We were asked to do two things for today:

1. Present the roadmap to 125 acres
2. Review the zoning petition
Executive Summary

- The City is launching a SomerVision update: 🌸 SOMERVISION2040
- We are committed to putting a stronger focus on planning for public space.
- We need additional indicators of success for future planning; The adequacy and validity of using acreage alone for our specific situation and objectives is questionable.
- About 20 acres of public space has been created since 2010. Another 11.75 acres is in planning stages right now. 88.25 acres is still needed.
- Sites for the remaining 88.25 acres will be hard to find and will cost an estimated $550+ million dollars to acquire, design, and construct.
- This cost is too much for the City of Somerville or for development to bear alone. How much each party should provide remains unanswered.
- The City is forming a task force to answer these questions by weighing costs/benefits in relation to other objectives.
- Interim zoning was prepared, but long term zoning solutions are needed.
Agenda

• Planning for public space
• The roadmap to 125 acres
• Financing the 125 acre goal
• Zoning petition review and next steps
Planning for Public Space
Mayor Joseph A Curtatone is pleased to announce the launch of a new community process to update SomerVision: Somerville’s Comprehensive Plan 2010-2030 and create SomerVision 2040.

Nearly ten years ago in 2009, the Somerville community came together over the course of more than 50 meetings, visioning sessions, and workshops to hammer out a guiding document for the city. The resulting SomerVision plan includes more than 584 values-driven goals, policies, and actions ranging from housing, job, and open space creation to neighborhood preservation, transformational development, and transportation advances, and more.

Since then, SomerVision and its metrics, goals, and priorities have served as the cornerstone of City policy and planning and City efforts to make Somerville an exceptional place to live, work, play, and raise a family. The City is now calling the community together again to revisit SomerVision 2030 and build in goals for 2040. The process will start with a SomerVision 2040 Kick-Off Meeting on Tuesday, January 15th, from 6 to 8 p.m. at The Center for Arts at the Armory at 191 Highland Ave.
We all agree...

There is NOT enough public space in Somerville.
OSPCD is committed to a more holistic approach in planning for public space in SomerVision 2040 than in previous efforts.

Question 1:
What indicators can help us assess and plan for public space?
Indicator #1

Public Open Space as % of Land Area

Indicator #2

Open space per 1,000 residents (or “per capita”)

Indicator #2

Open space per 1,000 residents (or “per capita”)

6 acres per 1,000 residents

10 acres per 1,000 residents
Somerville has 1,945 acres

TPL: 6 ac per 1,000
- 480 acres (25%)

NRPA: 10 ac per 1,000
- 800 acres (41%)
Somerville has 1,945 acres

TPL: 6 ac per 1,000
  • 480 acres (25%)

NRPA: 10 ac per 1,000
  • 800 acres (41%)

SomerVision: 3.3 ac per 1,000
  • 265.84 acres (13.66%)
Indicator #2

Open space per 1,000 residents (or “per capita”)

Good as an apples-to-apples comparison across cities

Math Problems
- Natural wooded areas, shorelines and water bodies, and state facilities skew the the acreage

Does not take into account…
- the specific mix of facilities,
- the variations in the types of park or open space available in a community,
- the condition of park facilities,
- the specific parkland needs of the population,
- nor the demographic characteristics or trends of the population or communities being served.
In the 1990’s the NRPA, dropped the 10 acres per 1,000 residents metric because small, built-out communities had no hope of ever meeting the standard.

"The 10 acres per 1,000 standard was developed in the early '60s and lasted through the '80s. Then it started to erode."
- Bill Beckner, NRPA Research Director

NRPA suggests instead that cities establish their own standard based on their own growth patterns.
The TPL stopped recommending 6 acres per 1,000 residents and created a weighted scoring system to evaluate city park systems that uses replacement metrics:

- Median Park Size
- % of Land Area
- Spending per Resident
- Park amenities per capita
- Access (% of population within 10-min walk)
Indicator #3

Public Space Access

“No resident should be further than ¼ mile (400 meters) from a public park”

- Olmstead, Bartholomew and Associates

Olmstead produced designs and plans for hundreds of parks throughout the United States and Canada.

- Arnold Arboretum, Boston
- Back Bay Fens, Arborway and Riverway, Boston
- Emerald Necklace, Boston
- Franklin Park, Boston
- Central Park, New York
- Prospect Park, Brooklyn
Access to public space

95% of Somerville’s area is within 2.5 minutes (1/8 mile) of a public space

- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Fields
- Plazas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Spaces</th>
<th>¼ mile 5 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Parks</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fields</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plazas</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Garden</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Open Spaces</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plazas:
Only 1% of available public space

Passive Parks:
Only 16% of available public space

Mystic River and Alewife Brook Reservations excluded due to poor access
**Percent of Households in Walkshed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>¼ mile 5 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
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<td>41.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Open Spaces</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indicator #4

Need/Demand and Quantity/Variety of Amenities

Community Gardens: 230+ people on the waitlist

Athletic Fields: 3,000 requested hours not permitted
Indicator #5

Physical Conditions
Public Space Assessment Indicators:

1. Public Space Access
2. Public Space Pressure
3. Quantity & Variety of Uses/Amenities
4. Condition of Amenities

125 New Acres of Publicly-Accessible Open Space
as part of our realistic plan to provide high-quality and well-programmed community spaces.

Determine a goal for the location, size (acres), and demand for uses and facilities within different types of public spaces: Parks, Commons, & Plazas.
• 20% more people in the plaza after the movable chairs were deployed.
• 40% increase in sitting after the chairs were deployed.
A Roadmap to 125 Acres
## Appendix 2
### The Numbers and the Maps: The SomerVision Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirational Targets</th>
<th>By 2030, Somerville will achieve:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Plans</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,000 New Jobs</strong> as part of a responsible plan to create opportunity for all Somerville workers and entrepreneurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allow communities to take into account all their priorities. Based on our shared values, and using the SomerVision Map, the SomerVision Numbers are our achievable but aspirational targets. SomerVision seeks to achieve the goals on this page by 2030.</td>
<td><strong>125 New Acres of Publicly-Accessible Open Space</strong> as part of our realistic plan to provide high-quality and well-programmed community spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6,000 New Housing Units - 1,200 Permanently Affordable</strong> as part of a sensitive plan to attract and retain Somerville’s best asset: its people.</td>
<td><strong>50% of New Trips via Transit, Bike, or Walking</strong> as part of an equitable plan for access and circulation to and through the City.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>85% of New Development in Transformative Areas</strong></td>
<td><strong>85% of New Development in Transformative Areas</strong> as part of a predictable land use plan that protects neighborhood character.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The SomerVision Numbers cannot be separated into parts and cannot be separated from the SomerVision Map in order to advocate for a specific action by the City. They must be viewed in the context of entire Comprehensive Plan including the backup information in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.*
## New Spaces Created

Created to date: **~20 ac.**

Remaining to 125: **~105 ac.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publicly Managed</th>
<th>Zero New Washington</th>
<th>Quincy St.</th>
<th>Baxter</th>
<th>Chuckie Harris</th>
<th>North St. Veterans</th>
<th>Symphony</th>
<th>Path (Cedar/Lowell)</th>
<th><strong>Total</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>9.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPS</th>
<th>Block 2A Plaza</th>
<th>Maxwell’s Green</th>
<th>50 Middlesex</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Milbrook Park</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>ArtFarm</th>
<th>5 Palmer</th>
<th>35 Richardson</th>
<th>Community Path Extension</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total**        |                    |                  |               |                         |          |          |                   | 19.9     |
# Spaces in Planning

Total planned: **11.75 ac.**  
Remaining to 125: **93.25 ac.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Space in Planning: Identified by Neighborhood Plans (acres)</th>
<th>Developer</th>
<th>City Share</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gilman Square</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Hill</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Square</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>9.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville Junction II</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Potential Additional Spaces

Total: +/- 5 ac.

Remaining to 125: **88.25 ac.**

Continuously monitored but ever changing list of potential additional properties.

**Examples:**

Acquired:
- 5 Palmer or Symphony

Have not acquire:
- 9-11 Aldersey Street
**Still Needed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SomerVision Goal</td>
<td>125 ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Created</td>
<td>19.9 ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space in Planning/Design</td>
<td>11.85 ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Additional Space</td>
<td>+/- 5 ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88.25 ac</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

88.25 ac.
TRANSFORM AREAS

Total Area
(excluding streets, parks, railways)

• 311 acres available
TRANSFORM AREAS

Remove inaccessible areas and some small lots in Boynton

- 253 acres available
TRANSFORM AREAS

Remove Union D Parcels

• 244 acres available
TRANSFORM AREAS

Remove recent construction

- 212 acres available
TRANSFORM AREAS

Remove recently permitted projects

- 193 acres available

- Boynton Yards 15.73 ac
- Union East 8.27 ac
- Grand Junction 22.68 ac
- Brickbottom 20.66 ac
- Inner Belt 81.74 ac
- Assembly Square 43.73 ac

Total 192.81 ac
TRANSFORM AREAS

193 acres available

88.25 acres open space target of SomerVision

- 88.25 acres is larger than all of Inner Belt
- 88.25 acres is 45.79% of all available land
Financing the 125 acre goal
Estimated Cost to Create Open Space Today

**Acquisition:** $4 million/acre  
**Design & Construction:** $2.2 million/acre  
**Total:** $6.2 million/acre

These costs increase every month.
# Spaces in Planning

Total planned: **11.75 ac.**  
Remaining to 125: **93.25 ac.**

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<td><strong>11.75</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

City of Somerville  
**ZONING OVERHAUL**
Potential Additional Spaces

Total: +/- 5 ac.

Remaining to 125: 88.25 ac.

Continuously monitored but ever changing list of potential additional properties.

Examples:

Acquired:
5 Palmer or Symphony

Have not acquire:
9-11 Aldersey Street
Estimated Costs

8.05 acres in planning
+/- 5 acres additional acquisitions

13.05 acres

$82 million

61% or .61 times the cost of the City contribution for the High School

88.25 additional acres to reach 125

$548 million

410% or 4.1 times the cost of the City contribution for the High School

Total: $629 million
10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Existing CIP Budget:
$503,050,029

Additional Costs (to reach 125 acres):
$629,000,000

Total CIP Costs:
$1.13 billion
Ongoing Maintenance Costs

We also need to plan for:

- **Renovating existing parks**: 25 parks in pipeline over next 10 years
- **Increasing maintenance costs**: Costs will vary based on size and complexity of new open space
- **Expanding staffing**: Additional OSPCD staff needed to manage park design and construction
Bottom Line:

The **City of Somerville** cannot afford $629 million + the costs of ongoing renovations and maintenance of already existing public spaces.

…so, what if development absorbed the costs?
If new development “paid”

Increased development costs:

- Per unit of housing ~ **$62,000**
- Per sf of commercial space ~ **$55**

In 2015, 82.5% of Somerville households could not afford the average condo sale price of **$593,479**

$55/sf is the difference in monthly rent that a typical local business can afford compared to a national chain.
# Development Exactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Permit Fees:</td>
<td>$20/$1,000 value</td>
<td>(highest in MA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing Linkage:</td>
<td>$10/sf</td>
<td>(only Boston is higher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs Linkage:</td>
<td>$2.46/sf</td>
<td>(Boston is the only other muni)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Improvements:</td>
<td>$2.00/sf</td>
<td>(request in Transform Areas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Line Linkage:</td>
<td>$2.40/sf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Benefits:</td>
<td>$1.60/sf</td>
<td>(based on recent negotiations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflow &amp; Infiltration Fee:</td>
<td>$14.35/gallon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing On-site Open Space:</td>
<td>10%-17.5% of land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing:</td>
<td>20% of units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open Space required for 125ac</strong></td>
<td><strong>$62,000/du</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$55/sf commercial space</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There’s not enough housing, or open space, or commercial space. It’s not just about the volume – it’s about coming up with balance, quality, and accessibility of all of those things.

– Stephen Mackey, Somerville Chamber of Commerce
Open Space Task Force

- Rachel Borgatti, Somerville Conservation Commission
- Kat Rutkin, Groundwork Somerville
- City Staff (multiple departments)
- Will request BOA appoint member at December 13 meeting
Task Force Mandate

Develop land acquisition strategy to include recommendations for:

• Strategies for ensuring equitable access and quality
• Open space in the Transformative Areas
  • Required percentage of open space
  • Open space creation split between developers and City
• Cultivating community partners in acquiring open space
• Funding strategy
• Parcels to acquire in neighborhoods and Transformative Areas
• Engaging community around open space as part of the SomerVision update
4. Voter Petition
Existing Definitions in Zoning

**Open Space:** Land area uncovered by buildings, roads, driveways and parking areas, or other accessory manmade structures not meeting the definition of landscaping set forth in this Article.

**Open Space, Usable:** Open space accessible to and designed for use by the public and limited to use as landscaped area and/or non-profit recreational uses. Landscaping, plazas, sidewalks, decks, arcades and loggias, landscaped boulevard medians of minimum fifteen (15) feet width, swimming pool, basketball and tennis courts and other sports facilities, boat launches, and similar uses, all of which are open to public use and, whether dedicated to such public use in fee or by easement, deed restriction, covenant or comparable legal instrument enforceable by the City of Somerville or other public entity, shall constitute usable open space for purposes of this Ordinance. Usable open space shall exclude all enclosed interior space, unless such space is associated with and integral to an accepted recreational use. (Also see "Landscaping", "Landscaped Area (Minimum)", "Open Space", and refer to [Article 16](#), Planned Unit Development, for additional definitions and information).
Existing Definitions in Zoning

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- limited to use as landscaped area and/or non-profit recreational uses.
  - landscaping,
  - plazas,
  - sidewalks,
  - decks,
  - arcades and loggias,
  - landscaped boulevard medians of minimum fifteen (15) feet width,
  - swimming pool,
  - basketball and tennis courts and other sports facilities,
  - boat launches, and similar uses,
- excludes all enclosed interior space, unless associated with a recreational use.
Open Space Petition

 Applies to the following in “all” zoning districts:

 Commercial buildings over 85 feet (5 stories intended)

 Residential buildings over 65 feet (5 stories intended)
Open Space Petition

Commercial Buildings: provide one (1) square foot of additional usable open space for each ten (10) feet of built gross square footage proposed where the interior ceiling is at a height above 85 feet.

Residential Buildings: provide two (2) square feet of additional usable open space for each ten (10) feet of built gross square footage proposed where the ceiling is at a height above 65 feet.
In addition to all other open space requirements...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Open Space</th>
<th>Useable Open Space</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boynton Yards</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business A</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD 55</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD 70</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD 100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD 135</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1.56</td>
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<td>Union East</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCD 55</td>
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<td>3.26</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD 135</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Junction</td>
<td>22.68</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD 100</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD 135</td>
<td>3.24</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>BA</td>
<td>11.93</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial A</td>
<td>3.05</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brickbottom</td>
<td>20.66</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial A</td>
<td>20.66</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Belt</td>
<td>81.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business B</td>
<td>13.86</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial A</td>
<td>67.88</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly Square</td>
<td>43.73</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open Space Petition

Additional useable open space may be provided off site, provided that the location is not within 300 feet of a roadway with more than 30,000 average daily weekday vehicle trips.

- Interstate 93
- McGrath Highway
- Mystic Avenue
- Alewife Brook Parkway (maybe?)

If space is not available onsite or “nearby”, the review boards may permit an in lieu payment sufficient to purchase and improve the requisite square footage of open space to be contributed to the Open Space Fund of the City of Somerville.
Open Space Petition

**Challenges:**
- Definitions include standards
- Definitions are confusing
- Definitions for high-rise conflict with the MA State Building Code
- Intermixes use of “open space” and “useable open space”
- Could allow for unintended stories under feet-based height measurements.
- Permits 5 story construction without any additional useable open space.
- Generates an open space requirement that is larger than the available lot area.
- Useable open space provided off-site must be 300 feet away from any street with 30,000 or more daily vehicle trips, but open space provided on-site has no similar restriction.
- Nearby is undefined; language silent on permitted distance for off site locations
- Fund created can only be used for acquisition, but not design or construction of open space.
- The taller someone builds the more damaging it is the urban design & commerce.
Open Space Petition

Challenges:
- Definitions include standards
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Open Space Ratio
Open Space Petition

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- Fund created can only be used for acquisition, but not design or construction of open space.
- The taller someone builds the more damaging it is the urban design & commerce.
Lot Size: 37,075 sf
Proposed Development: 368,000 sf
Open Space: 25% (9,268 sf); 10,479 sf provided (28%)
Useable Open Space 12.5% (4,634 sf); 8,150 sf provided (22%)
Additional Open Space?: 1sf/10sf res; 1sf/10sf com = 43,000 sf; 15,999 provided

Total Required: 60,418 sf 163% or 1.63 times the available lot size
Land Area %
Land Area %
(25% example)
Land Area %
(25% example)
Land Area %
(25% example)
Land Area %
(25% example)
2018 Zoning Overhaul

At full build out, at least _____ percent (XX%) of the development site must be provided as one or more civic space types.

All civic space types require Site Plan Approval
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All civic space types require Site Plan Approval

We need to figure this % out
5. Interim Zoning?
Existing Zoning
Conclusion

• SomerVision 2040 will improve planning for public space
• We have created 20 acres so far, with 16.75 acres on the way.
• We need 88.25 acres from Transform Areas to hit the target of 125 acres
• Neither the existing zoning, proposed zoning overhaul, nor zoning petition in question will get us anywhere close.
• A straight % of land area requirement is the only metric guaranteed to produce space.
• How much of 88.25 acres should be created by the City vs Developers remains unanswered.
• City is forming an Open Space Task Force to answer outstanding ?s.
• OSPCD is drafting interim zoning; ready for the first BOA meeting of the new year.
City of Somerville
ZONING OVERHAUL
www.somervillezoning.com