay for it.

SOMERVISION

The aim of Somerville's Zoning Overhaul is to achieve as many of our goals and plans as possible set forth in SOMERVISION that successfully implements the comprehensive Master Plan of the City of Somerville and enforces officially adopted plans and policies. It is also to permit development and redevelopment according to plans that are collaboratively developed with the Somerville community, as states in the Introductory provisions, section 4. Purpose. (p.5)

The question that must be asked of each ordinance is does it bring us closer to fulfilling SOMERVISION. If yes, proceed, if no, we must rethink it.

The Comprehensive Plan was produced by the Somerville community, for the Somerville community to use as a blueprint for a more sustainable, more equitable, and more exciting future. SOMERVISION

SOMERVISION is a combination of quantifiable goals and goals that reflect our community values and where we want to go moving forward.

Encoding SOMERVISION will bring us closer to achieving our goals.

SOMERVISION Numbers

1. 30,000 New Jobs as part of a responsible plan to create opportunity for all Somerville workers and entrepreneurs.
2. 125 New Acres of Publicly-Accessible Open Space as part of our realistic plan to provide high-quality and well-programmed community space.
3. 6,000 New Housing Units - 1,200 Permanently Affordable as part of a sensitive plan to attract and retain Somerville's best asset: its people.

4. 50% of New Trips via Transit, Bike, or Walking as part of an equitable plan for access and circulation to and through the City.
5. 85% of New Development in Transformative Areas as part of a predictable land use plan that protects neighborhood character.

We must have a balanced path to SOMERVISION numbers. If anyone of our goals gets to far ahead of the other then we need to bring the other numbers up. We need to continue apace our goals, of affordable, housing, jobs, and open space. The SOMERVISION numbers are not to be separated. (p 16)

Commercial

In the Transformative district and the overlay zonings increase commercial to 66% commercial excluding retail.

Give commercial a sliding tax break for their first 5 years. Tenanted space 100%, 80, 60, 40, 20 tax reductions for first five years, permanent 10% affordable studio space.

SOMERVISION, page 18, goal number 4. *Protect and promote a diverse, interesting mix of small-scale businesses in Somerville's neighborhoods.*

Small scale and worker owned businesses (< 6 storefront locations) should be prioritized. Excess of chains should be discouraged. Chains will subsidize local businesses.

Outdoor Civic and Open Space

Our goal of 125 acres of new Open Space will refer to new land, not currently owned by the city or the state. Decommissioned roads, improvements of accessibility, and rooftop space are not counted towards the 125 of new open space goal.

We need a formula and design of where these open spaces will be and how we will pay for them. Protentional funding mechanism is the establishment of a land trust and an open space fund, research for large grants (Nature Conservancy) that will pay for increasing open space in urban areas.

Equity issues in open space. Open Space (especially green space) will be more accessibility to open and green space

Open Space variety, we need to focus on increasing our greenspace on the ground plane, vertical plane and horizontal planes. Increasing the percentage of green space within all open spaces.

Outdoor Civic space needs be 34% in overlay district for those districts to contribute their share of open space for SOMERVISION goals.

Plazas should have Wi-Fi available.

Ecosystem Restoration in Our Civic Landscapes

Nature Parks shall be a civic space type. Nature Parks are for adults and children, both active and passive ones. Their aim is to encourage healthy play, interactions with nature, sensory exploration, nature bathing, scientific discovery, meditation, yoga, and a place to create art.

The intention of all green spaces in the city in parks and on rights of way is to create a functioning ecosystem. Planting to restore all layers of the forest with native plants is critical to rehabilitating our insect populations who determine the fate of the planet.

Changing our mulching habits from bark mulch to living mulch is necessary for ecosystem function. Bark mulch as we use now rots trees, creates atmospheric carbon, and does not hold moisture in as living mulch does.

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/02/23/study-urban-backyards-contribute-almost-as-much-co2-as-much-as-cars-and-buildings/>

Maintenance and care of our green space needs to be included in the zoning. A 'Landscaping ecologically manual with guidance from the Ecological Landscaping Alliance, Grow Native!, the New England Wildflower Society and other cities needs to be part of the zoning.

Removing leaf litter from our green spaces is the opposite of what needs to be done. It wastes resources contributes, uses fossil fuels, to carbon We also need to plant our 'grass' spaces with native low mow grasses (creeping red fescue), no-mow sedges, and rushes and a mix of warm season and cool season species to eliminate the need for irrigation.

A native planting and ecosystem restoration ordinance needs to be passed for all civic green spaces in the city.

Green Space Minimum or Green Space Replacement

To ensure that we continue to increase our greenspaces, the amount of our current greenspace needs to be calculated and never drop below. Or: Anytime a greenspace is removed, including city or state-owned land, civic and open spaces including highway vegetation, trees berms and medians, that greenspace needs to be replaced on-site or in another location within a year of its removal.

Somerville's Green Score

Somerville's Green Score is a landscaping standard that improves our green space coverage and sustainability. There are sections in the Landscaping standards that needs tweaking and will be commented on further throughout the zoning process.

One worrisome point is about the sizes of trees that need to be planted. For trees to be healthy and long lasting, they need to be planted as saplings. To plant an larger than a 1" caliper tree will cause the tree to grow slower as it recovers from its taproot being cut. If we are to mandate a size of the tree, we should mandate that the tree be planted that is no more than 1" in caliper not greater than 2" and 10' tall. This needs further discussion

10.3..5 New trees must have a minimum height of ten (10) feet or be two (2) inches in caliper when planted.

Minimums need to be reconsidered.

Wildlife

Create a wildlife sanctuary civic space category and provide green connectivity throughout the city that connects our civic spaces, rights-of-way, city and federally owned property and for private new and renovated (50% of value) properties.

As the green line is completed Somerville needs to replant the railway corridor to restore our forest ecosystem. In tandem with replanting our forest, Intentional wildlife habitat needs to be incorporated in all new development or renovations up to 100% of a property values. Utility poles should be valued and retrofitted for potential raptor habitat.

<https://www.futurity.org/raptors-businesses-land-803772/>

Vernal pools and amphibian life need to be restored in our cities. We need to provide safe passage for our wildlife. There should be seamless connectivity of our green spaces. Threats and disturbance to our urban wildlife needs to be mitigated.

Bird collisions needs to be mitigated with proper glazing and surfacing in our taller buildings.

The Urban Wildlife Working Group is a source for restoring our wildlife.

<http://urbanwildlifegroup.org/urban-wildlife-information/>

Urban Farming

One part of sustainability is feeding ourselves. Partnerships to create more green roofs and ones that produce food. Green City Growers, Recover green roofs, non-profits, Groundworks Somerville, Urban Farming Institute, The Growing Center.

Our civic spaces need to have open food gardens, and forests where people can come and take what they need. “Need a tomato, take a tomato.” Appropriate civic building rooftops should dedicate portions of its roof to farming.

Example from Paris. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/stories-46275458/the-city-turning-streets-into-gardens>.

Food forests as civic space type.

Indoor Civic Space

In the Union Square Overlay Zoning we failed to get indoor civic spaces addressed. We must do so in this Overhaul. In the overlays and transformative areas, a percentage of new development needs to be dedicated in indoor civic space: (15% built square footage of development?)

We suggest indoor Community Centers be prioritized and encoded so residents will have access to safe environments through all types of weather.

Perhaps indoor civic spaces should be type-based like outdoor civic spaces.

Access to indoor community centers needs to be incorporated in every neighborhood. Every resident should be in ¼ mile from indoor community space, similar to the distance to playgrounds.

The city should ideally to build at least one community center that is its own building on city owned land. We should invest in ourselves.

At least one community center needs to be an indoor recreational sports facility to take the burden off our natural grass fields and accommodate increased need for playing fields. A large city owned building where there are sports fields inside along with the rooftop ones, indoor tracks, squash courts, gym, pool etc.

Indoor civic spaces will have wifi.

Sustainability

Overlay districts must abide by sustainability measures outlined in the overhaul. The Union Square Zoning Overlay is lacking. We need to somehow make sure that US2 complies with the new sustainability standards. It is a travesty to allow them to move forward without requiring them to the new zoning.

All buildings must be net-zero ready with incentives to be net zero.

All rooftops need to be equipped to be solar, green and blue ready.

25% of your rooftops must be green.

Stormwater must be processed on site.

Biophilic design needs to be supported through zoning.

<https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2010.01857.x>

Air quality sensors must be in all civic spaces near congested roadways, ones near train activity, and at places where people are encouraged to gather.

<https://ideas.stantec.com/nels-nelson/what-if-your-neighborhood-could-make-you-healthier>

Housing

Mixed income housing should be within walking distance to t-accessibility. Mobility challenges, seniors should be even closer. Locations to transportation should be relative to populations we want to serve.

We need to explore ways that prevent developers evading the contribution of an affordable unit by separating buildings or by building one less unit than triggers the inclusionary housing. A possible solution would be that contribution of affordable housing should be considered as a scale rather than triggered by a certain number of units.

Benevolent landlord tax incentive charging below market rent will receive

The city needs to do a study of demographics of the populations in needs of affordable housing. Senior populations are rising and we need to make sure they are not lost in the mix.

How do we get artists to stay? How does the live/work play into the zoning? Will there be separate artist housing?

We also need to address seniors losing their group homes. Can we put protections on the zoning to prevent this from happening?

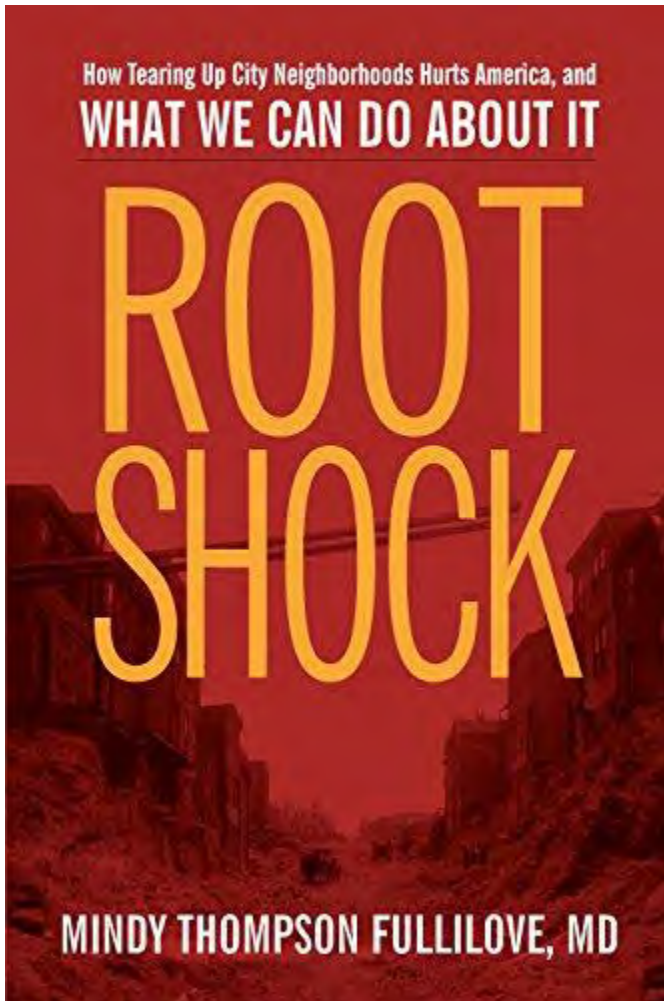
Workforce housing and boarding should be available with community living spaces and cooking spaces.

Ways to increase services and places to prevent isolationism, an ill of our modern society, should be investigated in the zoning.

We need more incentives for Co-ops. Tax-breaks, group ownership, requiring a special permit, but waiving the costs.

We must explore other housing options, like pairing able-minded students with seniors. Seniors with extra space with young people, seniors with extra space with young families.

Given how much effort we are putting into anti-displacement, we should seek the ability to relocate people in the community (Transplanting- high morbidity rate).



'Transitions in life can be very tough for some people, which can be placed based. Help vulnerable populations. How do we do it? Can zoning help?

Artists

We need to find a way to preserve our artists who bring so much to our community. It is against our values in SOMERVISION to not provide solutions for their displacement. They are a resource and cannot be abandoned in our redevelopment.

What happened to live/work? How can we keep our artists here? Are they belong to a subset of inclusionary housing? Can we create intentional artist housing (like Brickbottom?)

Affordable commercial for artists? Do the fabrication districts allow for housing?

Development Standards (Section 10)

All satellite dishes must be located in the rear of a building. Any time a satellite dish is installed all unused dishes must be removed. Satellite dishes can become a site pollution. Precedence in Jamiaca Plain.

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/jamaicaplain/boston-city-council-regulates-where-tv-satellite-dish2fc5921d8c>

All sidewalks greater than 10 ft must be engineered with LID and have 2 ft wide aggressively planted bioswales, with appropriate forbes, shrubs and trees.

193 Washington Street sidewalks are a waste of an opportunity to provide green space. We need to do better.



Development Benefits

Under Linkages, there needs to be a contribution to an open space fund.

Street and Highway Lighting

Incorporating Dark sky ordinance city-wide, that applies to city and state owned property within the bounds of Somerville, needs to be passed in tandem with zoning. Or within 6 months of zoning passing. LED street lighting needs to be retrofitted with appropriate hoods or shields to create a healthy lighting spectrum.

Airbnb Regulation

Cannot rent out entire units for more than 60 days? Limits need to be in place for renting out one's entire unit. No more than 50% of a dwelling unit can be used for Airbnb.

Administrative Process

We must encode that the city update the aldermen quarterly at a Land Use Committee meeting, not just updated via email. That the aldermen must regularly check SOMERVISION numbers and advise the city to make the appropriate steps if one of our goals is falling significantly behind another. The Planning Board should be quarterly updated and the administration provide links to reports on SOMERVISION in its newsletter.

I support the Design Review Committee to enter in the design process much earlier on and offer alternative designs for the community to weigh in on. It is important in this new zoning that the DRC have as much approval power planning board. Compliance with their findings are mandatory, not discretionary, for a project to proceed.

I support encoding specific guidelines on how the Planning Board makes their decisions, especially when it comes to community feedback and fulfilling the goals of SOMERVISION. We want the zoning to guide the Planning Board to be an independent body and be staffed with skilled planners who will have the ability to come to their own conclusions and not just regurgitate what the city hands them.

This was referred to at the November 5th, [Confirmations and Appointments](#) committee meeting.

The aldermen must regularly review Planning Board staff. Consideration of re-appointments must be obligated in the zoning and not controlled by the mayor.

This is what I have so far.

Thank you for taking my commentary on the zoning. I'm sure I will have a lot more input as the process advances.

Kindly,

Tori Antonino

BLATMAN, BOBROWSKI & HAVERTY, LLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

9 DAMONMILL SQUARE, SUITE 4A4
CONCORD, MA 01742
PHONE 978.371.3930
FAX 978.371.3928

MARK BOBROWSKI
Mark@bbhlaw.net

November 26, 2018

TO: Somerville Planning Board
FR: Mark Bobrowski
RE: Zoning Recodification
325 Alewife Brook Parkway

Please be informed that I represent 325 Alewife Brook Parkway Realty Trust. I would like to take this opportunity to express the Trust's opposition to classification of its property at that location (the "Property") as Urban Residential "UR" in the latest proposed zoning map (September 26, 2018).

The earlier version of the proposed zoning map (June 14, 2017) indicated that the Property would be reclassified as Mid-Rise 3 - MR3. In that regard, the Property was treated the same as the other nearby gas stations located at 395 Alewife Brook Parkway, 379 Alewife Brook Parkway, and 166 Boston Avenue, all classified as MR3 in the 2017 and 2018 proposals. See the attached 2017 and 2018 maps. The Property is the southernmost MR3 property on the 2017 map. That made sense. The parcels are all relatively the same size: 395 Alewife Brook Parkway has 0.45 acres, 379 Alewife Brook Parkway has 0.46 acres, 166 Boston Road has 0.33 acres, and 325 Alewife Brook Parkway has 0.40 acres. All are corner lots. All have gas stations today. All are located on Alewife Brook Parkway or Mystic Valley Parkway.

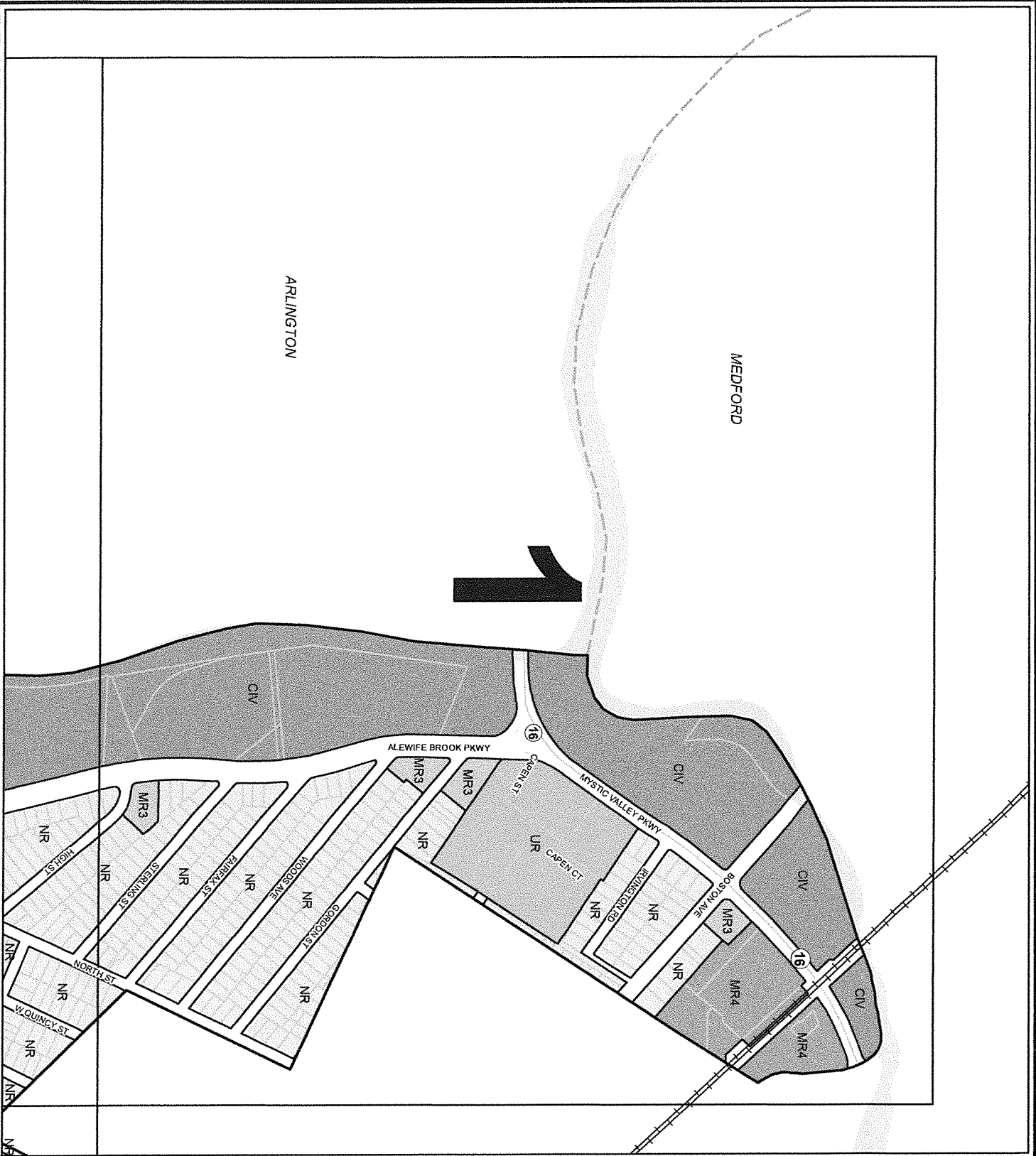
Without any rational basis to distinguish the treatment of the Property from these other gas station sites, the Planning Board may be engaged in "reverse spot zoning." This occurs when a parcel is singled out for disparate treatment without any legitimate government purpose in mind. See, e.g. *Canteen Corp. v. City of Pittsfield*, 4 Mass. App. Ct. 289 (1976).

Unless the Planning Board can point to some rational relation to a permissible government objective, I respectfully request that the Property be classified again as MR3 in your final recommendation to the City Council.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.






cc: David Shapiro, Legal Department

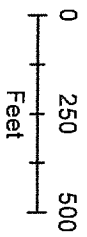
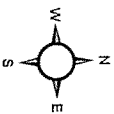
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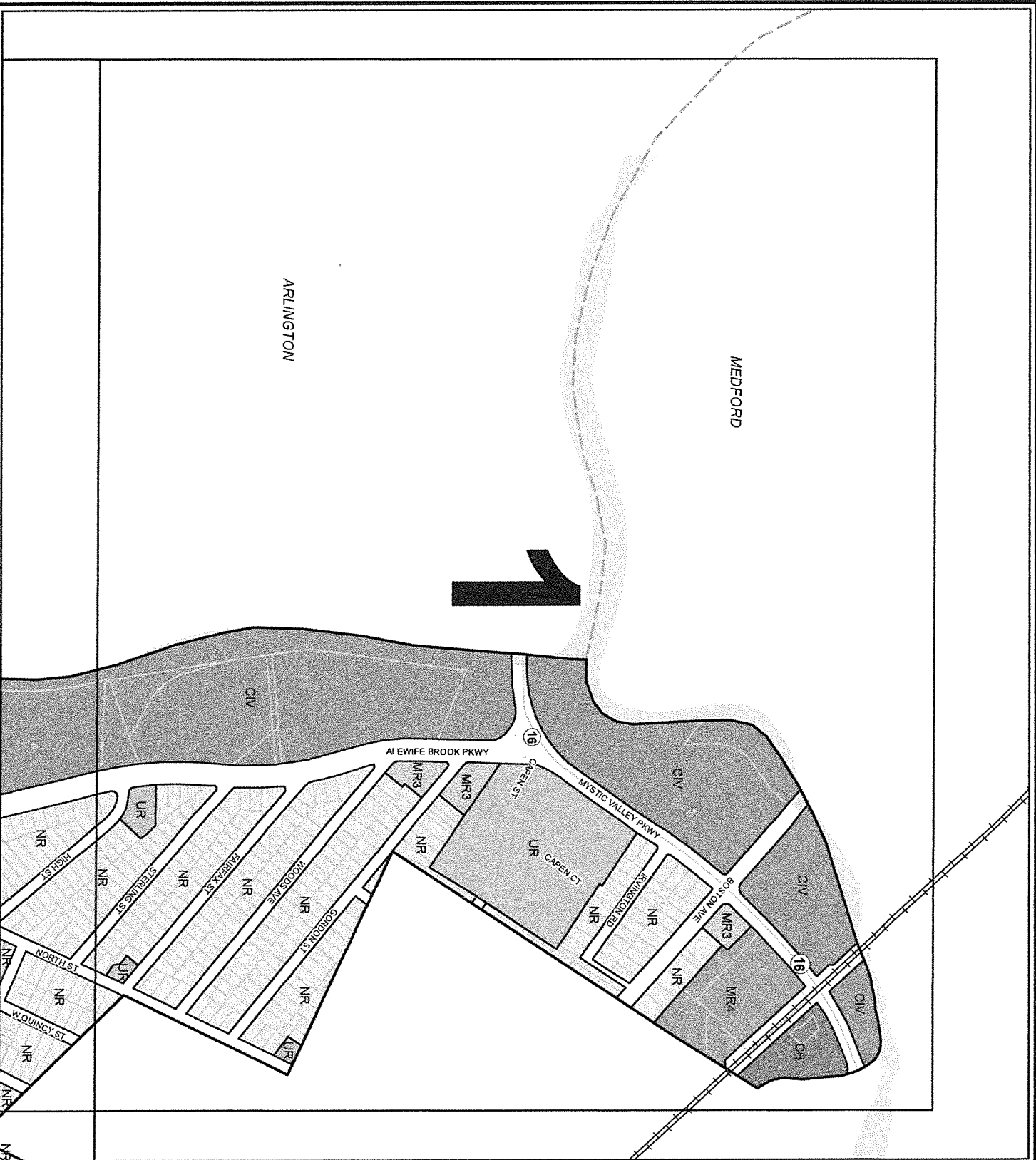
CITY OF
SOMERVILLE, MA
**OFFICIAL PROPOSED
ZONING**
(UNADOPTED)

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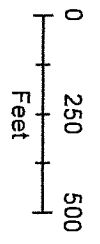
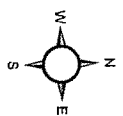
Date: June 14, 2017



CITY OF
SOMERVILLE, MA
**OFFICIAL PROPOSED
ZONING**
(UNADOPTED)

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-  NR
-  UR
-  MR3
-  MR4
-  CIV
-  CB



Date: September 26, 2018

Monique Baldwin

From: Chris <clarkie_84@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 11:44 AM
To: Christopher Otey; COS-Website-Planning; Mark Niedergang
Subject: Oppose 50-54 Murdock St. proposed 10-unit development -- public comment invited
Attachments: 20181125_072331.jpg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern,

I would like to say I agree with Mr. Otey concerns and suggestions. I would also like to add that there are currently two public parking spots in front of the property. Murdock street residents can not afford to lose any more parking. (See attached picture) In the proposed plans it looks like both parking spots are no longer available. I would like to see parking spots enforced for such a big development according to the zoning regulations as well as not loosing any more very limited parking spots that we currently have.

Thank you,
Christopher Clark and residents at 58 Murdock st. Somerville

On Nov 25, 2018 12:25, Christopher Otey <chrisotey@gmail.com> wrote:
Thanks for sending this along, Mark. Are you also telling the ZBA that you do not generally support these plans given the concerns you have heard or simply providing your list of concerns to the ZBA? As you know, I would like that property to be developed but this is very far away from anything that I imagine should be acceptable.

For others, below is what I am sending to the ZBA today. Feel free to copy from it and use it as your own if you wish.

Chris

To Whom it May Concern at the Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals,

Thank you for considering my thoughts on the proposed development for 50-54 Murdock St in Somerville. I very much wish I could attend this meeting in person, however, I will be out of town for work.

I live with my wife and son at 42 Murdock St which is two doors down from the proposed development location. While we are in favor of development being done at this location, we strongly disapprove of the proposed plan in its current form. I have listed a number of concerns below but believe our street deserves a much better design that better fits within the neighborhood and is in compliance with the zoning requirements while also enhancing our street and making it safer. The developers can easily do this while still making a very strong financial return.

List of Concerns

- **The number of units is simply way too large.** As I understand it, they are allowed to build anywhere from 3 to 8 units depending on what is allowed in combining the lots. They should stick to the accepted zoning. There are simply no concessions being made to benefit the neighbors or the neighborhood in exchange for the very significant increase in total number of units that is required for these plans. Some subtle design changes were made to the plans but none of these are to the benefit of the neighborhood. The neighbors have asked for sidewalks, more trees, more greenery along the street, and a design that fits within the other nearby units, to name a few.
- **Requested parking reductions are way too large.** From the plans, it appears the developer is asking for concession of 3 to 4 fewer parking spaces (17+1HC to 14+1HC). This is not acceptable given the difficulty of parking on the street and the difficulty of safely driving on the street given all of the parked cars currently. The narrow street combined with the parking issues creates a very unsafe environment for pedestrians, many of which are children.

The plan should comply with the parking requirements and simply should not get any concessions. There is no reason to provide any concessions especially since we do not understand the impact of the other three developments that will produce 30+ units over the next few years. The city has already given parking concessions for these units and should not provide anymore until we understand their impact.

- **Design does not fit into neighborhood.** It is big and blocky and will dramatically impact the light of the street. Aesthetically, it should be broken into two to three buildings.
- **Drainage already bad and this will make it worse.** As the city is aware, the drainage on the street continues to be poor and water accumulates at different locations. Much of the water drains through this lot and adding pavers and concrete can only make this worse and will add to the drainage/flooding issues. A “greener” design should be considered.
- **Considerations amongst other developments on Murdock Street.** There are three ongoing developments on the street that will produce 30+ units. The city has already given many concessions and the street has been under a constant state of noise and construction of the past 2 years. We do not yet understand the implications of these developments to the street and the city should not provide concessions until we do.

Some Suggestions to Developers

- Get inspiration from the 17-25 Murdock Development. This was broken into multiple units that better fit into the neighborhood. This developer also plans to put in sidewalks. Additionally, many developers on Warwick have made single units instead of one large units which is favorable to this blocky design.
- Comply with the parking requirements.
- Enhance the streetscape with sidewalks and more greenery. Setback the units further from the street.
- Reduce the number of units. 10 units is simply too much for the street given all of the other developments and are not needed to make a very strong financial return.
- Consider a greener design that is more aesthetic and will allow for better drainage.
- Consider how to contribute to enhancing the drainage of the street in general as it will be an issue for these units.

Then I have a number of concerns based on the design itself. Normally I wouldn't represent these but multiple plans have been produced that have stated things like parking and unit number are in compliance when they are not. This is still true on the current plans. This makes me question the developer's representations and therefore I want to express these concerns.

- There is a fire hydrant in front of the lot that is not shown on any of the plans. It would appear to be in the way of the driveway.
- The developer has state that this is the only design that works for the lot. If they are moving the sewer pipe then surely other more neighborhood friendly designs are possible.
- The height of the unit looks to be well beyond what zoning would allow for the neighborhood and seems to be another special allowance they would need.
- It's unclear how many units will be affordable units.
- I have heard that the property lines are unclear around the development site.
- Given the ongoing drainage issues on the street and that water often accumulates around there, I worry the shade created by the building since it is slow close to the street will create ice patches
- I am also concerned that the drainage implications have not been fully considered. Currently a lot of water drains into the dirt of that lot. Pavers and a concrete structure will not improve that and add to the occasionally flooding we have on the street. Additionally, after it rains there is often a large amount of standing water on that lot itself.

Thank you again for your considerations,

Chris Otey
 42 Murdock St
 Unit 3
 Somerville, MA 02145

On Tue, Nov 20, 2018 at 1:56 PM MARK NIEDERGANG <m.niedergang@comcast.net> wrote:

Dear Murdock Street neighbors and others in the vicinity,

The proposed 10-unit development of the large empty lot at 50-54 Murdock Street will be before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) at their meeting next Wednesday evening, November 28, 6 PM at City Hall, 2nd Floor in the Aldermens Chambers.

Any member of the public can testify before the ZBA to share your opposition to, support for, or any comments and suggestions you have about this application. If you can't or don't want to attend the meeting, or don't want to speak, you can email your comments to planning@somervillema.gov. I suggest if you email comments that you do so by Monday, November 28th. If you do attend, I suggest you bring a book or phone calls to make. While 50-54 Murdock is first on the posted agenda, the ZBA often takes items out of order and it could be an hour or two before this application is heard.

I have attached the revised plans and also a short memo from the developer describing the changes they have made to the plan since the neighborhood meeting that was held on July 17th.

The proposal is to build 10 units with 15 parking spaces, which comes close but does not satisfy the zoning requirements for parking, which are for 18 spaces. The only zoning relief they need is for parking and a special permit to build more than 2 units.

I anticipate the Staff Report will recommend conditional approval. The Staff Report should be available on the City Website by Monday Nov 26th; if you want to read it, you will be able to find it here: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/zoning-board-of-appeals>

I continue to have some concerns with this application in terms of its bulk, closeness to the street, lack of sidewalk, and the location of some of the balconies, and I will write to the ZBA to express those concerns. I have several other meetings to attend that evening so I am not sure I will be at the ZBA meeting when this application is heard, but if I can, I will testify with my concerns.

Don't hesitate to email or call me with any questions.

Yours,

Mark

Mark Niedergang

Ward 5 Alderman

29 Conwell Street

Somerville MA 02143

(617) 629-8033

m.niedergang@comcast.net

mniedergang@somervillema.gov

www.MarkNiedergang.com



CAUTION
FALLING
OBJECTS

NO PARKING
IN FRONT
OF DRIVEWAY

NO TRESPASSING
BEHIND THIS FENCE
IS PROHIBITED
BY LAW

CARE

LAW OFFICES of
RICHARD G. Di GIROLAMO
Attorneys at Law
424 Broadway
Somerville, MA 02145

2018 NOV 26 AM 3:35
CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PLANNING DEPT.

Richard G. Di Girolamo
Anne M. Vigorito, Of Counsel

~~~~~  
Tel: (617) 666-8200  
Fax (617) 776-5435

Michael LaRosa, Of Counsel

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November 26, 2018

1. Alderman Lance Davis, Chairman, Land Use Committee, City of Somerville Board of Aldermen
2. Michael Capuano, Chairman, City of Somerville Planning Board

93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02145

RE: 86 Joy Street, Somerville, Massachusetts—Joy Street LTD Partnership  
Map/Block/Lot: 94/A/8  
Zoning Map Change Request

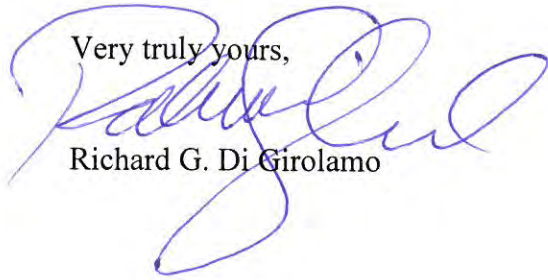
This office is counsel to Joy Street LTD Partnership, relative to the property they own at 86 Joy Street, Somerville, Massachusetts. At this time our client respectfully requests a map change regarding the proposed zoning overhaul for the City of Somerville.

The property is currently in an IA Zoning District. The property is a two (2) story building with basement industrial/commercial building. The basement has some commercial rental space, the first level has repair garages and other commercial tenants the second floor has various artist studios.

The proposed Zoning District for this parcel is Fabrication. This proposed zoning designation for the site is overly restrictive for a parcel that would have much more potential under the current IA Zoning District. As the City begins its Neighborhood Plan in this area it will become readily apparent that it is more suitable as a MR4 district. The site is in close proximity to a future MBTA Green Line train station. The promoting of higher density and pedestrian activities along this future transit corridor. An MR4 Zoning designation would be more appropriate in this area which is in close proximity to other MR4 Zoning Districts.

Should any further information be necessary for this request please contact our office.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard G. Di Girolamo", written in a cursive style.

Richard G. Di Girolamo

## Monique Baldwin

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**From:** Jennifer Gottlieb <jennifer.gottlieb@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 26, 2018 6:43 PM  
**To:** COS-Website-Planning  
**Subject:** Comment on Zoning Overhaul Plan, and recommendations

**Importance:** High

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up

**Flag Status:** Flagged

Good evening,

I am writing this email to note my dissatisfaction with how the city's zoning overall planning proposal is really falling short of what our city needs. I am in strong support of the Affordable Housing Organizing Committee's recommendations for revision to the plan, and hope that you will take these into account. These specific recommendations are included below.

I am a resident of Somerville for the past 14 years, and have been a single-family homeowner for that entire time. So it's not about my personal needs -- I was lucky to be able to buy a house in Somerville several years ago, and I am fortunate and grateful to have a reasonable income to support my housing and living expenses. This is about our community, and taking a humane (yet pragmatic) approach to what we are going to make available for the citizens of Somerville. What kind of a city do we want to be? We are proud to be a sanctuary city, but what good is that if the very people we are trying to keep safe don't have the ability to afford to live here. We can make a difference NOW -- by not caving into greedy, non-resident developers. Please do the right thing.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Gottlieb  
401 Washington St, Somerville

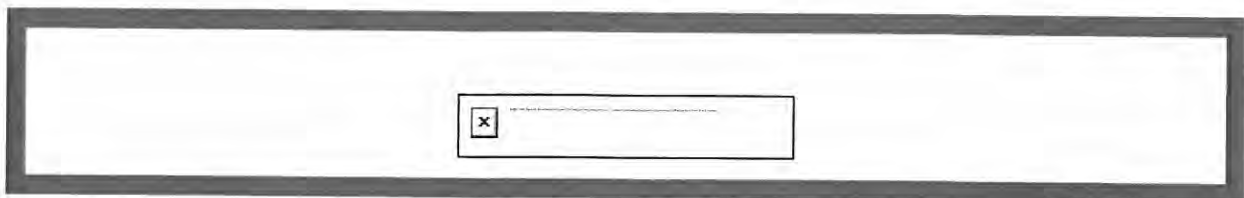
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**De:** Affordable Housing Organizing Committee <dleblanc@somervillecdc.ccsend.com> en nombre de Affordable Housing Organizing Committee <rmardones@somervillecdc.org>

**Enviado:** lunes, 26 de noviembre de 2018 12:05 p. m.

**Para:** jennifer.gottlieb@hotmail.com

**Asunto:** Zoning Overhaul Recommendations



# Affordable Housing Organizing Committee's Zoning Overhaul Recommendations

Dear SCC Family,

As some of you may know, the City of Somerville has recently introduced a proposal for a new Zoning Overhaul. In our continued effort to fight for affordable housing, we have made it a priority to organize around this zoning overhaul to ensure our Somerville community continues to protect and promote increased access to affordable housing for residents.

As a part of this organizing effort, our Affordable Housing Organizing Committee has created seven recommendations (see below), which we are urging the City to consider during their discussions.

In order to make our voices heard, we have TWO MAJOR ACTION ITEMS WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT IN. The first is to send an email detailing our recommendations to the Planning Board ([planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov)) NO LATER than November 26<sup>th</sup>, and the second is to send an email detailing our recommendations to the Board of Aldermen ([boardofaldermen@somervillema.gov](mailto:boardofaldermen@somervillema.gov)) NO LATER than December 13<sup>th</sup>.

It is crucial we have your support in following through on these simple requests if we want to see real progress in the upcoming discussions. Please reach out to Rene Mardones ([rmardones@somervillecdc.org](mailto:rmardones@somervillecdc.org)) if you have any comments or questions on these action items or our organizing efforts as a whole. Thank you team.

In Solidarity,  
Affordable Housing Organizing Committee



## Affordable Housing Overlay District

Inclusionary zoning will not, by itself, add enough affordable housing to meet even existing needs. **We encourage creation of an Affordable Housing Overlay District along transportation corridors (bus/train routes)**, making such projects more financially feasible, by allowing higher

density and substantially waiving parking requirements (and eligibility for parking permits).

---

### Rehabilitation

The proposed Zoning Ordinance limits which buildings are subject to inclusionary zoning requirements. It does this by eliminating buildings undergoing substantial rehabilitation from the definition of "Applicability" in Section 12.1.2. **We think substantial rehabilitation should be added back into this definition.**

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### Inclusionary Rentals

We are very concerned that tenants in inclusionary rental units in buildings converted to condominiums are currently vulnerable to displacement if they cannot afford to purchase their units. Section 12.1.3 should be amended to ensure that **inclusionary rental units in buildings being converted to condominiums must continue to be rented to the existing inclusionary tenants, if the tenant cannot afford to purchase the unit.**

---

### Affordable Housing Units for Families

Currently, for every 100 units developed, only four (4) of the twenty (20) inclusionary units are required to be affordable family-sized units. Given the acute shortage of affordable family-sized apartments in Somerville, the requirement should be increased, so that as many as eight (8) of the twenty (20) inclusionary units are for families. **Section 12.1.5 "ADU Development Standards" should be amended to increase the percentage of affordable units that are targeted for families.**



### Offsite Compliance

We think Section 12.1.8 "Offsite Compliance" should be amended to require that the **value contributed by offsite Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) equals or exceeds 150% of the value of the onsite inclusionary units that the offsite ADUs would replace with the goal of creating more ADUS, increasing the number of ADUs with three or more bedrooms, and creating a greater depth of affordability.**



### Displacement

We think Section 12.1.7 "Purchase and Tenancy Standards" should be amended to specifically prioritize tenants on the verge of being displaced and tenants who were recently displaced and want to return to Somerville. **We suggest that the zoning provisions include the specific language on priorities developed by the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group.**



### Buyouts and Payments

We believe that in general, developers should not be allowed to make in lieu payments instead of creating actual affordable units. Inclusionary units should come online no later than the market units, whether they are onsite or otherwise. Please amend 12.1.7 "Buyouts and Payments" **to ensure that in-lieu payments are paid before a developer receives their Building Permit Beyond Foundation.**



02143

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Sent by [rmardones@somervillecdc.org](mailto:rmardones@somervillecdc.org) in collaboration with



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**Monique Baldwin**

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**From:** Denise <denise.provost@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 26, 2018 11:04 PM  
**To:** COS -Website-Planning  
**Subject:** additional remarks on new zoning.

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

I wish to state that while I do not support a higher-density affordable housing overlay district, I do support the following changes to the zoning ordinance which will enhance the creation of affordable housing units:

- 1) The requirement inclusionary affordable units should apply when there is "substantial rehabilitation" of a building, not just new construction.
- 2) I support amendment of 12.1.3 to cover inclusionary rentals, and of amendment of 12.1.5 to increase the provision of family-sized affordable dwelling units.
- 3) I support amendment of 12.17 to require that in-lieu payments actually be made to the city before permits or certificates of occupancy are granted.

## Somerville 2018 Proposed Zoning – Comments

Submitted by Denise Provost, November 26, 2018

My general perspective is that while people who live in Somerville enjoy living at urban densities, Somerville's tight street system, limited open space, inadequate infrastructure, and years of over-building and over-paving cause a lot of friction at the neighborhood level. While the proposed revisions to our zoning ordinance reflect an immense amount of hard work, I believe that some aspects need more thought. Here are a few rough observations:

### 1) We should Put Somerville on a Density Diet, with plenty of Greens

I want to put on record my opposition to any provisions which would increase density more than minimally in Somerville other than in such redevelopment areas as Assembly Square, the southern side of Union Square, Brick Bottom, and Inner Belt. Somerville is already approximately 25 times as densely built as the Massachusetts average. We have close to the least amount of green space, parkland, and recreational space per capita of any community in the commonwealth, which is unhealthy for residents and engenders un-neighborly competition for the little such space we have.

Simply increasing density in underdeveloped areas of the city will exacerbate this imbalance terribly. Our zoning should have far more robust open space requirements, which the city should enforce, and not waive. Only once Somerville has added significantly to its park and open space inventory should the city consider adding population density.

### 2) Somerville Has a Climate Plan, but it's not Reflected in its Zoning Maps –and Should Be

Too much built and paved surface means that more basements flood now – one can see sump pumps hard at work even on fairly dry days. This water infiltration damages and devalues properties, triggers a lot of additional electricity consumption, and will only get worse as climate change effects increase. So will flooding in low-lying parts of the city, and surcharging and overflows of storm drains.

It's probably not taught as part of traditional city planning, but planning for climate change effects should be part of our big re-zoning effort.

### 3) Reconsider the Spotty UR Zoning in the New Maps

It has been explained to me that the UR parcels sprinkled throughout NR neighborhoods are meant to remedy existing nonconformities. Unfortunately, they do not do just that. The UR parcels – which look a lot like a rash of spot zoning to me – could be redeveloped up to UR standards, which I read as going up to 10 units, space permitting.

Locating UR parcels – seemingly at random –in NR neighborhoods has every potential to violate some of the very principles on which the new zoning is based. One of these is the announced intention to “provide distinct physical habitats at different scales, including the lot, block, and neighborhood, so that meaningful choices in living arrangement can be provided to residents with differing physical, social, and emotional needs.” Having various 2 and 3 family homes in one's neighborhood potentially morph into 6 to 10 unit buildings would dramatically alter the scale of the existing neighborhood.

Creating so many UR parcels is also at odds, through the tear-down-and-redevelop potential it poses, with the avowed intent of the new zoning to “preserve and enhance the existing character of Somerville’s traditional housing and respect existing built form and development patterns.” Imagine every UR parcel at full build-out, and you will see why.

4) Rethink and Create Clarity about the Creation/Conversion of Accessory Apartments/Structures/Units

Right now, these concepts in the new zoning are confused and confusing. Yet it’s terribly important that we clarify these ideas, and the terms that describe them. For instance, all detached and semi-detached residences, even in NR zones, will be able, *as of right*, to have “accessory apartments” – yet this term is defined *nowhere* – so exactly what is it that owners of these properties are entitled to create?

Definitions must be the building blocks of any understanding of law, but the new zoning is muddled when it comes to what is “accessory.” The definition of an Accessory *Structure* in Article 16 is: “Any structure designed, arranged, used, or occupied per the provisions of Article 6.B.” But I have not yet been able to locate “Article 6.B” it doesn’t seem to be in Article 6, which has four subparts, and governs Commercial Districts.

This definition itself suggests a regulatory structure possibly at odds with 10.1.b., which states that “[a]ccessory structures are permitted by-right.” That subsection itself seems to conflict with the subsection just prior to it (10.1.a.), which states that “[All] development, excluding normal maintenance, requires the submittal of a development review application to the Building Official and the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance prior to the issuance of a Building Permit or Certificate of Occupancy.” There is guidance for building officials as to what is an accessory structure, but it’s not entirely clear that the list of 23 such structures in 10.2 is an exhaustive list.

If I were a property owner trying to understand how to put an accessory apartment (an undefined term, remember) on my property, would I properly conclude that it wouldn’t be an accessory structure, but an “Accessory Use”? In Article 16, “Accessory Use” is defined as a “use(s) of a lot, structure or portion thereof that is incidental and related to a principal building or use of land and located on the same lot as the principal building or use of land.” This definition suggest that an “accessory apartment” could be both an “Accessory Use,” and an “Accessory Structure;” and if the latter, something which could be built (or converted) as of right, and presumably subject only to the 3 foot setbacks which seem to be the only dimensional requirements for “Accessory Structures.”

The murkiness surrounding this topic is compounded by the use of another undefined term, which appears repeatedly in the “Use and Occupancy” tables of Article 3, concerning residential districts. These tables distinguish the (undefined) “accessory apartment” from the also undefined “household living.” Does use of this terminology suggest that no one may establish a household (whatever that means) in an accessory apartment?

At least one alderman I spoke to was convinced that the new zoning would allow property owners to convert existing garages into accessory apartments. I could not find obvious rules for doing so, but I could well be missing something. What I was able to find regarding “accessory” anything, however, was confusing, and makes me wonder how well thought-out this additional density-driver actually may be.

## Monique Baldwin

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**From:** Sarah Radding <sarah@diotima.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 26, 2018 3:26 PM  
**To:** COS-Website-Planning  
**Subject:** SZO comments

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Planning Board members,

I'm writing to reiterate the two concerns I expressed in person at the hearing on October 30, 2018.

Design guidelines are too prescriptive. They stifle innovation and restrict architectural style. Some MR and HR district guidelines are too specific to residential building types and materials and inappropriate for larger scale construction. Others are out of step with modern construction practices. At a minimum, the UDC should have discretion to waive guidelines they deem not applicable to a particular project. Likewise, applicants should have the opportunity to request such a waiver.

Earlier and more holistic design review. Project review by the DRC (future UDC) is needed earlier in the process, when feedback to the design team is constructive and has greater potential to drive design revisions. Committee review and feedback should happen before a project's schematic design begins. In addition, holistic urban design review is presently missing from our approvals process, to the detriment of development quality. The existing CDSP process, tested with the Union Square redevelopment parcels, needs fine tuning and should be more like Boston's Article 80 or Cambridge's Urban Design Special Permit process. At present it does not ensure a high-quality, comprehensive urban design vision for the large projects it serves.

Sarah Radding, AIA  
Design Review Committee

## Monique Baldwin

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**From:** molly ruggles <molly\_d\_ruggles@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 26, 2018 3:55 PM  
**To:** COS-Website-Planning  
**Subject:** Recommendations for Zoning Overhaul

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Planning Board,

Please consider and adopt the following recommendations:

### Affordable Housing Overlay District

Inclusionary zoning will not, by itself, add enough affordable housing to meet even existing needs. We encourage creation of an Affordable Housing Overlay District along transportation corridors (bus/train routes), making such projects more financially feasible, by allowing higher density and substantially waiving parking requirements (and eligibility for parking permits).

### Offsite Compliance

We think Section 12.1.8 "Offsite Compliance" should be amended to require that the value contributed by offsite Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) equals or exceeds 150% of the value of the onsite inclusionary units that the offsite ADUs would replace with the goal of creating more ADUS, increasing the number of ADUs with three or more bedrooms, and creating a greater depth of affordability.

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Thank you,  
Respectfully  
Mary Ann Ruggles  
Somerville resident and home owner.

## Monique Baldwin

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**From:** Michael Walsh <michael.jay.walsh@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 26, 2018 10:19 AM  
**To:** COS-Website-Planning; Board of Aldermen  
**Subject:** Somerville Zoning Ordinance Feedback

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Somerville Board of Aldermen,

I write to offer some feedback on the pending Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The current draft is a significant improvement to the status quo and I encourage that the Board of Aldermen make an effort to pass it as soon as practicably feasible.

Somerville needs to be a leader on addressing two challenges: housing affordability and climate change. The former is apparent in the increasing cost of housing, the latter can be best summarized by the recent National Climate Assessment Report (<https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report>).

Somerville can lead by densifying and building more housing units. Having a larger supply of housing units lowers overall prices, even if all new units are "luxury". Densifying reduces the need for car ownership and single occupancy vehicle use.

1. Minimize height restrictions – We should have 5-6 story housing complexes across the city, especially close to transit stops. Many aesthetically pleasing European cities are densified like this with shops, studios and offices on the first floor and 4-5 stories of housing above. Build even larger buildings at key hubs. The model at Assembly is a great example. Porter, Davis, Union should all be up-zoned and welcome 10+ story apartment complexes.
2. Require tall buildings to be Net Zero – I acknowledge that "giving" air space away might seem unfair, but the city could require that all new large scale growth aims to be net-zero emissions achievable. These large buildings should be state of the art, highly insulated, efficient, and avoid the use of natural gas as much as possible.
3. Make adding an Accessory Dwelling Unit as easy as possible. Our condo association should be able to convert our detached garage into an efficiency apartment (an additional condo) with ease if we wanted to. A friend recently bought a 1500 sf single-family house in Somerville with a decaying barn. He had hoped to turn it into a guest house and play space. Current zoning makes it hard to turn this into an ADU. This is absurd especially as the barn as it currently stands provides little value and is at risk of being a home to rodents etc. He should have every right to improve this space for comfort and living. With an aging population the need for ADU's are critical.

My wife and I currently own a starter condo. We have 2 young kids. At some point we will have to move into a larger space to accommodate our growing family, which will likely include my aging parents. We hope trade-up in Somerville, but the current cost of property may make that difficult. A flexible zoning policy could enable us to continue to reside in Somerville and develop a place to house our family.

Densifying and building taller is the key way that cities like Somerville can address housing costs and climate change. Eschewing densification hoards the benefits of a low-carbon urban lifestyle to the rich, pushing out the middle class and socially vulnerable populations. I encourage you to quickly approve a zoning code that maximizes the opportunity to densify.

Thank you,

Michael Walsh  
42 Hudson St. #1  
Somerville MA

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2018/11/24/the-case-for-scraping-stamp-duty>

## Monique Baldwin

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**From:** Cindy Goulden <cindyanngoulden@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 26, 2018 5:06 PM  
**To:** COS-Website-Planning

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

To Somerville Planning Board,

After reviewing your proposal for a new zoning overhaul for Somerville; the city my Son and I have called home for 10 years after opening it's arms to us through the Respond DV Shelter Program and the Somerville Homeless Coalition, I must request that you consider the following recommendations in your proposal in upcoming meetings and revisions.

### Affordable Housing Overlay District

Inclusionary zoning will not, by itself, add enough affordable housing to meet even existing needs. We encourage creation of an Affordable Housing Overlay District along transportation corridors (bus/train routes), making such projects more financially feasible, by allowing higher density and substantially waiving parking requirements (and eligibility for parking permits).

### Rehabilitation

The proposed Zoning Ordinance limits which buildings are subject to inclusionary zoning requirements. It does this by eliminating buildings undergoing substantial rehabilitation from the definition of "Applicability" in Sect'on 12.1.2. We think substantial rehabilitation should be added back into this definition.

### Inclusionary Rentals

We are very concerned that tenants in inclusionary rental units in buildings converted to condominiums are currently vulnerable to displacement if they cannot afford to purchase their units. Section 12.1.3 should be amended to ensure that inclusionary rental units in buildings being converted to condominiums must continue to be rented to the existing inclusionary tenants, if the tenant cannot afford to purchase the unit.

### Affordable Housing Units for Families

Currently, for every 100 units developed, only four (4) of the twenty (20) inclusionary units are required to be affordable family-sized units. Given the acute shortage of affordable family-sized apartments in Somerville, the requirement should be increased, so that as many as eight (8) of the twenty (20) inclusionary units are for families. Section 12.1.5 "ADU Development Standards" should be amended to increase the percentage of affordable units that are targeted for families.

### Offsite Compliance

We think Section 12.1.8 "Offsite Compliance" should be amended to require that the value contributed by offsite Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) equals or exceeds 150% of the value of the onsite inclusionary units that the offsite ADUs would replace with the goal of creating more ADUS, increasing the number of ADUs with three or more bedrooms, and creating a greater depth of affordability.

### Displacement

We think Sect'on 12.1.7 "Purchase and Tenancy Standards" should be amended to specifically prioritize tenants on the verge of being displaced and tenants who were recently displaced and want to return to Somerville. We suggest that the zoning provisions include the specific language on priorities developed by the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group.

### Buyouts and Payments

We believe that in general, developers should not be allowed to make in lieu payments instead of creating actual affordable units. Inclusionary units should come online no later than the market units, whether they are onsite or otherwise. Please amend 12.1.7 "Buyouts and Payments" to ensure that in-lieu payments are paid before a developer receives their Building Permit Beyond Foundation.



I look forward to seeing the revisions.

Best,

Cindy A. Goulden  
Somerville Community Member

## Monique Baldwin

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**From:** pennie taylor <penelope.a.taylor@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 26, 2018 3:16 PM  
**To:** COS-Website-Planning  
**Cc:** J.T. Scott  
**Subject:** Zoning overhaul comments

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Greetings,

I share the opinion, and am sharing my colleague Tori Antonino's words, on steps that must be taken before the zoning overhaul is passed. See below.

In addition, I'm urging the city to adopt a metric for quality green and open space-- sidewalk edges cannot count toward our goal, nor should open spaces under and within distance of highways and heavy-use intersections where air pollution causes diseases.

Thanks for the opportunity to give comment.

Best,

Pennie Taylor  
8 Quincy St. #2

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Before the Overhaul is passed these two standalone zoning amendments need to be passed by the aldermen. There are two 10-person citizen's petition in Land Use Committee that should be voted on as standalone amendments before the end of the year. These 10-person petitions were brought about by activists in the community. One is better air quality mitigation in residential buildings near highways, the other is increased open space requirement for mid and high rise buildings.

In addition to these amendments, we need a city-wide design of our civic spaces, indoor and outdoor, across all overlay districts and transformative zones. Before zoning is passed the city needs to provide the plan to achieve the 125 new acres of open space, where it will be and how we will pay for it.

FROM THE DESK OF

**Dr. Mouhab Z. Rizkallah**

October 30, 2018

**RE: Zoning Overhaul 3.0**

Dear Board of Alderman,

I have reviewed the Zoning Overhaul Version 3.0 and I have the following comments:  
I applaud the new operating system, and I think two system bugs still exist:

**BUG 1: DOWNZONING IS INCONSISTENT WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS**

The current proposal is aiming to downzone the current RB zone, which promotes 2 & 3 family homes to an NR zone, which promotes only 1 & 2 family homes. We should not down-zone anything, given our housing deficiency and ever-growing population.

**BUG 2: ACCESSORY APARTMENTS CANNOT BE LIMITED TO OWNER-OCCUPIED PROPERTIES**

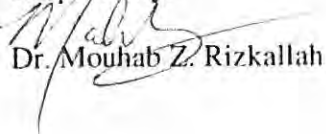
Accessory apartments are consistent with Somervision. Smart Zoning move!

But the idea of limiting accessory apartments to only owner-occupied properties is a slippery slope.

1. What will the tenant do if the owner sells? or dies? or leaves for a year? or is incapacitated and moved to assisted living?
2. What if the Accessory Unit Tenant is in a multi-year lease and the owner dies, sells, etc? Is the lease no longer valid?
3. There is also a legal question here. Is it a violation of civil rights to exclude the majority of property owners and only include Owner-Occupied Homes, based on the arbitrary and capricious premise that an on-site homeowner is a babysitter for the third unit tenant, where standard 3-family (or even 10-family) homes seem to have no problems in this City requiring a baysitter. There is no data to support this premise.

The Planning Department has suggested that there will be no legal challenge because this has "existed in Newton with no legal challenge to date." But Newton is primarily owner-occupied homes. Owner-Occupied homes are a minority in Somerville. There will be a legal challenge. Adults in this City don't need a babysitter. They need an affordable home.

Respectfully,

  
Dr. Mouhab Z. Rizkallah