Ground-Story Elevation

Land Use Committee and Planning Board Joint Hearing

October 1, 2026

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Amendment Introduction

Description

This amendment eliminates **ground-story elevation** requirements for all building types in all zoning districts.

Following Adoption of this Amendment

Developers may still include a ground-story elevation if they wish, but it would no longer be a requirement

Purpose

- Standardize requirements for all building types and zoning districts
- Make it easier for new buildings to comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) regulations
- Simplify dimensional standards in the SZO when appropriate
- Remove items that are contrary to or duplicative with the building code or other state/federal regulations

Research and Engagement that informs this amendment

- Review with internal staff experts at ISD, Housing, and other Divisions
- Review of past permits and existing plan objectives

Background

- The values for existing ground floor elevation requirements are representative of many existing buildings in Somerville
- No strong public purpose to requiring a ground floor elevation
- Ground-story elevation requirements automatically introduce additional requirements for a ramp or other accessible entry method to comply with ADA requirements
- These ADA requirements create additional planning, construction, and compliance checks during the building process

Recommended Edits

Impacted Sections of 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)	4.1.7	Apartment Building
Mid-Rise (4)	4.2.7	Apartment Building
Mid-Rise (5)	4.3.7	Apartment Building
Mid-Rise (6)	4.4.7	Apartment Building

2.4.4 Massing & Height

a. Main Massing

~~vi. 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 and 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	

Questions and Comments

Thank you!