Planning Division

Proposed Zoning Amendment Fact Sheet

Ground-Story Elevation Amendment

Proposed Zoning Amendment Summary

This proposed amendment eliminates **ground-story elevation** requirements for all building types in all zoning districts. This will standardize requirements for all building types and zoning districts and make it easier for new buildings to comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) regulations.

- Ground-story elevation requirements automatically introduce the additional requirement of a ramp or additional accessibly entry method in order to comply with ADA requirements.
- The additional ADA requirements that result from a required ground-story elevation create additional planning, construction, and compliance checks during the building process.
- Without a ground-story elevation no ramp or additional accessibly entry method is automatically required, as the entrance would be accessible.
- The values for existing ground floor elevation requirements are representative of many existing buildings in Somerville, but there is no strong public purpose to requiring a ground floor elevation.
- Developers may still include a ground-story elevation if they wish, but it would no longer be a requirement.

This recommendation was informed by research and engagement, including review with internal staff experts at ISD, Housing, and other Divisions and analysis of past permits and existing plan objectives.

Proposed Amendments

The Proposed edits are outlined below.

2.4.4 Massing & Height

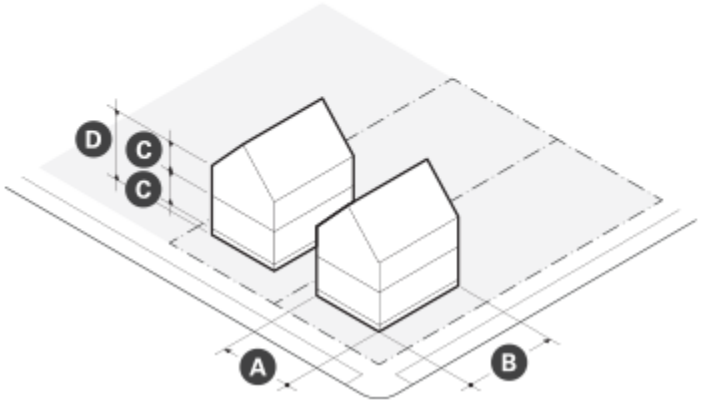
a. Main Massing

~~ii. Ground Story Elevation~~

~~a). Ground story elevation is measured as the vertical distance from the average finished ground level at the facade(s) to the top of the finished floor of the ground story.~~

3.1.7 Cottage

c. Massing & Height



Main Mass			
	Facade Build Out (min)	60%	
A	Width (min/max)	22 ft	26 ft
B	Depth (min/max)	24 ft	32 ft
	~~Ground Story Elevation (min)~~	~~2 ft~~	
C	Story Height (min/max)	10 ft	12 ft
D	Number of Stories (max)	2	
	Roof Type	Flat, Gable, Mansard	

Affected Sections of the SZO

Standards and Measurements	2.4.4	Massing & Height
Neighborhood Residence (NR)	3.1.7	Cottage
	3.1.8	Detached House
	3.1.9	Semi-Detached House

	3.1.10	Duplex
	3.1.11	Detached Triple Decker
Urban Residence (UR)	3.2.7	Semi-Detached Triple Decker
	3.2.8	Multi-Plex
	3.2.9	Apartment House
	3.2.10	Apartment Building
	3.2.11	Row Houses
Mid-Rise 3 (MR 3)	4.1.7	Apartment Building
Mid-Rise 4 (MR 4)	4.2.7	Apartment Building
Mid-Rise 5 (MR 5)	4.3.7	Apartment Building
Mid-Rise 6 (MR 6)	4.4.7	Apartment Building