



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Union Square Zoning Amendment

Meeting #8

2.07.17

Tonight's Presentation Topics

1. Website Information
2. Resubmittal Update
3. Topics for Future Meetings
4. Topics for Today:
 - Offsite compliance/ phasing
 - Family units
 - Formula businesses
 - Dimensional Requirements
 - D1 block height
 - Height abutting residential buildings



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

1. Website Information



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

All Union Square Zoning
information is now available at:

<http://www.somervillema.gov/unionsquarezoning>



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

2. Resubmittal Update

Resubmittal Update

- New draft is substantially complete
- Submittal on target for February 9, 2017 BOA meeting
- A joint public hearing can be scheduled with the March 1, 2017 Land Use Committee meeting
 - Based upon necessary public notice schedules



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

3. Topics For Future Meetings

Topics for Future Meetings

- Open space – Quality and Quantity
- MMUR: The optimal commercial/residential split
- Affordable commercial space (legal review)
- Collecting and enforcing developer contributions
- Illustrations:
 - Illustration of buildout under current and proposed zoning
 - Shadow impacts of towers at different proposed heights
- Timing / phasing enforcement
- Green: building / roofs / etc.



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

4. Topics for Today



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

4A. Off-site compliance

Offsite Compliance: What is It?

What is it?

- Offsite compliance lets requirements for:
 - Maker/Arts Spaces; and,
 - Affordable Housingto be provided on a different site within the CDSP application
- Offsite compliance does not move these requirements out of Union Square or even out of the overall development proposal
- Offsite compliance does not include Civic Space, which is required on individual lots throughout the development area.
 - BUT, Civic Space requirements will need to similarly be timed to ensure that they are developed in accordance with a phasing plan



Offsite Compliance: Union Square Plan

Union Square Plan (p68 and p96)

On Affordable Housing:

- Research shows benefits for integrating affordable housing into neighborhoods
- Prioritize on-site ADUs
- Consider allowing off-site by special permit when:
 - Site control can be demonstrated
 - The site is walking distance to transit
 - There is a guarantee of timely construction of the units
- On arts/maker space:
 - Require 5% of commercial space to be set aside for arts/creative
 - Consider consolidating and relocating to larger sites

Benefits:

- Better location and design of affordable housing units
- Opportunity to combine spaces to meet arts/ maker space requirements



Offsite Compliance: Zoning Draft

Offsite Compliance is an issue of Design and Phasing

- Zoning permits off-site compliance for affordable housing and arts/maker space requirements
- Zoning expects the Planning Board will address:
 - The portion permitted to be off-site
 - The requirement for phasing and compliance

Offsite Compliance: Zoning Draft

Addressing Offsite Compliance

- The role of the Planning Board:
 - Trust the Planning Board to establish phasing requirements
 - Order the Planning Board to establish phasing requirements
 - Set phasing requirements in the ordinance
 - Set phasing in the ordinance AND order the Planning Board to implement it
- Enforcing phasing requirements:
 - Require phases to be built at the same time
 - Require phases to be started before others are complete
 - Establish financial guarantees for projects with unfinished phases
- Other alternatives:
 - Limit the portion of any metric that can be met with off-site compliance
 - Eliminate off-site compliance

Offsite Compliance: Zoning Draft

Recommendation

- Set phasing in the ordinance AND order the Planning Board to implement it
- Phasing requirements:
 - Start of construction of off-site compliance is required prior to completion on the project for which the requirement was moved off-site
 - In the alternative – financial guarantees can be provided
- This same strategy can apply to required civic spaces that match the percentage of open space required for each lot that is under construction



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

4B. Family Units

Family Units: Union Square Plan

Data on Housing Demand (pages 90-91 of plan)

- Housing demand ranges from 2715-4875 new units over just the next five years
- Amongst those in the market for housing in Somerville:
 - 76% of households are singles or childless couples
 - 10% empty nesters / retirees
 - 14% are families
- Demand exceeds supply in all housing categories
- Somerville has lots of housing but little housing diversity
 - Over 17,000 lots across the city, less than 200 are apartment buildings.
 - 85% of our housing is in 1-3 family buildings.
 - Family-sized units are currently throughout our neighborhood, often filled by roommates that would benefit from shifting to smaller units
- Conclusion: The greatest need for market rate units is for smaller units
- But: Affordable housing demand for family units is significant



Family Units: Union Square Plan

Union Square Plan (p98 and p99)

- Recommends zoning include the creation of multi-bedroom affordable units through inclusionary requirements
- Recommends design guidelines for family housing
- Recommends minimum floor space requirements for required family units

Benefits

- Provides opportunities for families to have affordable housing units
- Meets a priority of the Somerville community
- Addresses quality of design of family units

Family Units: Zoning Draft

Family Units

- Current zoning has a requirement for lot area per unit – and the 60/40 split, which forces units to be larger than market would otherwise create, but has no set requirement for family units
- The 2015 proposed citywide overhaul provided bonuses for projects that have a minimum of 10% as 3-bedroom units



Family Units: Zoning Draft

Addressing Family Units

- Establish a bonus for providing affordable three-bedroom units
- Require a portion of affordable units to be three-bedroom units
- Establish a bonus for providing market rate 2+ bedroom units

Family Units: Zoning Draft

Recommendation

- Require a minimum of 10% of affordable units to be 3+ bedrooms, and establish requirements for design and minimum unit sizes for these units
- Establish a 1 story height addition to podium tower for each additional 5% of the affordable units in the development that are 3+ bedrooms (up to 3 stories additional if 25% of all affordable units are 3+ bedrooms)



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

4C. Formula Business

Formula Business: Union Square Plan

Union Square Plan (p74-75)

- Consider requiring a special permit for formula business in Union Square in the Somerville Zoning Ordinance

Benefits

- Ensures that formula business is reviewed by Planning Board and integrated into Union Square in a way that blends better with our independent businesses
- It DOES NOT permit us to eliminate a formula business because it is a chain store and not local

Formula Business: Zoning Draft

Formula Business

- Original Union Square draft did not include the formula business special permit
- The formula business special permit is included in the 2015 zoning overhaul draft and expected in the 2017 zoning overhaul draft.

Formula Business: Zoning Draft

Addressing Formula Business

- This is best addressed with a special permit. These uses cannot be singled out and denied, but can be reviewed for design and sign standards and guidelines.

Formula Business: Zoning Draft

Recommendation

- Establish a formula business special permit for all retail in the underlying district and the overlay
- This is the same special permit that will be in the overhaul.



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

4D. Dimensional Requirements



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

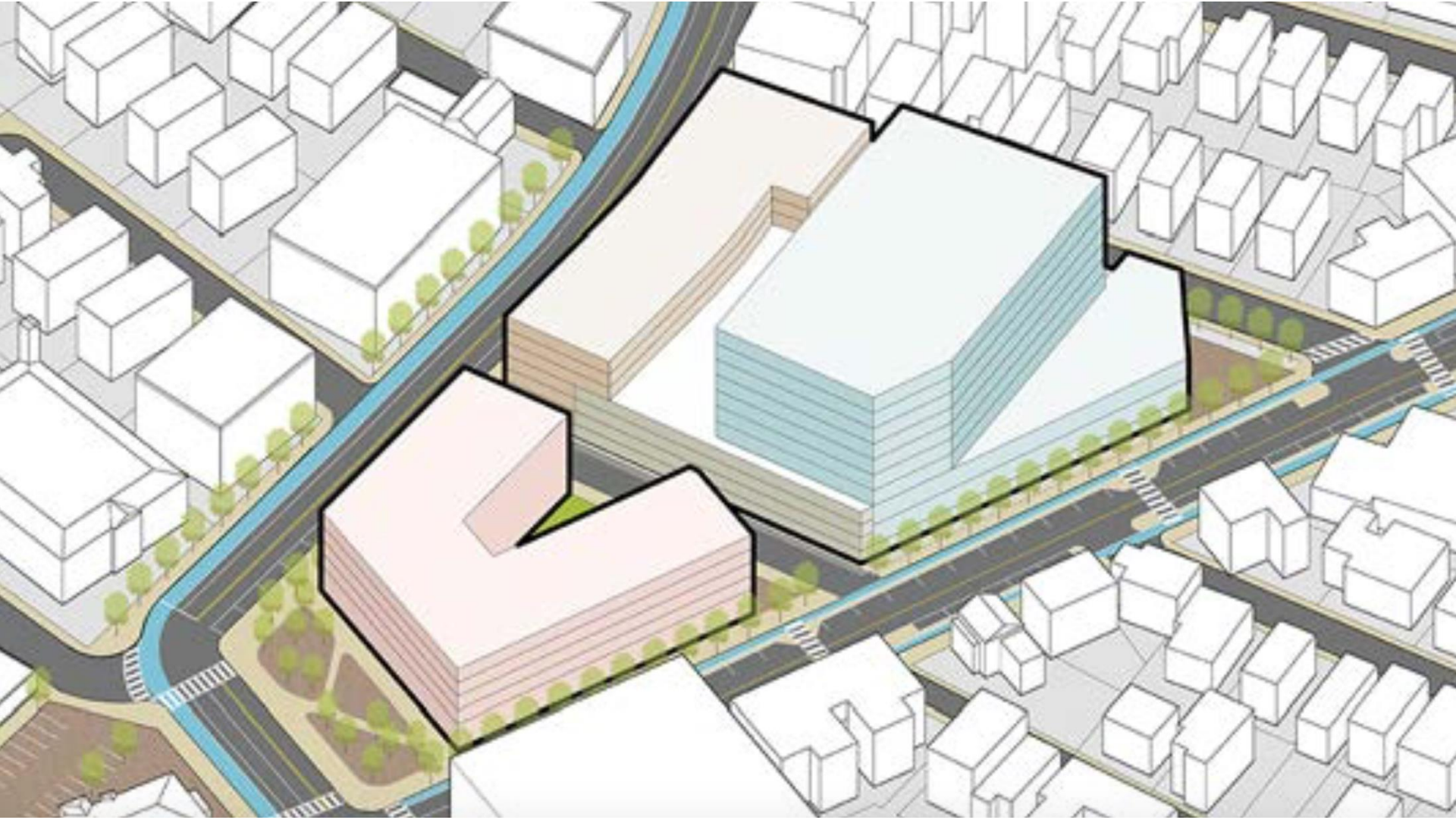
4D. Dimensional Requirements: D1 Height

Dimensional Requirements: D1 Height

Problem

- D1 is identified as a High Rise district in the proposed ordinance
 - High Rise permits Podium Tower buildings up to 20 stories
- Neighborhood Plan (p181) identifies this area as a 10-story maximum height (with tapering towards Merriam Street)
 - This is a prime site for a mixed commercial/residential building with garage

Dimensional Requirements: D1 Height



Dimensional Requirements: D1 Height

Problem

- D1 is identified as a High Rise district in the proposed ordinance
 - High Rise permits Podium Tower buildings up to 20 stories
- Neighborhood Plan (p181) identifies this area as a 10-story maximum height (with tapering towards Merriam Street)
 - This is a prime site for a mixed commercial/residential building with garage

Dimensional Requirements: D1 Height

Problem

- D1 is identified as a High Rise district in the proposed ordinance
 - High Rise permits Podium Tower buildings up to 20 stories
- Neighborhood Plan (p181) identifies this area as a 10-story maximum height (with tapering towards Merriam Street)
 - This is a prime site for a mixed commercial/residential building with garage

Solution

- Add specific language to the district to limit the total height of any podium tower building on the D1 lot to the 10 story maximum established in the neighborhood plan





City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

4D. Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences

Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences

Question

- What are the side and rear setbacks for projects abutting residential buildings?
- How does that compare to current zoning?

Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences

District	Side	Rear			
Base Districts / Current Districts					
CCD-55	0	0			
TOD (55+)	0	0			
Overlay Districts					
Apt Building	0	10			
General Building	0	10			
Commercial Building	0	10			
Lab Building	0	10			
Podium Tower Base	0	10			
Podium Tower	30	30			
Lined Parking	0	10			

Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences

District	Side	Rear	By RA-RB		
			Side	Rear	Notes
Base Districts / Current Districts					
CCD-55	0	0	20	20	15ft tapering at 35 ft
TOD (55+)	0	0	0 (with solid wall)	0 (with solid wall)	Building limited to 24ft high in first 40 ft
Overlay Districts					
Apt Building	0	10	5	15	
General Building	0	10	5	15	
Commercial Building	0	10	5	15	
Lab Building	0	10	5	15	
Podium Tower Base	0	10	5	15	
Podium Tower	30	30	60	60	
Lined Parking	0	10	5	15	

Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences

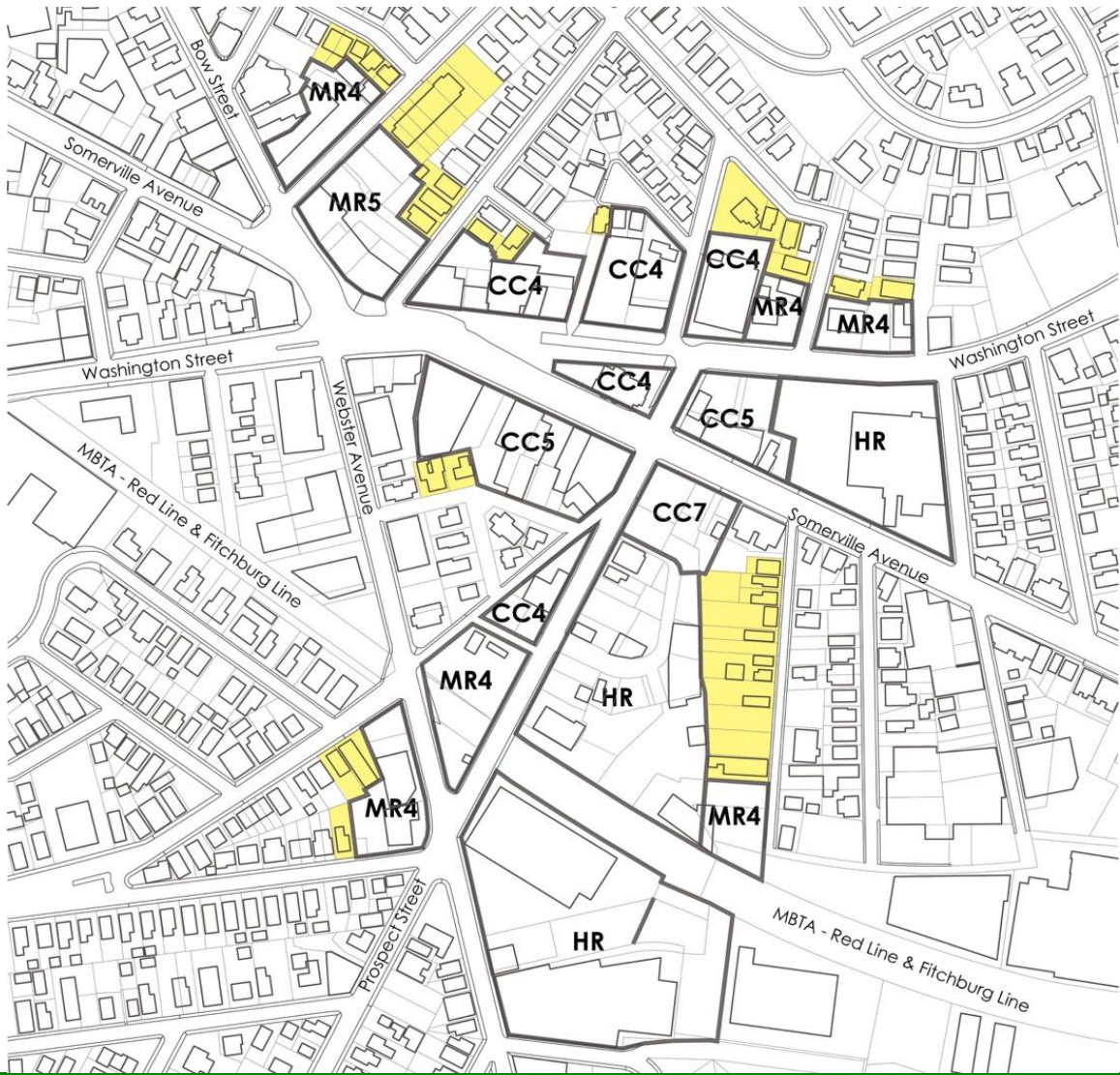
Answers

- What are the side and rear setbacks for projects abutting residential buildings?
 - For every district there are 5 foot side yard and 15 foot rear yard setbacks abutting housing
 - These are greater than setbacks in current TOD districts (including D1 and D2), but 5 feet closer than CCD districts

BUT

- The overall height on these abutting lots is LOWER than current zoning
- For this reason, the tapering requirements are not included

Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences



Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences



Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences

Conclusions

- All but 4 lots are adjacent only to 4-story buildings
- Special cases:
 - Post office site: No new height to be built on that site
 - Allen Street: development is separated by an alley, and lots are already deeper than other blocks
 - Block D7: five story area by houses intended as civic space use
 - Merriam Street: D1 development across street limited to five stories for the first 30 feet before getting higher
 - D4 by Concord Street: Likely civic space uses on a significant portion of this site, include current garden area
 - Block D6: The building designs on this site are not intended to use the fingers on the back of the lot – thereby creating relief for abutting properties



Dimensional Requirements: Abutting Residences

Recommendation

- Maintain the setbacks in proposed zoning



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Questions?



City of Somerville Zoning Amendment

Union Square Zoning Amendment

Meeting #8

2.07.17