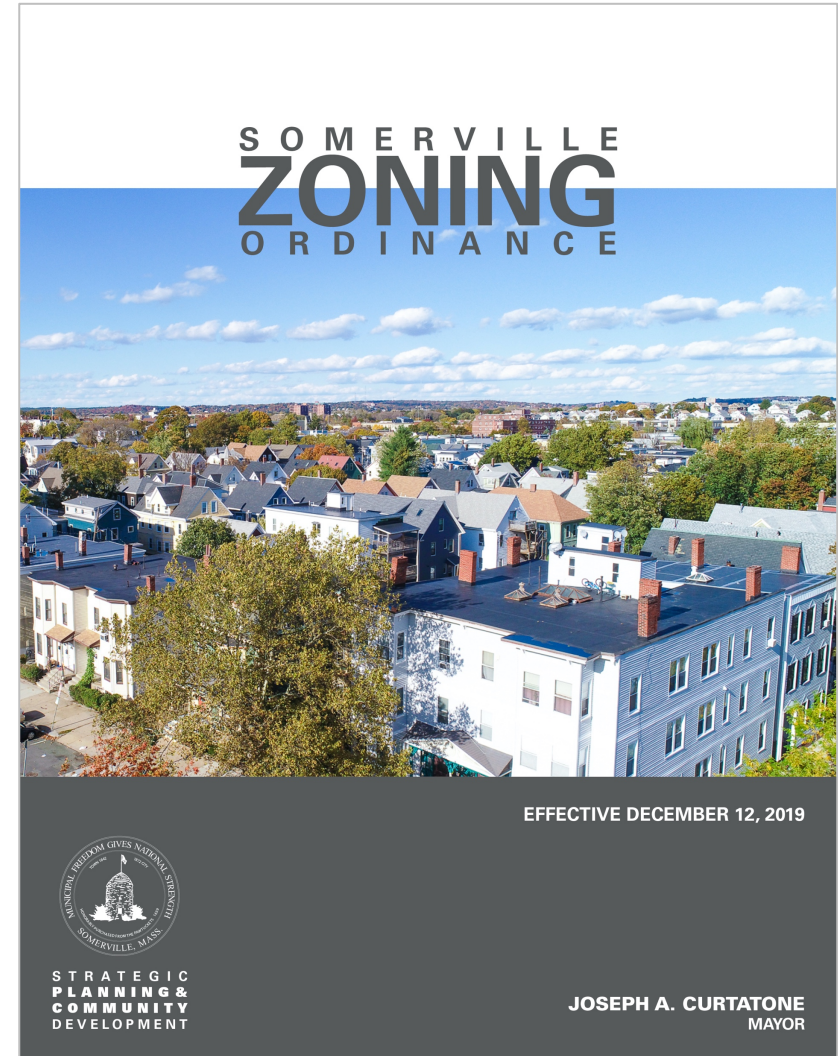


# LAND USE COMMITTEE

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December 08, 2020

[www.somervillezoning.com](http://www.somervillezoning.com)



# ITEMS ADDRESSED

209478: That the Director of SPCD present recommendations for an "[Affordable Housing Overlay District](#)" to this Council's Committee on Land Use, to facilitate the construction of new affordable housing.

210841 : Requesting approval of the attached amendments to the Zoning Ordinances to establish an [Affordable Housing Overlay District](#).

## 8. OVERLAY DISTRICTS

### Affordable Housing (AH)

#### 8.1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING (AH)

##### 1. Intent

- To implement recommendations of SomerVision for affordable housing.
- To increase the supply of AFFORDABLE DWELLING UNITS in the City of Somerville.

##### 2. Purpose

- To permit the development of buildings that provide all dwelling units as AFFORDABLE DWELLING UNITS.
- To permit additional residential use intensity, additional building height, and additional tolerance for dimensional standards to incentivize the development of AFFORDABLE DWELLING UNITS.

##### 3. Applicability

- This Section is applicable to real property located in the Residential Districts (Article 3) and Mid-Rise Districts (Article 4), as specified for each zoning district.
- The provisions of this Section supplement or supersede the provisions of the districts upon which it is superimposed.
- Development may choose to comply with all of the applicable provisions of this Section in lieu of complying with those same provisions of the underlying zoning district.
- Where the provisions of this Section conflict with those found elsewhere in this Ordinance, the provisions of this Section apply.
- Development subject to his Section is exempt from Section 12.1 Affordable Housing.

##### 4. Neighborhood Residence

- Building Types
  - The following building types are permitted by right:
    - Cottage (§3.1.7)
    - Detached House (§3.1.8)
    - Semi-Detached House (§3.1.9)
    - Duplex (§3.1.10)
    - Detached Triple Decker (§3.1.11)
    - Backyard Cottage (§3.1.12)
  - Within the 1/2 Mile Transit Area, the following additional building types are permitted by right:
    - Semi-Detached Triple Decker (§3.2.8)
    - Multi-Plex (§3.2.8)
    - Apartment House (§3.2.9)
    - Rowhouses (§3.2.11)
- Dimensional Compliance
  - Development may deviate by up to five percent (5%) from any maximum lot coverage, minimum green score, minimum open space, front and side building setbacks, minimum facade build out, and maximum floor plate specified for each building

- Use Provisions
  - Development is exempt from any maximum number of dwelling units and maximum number of dwelling units per lot specified elsewhere in this Ordinance.
  - All dwelling units must be AFFORDABLE DWELLING UNITS.

##### 5. Urban Residence

- Building Type
  - The maximum number of stories permitted for each building type is specified on Table 8.1.5.

Table 8.1.5

	Semi-Detached Triple Decker	Multi-Plex	Apartment House	Apartment Building	Row Houses
Number of Stories (max)	4	4	4	4	4

- Dimensional Compliance
  - Development of any building type permitted by this Section may deviate by up to five percent (5%) from any maximum lot coverage, minimum green score, minimum open space, front and side building setbacks, minimum facade build out, and maximum floor plate specified for each building type elsewhere in this Ordinance.
- Use Provisions
  - Development is exempt from any maximum number of dwelling units, maximum number of dwelling units per lot, and minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit specified elsewhere in this Ordinance.
  - All dwelling units must be AFFORDABLE DWELLING UNITS.

##### 6. Mid-Rise Districts

- Building Types
  - The following building types are permitted by right:
    - Apartment Building
    - General Building
  - ~~The maximum number of stories and the maximum building height permitted for each building type is specified on Table 8.1.6. The~~

## 8. OVERLAY DISTRICTS

### Affordable Housing (AH)

~~standards of Table 8.1.6 supersede or supplement the dimensional standards for the specified building types permitted by the underlying zoning district.~~

- Dimensional Compliance
  - ~~Development of any Apartment Building or General Building may deviate by up to five percent (5%) from the numeric value of the following dimensional standards of the underlying zoning district:~~
    - ~~Lot coverage (max)~~
    - ~~Green score (min)~~
    - ~~Open space (min)~~
    - ~~Front building setbacks (min & max)~~
    - ~~Side building setbacks for lots abutting any non-NR or LHD lot (min)~~
    - ~~Facade build outs (min)~~
    - ~~Floor plate (max)~~
- Use Provisions
  - Uses from the following principal use categories are permitted by right:
    - Household Living
  - Development is exempt from any minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit specified elsewhere in this Ordinance.
  - The use of any upper story of a general building is limited to the following principal use categories and specific uses:
    - Community Center
    - Library
    - Public Service
    - Religious & Educational Uses Protected by M.G.L. 40A, Sec. 3
    - Day Care Services
    - Health Care Services
    - Household Living
    - Group Living
  - At least forty percent (40%) of the gross floor area of any general building must be occupied by uses from the Residential principal use categories.
  - All dwelling units must be AFFORDABLE DWELLING UNITS.
- Parking & Mobility
  - Development may deviate by up to five percent (5%) from the minimum number of bicycle parking spaces required per dwelling unit.

Table 8.1.6 Dimensional Standards

	Apartment Building	General Building
<b>Building Setbacks</b>		
<b>Side Setback (min)</b>	=	=
<b>4th - 7th Story abutting NR or LHD</b>	30 ft	30 ft
<b>Rear Setback (min)</b>	=	=
<b>4th - 7th Story abutting NR or LHD</b>	30 ft	30 ft
<b>Main Massing</b>		
<b>Number of Stories (max)</b>	=	=
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	4	4
All other MR3-MR6 lots	7	7
<b>Step-Back, 5th - 7th Story (min)</b>	10 ft	10 ft
<b>Building Height, Feet (max)</b>		
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	50 ft	52 ft
All other MR3-MR6 lots	86 ft	88 ft

## 8. OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Affordable Housing (AH)

standards of Table 8.1.6 supersede or supplement the dimensional standards for the specified building types permitted by the underlying zoning district.

- b. Dimensional Compliance
  - i. Development of any Apartment Building or General Building may deviate by up to five percent (5%) from the numeric value of the following dimensional standards of the underlying zoning district:
    - a). Lot coverage (max)
    - b). Green score (min)
    - c). Open space (min)
    - d). Front building setbacks (min & max)
    - e). Side building setbacks for lots abutting any non-NR or LHD lot (min)
    - f). Facade build outs (min)
    - g). Floor plate (max)
- c. Use Provisions
  - i. Uses from the following principal use categories are permitted by right:
    - a). Household Living
  - ii. Development is exempt from any minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit specified elsewhere in this Ordinance.
  - iii. The use of any upper story of a general building is limited to the following principal use categories and specific uses:

**Table 8.1.6 Dimensional Standards**

	Apartment Building	General Building
<b>Building Setbacks</b>		
<b>Side Setback (min)</b>	=	=
4th - 7th Story abutting NR or LHD	30 ft	30 ft
<b>Rear Setback (min)</b>	=	=
4th - 7th Story abutting NR or LHD	30 ft	30 ft
<b>Main Massing</b>		
<b>Number of Stories (max)</b>	–	--
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	4	4
All other MR3-MR6 lots	7	7
<b>Step-Back, 5th - 7th Story (min)</b>	10 ft	10 ft
<b>Building Height, Feet (max)</b>	–	--
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	50 ft	52 ft
All other MR3-MR6 lots	86 ft	88 ft

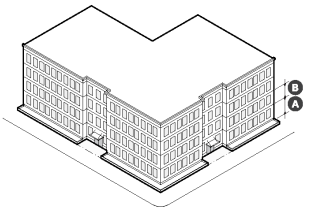
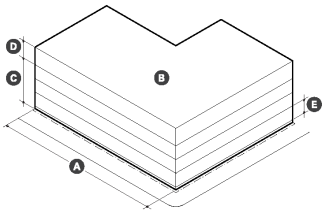
# ACCESSIBILITY

1. Ground Story Elevation: 2 ft (min)

4.2.7. Apartment Building (continued)

c. Massing & Height

d. Uses & Features



Main Massing	
A BUILDING WIDTH (max)	200 ft
FACADE Build Out (min)	--
Primary Front	80%
Secondary Front	65%
GROUND STORY ELEVATION (min)	2 ft
NUMBER OF STORIES (min/max)	3 / 4
BUILDING HEIGHT, FEET (max)	50 ft
Roof Type	Flat

Facade Composition	
A GROUND STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
B UPPER STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
BLANK WALL (max)	20 ft

Use & Occupancy	
GROSS FLOOR AREA per DU	--
LOT AREA < 5,500 sf	1,500
LOT AREA >= 5,500 sf	1,125
NET ZERO READY BUILDING	850
100% AFFORDABLE HOUSING	850
OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE (min)	1/DU

# ACCESSIBILITY

## 1. Ground Story Elevation: 2 ft (min)

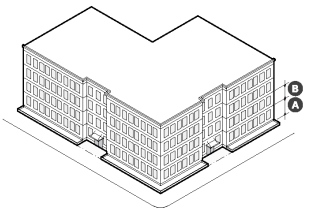
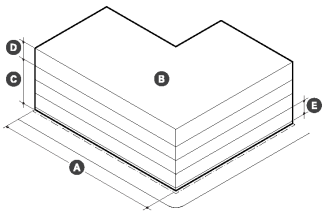
- Reduces flood damage
- Reduces rotting of building materials due to contact with the earth
- Natural insulation
- Improved heating and cooling efficiency
- Improved pest control
- Prevents tree removal required for slab foundations
- Reduces home improvement costs (water, sewer, electrical)
- Increases privacy

### 4. MID-RISE DISTRICTS Mid-Rise 4 (MR4)

#### 4.2.7. Apartment Building (continued)

c. Massing & Height

d. Uses & Features



Main Massing	
A BUILDING WIDTH (max)	200 ft
FACADE Build Out (min)	--
Primary Front	80%
Secondary Front	65%
GROUND STORY ELEVATION (min)	2 ft
GROUND HEIGHT (min)	15 ft
D NUMBER OF STORIES (min/max)	3 / 4
E BUILDING HEIGHT, FEET (max)	50 ft
Roof Type	Flat

Facade Composition	
A GROUND STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
B UPPER STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
BLANK WALL (max)	20 ft

Use & Occupancy	
GROSS FLOOR AREA per DU	--
LOT AREA < 5,500 sf	1,500
LOT AREA >= 5,500 sf	1,125
NET ZERO READY BUILDING	850
100% AFFORDABLE HOUSING	850
OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE (min)	1/DU

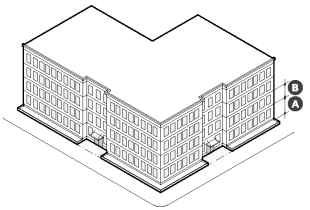
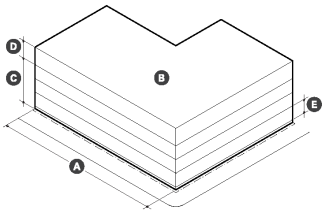
# ACCESSIBILITY

- 1. Ground Story Elevation: 2 ft (min)
- 2. All residential buildings [] must provide at least one (1) zero step entrance at the front, side, or rear of the building.

4.2.7. Apartment Building (continued)

c. Massing & Height

d. Uses & Features



Main Massing	
A BUILDING WIDTH (max)	200 ft
FACADE Build Out (min)	--
Primary Front	80%
Secondary Front	65%
GROUND STORY ELEVATION (min)	2 ft
NUMBER OF STORIES (min/max)	3 / 4
BUILDING HEIGHT, FEET (max)	50 ft
Roof Type	Flat

Facade Composition	
A GROUND STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
B UPPER STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
BLANK WALL (max)	20 ft

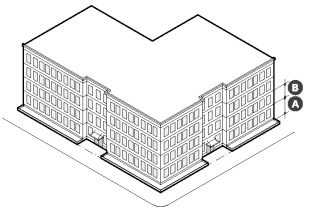
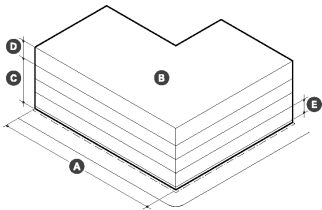
Use & Occupancy	
GROSS FLOOR AREA per DU	--
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LOT AREA >= 5,500 sf	1,125
NET ZERO READY BUILDING	850
100% AFFORDABLE HOUSING	850
Outdoor AMENITY SPACE (min)	1/DU

# ACCESSIBILITY

- 1. Ground Story Elevation: 2 ft (min)
- 2. All residential buildings [] must provide at least one (1) zero step entrance at the front, side, or rear of the building.
  - Per Article VI of the Code of Ordinances, City of Somerville, Massachusetts, reasonable accommodation may be requested to comply with this standard.

4.2.7. Apartment Building (continued)  
c. Massing & Height

d. Uses & Features



Main Massing	
A BUILDING WIDTH (max)	200 ft
FACADE Build Out (min)	--
Primary Front	80%
Secondary Front	65%
GROUND STORY ELEVATION (min)	2 ft
ROOF HEIGHT (min)	15 ft
D NUMBER OF STORIES (min/max)	3 4
E BUILDING HEIGHT, FEET (max)	50 ft
Roof Type	Flat

Facade Composition	
A GROUND STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
B UPPER STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
BLANK WALL (max)	20 ft

Use & Occupancy	
GROSS FLOOR AREA per DU	--
LOT AREA < 5,500 sf	1,500
LOT AREA >= 5,500 sf	1,125
NET ZERO READY BUILDING	850
100% AFFORDABLE HOUSING	850
Outdoor AMENITY SPACE (min)	1/DU



# ACCESSIBILITY

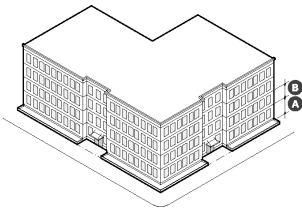
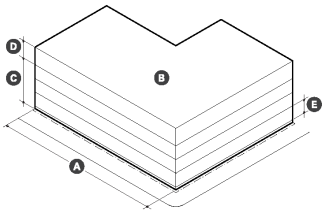
- 1. Ground Story Elevation: 2 ft (min)
- 2. All residential buildings [] must provide at least one (1) zero step entrance at the front, side, or rear of the building.
  - Per Article VI of the Code of Ordinances, City of Somerville, Massachusetts, reasonable accommodation may be requested to comply with this standard.
- Landscape Slope
- Constructed Ramp
- Mechanical Lift
- Zoning Exemptions (per Article VI above)
  - Slab on Grade Foundation
  - Different Setbacks
  - Different Ground Story Elevation
  - etc.

## 4. MID-RISE DISTRICTS Mid-Rise 4 (MR4)

### 4.2.7. Apartment Building (continued)

c. Massing & Height

d. Uses & Features



Main Massing	
A BUILDING WIDTH (max)	200 ft
FACADE Build Out (min)	--
Primary Front	80%
Secondary Front	65%
GROUND STORY ELEVATION (min)	2 ft
NUMBER OF STORIES (min/max)	3 / 4
BUILDING HEIGHT, FEET (max)	50 ft
Roof Type	Flat

Facade Composition	
A GROUND STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
B UPPER STORY FENESTRATION (min/max)	15% 50%
BLANK WALL (max)	20 ft

Use & Occupancy	
GROSS FLOOR AREA per DU	--
LOT AREA < 5,500 sf	1,500
LOT AREA >= 5,500 sf	1,125
NET ZERO READY BUILDING	850
100% AFFORDABLE HOUSING	850
Outdoor AMENITY SPACE (min)	1/du

# ITEMS ADDRESSED

209810 : That the Director of SPCD consider revising the city's zoning to include [universal ADA accessible design standards](#) in new developments.

# ITEMS ADDRESSED

210783 : That the Director of SPCD present zoning recommendations to establish density bonuses in certain areas, including increased building height, in exchange for additional community benefits.

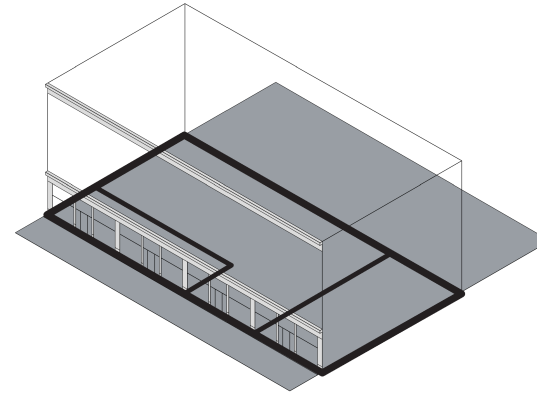
## 8. OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Small Business (SB)

### 5. **Mid-Rise, High-Rise, & Commercial Districts**

- a. Applicability
  - i. This section is applicable to the construction of any new PRINCIPAL BUILDING.
- b. Standards & Measurements
  - i. Uses & Features
    - a). Commercial Space Width
      - i). The width of a commercial space is measured parallel to the facade to the minimum required commercial space depth specified for each building type.
- c. Building Design Standards
  - i. One (1) GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACE is required per thirty (30) feet of building width, measured only at the primary facade.
    - a). Any fractional number resulting from this calculation is rounded to the nearest whole number.
  - ii. GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACES may have any configuration within a building.
  - iii. The LEASABLE FLOOR AREA of any GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACE must have a minimum width of ten (10) feet and a minimum depth of twenty (20) feet.
  - iv. Only one (1) GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACE over (35) feet in width is permitted to front any primary facade.

Figure 8.2.5 Example Commercial Spaces



# 12. DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

## Development Bonuses

### 12.4 DEVELOPMENT BONUSES

**1. Purpose**

- a. To implement the community development objectives of the comprehensive plan of the City of Somerville.
- b. To recapture a public benefit from the increased value of land resulting from the adoption of this Section.
- c. To promote the creation of specific development benefits in the public interest.

**2. Applicability**

- a. This Section is applicable to real property in the Mid-Rise 4, Mid-Rise 5, Commercial Core 3, Commercial Core 4, and Commercial Core 5 zoning districts.

**3. Enforcement**

- a. The Director of Economic Development may establish additional standards and procedures for the administration enforcement of this Section.

**4. Development Bonuses**

- a. Development of any General Building, Commercial Building, or Lab Building may comply with the standards of Table 12.4.1 in lieu of the same standards for the zoning district where the development site is located for providing [one (1) or more] [at least two (2)] development benefits, subject to the provisions of §12.4.5. Development Benefits.

Table 12.4.4 **Dimensional Standards**

	General Building	Commercial Building	Lab Building
Main Massing			
Number of Stories (max)	--	--	--
All other lots	6	6	6
Building Height, Feet (max)	--	--	--
All other lots	60 ft	85 ft	110 ft

**5. Development Benefits**

- a. Affordable Commercial Space
  - i. All ground story commercial spaces are rented at thirty five percent (35%) below the current fair market value (FMV) triple net rent (NNN), as established and annually updated by the Director of Economic Development.
- b. Community Ownership
  - i. All ground story commercial spaces are owned by the Somerville Redevelopment Authority or a non-profit Community Land Trust or Community Development Corporation.
- c. Tenant Relocation
  - i.