

SomerVision

Actions

Neighborhoods

- Implement more collaborative processes for engaging neighbors in review of development projects and City priorities
- Revise the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to simplify the process of sign approval, ensure that signs are appropriately sized and placed for their location, and minimize visual impacts on pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers
- Review zoning regulations and other regulatory processes to ensure that appropriate businesses can be easily permitted in designated areas, such as around transit stations
- For small home improvement projects such as windows, dormers and small additions that currently require special permits, establish a more efficient design review system that will reduce review time but continue to ensure that neighbors are protected from impacts of these improvements
- Develop a permitting process for paving of private lots to ensure that development is consistent with zoning and stormwater policies



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Actions

Corridors, Squares, Growth Areas

- Consider the number of new jobs created when reviewing land use permit applications.
- Create a permit and license application system that allows for online application together with online issuance of permits/licenses, as appropriate.
- Create a publicly-available electronic tracking system for license and permit applications.
- Consider creating an in-house permit ombudsman position to guide applicants through the regulatory process.
- Develop metrics by which development proposals in each transformative district are to be judged.
- Require that land use permit applications include projected fiscal impacts of the proposed development on the City.
- Require the Special Permit Granting Authority to make a finding that applications for zoning relief in Neighborhood Mixed Use and Urban Mixed Use Districts support and promote the goals, policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan and approved Area Plans before granting relief.



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Actions

Infrastructure

- Establish a permitting requirement for increased impervious surface for projects in residential districts that do not otherwise require a zoning or building permit



City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Office of Strategic Planning
& Community Development

SomerVision

Goals, Policies & Actions

Goal: Engage community members in civic life and decision-making, seeking diverse representation and participation.

Policy: *Somerville should work to increase public participation in civic activities, including reducing barriers to participation and increasing diversity in civic activities to reflect the City population.*

Action: Implement more collaborative processes for engaging neighbors in review of development projects and City priorities

Goal: Strengthen and support neighborhood commercial centers that integrate residential uses, offer lively destinations and contribute to Somerville's unique identity

Policy: *The City should support neighborhood-center development consistent with existing and future area plans*

Action: Revise the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to simplify the process of sign approval, ensure that signs are appropriately sized and placed for their location, and minimize visual impacts on pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers



City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Office of Strategic Planning
& Community Development

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Goals, Policies & Actions

Goal: Protect and promote a diverse and interesting mix of small-scale businesses in Somerville's neighborhoods

Policy: *The City should establish policies, regulations and fees for small neighborhood businesses that are fair, clear, and designed to encourage entrepreneurship*

Action: Review zoning regulations and other regulatory processes to ensure that appropriate businesses can be easily permitted in designated areas, such as around transit stations



City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Office of Strategic Planning
& Community Development

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Goals, Policies & Actions

Goal: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville's neighborhoods, enable sensitive, economically feasible maintenance and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and respect neighborhood form and patterns while expanding Somerville's architectural legacy

Policy: *The City should ensure that neighborhood properties can adapt and change to meet the needs of residents, while respecting the character of the neighborhood*

Action: For small home improvement projects such as windows, dormers and small additions that currently require special permits, establish a more efficient design review system that will reduce review time but continue to ensure that neighbors are protected from impacts of these improvements

Goal: Improve our shared neighborhood environmental quality

Policy: *The City should protect neighbors from the adverse environmental impacts of decisions made by individual property owners*

Action: Develop a permitting process for paving of private lots to ensure that development is consistent with zoning and stormwater policies



City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
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Goals, Policies & Actions

Goal: Make Somerville a regional employment center with a mix of diverse and high quality jobs.

Policy: *The City should promote job creation, with a goal of reaching a one-to-one ratio between jobs and resident workforce in Somerville within the next 20 years.*

Action: Consider the number of new jobs created when reviewing land use permit applications.

Goal: Support a business-friendly environment to attract and retain a diverse mix of businesses that can start here, grow here and stay here.

Policy: *The City should continue efforts around permit streamlining to facilitate the process of opening a business in Somerville, while ensuring a transparent public review process.*

Action: Create a permit and license application system that allows for online application together with online issuance of permits/licenses, as appropriate.

Action: Create a publicly-available electronic tracking system for license and permit applications.

Action: Consider creating an in-house permit ombudsman position to guide applicants through the regulatory process.



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Zoning Overhaul

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Goals, Policies & Actions

Goal: Transform key opportunity areas, such as Assembly Square, Inner Belt, Brickbottom, Boynton Yards, and the southeastern portion of Union Square into dynamic, mixed-use and transit-oriented districts that serve as economic engines and complement the neighborhoods of Somerville.

Policy: Overall development in transformative districts should have a net positive fiscal impact to the City.

Action: Develop metrics by which development proposals in each transformative district are to be judged.

Action: Require that land use permit applications include projected fiscal impacts of the proposed development on the City.

Goal: Facilitate thoughtfully designed, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development and reuse opportunities in Commercial Corridors, Squares and around transit stations that are sensitive to neighborhood context, and serve existing and future residents and businesses.

Policy: *The City should establish a clear vision for the desired scale and type of redevelopment within transformative mixed use districts that speaks to the City's economic goals; following upon an active public process to develop the vision, seek to increase flexibility and reduce the complexity of the permitting process.*

Action: Require the Special Permit Granting Authority to make a finding that applications for zoning relief in Neighborhood Mixed Use and Urban Mixed Use Districts support and promote the goals, policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan and approved Area Plans before granting relief.



City of Somerville
Zoning Overhaul

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Goals, Policies & Actions

Goal: Improve stormwater and wastewater management systems to increasingly separate storm water and sewerage systems and support desired levels of future growth

Policy: *The City should create incentives and zoning regulations to infiltrate stormwater and to limit stormwater runoff from entering the wastewater system*

Action: Establish a permitting requirement for increased impervious surface for projects in residential districts that do not otherwise require a zoning or building permit