

Somerville Open Space and Recreation Plan 2008-2013

City of Somerville, Massachusetts



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

May 8, 2009

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Division of Conservation Services
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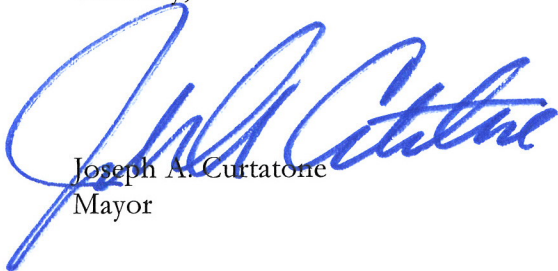
Dear Ms. Cryan:

It is with great pleasure that I submit the City of Somerville's *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* to the Division of Conservation Services. This exemplary plan is the product of months of outreach, public participation, and research, and represents a comprehensive documentation of past, current, and future efforts to improve, enhance, and increase open space and recreational opportunities in the city.

Somerville is a densely populated urban community in which our precious open space is highly valued by residents. It is vitally important for the City to rely on its *Open Space and Recreation Plan* as a guide for informing its short- and long-term strategic vision around open space. The City is grateful for the ongoing support from the Commonwealth that has made it possible to acquire new open space, construct new spaces, and revitalize many of our existing parks, playgrounds, and recreational fields.

I enthusiastically approve this plan and, with its submission, pledge on behalf of the City to continue the essential work that contributes so substantially to a better quality of life for all residents of Somerville.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Curtatone
Mayor



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Preface

The term “open space” has many meanings for the many people who use it. To those who participate in active recreational activities like soccer, basketball, running, and bicycling, open space means grass playing fields, asphalt courts, and multi-use pathways. For others, it means playgrounds, sandboxes, and climbing structures for younger children. And for still others, whose numbers are growing, open space is synonymous with “greenspace” – public areas that feature lawns, trees, and other vegetation and that promote more “passive” recreation, such as reading, social interaction, and appreciation of nature.

Somerville’s open spaces satisfy specific social and recreational needs of individual neighborhoods, while also serving citywide functions, such as offering transportation alternatives, providing ecological “services” (e.g., reducing carbon dioxide levels, cleaning the air, and reducing stormwater runoff), and improving the health of the community overall.

As stated in the *Open Space and Recreation Planner’s Workbook*¹, “open space”

...is often used to refer to conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation. However, the term can also refer to undeveloped land with particular conservation or recreation interest. This includes vacant lots and brownfields that can be redeveloped into recreation areas. Some open space can be used for passive activities such as walking, hiking, and nature study while others are used for more active recreational uses... Although open space itself is a simple concept, the factors that affect it, and that it affects, are complex.

This *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* explores these meanings and complexities in the context of Somerville’s changing vision of open space, bringing together seemingly separate notions under an inclusive narrative. It assesses the current state of open space and recreational opportunities in Somerville and outlines an achievable strategy for addressing the city’s current and future needs. This document represents both a physical plan for Somerville’s shared open spaces and an organizational plan which provides guidance for the public and private groups stewarding those spaces. Finally, and perhaps most important, the plan acts as an information resource for residents and community groups who wish to learn more about the City’s commitment to expanding and improving open space and recreational opportunities in the city.

The composition of this plan was guided by the 2008 “Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements” for compliance with Self-Help and Urban Self-Help Grants administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services (DCS). This plan’s acceptance by DCS makes Somerville eligible for funds which the City can use for land acquisition and preservation, and improvement of parks and other open spaces.

¹ Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services (March 2008 revision)

Credits and Acknowledgements

City of Somerville, Mayor Joseph Curtatone

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Special thanks go to four graduate interns who contributed significantly to this Plan: Brad Rawson (M.A. candidate, Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy, Tufts University), for expertly generating all of the GIS maps contained herein; Tammy Zborel (M.A. candidate, Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy, Tufts University), for updating the City's open space inventory, distributing the Open Space and Recreation Survey throughout the community, analyzing the quantitative survey data, and writing key pieces of the narrative; and Kathleen Ziegenfuss (Master of City Planning candidate, MIT), for her keen editorial and analytical eye in organizing the qualitative survey data; and Julie Prange (M.A. candidate, Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy, Tufts University) for contributing substantial data and narrative from her "Transportation and Infrastructure Trends Report," drafted for OSPCD during the summer of 2008.

Thanks also to David Guzman (Planner, OSPCD), Berlande Edouard (OSPCD), Joseph Crugnale (former intern for OSPCD), and Regina Bertholdo (Director, Parent Information Center, Somerville Public Schools) for providing translations for the Open Space and Recreation Survey.

The advice offered by the Somerville Garden Club and the Somerville Conservation Commission was greatly appreciated during the planning process. Finally, thank you to all members of the public who contributed to the public survey and the community meetings. Your feedback was invaluable to the plan's development.

This *Open Space and Recreation Plan* represents an update of the material collected, analyzed, and presented in the City's 2002-2007 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. Where no updates were necessary, sections from that plan have been excerpted into this plan.

Section 1: Plan Summary

This *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* reflects Somerville's commitment to protecting, maintaining, and, wherever possible, expanding open space opportunities for community members. Although Somerville is a comparatively dense urban environment, its density only *adds* to the social and ecological value of its open spaces. Somerville's public parks, fields, and greenspaces satisfy a diverse set of recreational needs – from active play and gentle exercise to social interaction and quiet contemplation – for a large population of users. Indeed, there is a direct relationship between the quality of life for Somerville residents and the quality of the open space in neighborhoods and citywide. It is this latter correlation which guides – and will continue to guide – the City's vision for open space development.

The *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* offers an overview of Somerville's history, physical development, and environmental characteristics; explores the open space needs and goals of the community; and outlines the City's open space priorities in consideration of those needs and goals. In addition to this Plan Summary,

- **Section 2** provides an introduction and describes the process by which the plan was generated;
- **Section 3** describes Somerville's history and development, at both a regional and local level, and discusses major trends and changes occurring since the last Plan(2002);
- **Section 4** describes and analyzes the city's physical environment (past and present) and established a baseline of environmental opportunities and challenges;
- **Section 5** details the city's inventory of public and publicly accessible open space;
- **Section 6** presents the accomplishments achieved during 2003-2007 for parks, open space, and recreational areas;
- **Section 7** includes a summary of Somerville's open space needs, including resource protection needs, community needs, and management needs;
- **Section 8** discusses the community's overall open space and recreation goals, as well as the process used for ascertaining those goals;
- **Section 9** refines the Section 8 goals into achievable objectives;
- **Section 10** incorporates the goals and objectives from the previous section into a Five-Year Action Plan framework; and,
- **Section 11** focuses on the open space vision and planning process for the Union Square area of Somerville.

As this Plan makes clear, the City of Somerville must continually employ creative strategies for expanding open space and recreational opportunities for an increasing number of users. Of the City's 4.1 square miles, only about 177 acres, or 6.75%, meet the definition of open space. With few exceptions, all of these spaces are used heavily by the city's nearly 80,000 residents. They are precious resources. Indeed, according to a recent survey (see Appendix E), nearly 80% of respondents indicated that they use open space in Somerville "frequently" (i.e., 12 or more times a year.)

By focusing on the conversion of existing, unused parcels to public open spaces – such as parks and community gardens – and by requiring that large-scale development projects build open space into their program, the City has developed a targeted approach for adding to and diversifying the current inventory, without conflicting with other needs like affordable housing, municipal facilities, and economic development. Much progress has been made, for instance, by remediating “brownfields” for greenspace, such as the Allen Street Community Garden, the new Park at Somerville Junction, and the recently opened Edward L. Leathers Community Park. In addition, the Assembly Square and MaxPac development projects represent the forefront of the City’s commitment to promoting collaboratively used spaces that benefit both private developers and the general public.

Another key finding of this plan is that the City must continue to improve the *quality* of open space and recreational facilities and programs. An estimated 20% of the City’s 49 parks and open spaces are currently in need of renovation. As Somerville’s current park system has aged, it has become less reflective of the programmatic needs of today’s residents, many of whom prefer open green space over recreational fields or asphalt play surfaces. Thus the City has committed to “greening” the design and construction of its public open spaces, a perspective woven throughout the goals and objectives of this plan. The need to renovate existing parks and open spaces is a clear mandate for the City to promote health, well being, and safety for all residents.

A final note about the *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan*: In addition to narrative and analyses, this document includes a number of “Success Stories,” which describe recent achievements related to Somerville’s open space and recreational opportunities. An important component of planning is to celebrate (and learn from) our recent achievements so as to inspire more success.

Section 2: Introduction

2. A. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* is to:

- increase awareness of open space and recreational programs and properties in Somerville;
- evaluate current needs and prioritize them within the City's vision, goals and strategies for open space and recreation;
- outline a five-year strategic plan for the creation, protection, management, and enhancement of open space in the city;
- encourage thoughtful planning and a sustained commitment to open space; and,
- build on past plans to document accomplishments, future goals, and opportunities.

The *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* includes elements of a *physical* plan (existing and proposed properties, facilities, and infrastructure), an *organizational* plan (the City's formal and informal structures for maintenance, management, and overall decision-making related to open space and recreation), and an *educational* resource (open space inventory, history of open space and land-use changes, spotlights on past successes, and present opportunities and challenges).

It is hoped and expected that the *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* will be a living document to guide City policies; will be consulted on a regular basis by citizens and decision-makers; and will be subject to periodic evaluations and updates. Public feedback on this plan is welcome and encouraged at any time.

2. B. Planning Process and Public Participation

This report builds on the significant work reflected in the *2002-2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan*. The 2002 Plan served as an excellent foundation for the current version, and the project team was able to update and expand it by adding new sections.

In September 2007, the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) began the updating process. An Open Space Advisory Committee was formed, and began its series of bimonthly meetings to review the City's open space strategy and goals and provide advice and perspective throughout the revision process. Concurrently, OSPCD was also engaged in the revision effort for the *2008-2013 Consolidated Plan*, which was submitted to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in February 2008. Parts of the *Consolidated Plan* proved of immense help in preparing the *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

Strong, diverse and significant public participation was central to the revision process. This Plan update strived to include and address the needs and concerns of the varied open space and recreation interests in the city, including City boards and departments, local and regional environmental groups, and the community at large. In addition, it was agreed that certain constituencies within the City were underrepresented in the last version and that the public process should actively seek out and engage Environmental Justice (EJ) communities within Somerville.

With an average of 30 people per acre, Somerville is a very active community; many local and regional groups are involved in open space, environmental, and recreation issues. It is also a city with significant EJ communities, as determined by the State of Massachusetts (see Appendix A: Environmental Justice map). Issues of cultural competency, language barriers, nonstandard work hours and lifestyle can lead to political disenfranchisement and ignorance or rejection of opportunities for public participation. For these reasons, a significant effort was made to reach out to parts of the Somerville community that do not traditionally participate in City planning forums.

Public participation in the update process involved a number of simultaneous and mutually-reinforcing components:

I. Open Space Advisory Committee

The formation of an Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) was an important goal from the 2002-2007 Plan. The Committee is composed of City officials and representatives of Somerville non-profit/community organizations, such as Shape Up Somerville, the Dog Owners' Task Force, East Somerville Main Streets, Groundwork Somerville, and the Somerville Garden Club. Eleven of the Committee's 17 members are from City departments, including OSPCD Parks, the Department of Recreation, and the Department of Public Works. The composition of the OSAC provides an opportunity for City staff responsible for planning, programming and maintaining the City's open spaces to discuss issues and work together with representatives from other City departments and groups toward the fulfillment of shared community interests. A full list of the OSAC current membership is provided in Appendix F.

The Committee met bimonthly from fall 2007 to summer 2008 to address the Plan's revision. OSAC members disseminated information about the Plan updates and the Open Space and Recreation Survey (see description below) to their constituencies and also helped the OSPCD team to gather data and refine its public process. Their volunteer help was of tremendous benefit to the Plan.

II. Community Meetings

Three public meetings were held in 2008: February (West Somerville), April (East Somerville) and October (Central Somerville). The meetings were advertised citywide, and Ward Aldermen and the Open Space Advisory Committee worked to encourage local neighborhood participation. The meetings reflected the progress throughout the revision process and reinforced the basic premise of the Plan, so that both newcomers and consecutive attendees would be engaged and find their participation productive. Different focus questions were used at each meeting to elicit a varied and comprehensive discussion. Public comments were recorded and are presented in Appendix G. An email list was also built from these meetings and used for alerts and updates throughout the revision process.

III. Departmental, Commission, and Interagency Meetings

The Plan update was discussed at a number of meetings of City staff and boards throughout the spring and summer, including the Conservation Commission, SomerStat (City meetings that include the Mayor, OSPCD staff, and other City officials), ResiStat Parents Group, and the Youth Council. These meetings provided an opportunity to evaluate the previous plan and past

progress toward its stated goals and objectives, and to refine the goals, objectives, and actions of the new Plan.

IV. Open Space and Recreation Survey

An open space and recreation survey was prepared by the OSPCD team and made available online. The Open Space Advisory Committee provided feedback and shaped both the final survey and the method of distribution. Translations of the survey were prepared in Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish, and made available in PDF format to download and mail in. The survey ran from May 1 to July 31, 2008, and was widely advertised through email lists, newspaper articles, local cable TV, and fliers distributed to small businesses and community groups citywide. Organizations such as East Somerville Main Streets, Union Square Main Streets, and the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) helped to get the word out, enabling residents to complete paper surveys in multiple languages. Fliers were also distributed in parks at random times during the week, at City events (e.g. Park Clean-Up Day and Family Fun Day), to the Youth Council and other diverse constituencies, and at the Grown in Somerville booth on July 26, 2008, at the Union Square Farmers Market. OSPCD Parks also reached out specifically to the senior citizen community – which may have had limited survey access due to technology and disability barriers – through a visit to the Visiting Nurse Association on Lowell Street and by distributing surveys at the Mayor’s Senior Picnic.

A total of 906 survey responses were received – the highest response rate to an online survey in City history. A full report on the survey results, including quantitative and qualitative analyses, can be found in Appendix E.

V. Board of Aldermen

Aldermen from the seven City Wards were invited to the community meetings as they occurred in their districts. The Aldermen hosted these meetings and spoke with residents about their current work on open space issues. The draft plan was submitted to the Board of Aldermen at their December 11, 2008 meeting for their review and formal approval.

It is anticipated that the final *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* will be made available to the public and submitted to DCS in early 2009.

Section 3: Community Setting

3. A. Regional Context

Located in the Boston Basin coastal plain, Somerville is bounded to the north by the Mystic River and the communities of Medford, Malden, and Everett; to the west by the Alewife Brook and Arlington; and to the east and south by the cities of Boston and Cambridge. Though Somerville is part of a regional fabric of residences, businesses, and educational institutions, the city retains a unique urban character distinct from the communities surrounding it, many of which have become more suburbanized in recent years.

Public open space represents only approximately 5.37% of Somerville's total land area (about 141 acres), yet it supports a variety of uses, including passive recreation, athletic activities, playgrounds, and natural habitat. Only 45% (63.52 acres) of this area is actually owned by the City of Somerville. The remainder is owned and managed by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (68.36 acres), the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (6.13 acres, Community Path), and Middlesex County (.50 acres, Somerville District Court). There are also approximately 45 acres of privately held open space, including Tufts University sports fields and church properties.

In addition to Somerville's parks and open spaces, residents have access to other regional open and natural spaces. DCR's 2,060-acre Middlesex Fells Reservation lies less than a mile north of Somerville's northwest border. The Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes are two miles to the northwest, while the 115-acre Alewife Reservation lies about a half mile beyond the western boundary of the city. Also, the popular Charles River shoreline and parkland is two miles south of Somerville.

There are three high-volume traffic arteries within Somerville's boundaries: Routes 16 and 28, and Interstate 93. These regional highways provide easy access to some parts of the city; however, they also isolate Somerville's largest open spaces (i.e. along the Alewife Brook and Mystic River, and Foss Park) from adjacent neighborhoods.

The development of recreational corridors such as the Community Path in west Somerville has begun to restore connections to some of these waterfront and wetland resources. Yet open space within the city is particularly scarce, due largely to development and subdivision patterns that predominated during the first half of the 20th century (see "Section 3B: History of the Community").

The acquisition of large pieces of new land has been extremely challenging due to fiscal constraints and a lack of available parcels. Thus, past and current efforts have focused on three primary objectives:

1. meeting the maintenance and renovation needs of existing parks and open spaces;
2. acquiring small sites (often former brownfields) for neighborhood parks, playgrounds, or community gardens; and,
3. developing stronger connections to local and regional open space resources.

Regional Planning Efforts

Detailed below are some of the regional open space initiatives which have helped guide Somerville's planning vision and implementation:

MetroGreen

In 1992, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency for the Greater Boston Area, adopted a regional open space plan known as "MetroGreen." The plan established four main goals for MAPC's open space planning in the Greater Boston region:

1. to preserve and protect critical land resources;
2. to shape the growth of the region;
3. to help preserve and enhance a "sense of place" for the region; and,
4. to fulfill the recreational needs of the region's population and to provide access, where appropriate, to protected open spaces.

The ambitious MetroGreen plan also maps a group of areas recommended for protection. For instance, action item LR#8 specifically calls for land resource protection planning in concentrated development centers, such as Somerville, while item LR#11 calls for the creation of an Inner Core Greenspace Alliance. Action item LR#9 calls on MAPC to encourage implementation of local open space and recreation plans.

MetroPlan 2000

In 1987, MAPC initiated MetroPlan, a planning process recognizing the "mixed impacts of widespread low density development in the region" and encouraging concentrated development over scattered growth. The plan's latest update, MetroPlan 2000, incorporates many of the land-resource recommendations of the MetroGreen Plan. Key recommendations most relevant to Somerville include the following:

1. Public transit and green space planning should allow urban residents convenient access to suburban open space;
2. Concentrated development centers should have sufficient land available for local open space needs and land-resource protection, or the potential for securing that land;
3. Uniform environmental setbacks along river- and stream-banks should be established to prevent further development in these critical areas. (Existing uses would be grandfathered);
4. Public-private partnerships and donations of land should be encouraged and enhanced;
5. The Surface Transportation Act should be used to fund the implementation of land resources protections;
6. Procedures should be established to prevent the fragmentation and encroachment of abandoned rights-of-way.

MetroFuture

MetroFuture (<http://www.metrofuture.org>) is a collaborative regional planning effort initiated by MAPC that has, since 2003, engaged 4,500 people in collaborative learning and decision-making about the future of the 101 communities that make up the Metropolitan Boston area.

The MetroFuture Plan that resulted from that process seeks to improve equity among our residents, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and improve our quality of life. The Plan proposes new patterns of growth and development that help to create choices and conserve resources. People will have more housing options and different ways to get around. The region will use less energy and water and will spend less money extending infrastructure to new developments. The region's communities will be more sustainable as well, with stronger municipal finances and high quality education in every city and town.

Among the MetroFuture Plan's key goals are to:

1. Coordinate urban park planning, development, administration and regional connections;
2. Leverage partnerships and private funding to improve maintenance of urban parks;
3. Increase the urban tree canopy;
4. Expand urban farms and community gardens; and,
5. Protect and restore urban wilds, waterways, and urban ecology.

To help achieve these goals, MetroFuture proposed the following mechanisms be put in place:

1. Develop open space funding sources through the use of a regional "Greenfield Fee."
2. Provide adequate funding for open space.
3. Increase local capacity for open space acquisition.

MAPC Inner Core Committee and the Mystic River Corridor Strategy

The City of Somerville, through its Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, is an active participant in MAPC's Inner Core Committee, a group of community representatives that meet regularly to discuss open space issues and opportunities.

In 2008, Mayor Curtatone worked with MAPC to initiate the "Mystic River Corridor Strategy" project with communities along the Lower Mystic River, including Chelsea, Everett, Medford, Malden, and the Charlestown section of Boston. The Lower Mystic Valley communities envision a waterfront that once again serves as a vibrant area for residents to use and enjoy. To achieve this vision, the communities have joined together to plan and undertake actions that improve the quality of life along the river corridor and enhance the river environment. This vision will be achieved by improving existing open space along the river, developing new open space, and connecting those spaces via an active trail network. Strong public and private partnerships will ensure that these facilities are safe and well-maintained.

The Mystic River Corridor Strategy includes a number of recommendations specific to Somerville. These are as follows:

- Strategy 1A: MAPC and the six cities will work cooperatively to advocate for the completion of the open space system, with a focus on eleven high priority open space initiatives including the Assembly Square Land Swap, the Draw 7-Sullivan Square Connector trail and improvements to the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse.

- Strategy 3E: MAPC and the six cities will work to complete the gaps in the multi-use path system along the Mystic River.
 1. MAPC and the six cities will work to further multi-use path projects already identified in Strategy #1.
 2. MAPC and the six cities will work with DCR to ensure that the Mystic River Reservation Master Plan and subsequent capital improvements will ensure a complete path system throughout the reservation.
- Strategy 4C2: MAPC and the six cities will work with DCR to expand its master plan to all land owned by DCR along the Mystic and its tributaries and to ensure that there is sufficient funding for capital improvements and maintenance activities.

Mystic River Assessment and Action Plan

In fall 2006, the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), released its Mystic River Assessment Action Plan (<http://www.mysticriver.org/publications/ActionPlan.html>), a comprehensive examination of the environmental and recreational value of the Mystic River and its preservation needs. Recommended actions include:

1. developing Integrated Regional Flooding and Water Quality Management Strategies;
2. monitoring and controlling bacteria pollution;
3. developing consensus around Smart Growth principles for projects in urban areas that consider the need to reclaim open space, repair inadequate sewer infrastructure, control flooding, and address traffic and other community concerns;
4. developing a “Meta Plan” for parks and pedestrian/bike paths for the Lower Watershed that identifies all on-going waterfront redevelopment and planning, and identifies areas where coordination among plans would enhance the value of individual components;
5. expanding the MyRWA River Use Survey of recreational uses to include additional portions of the watershed in order to identify locations where swimming and fishing might present public health risks; and ,
6. conducting outreach and education for youth on safe recreation practices in EJ communities.

Mystic River Master Plan

The City of Somerville is an active participant in DCR’s efforts to develop a Master Plan for the Lower Mystic Basin, from the Craddocks Dam in Medford, through Somerville, to Route 99 in Everett and Charlestown. The master plan focuses on improvements to the Mystic River Reservation, including creation of a connected trail system along its length.

Mystic River Active Transportation Initiative/2010 Active Transportation

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy requested that Somerville join a national campaign to expand efforts to promote a new federal “Active Transportation” program. The program would provide resources to communities to develop infrastructure that encourages walking and bicycling as forms of transportation. In response to the Conservancy’s request, Somerville has joined with the communities of Boston (Charlestown), Chelsea, Everett, Malden and Medford to create a coalition focused on active transportation along the Mystic River. Specific goals of the initiative include:

1. creating an interconnected trail network along the Lower Mystic River;
2. improving waterfront access in order to support revitalization of adjoining neighborhoods and business areas;
3. establishing an “urban river ring” linking the Charles River, the Alewife Brook, and the Mystic River; and,
4. connecting to statewide and national trail systems.

Alewife Brook Master Plan

In June 2003, DCR created a Master Plan for the Alewife Brook Reservation (<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/pe/alewife.htm>), which calls for:

1. an improved trail system along the length of the Reservation through Somerville;
2. elimination of fencing along the Brook to provide boating access from the Dilboy Stadium parking lot;
3. removal of the concrete-lined channel;
4. planting more native plants and grasses within Reservation boundaries;
5. adopting maintenance practices that encourage a more natural landscape such as mowing grasses to be 6 – 12 inches high; and,
6. creating a gateway park near Broadway and improving play structures north of Broadway.

Additionally, the master plan calls for an improved intersection at Alewife Brook Parkway and Broadway to help make it easier for Somerville residents to access the Reservation. DCR was also asked by Alderman Robert Trane (Ward 7) to address the poor conditions of sidewalks along the residential side of Alewife Brook Parkway.

Commonwealth Initiatives

In addition to the regional planning initiatives mentioned above, various agencies of the Commonwealth have developed (or are developing) statewide plans which, if implemented, will impact Somerville’s access to open space opportunities.

State Bicycle Plan

MassHighway’s 2007 State Bicycle Plan (<http://www.massbikeplan.org>) includes proposals to extend the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail (see below) along the route of the Somerville Community Path and the Mystic River Reservation Bike Trail, and along the Somerville waterfront from the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse to Sullivan Square in Charlestown.

Commonwealth Connections

In 2002, the Department of Environmental Management (now DCR) prepared a state-wide plan for greenways called *Commonwealth Connections* (<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/connections.htm>). A key recommendation of this plan was to create a “cross-state, multi-use” greenway extending from the Berkshires to Boston along the proposed route of the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail:

“Most of the established long-distance trails in Massachusetts run north-to-south with only a handful running east-to-west. Over the past several years, there have been a wide range of local and regional efforts to create a cross-state multi-use trail along the Central Massachusetts rail line reaching from Boston to

the Connecticut River Valley and perhaps beyond. Being able to walk or ride a bike along a continuous trail reaching from Boston to the Berkshires is an idea that captures the imagination of many people and one that is gradually becoming a reality. Given the length of the proposed cross-state trail and the complexity of issues surrounding the funding of such an endeavor, it is critical to remain focused and provide support and encouragement to the many organizations and efforts forging the way for this trail.”

The proposed route of the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail follows the existing and proposed route of the Somerville Community Path into Boston.

Commonwealth Connections also called for the development of the Massachusetts section of the East Coast Greenway (ECG). The ECG will be a system of primarily off-road trails from Maine to Florida that will link the major cities along the East Coast. The proposed route of the trail in the Boston Region runs along the Charles River to Cambridge and Boston, and then heads north through Charlestown and Somerville, where it would link to the Northern Strand Trail system via a new bridge over the Mystic River between Somerville and Everett.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

In 2006, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Division of Conservation Services prepared a plan that examined statewide and regional recreational facility needs (http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/pdf/scorp_2006.pdf). Regarding recreational demand in the Metropolitan Boston Region, where Somerville is located, the SCORP survey indicated the following:

- *Activities:* “Walking is the most reported recreation activity in the region, as in the state, followed closely by sightseeing, which is engaged more frequently here than in any region but the Southeastern and Central Regions. These are followed, in rank order, by swimming (48.3%, its lowest in the state), and then a large drop to golfing (21.5%), picnicking (21.0%), playground activity (20.5%), and sunbathing (20.3%). Significant numbers also report engaging in fishing (17.3%), and both types of biking, road (17.2%) and mountain (13.2%). It is also interesting to note that participation rates for tot lots within this region are second lowest over all regions, even though tot lot facilities are most abundant in this region. While relatively low in absolute terms, this region also reports the highest activity rates among the regions in basketball (7.9%), and the second highest for baseball (7.4%) after the Connecticut Valley. Boating, fishing, and swimming are significantly less popular among residents from Metropolitan Boston than in other regions of the state.”
- *Resource Use:* “Bikeways also receive heavy use, as they do on the Cape and in the Connecticut Valley. These reports are reinforced by the frequency of return visits reported, where bikeways, coastal beaches or shorelines, and golf courses, neighborhood parks, playgrounds and tot lots receive the largest number of return trips per year (10, 12 and 15 respectively). This pattern of use is quite different, even from the relatively urban Northeastern Region, which relies more heavily on rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.”
- *Facilities Needs:* “Residents from Metropolitan Boston mention needs for tennis (11.8%) and basketball (8.7%) significantly more than the statewide sample. They mention needs for fishing and hiking significantly less often than the statewide sample...Walking (14.8%), road

biking (10.5%), and swimming (14.9%) rank highest in the preferences of this region's residents for new facilities, with playgrounds trailing closely at 9.0%.”

3. B. History of the Community

Somerville's location in the Boston Basin coastal plain has guided its development over the last three and a half centuries. Historically, European settlement and land-use patterns in Somerville were driven by the physical relationship of the land to maritime colonial Boston (see Figure 3.1). Colonists first settled the narrow neck of land connecting Somerville to Charlestown, and the Pawtucket Nation deeded present-day Somerville to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1639. Ten Hills, the location of Governor Winthrop's estate along the Mystic River, provided a defensible position for forts, and an early trade path (now Broadway) strengthened the connection to Charlestown and Boston.

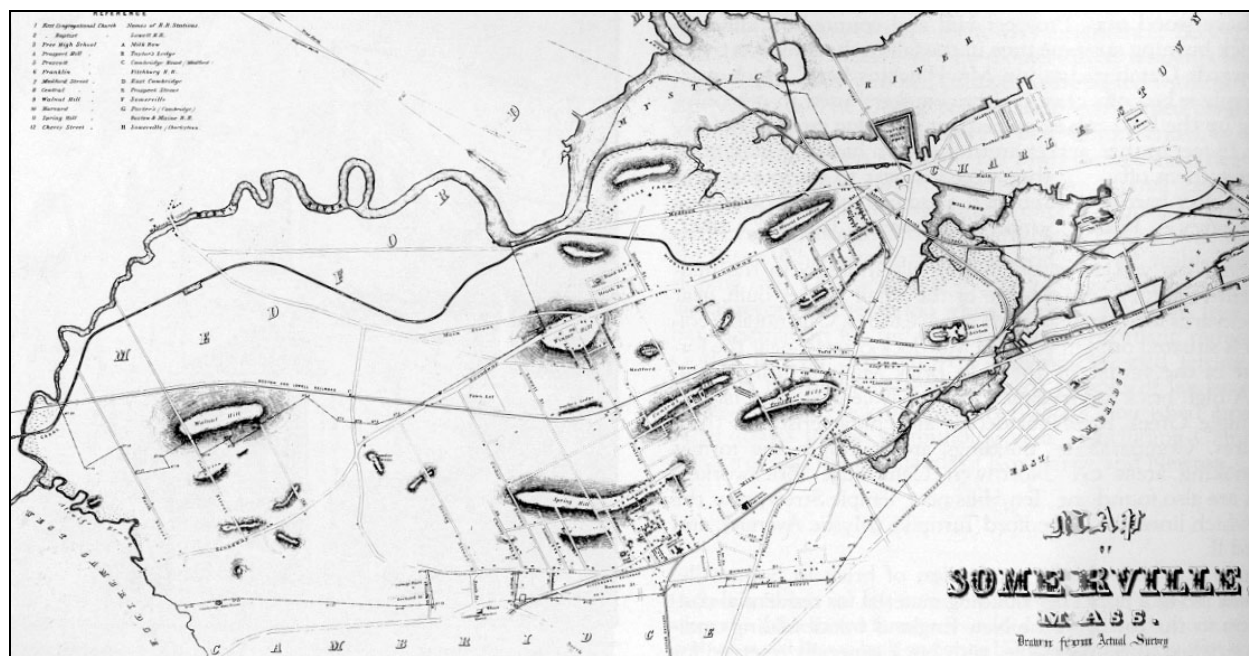


Figure 3.1: Draper Map of Somerville, 1852. Source: City of Somerville Map Collection

As Cambridge grew, another important route (now Washington Street) was established, connecting Cambridge to Boston through Somerville. Somerville's ridgeline of hills naturally defined east-west travel routes (now Broadway and Somerville Avenue), and 11 north-south connecting roads were built between 1681 and 1685 (see Figure 3.2).

Land in early Somerville was used primarily as grazing commons and small farms. Residential development first centered in the Charlestown Neck, along present-day Broadway and Washington

Streets². Early industry included sawmills, gristmills and quarries, but most of the landscape remained agricultural throughout the 1700s. Somerville's "seven hills" and its river routes were important strategically to the Colonists throughout the American Revolution.

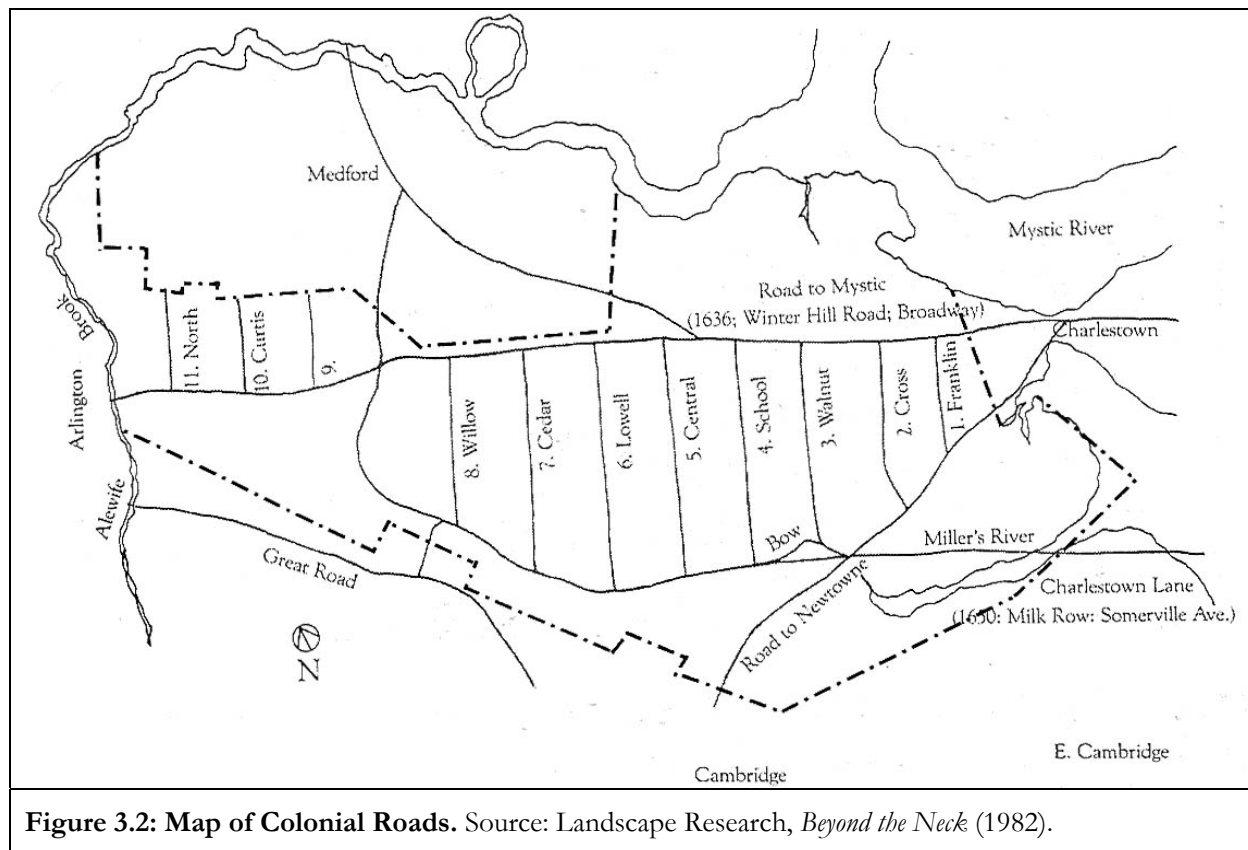


Figure 3.2: Map of Colonial Roads. Source: Landscape Research, *Beyond the Neck* (1982).

After 1800, Somerville expanded its industrial base, notably with the establishment of a bleachery and several brickyards. The strong road network and the new Middlesex Canal provided the means for dairy farmers in western towns to move their products through Somerville to Boston, and Somerville agriculture shifted largely to small crops and fruit orchards³. In 1835, railroad construction began, resulting in the establishment of both the Boston and Lowell, and Fitchburg lines within a decade. The railroads heralded both the industrial and residential expansion that would define Somerville's growth throughout the mid-1800s.

In 1842, the Town of Somerville formally separated from Charlestown, with a population of 1,013 residents. New passenger rail service drove the subdivision of land into house lots, though the cost of railroad travel was prohibitive to all but the wealthiest citizens. While Somerville's population growth would not soar until after the Civil War, the railroads did have a significant early impact on

² Zellie, Carole, et.al. *Beyond the Neck: the Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts*. St. Paul, MN: Landscape Research, 1982. 11.

³ *Beyond the Neck*, 18.

the landscape. Industry erupted along the railroad corridors, particularly in the southeast where several lines crossed. This low floodplain, the Miller's River marsh, was turned into rail yards, slaughterhouses, and other large-scale land uses. The uncontrolled filling and industrial occupation of these tidal flats between Somerville and Cambridge caused enough pollution that the Commonwealth decreed that the river be filled.

In 1872, as the top of Prospect Hill was being lowered to fill the area of flats along Union Square, Somerville was incorporated as a city. A period of rapid municipal growth began, with civic buildings constructed along the ridge of Central Hill and the police and fire stations in Union Square. The land-use pattern that the City would follow for the next 50 years had been set, with commerce and industry locating in the lower elevations and along major travel routes, and residential lots on the hillsides and higher elevations.

After the end of the Civil War, Somerville's population increased rapidly. While the densest residential areas were historically in East Somerville, the advent of streetcars brought development to areas further west, as the easy commute from Boston made the area attractive to new residents. Previously, lands along the tops of Somerville's hills had seen limited development because of a lack of available water and limited roads, but a water tower built on Spring Hill (now Bailey Park) in the 1880s solved the problem of municipal drinking water at higher elevations. Sewer lines were built throughout the city as the Metropolitan District Commission provided a pumping station along the Alewife Brook. Infrastructure paved the way for a housing boom among immigrants looking for affordable rental units within easy commuting distance of Boston.

Between 1880 and 1890, Somerville's population exploded, growing from 24,933 to 40,152⁴. As the western part of the city opened up, orchards, farmlands, brickyards and marshlands were redeveloped into dense tracts of predominantly two-family housing. Larger residential properties were subdivided to accommodate speculative infill lots, and the pattern of long street blocks with shorter dead-end spurs became more common during this time.

At the time, this rapid subdivision was publicly criticized as development that combined relatively cheap construction with a lack of landscaping. In response, the Somerville Improvement Association was founded in the 1880s and began to rally support for planned trees and open space. The Heptoreans, a women's organization, also focused on park acquisition and zoning ordinances, and was instrumental in the creation of Prospect Hill Park (1903).⁵

Only a few significant public parks were constructed before the massive housing boom at the turn of the 20th century. In the



Figure 3.3: Central Hill Park, 1913
Source: City of Somerville Postcard Collection

⁴ *Beyond the Neck*, 39.

⁵ *Beyond the Neck*, 58.

1870s, two major parcels were dedicated as permanent open space: Central Hill Park (current home of Somerville's High School, City Hall, and Central Public Library – see Figure 3.3) and Broadway Park (now Foss Park, currently owned and operated by the DCR). Private estates were largely sold for development. In fact, only one tract of land was donated to the City for public use – Nathan Tufts Park in 1890.⁶

Between 1890 and 1910, 50% of today's housing stock was constructed. This intense development and subdivision pattern left Somerville with little remaining available land for public parks. By 1900, only 52 acres (4.7%) of Somerville's land were dedicated to parks or playgrounds.⁷ A lack of strategy for creating or preserving open space was seen at the state level as well – in 1900, the Governor vetoed a bill for the extension of the Metropolitan Park System, which also included an appropriation for a boulevard across Somerville (a potential green corridor).

Tracing the history of Somerville's public parks is an interesting exercise in urban land-use history. The City dedicated only two major parks during this time of rapid residential expansion: Lincoln Park (1900) and Trum Field (1903). The rest of the city's parks, playgrounds, and open spaces were constructed with little administrative master planning. For this reason, many of Somerville's open spaces are less than a half acre in size, and scattered throughout the city in a "patchwork" or irregular pattern (see Appendix A: Open Space Inventory map). Some of today's parks were undeveloped house lots, while the more sizeable parks are typically former schoolyards or other municipal lands that were converted to parks in the latter half of the 20th century, as the public demand for open space grew and housing needs declined.

Soon after the turn of the 20th century, almost all of Somerville had been developed. According to U.S. Census records, Somerville's population reached its apex of 103,908 in 1930. The current population is 77,478 (as of the 2000 Census), roughly 75% of the City's peak. With the exception of the 1990s, Somerville – in line with major national trends of the 20th and 21st centuries – has seen steady population declines (largely due to smaller family sizes and the de-densification of housing) along with a decreasing presence of industry. These issues are discussed in greater detail in "Section 3. C. Population Characteristics" and "Section 3. D. Growth and Development Patterns."

3. C. Population Characteristics

As noted in the previous section, Somerville's population reached its historic peak in 1930 and then decreased consistently for the next 60 years. The most significant population decline occurred between 1950 and 1980, when the city lost an estimated 25,000 residents, largely from the neighborhoods of East Somerville, Spring Hill, and Union Square. In 1990, the U.S. Census recorded Somerville's lowest population of 76,210 individuals.

By 2000, however, the number of residents in Somerville had rebounded to 77,478, a 1.7% increase during the previous decade. This influx of new residents is attributable to many factors, including increased immigration, the availability of multiple affordable housing options, accessibility to public transportation, and strong community support for pedestrian and bicycle activity. With this increase

⁶ *Beyond the Neck*, 58.

⁷ *Beyond the Neck*, 58.

has come an attendant shift in demographics and growth patterns, giving rise to a modern mix of families, youth, retirees, and students, and producing one of the most diverse cities in the Commonwealth.

Density

As has been well-documented, Somerville possesses a large population relative to its area (18,879 persons per square mile, or 29.5 persons per acre). This density, however, is not evenly distributed across the city. Seventeen of Somerville's 67 Census Block Groups, including areas in Assembly Square and the Inner Belt, show densities under the citywide average. Conversely, 50 of Somerville's Block Groups, such as areas of Ball Square, East Somerville, Inman Square, Spring Hill and Winter Hill, contain 40 to 60 persons per acre.

Race, Ethnicity, and Language

According to the most recent U.S. Census, racial minorities represent 23% of the city's population, making Somerville more racially diverse than the state as a whole (15% minority). The data also confirm Somerville's long-time standing as a gateway community for newcomers to the United States: Foreign-born residents represent 29.3% (or 22,727) of the population, of whom roughly half have arrived in the past ten years. Between 1990 and 2000, the Hispanic population increased by 41.3% to approximately 6,800 residents and today comprises nearly 9% of Somerville's population. During the 1990s, the Asian population nearly doubled to approximately 5,000 residents. At the same time, the White population declined 12.4% to 56,320 residents.

In light of the city's diversity, it is not surprising that 36% of Somerville residents speak a language other than English at home, and more than 50 languages are spoken in the city. The most commonly spoken foreign languages in Somerville are Portuguese and Spanish, respectively. Smaller yet significant populations of Haitian Creole, Italian, and Chinese speakers are also present.

Households

Between 1990 and 2000, Somerville experienced a 2.5% decrease in average household size and a 4% *increase* in the number of households. The average household size in 2000 was reported at 2.38 persons; however, averages vary across the city, with roughly one-third of Somerville's Census Block Groups showing average household sizes greater than the citywide average. These Block Groups tend to cluster in East Somerville, Union Square, and along the Medford border. A broad arc of Block Groups with household sizes smaller than the citywide average runs from West Somerville through Spring Hill and south to Inman Square (see Figure 3.4.)

Income

Somerville has retained its historic mix of professions and incomes. In the 1990s, as middle-income professionals returned to city centers nationwide, the median income in Somerville increased; however, large areas of mid- to low-income population remain today. In fact, the 2000 Census determined that 10% of Somerville households had an income less than \$10,000, and more than a quarter of households in Somerville earned less than \$25,000. Though Somerville has seen modest increases in median household income and per capita income, it is still not a wealthy community, and has seen a slight increase in the number of residents with incomes below the poverty level. Geographically, the neighborhoods of East Somerville and parts of Winter Hill, in particular, have some of the lowest household incomes in the city.

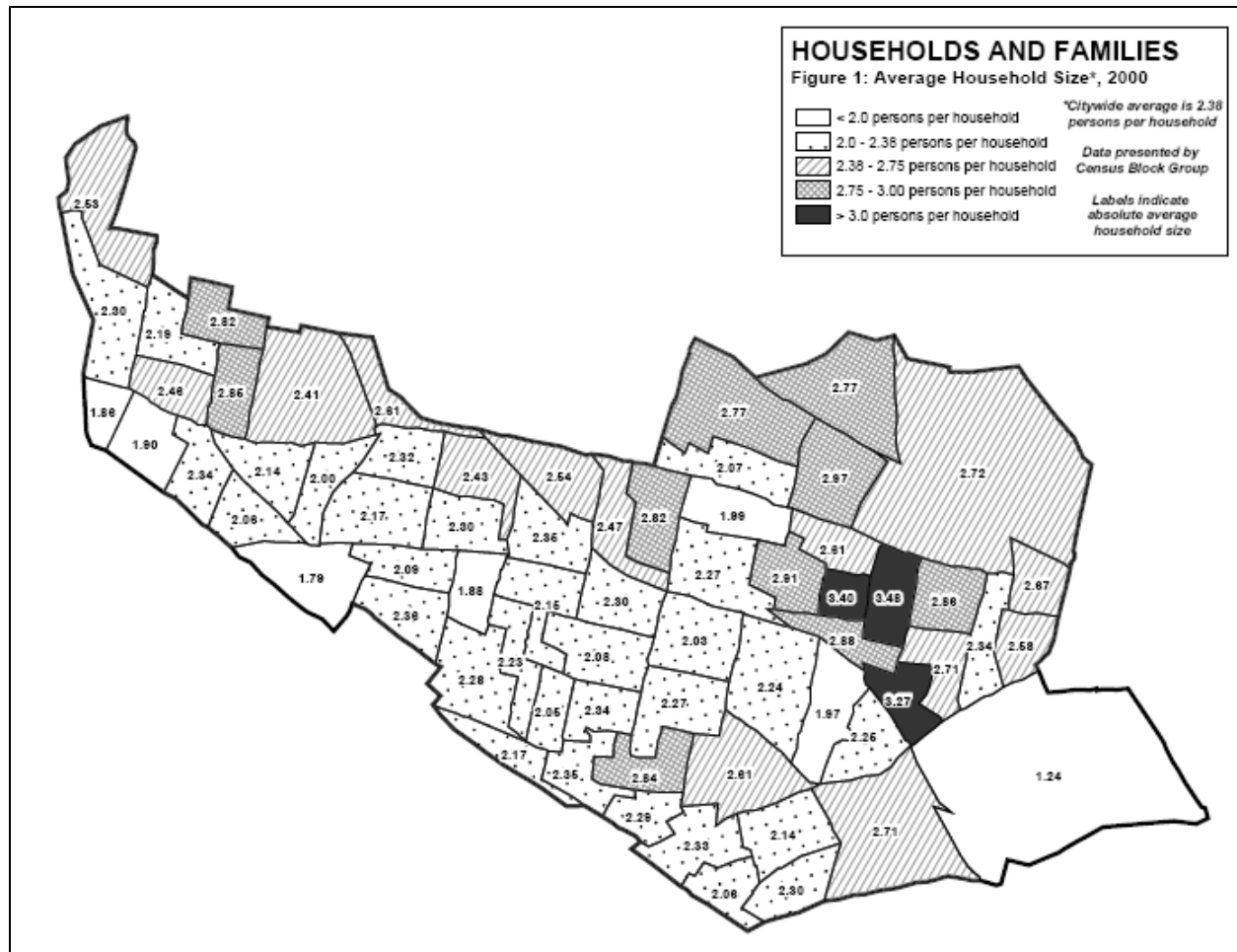


Figure 3.4: Average household size in Somerville. Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Employment and Industry Trends

Somerville’s current residential employment of roughly 45,400 is a significant increase from 43,000 in the 1990s. Roughly mimicking national employment trends, the City added, on average, 150 jobs per year from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, according to the U.S. Census, Somerville reached a high for employment levels of 48,000. The period of 2000 into 2001 marked the end of the “tech bubble” and the occurrence of the 9/11 terrorist attacks; the combination of these events and other global trends sent the U.S. economy into recession. Consequently, Somerville has shed nearly 5,000 jobs in the eight years since this period, or nearly 700 jobs per year.

While Somerville does approximate employment trends across the nation, the city, like the State of Massachusetts as a whole, is more sensitive to national economic downturns, is slower to recover, and recovers a smaller share of its original employment loss (see Figure 3.3a). There are a number of trends that explain these characteristics. First, Somerville and Massachusetts have close proximity to New York City where the terrorist attacks occurred and shared the brunt of the economic fallout in the East Coast region. Second, this is a region with a high proportion of information technology

firms that suffered disproportionate job loss during this time. Third, the national economy rebounded most strongly in three major sectors, construction (mostly residential), health services, and defense-related industries. While health services are the largest employing sector in Somerville (see Figure 3.3b), this region lacks a strong concentration of either defense industries or construction. Moreover, Somerville’s small land area has been largely built out for over a decade, minimizing new construction opportunities. While there have been a significant number of condo conversions in recent years, these involved smaller contracting work, and had a more significant stimulating effect on the local tax base than on construction-related employment.

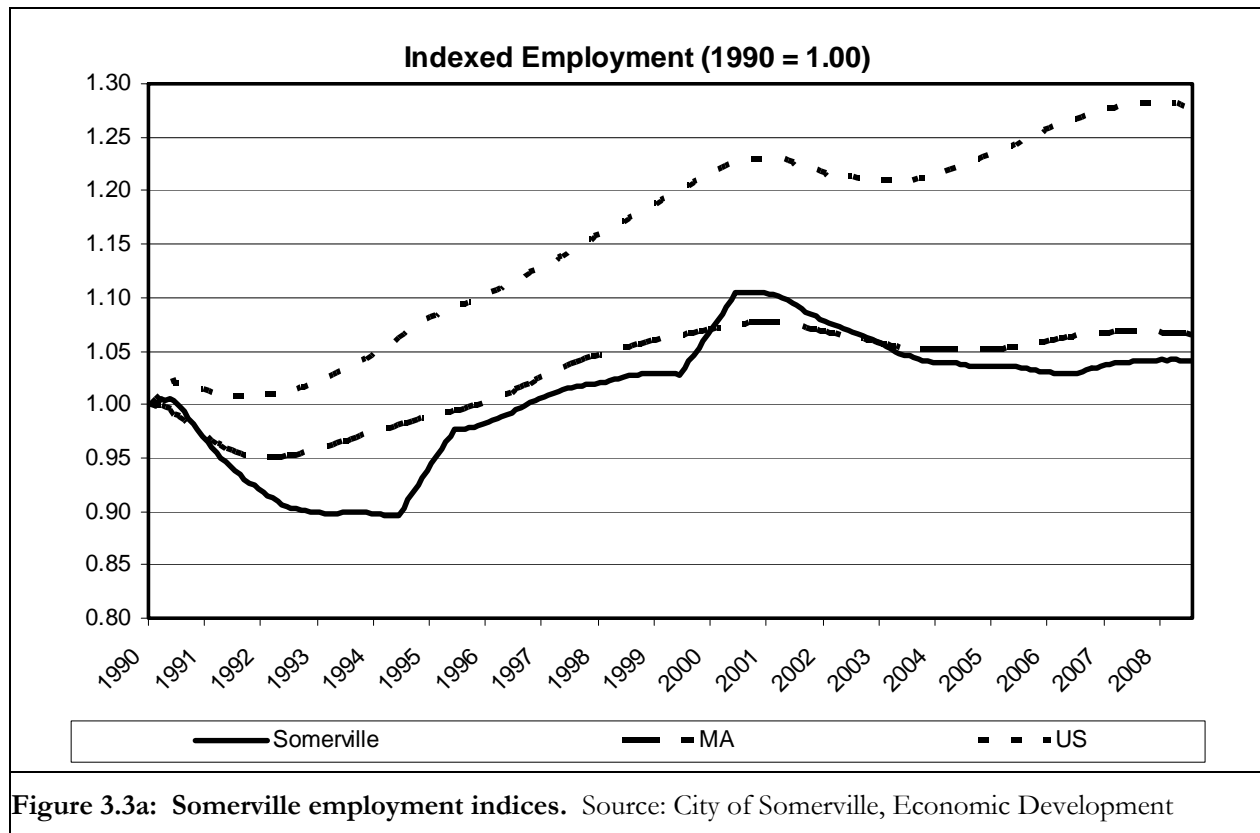
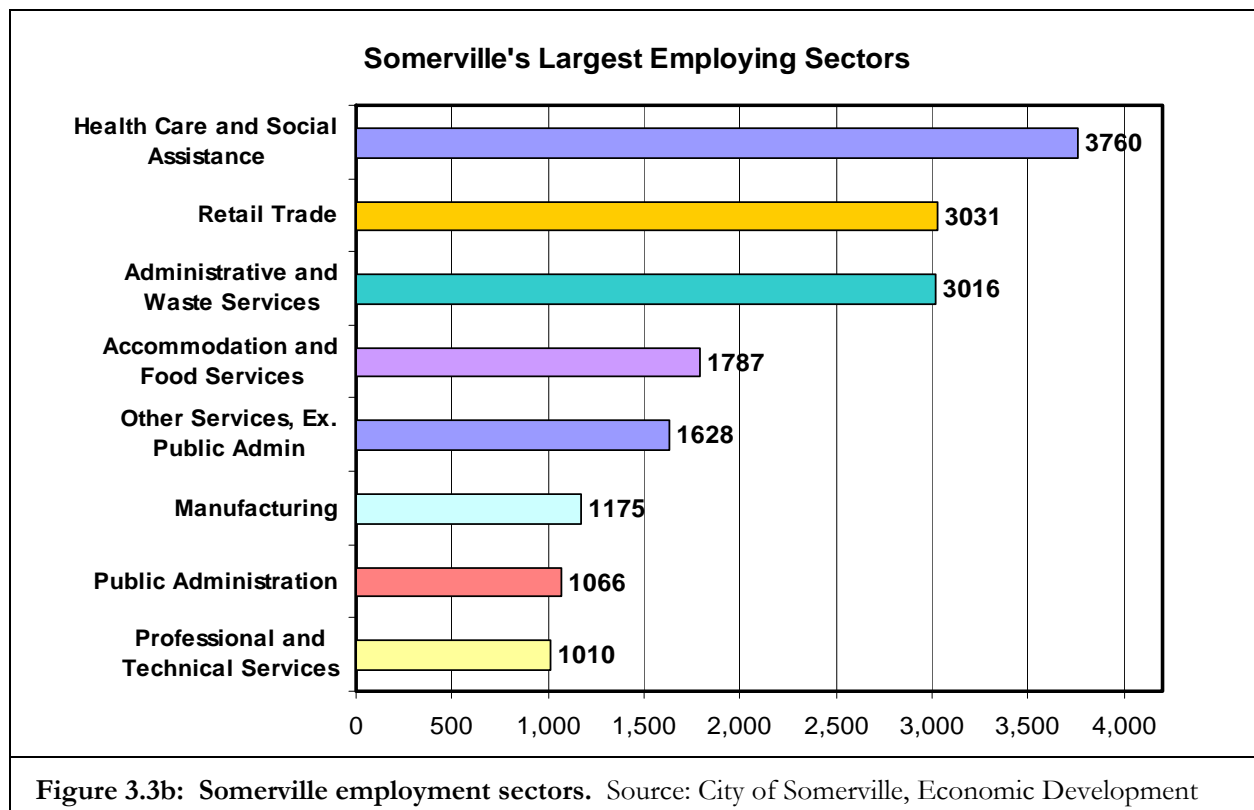


Figure 3.3a: Somerville employment indices. Source: City of Somerville, Economic Development



Age

Somerville’s reputation as a young city was reinforced by the 2000 U.S. Census: 27.6% of the city’s residents (or 21,362 residents) are between 25 and 34 years of age, while 17.9% are 19 and under. The majority of Somerville’s population is within the age range of 25-54, a group that saw rapid growth in Somerville during the 1990s. Interestingly, the 85-or-older population increased (+14.8%) during that same period. Between 1990 and 2000, however, the number of residents in every other age group (under 5, under 18, 18-24, and 55+) decreased. The greatest declines were in the population aged 55-85, even though this population is growing nationwide as the Baby Boomer generation ages. In addition, the median age rose slightly in 2000, to 31.1 years.

Persons with Disabilities

According to the 2000 Census, 32% of people 5 years old or older in Somerville have a disability (25,059 persons). Of this population 29% are 65 years old or older, and more than 32% live below the poverty level. This is a population with unique issues and challenges, yet it is an increasingly organized community that advocates for the types of comprehensive, cohesive, and individualized services that it needs. The City, in collaboration with its Commission on Disabilities, strives to serve residents with disabilities through education and advocacy for full civil rights and inclusion in all public-service opportunities.

3. D. Growth and Development Patterns

Somerville's physical development consists of an overlay of patterns from three distinct historical periods – agrarian (1630-1800), municipal growth (1800-Civil War), and streetcar suburban (1865-1950) (see “Section 3.B. History of the Community”). Since 1950, many of the early heavy-industrial land uses have diminished and have been replaced by lighter industrial uses – often auto-oriented, such as auto dismantling and vehicle storage.

Yet with the loss of heavy-industrial activity, Somerville has seen considerable commercial growth at the neighborhood level, particularly near the city's squares. Areas of mixed-use development (i.e. combinations of residential and commercial land uses) have also become increasingly more common, especially along the city's arterials. In tandem with this commercial growth, the City has concentrated its planning efforts on bringing improvements to Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) in East Somerville and Union Square. These areas, by definition, contain the highest proportion of low-and moderate-income residents in Somerville; however, they also hold the most potential for diverse commercial and residential growth.

As part of its broader vision of economic and community development, the City is committed to increasing not only the amount of but also access to open space for its residents. This has been no small feat. As noted earlier, by the turn of the 20th century, Somerville's intensive development – implemented without a comprehensive master plan – had left a shortage of available land for parks and other recreational needs. Where feasible, the City has acquired derelict properties for the purpose of creating additional recreation and open space, such as the former Bay State Smelting lot (now Conway Park) and Kemp Nut factory (now Ed Leathers Community Park).

The conversion of “brownfields” to public green space has also become a prioritized strategy for increasing the amount of municipal open space in the City. According to the state's cleanup law (M.G.L., Chapter 21 E), brownfields are “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.” Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties takes development pressures off undeveloped, open land, while improving and protecting the environment. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection lists 376 instances of reported contaminant releases in Somerville since 1993, and the City prepared a list of 20 brownfield sites that was submitted to Mass EOEPA in 2005. One of these city-identified properties, 245 Beacon Street, was converted to Durrell Park and Community Garden in 2007 (see Durrell Park and Community Garden Success Story).

Somerville has worked with the EPA on several brownfields conversion projects, and the City has established an Executive Office of Sustainability and Environment, which works with the Parks and Open Space Department on the detection and evaluation of Underground Storage Tanks (USTs), and the conversion of brownfields into public open space. Recent collaborations have included 30 Allen Street Community Garden and Somerville Junction Park (see respective “Success Stories” for these sites).

Success Story

Allen Street Community Garden

The Allen Street Community Garden sits just outside the center of Union Square, one of the most densely developed – and historic – neighborhoods in Somerville. Until the 1950s, the 30 Allen Street site was used for residential purposes. During the next five decades, however, it was left vacant, developing an unfortunate history of use as an illegal dumping ground. In 2003, the City acquired the parcel as part of a successful land swap with the Community Action Agency of Somerville, a local non-profit. In that same year, after an environmental assessment revealed that the soil and water in the parcel were contaminated, the City was awarded a \$350,000 EPA Cleanup Grant.

From 2005 to 2007, neighborhood residents, the Somerville Community Corporation, and the Ward 2 Alderman engaged the community in a planning process to identify the desired use for the 30 Allen Street lot. After reviewing various local area maps, participating in small-group discussions, and ultimately developing a proposal for submission to the City, the involved parties determined that the best use for the space would be as a community garden in which residents could relax as well as grow flowers and vegetables.

Cleanup activities at 30 Allen Street began in January 2007. The remediation included removal of three feet of contaminated soil and replacement with clean fill. A series of raised-bed gardening plots were then constructed, including the City's first purpose-built American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible plot. In addition to garden space, the park's central design features include sitting areas, shade trees and open space.

This project represents successful in-fill development through effective partnering, reuse of site materials, and organized community involvement. In September 2007, the garden was dedicated to the citizens of Somerville and also specifically to a recently deceased local resident, Mrs. Beverly Lipinski, who had worked tirelessly on behalf of affordable housing and many other revitalization efforts in the Union Square neighborhood.



30 Allen Street, *before*



30 Allen Street, *after*

Public Transportation

Due partly to Somerville's proximity to Boston and the northern suburbs, property values in the city have been rising in recent years. (Even during the recent economic downturn, Somerville has not seen significant decreases in home values). Its development patterns are well-suited to an increasing number of households that favor urban lifestyles. Thus, the availability and enhancement of public transportation resources will add to Somerville's attractiveness as a place of residence or employment.

Public transportation services in Somerville are provided by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The city is principally served by fixed-route buses and one rapid-transit station (Davis Square Red Line Station). Other MBTA rapid-transit services utilized by Somerville residents lie just outside the city boundaries at Lechmere, Porter, and Sullivan Squares. Present bus routes facilitate east-west travel across the City, while the Red Line rapid-transit service connects West Somerville with destinations in Cambridge and Boston. The MBTA's present hub-spoke system hampers effective north-south travel and is ineffective at transporting people in a radial fashion around Boston. Such radial movement is key for access to places of residence, employment, and recreation. The City of Somerville, in concert with the MBTA and other agencies, has intensively studied ways in which system improvements can be made, and has moved into the funding and planning stages for projects such as the new Orange Line subway stop in Assembly Square, the Green Line extension through Somerville to Medford and Union Square, and the Urban Ring, which will service the East Somerville neighborhood. The City has also increased advocacy efforts to include Somerville in MBTA's Circumferential Transit Study.

Infrastructure

Somerville's water supply and sewage disposal systems are supplied by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Water supplies are transported from surface reservoirs in western and central Massachusetts by pipeline. There are no surface impoundments within the city that are utilized for drinking water. Sewer services consist of a series of sanitary/stormwater lines that convey effluent to a regional treatment plant at Deer Island, operated by MWRA. City records do not indicate that any private water supplies or sewage disposal systems are in use.

Sewer System

The city has 152.4 miles of sewers – 69.4 miles are combined sewers (handling both sewer and stormwater), 58.6 miles are separate sanitary sewers, and 24.4 miles are storm drains. The majority of Somerville's sewers were constructed in the latter part of the 19th century; consequently, aging infrastructure and increased demands burden the current system. Listed below are some major highlights and challenges to the city's stormwater and sewer infrastructure system:

- The majority of Somerville sewers were built over 120 years ago; nearly one-half are combined sewers, carrying both stormwater and household waste in severely aging, undersized pipes.
- Somerville has two active combined sewer outfalls (CSO) – one at Alewife Brook Parkway near the Cambridge border (maintained by the City) and one on the Mystic River in East Somerville (jointly maintained by the City and MWRA). These CSOs emit effluent into the waterways when heavy rains exceed the system's capacity, thus polluting the rivers with raw sewage. The Alewife Brook CSO overflows 25 times a year.

- Somerville's existing sewer system was not designed to handle today's high levels of stormwater runoff. More streets and paved parking lots exist now than at the end of the 19th century when the sewers were built. These impervious surfaces exacerbate the effects of a storm as the runoff water is unable to filter into the ground and is quickly moved off-site to the nearest drains, and then into the sewer system. East Somerville has the largest area of impervious surface in the city, and also the greatest drainage troubles.
- East Somerville's drainage problems are largely caused by the filling of the Millers River which originally served as the city's natural outlet to the Charles River.
- The "Main Drain," the back-bone of Somerville's sewer system and CSOs, is aging and is undersized for the current magnitude of the city's needs. This combined sewer was built in 1873 and manages two-thirds of the city's land-area water flows.
- Somerville's combined sewage system is largely land-locked within the city with little to no drainage to other systems or natural water bodies. An existing blockage on MBTA property adjacent to the Boston Engine Terminal (BET) has a ripple effect throughout the eastern portion of Somerville.
- The construction of a 120-inch relief drain and subsequent sewer separation is the primary solution recommended for addressing the majority of the city's flooding exposure.
- The MWRA anticipates that its Long-Term Control Plan will result in a region-wide CSO discharge reduction volume from 3.3 billion gallons in a typical year to 0.4 billion gallons when the plan is fully implemented in 2015. Significant improvements for Somerville include tighter floatables regulation (i.e., plastics, papers) at the CSO points and improved de-chlorination mechanisms to comply with new residual chlorine discharge limits.
- Significant improvements in the last two decades from CSO closures and sewer separation have improved conditions throughout the region. Sewer discharge volumes have fallen 83% in the Mystic River and 78% in the Alewife Brook.

Water System

All water in Somerville is purchased by the City's Water Department from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). The water is delivered through seven MWRA master meters into the distribution system, which consists of pipes, valves, hydrants and service lines. This system delivers water to homes, businesses and other facilities for drinking and other uses. The system consists of approximately 120 miles of pipes, laid mainly in the late 1880s to early 1900s.

Beginning in September 2008, the City will implement a new, state-of-the-art, Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) system that will reduce city meter reading costs, immediately identify leaks, resolve billing conflicts and prepare a bill based on actual, accurate readings, not estimates, while eliminating the need for meter readers to access private properties⁸.

Long-Term Development Patterns

Development is regulated by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO). The SZO consists of 12 base districts, which are mapped citywide and establish bulk and use controls; seven overlay districts, based primarily on geographic peculiarities (e.g., proximity to the Mystic River, location within a

⁸ City of Somerville Accelerates Meters Install Project, Water Department

floodplain, inclusion of a university campus) that help to further guide development patterns; and three Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay districts, which permit higher-density development in strategic locations, in exchange for additional design review and provision of benefits such as usable public open space.

The 145-acre Assembly Square Mixed-Use District holds extraordinary development potential, with its proximity to a new transit station, state and federal highways, and, perhaps most important, the riverfront. During the past decade, there has been a great deal of activity around the redevelopment of Assembly Square, including discussions of how new uses can help preserve and enhance Somerville's open space network. Under its own base zoning and unique PUD overlay, a 65-acre site in Assembly Square has recently received master-plan approval for a development of 2,100 residential units, 1.75 million square-feet of office; a 340,000 square-foot IKEA store; 450,500 square-feet of other new retail and restaurant uses; a 62,000 square-foot cinema; and a 200-room hotel. As part of this approval, the developer is required to make significant improvements to on-site vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities within the large-scale development, as well as to seven off-site locations. More than 25% of the site will be open space, of which 15% will be subject to deed restrictions guaranteeing that it is publicly accessible during prescribed hours. In addition, improvements will be made to City-owned and State-owned recreational lands, and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections will be required between the site and those amenities.

Other areas of the city have also been subject to extensive study. With the planned extension of two Green Line branches through Somerville, most of the city will be within a half-mile of a transit stop. As Somerville becomes more accessible by transit, the City is reexamining its land-use controls to ensure that it promotes economic development, appropriate density, and housing affordability, while also preserving open space and expanding pedestrian and bicycle networks, including the Community Path. Central to these efforts has been the three-year rezoning study of Union Square and the 2007-2008 study of the Boynton Yards industrial area, the results of which have been submitted for future adoption in early 2009. The Union Square/Boynton Yards rezoning proposal would create one new Arts Overlay District specific to the Union Square area (preserving and strengthening its indigenous arts industry), but would also create four new Transit-Oriented Districts and a new Corridor Commercial District, which could later be mapped elsewhere in the city. Reflective of access to rapid transit and bus corridors, respectively, these districts would have increased density allowances and reduced parking requirements. Furthermore, for the first time in a base district, the highest density districts would be required to provide publicly usable open space (from 10% to 15% of lot area).

To ensure that the open space is also useful to the public, the zoning would permit a developer to buy out of the usable open space requirements, subject to the City's approval, if the site would not produce quality open space and if there were other sites in the district that would be more suitable. The funds would then go to a stabilization fund for acquisition and development of alternative sites. In addition, the zoning gives development bonuses for dedicating 40,000 square feet for a park. Thus a significant *new* purpose of the OSRP is to provide guidance around the location, use and design of this dedicated open space, both publicly and privately owned.

As in the case of Assembly Square, new commercial development in Somerville oftentimes replaces several smaller, underutilized, or functionally/economically obsolete structures. Property

rehabilitation, with City assistance and federal incentives, is also gaining in popularity, particularly in and around the city's squares. Most of the Somerville's preexisting residential areas are expected to remain residential, while some existing industrial and commercial areas that could benefit from development attracted by the new transit access will not reach their full potential until significant infrastructure reinvestment occurs.

As the City completes its 2008 Land Use Inventory, decisions will need to be made as to which areas should be protected for future commercial and industrial uses and which can be utilized for residential and open space uses. The City is attempting to offset the decline of traditional industries by redeveloping brownfields and "grayfields" (i.e., economically obsolete, outdated, or underutilized real-estate assets or land) for mixed use, to broaden its tax base and reduce the burden on residential property taxpayers. Expected growth in population and households will continue to stress existing open space in Somerville, underscoring the City's need to rehabilitate existing parks and optimize potential recreational areas so as not to lose potential tax revenue.

Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis

4. A. Geology, Soils, and Topography

Tens of thousands of years ago, glaciation left a series of drumlins (literally, “little hill ridges”) running west to east across the landscape. These ridges would later become known as the “seven hills of Somerville” during the city’s development. Physical boundaries were also defined by prominent waterways: the Mystic River to the north, the Alewife Brook to the west, and the Miller’s River (now underground) to the southeast.

Within the city’s boundaries, soil types range from sandy loam in the more elevated areas of West Somerville to dense clay in the Ten Hills neighborhood and around the former Miller’s River estuary near Union Square and Beacon Street (see Appendix A: Soils and Geologic Features map). Much of the southern and eastern portions of Somerville are part of the Cambridge Floodplain, which fills the lower valley of the Charles River from Watertown to the Boston Harbor. Somerville’s clay deposits were formed 14,000 to 15,000 years ago and contain fossilized shells of the saltwater Leda clam, extensive beds of which were created with the retreat of the glacier.

When the glacial waters receded from the Boston Basin, the clay-lands were replaced with forest and then a layer of peat. Several millennia later, when Europeans settled in Somerville, the clay was exposed only in nearby streams or tidal creeks. At that time, marshes could be found at the eastern, southern and northern edges of the then-named Charlestown mainland, while meadowland and grassland interrupted by marsh grew at the western edge near the Alewife Brook. Until the late 19th century, the relatively flat tract between Charlestown Neck and Alewife Brook was used largely for agricultural purposes. Before the onset of intense development in the early 20th century, large tracts of forested land could still be found in isolated upland regions in and around the city.

Soils and Parks

Soil health is an essential component of the design and construction of parks and other open spaces. Every park needs to have excellent drainage, which is particularly critical in lawn and other pervious surfaces. Prior to construction, soils are analyzed for composition, and percolation tests are conducted to determine permeability. In general, soils with heavy clay percentages need to be amended to allow for free drainage, and great caution is used during construction to avoid soil compaction by heavy machinery and dumpsters.

Because of Somerville's history of intensive land use, many of its existing parks and open spaces have a designation of "Complex Urban Soil"⁹ and require installation of a specially designed topsoil in order to support a healthy plant palette. Park construction projects typically remove some soil and amend or import new soil to provide the best surface condition possible.

Particular care is used when planning a community garden. Because plants will be grown and fruits and vegetables consumed from these soils, more extensive tests occur to ensure public health. Existing nutrients, pH, and proper texture should be assessed, as well as any potential

⁹ Craul, T.A., and P.J. Craul. 2006. *Soil Design Protocols for Landscape Architects and Contractors*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

contaminants. If a garden site does not have a suitable soil profile, then raised beds may be an option to keep community gardens as safe, clean oases for neighborhood agriculture.

4. B. Landscape Character

Somerville's physical landscape is characterized by a series of drumlins, or glacial hills, with relatively steep sides and outcroppings of slate. Three of the most prominent drumlins can be found at Powderhouse Park, Spring Hill (western edge), and Winter Hill (northern edge). These hills rise from the floodplain of the Mystic River and Alewife Brook, and generally run west to east, providing panoramic views of the Metropolitan Boston area (see Appendix A: Unique Features map).

The Mystic River and Alewife Brook form the city's western and northern boundaries, respectively. Formerly a tidal estuary before the construction of the Amelia Earhart Dam in the 1960s, the Mystic River is now a slow-moving urban river with open parklands and riparian vegetation along its banks. DCR-owned riverside parks offer pleasing views of the Mystic and open stretches of sky; they also support a diversity of plants and animals.

Much of Somerville's landscape character can be found in its vibrant and creatively designed streetscapes, parks, and recreational areas. The juxtaposition of these open spaces with historic buildings and squares, local commercial activity, and the city's diverse residential population lend Somerville a truly unique urban feel.

Somerville's open spaces can be grouped into the following usage categories:

Large recreational fields. Three City-owned properties (Trum Field, Lincoln Park, and Conway Park), three DCR-owned parks (Foss Park, Dilboy Field, and Draw Seven Park), and the playing fields owned by Tufts University serve as the recreational backbone for the city's sports-field users, both formal and informal. Smaller City-owned parks such as Hodgkins Park, Glen Park, and Nunziato Field provide more limited opportunities for field sports. These ten properties constitute all of the playing fields in Somerville.

Neighborhood parks and playgrounds, and schoolyards. The vast majority of the city's parks are either "pocket parks"—i.e., parks or playgrounds typically no more than an acre in size, and often much smaller—or school playgrounds. There are over 40 such properties in Somerville, serving every neighborhood of the city.

Waterfront parks. While the Mystic River and Alewife Brook are not pristine, they represent some of the most important scenic areas in the city. The parklands along these rivers have great potential for recreational uses; yet highways, fences, and other impediments separate most Somerville residents from these rivers. As noted, however, in Section 3.A., some creative and collaborative efforts are underway to make substantial lengths of these waterways more accessible to walkers, runners, and cyclists.

Community gardens. There are currently eight community gardens in use throughout the city. Together they comprise over 150 plots, all of which are filled to capacity. One of the newest of these

gardens – Allen Street Community Garden – was built on a former brownfield site after extensive environmental remediation.

Each community garden has a coordinator who works with the Conservation Commission to ensure that the gardens are properly maintained. Some of these gardens have been in production now for over 25 years, and all are sources of community pride. Two are privately owned (Tufts and Avon), one is on MBTA land leased by the City (Bikeway Community Garden), and one is on land owned by the Somerville Housing Authority, for the exclusive use of residents (Mystic). With the completion of the Durrell and Allen Street gardens, every Somerville resident is now within a half-mile of a community garden.

Success Story

Durrell Park and Community Garden



Located at 245 Beacon Street in Somerville, the Durrell Park and Community Garden was opened to the public in September 2007. The space is one of two community gardens in the city accessible to individuals with physical disabilities (the other is Allen Street Community Garden), and includes two raised beds for gardening from a wheelchair. At just over a tenth of an acre, the Durrell Park and Community Garden is situated on the site of an asphalt play-yard adjoining the former Durrell School. In 2002, the city's Office of Strategic Planning and Community

Development (OSPCD), in conjunction with the Somerville Conservation Commission, began planning for the lot's development as public open space. In September of that year, the Commission drafted a site-improvement plan, and in May 2003 OSPCD entered into an agreement committing the Commission to perform the work necessary to build the park and garden, and then to designate and distribute the plots.

The Durrell "pocket park" consists of two circular patios surrounded by planting beds; one patio has a planting bed in its center. Three benches for visitors line the patio, and a fence separates the park from the community garden area, with an access gate between the two. The community garden comprises 18 plots, two accessible raised beds, and sixteen 10'-by-10' plots. A gravel path constructed of ADA-compliant materials separates the various planting beds, and a luminaire provides additional security. The park is accessible via a local bus route (#83) and is located just over ½ mile from the Porter Square Redline Station.



4. C. Water Resources

While Somerville's water resources contribute significantly to the total open space acreage in the city, present day pollution of these water resources limits their full potential for active water usage.

Surface Water Resources

Surface water resources – shared with Medford and Arlington – consist of the last mile of the Alewife Brook and the last mile of the lower Mystic River to the Amelia Earhart Dam (see Appendix A: Water Resources map). Both the Alewife Brook and the Mystic River are part of the Mystic River watershed, which encompasses approximately 70 square miles of land, in which nearly 400,000 persons live across 19 municipalities: Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lexington, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester and Woburn.

Water Quality

Alewife Brook

As reported by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), “the water quality of Alewife Brook is often impaired due to bacteria and other pollutants from a number of sources, including cross connections between sanitary sewers and storm drains, urban stormwater runoff and Combined Sewer Overflows [CSOs]...and generally fails to meet state bacteria standards for fishing and swimming.” During the past several years, however, Somerville and Cambridge have collaborated with MWRA, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Basin Team, and local watershed groups such as the Mystic River Watershed Association to remove CSO outlets from the Alewife Brook. These efforts were required by a federal court order issued to the MWRA for the Boston Harbor clean up. MWRA, together with the affected CSO communities, is implementing 26 different CSO control projects along Boston Harbor, the Mystic, Charles and Neponset Rivers and Alewife Brook.

Work already completed by MWRA, Somerville, and Cambridge over the last several years has noticeably reduced the number of CSO events and the total volume discharged to the Brook. MWRA and Somerville closed four CSO outfalls through CSO control efforts. (Currently, one CSO outlet from the Somerville storm water system still drains into the Brook.) Unfortunately, despite these ongoing efforts, non-point source pollution, litter, and dumping continue to pose problems to the health of the Brook, and sediments accumulated on the bottom of the Brook present other health and safety hazards.

Mystic River

The water quality of the Mystic River is somewhat higher than the Alewife Brook due to the dilution of flow volumes as a result of outflow from the Mystic Lakes. Since March 1999, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has assigned these waters a “Class B CSO” designation, meaning that the “water should meet standards for primary and secondary contact except for a specific number and size of CSO events each year.” Somerville has removed all but one of its CSOs draining directly into the Mystic River.

In its 2008 water-quality assessment, EPA New England rated the Mystic River 46 percent swimmable and 79 percent suitable for boating, a marked improvement from previous years, thanks

largely to the determined advocacy of surrounding municipalities and local community groups. One of these groups, the Mystic Watershed Association, has partnered with the City of Somerville in many water quality improvement efforts, most notably the EPA funded Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking (EMPACT) project. The City has also committed to work with state and federal agencies to make the Mystic River suitable for swimming and boating in accordance with Massachusetts State Water Quality Standards by the year 2010.

Millers River

The Millers River, which once ran from Union Square to the Charles River, now flows underground through a series of drainpipes. These pipes, routed through the flats of Cambridge and emptying into the Charles River, affect the CSO effluents into the Mystic River and Alewife Brook due to interconnections among the City's drainage systems.

Flood Hazard Areas

Within Somerville, the 100-year floodplain – or the estimated lateral extent of floodwater that would theoretically result from the statistical 100-year frequency storm event – is restricted to the banks of the Mystic River and the Alewife Brook. Along the Mystic River north of the Amelia Earhart Dam, the floodplain boundary parallels the western and southern bank. South of the dam, the floodplain boundary extends west approximately 100 feet into DCR's Draw Seven Park. Along Alewife Brook, the floodplain area is larger, extending at its widest point approximately 500 feet from the bank. DCR parklands in both of these areas serve to provide water storage capacity during flood events (see Appendix A: Water Resources map).

Somerville's historical floodplain was likely much larger than the areas noted above. The filling of marshlands to make way for rail yards and other industries, combined with the channeling of Miller's River, consumed most of the City's flood storage capacity. The Amelia Earhart Dam, located at the confluence of the Mystic and Malden Rivers, has also reduced the area's flood storage potential. The dam is used to eliminate tidal influence upstream and to lower the river level in anticipation of coming storms.

Much of the city's lower elevation neighborhoods—including Union Square, Somerville Avenue, historic rail beds, and parts of Davis Square—suffer from localized stormwater flooding during sudden heavy storm events, because of large amounts of impervious surfaces, the piping of the Miller's River and the filling of its floodplain, and other alterations.

Wetlands

Most of Somerville's wetlands were lost due to extensive development during the first half of the 20th century. Those wetlands that remain are restricted to the 100-foot buffer zone on the shores of the Alewife Brook and the lower Mystic River and provide landscape diversity, natural habitat and recreational enhancement. Specifically, the Mystic River Reservation on the northern shore of the Mystic River in Medford is a vital and much used habitat and recreation area. An inspection by the Conservation Commission in 2007 determined there were no other existing wetlands within the city.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Somerville's only aquifer recharge area is a small piece of a larger aquifer recharge area located mostly in Medford. This aquifer is classified by DEP as a "medium potential aquifer unlikely to be

used.” Somerville obtains its drinking water from the MWRA Quabbin Reservoir and therefore contains no drinking-water supply aquifer recharge areas.

Recreation

Despite the generally poor water quality of the Alewife Brook and the Mystic River, both areas continue to attract residents and non-residents alike pursuing a number of recreational interests, including boating, canoeing, kayaking, bird-watching, wildlife viewing, fishing, swimming (in the Mystic), and other forms of outdoor activity.

4. D. Vegetation

Despite Somerville’s history of intense land use and development (residential and commercial), an estimated 10,000 trees grow in the public right-of-way (i.e., along streets, in parks, and on municipal property), not to mention tens of thousands of others found on private residential and commercial property. Together, these trees comprise an often overlooked but vital “urban forest” which provides a host of ecological, social, and economic benefits to individuals, neighborhoods, and the city.

While a full inventory of the city’s trees has not yet been conducted, there are numerous known tree species growing in Somerville’s urban forest. Among the most prevalent are Norway maple, red maple, sugar maple, honey locust, green ash, callery pear, Japanese zelkova, linden, pin oak, red oak, flowering cherry, and flowering apple.

Somerville’s parks are home to some of the most mature and stately trees in the city. Powderhouse Park, for instance, has a number of mature red oaks and white pines that tower to heights of more than 80 feet. Within the northern Mystic River parks, one may find majestic black and white oaks. And along the old railroad right-of-way, now the Somerville Community Path, there are several tree species, including silver maples, sugar maples, honey locusts, northern catalpas, and apple trees.

The riparian soils along the Mystic River support a diversity of vegetation that provides habitat for urban wildlife. Many native varieties grow along the River, including silver maple, alder, American elm, white oak, poplar, birch, dogwood, sumac, black cherry and cottonwood. Yet invasive species, most notably tree-of-heaven, phragmite, Oriental bittersweet, Norway maple, and false indigo bush have infested large areas along and near the Mystic shoreline. Invasive vegetation competes with native plants for limited natural resources, dominating habitats and reducing food and shelter for native wildlife. Although considerable invasive-species data has been collected in certain areas (e.g., along Mystic River and the Somerville Community Path), a citywide inventory of the types and density of invasive populations in Somerville has not been completed.

There are no known rare or endangered plant species in Somerville.

Together, DPW and OSPCD plant approximately 150 trees annually. In January 2008, Mayor Curtatone committed to expanding the total number of living public trees in Somerville by at least 20% by 2012. The current administration has also pledged to complete a comprehensive street-tree inventory, which will provide critical data about the number, location, species, health, and

maintenance needs of trees in the city, as well as potential planting sites. Efforts are now underway to conduct an inventory by summer 2009. Moving beyond a mere aesthetic valuation of its trees, Somerville has begun to quantify the ecological, economic and public-health benefits of the urban forest. In recognition of its planting and tree-care initiatives, the National Arbor Day Foundation has named Somerville a "Tree City USA" for the past thirteen consecutive years.

Success Story

The City of Somerville's Urban Forest Initiative



Somerville is home to tens of thousands of trees. Together, they comprise a vital "urban forest" that offers countless ecological, economic, and health benefits to the community. From removing carbon dioxide and harmful pollutants from the air, to reducing storm-water runoff, to increasing property values and beautifying urban landscapes, trees are one of the most significant investments a city can make. The health of trees directly affects the health of the communities in which they grow. It is for these reasons that Mayor Curtatone is committed to preserving and expanding Somerville's urban forest.

The Urban Forest Initiative was formed to raise awareness among residents, business owners, and community groups about the importance of trees in our neighborhoods and in our city. As the science of tree management has become more sophisticated, so too has our understanding of the far-reaching impacts trees can have on our quality of life. The more familiar individuals are with such benefits, the more likely it is that they will get involved in efforts to enhance the city's "green infrastructure."

Of course, trees can have drawbacks, especially in urban environments where growing space is limited. Roots can buckle and crack sidewalks. Leaves fall on lawns and walkways, requiring sweeping, raking, and removal in autumn. While in some cases these nuisances are unavoidable, they can often be prevented through proper species selection, and regular maintenance.

The Urban Forest Initiative encourages residents to rethink their relationship to – and interaction with – city trees, and to get involved in tree care and tree preservation efforts. Because our trees are vulnerable to a host of urban stresses, the Initiative encourages residents to provide ground-level care to street trees adjacent to their property. By following a few simple guidelines, residents can enjoy the rewards of tree care, while helping the City improve the health of the urban forest.



4. E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Although Somerville lacks large areas of natural habitat, it does support a diversity of plant and animal species. This biodiversity is greatest along the Mystic River and Alewife Brook and thins toward the city's center, where there are fewer desirable areas of nesting and feeding habitats. Yet, there are several railroad rights-of-way in Somerville that serve as important corridors for wildlife. These railways often have steep, heavily vegetated banks that offer protection as well as nesting and feeding habitat for birds and animals. Garter snakes have also been identified in these "wild" areas.

Although the best mammalian habitat may be in the wooded rail corridors and the river parks, resident mammals are spread throughout the city, occurring in many of the neighborhoods, away from both parks and railroads. These mammals include gray squirrels, raccoons, opossums, skunks, mice, rats, and even brown bats. The river areas may provide access points for rabbits, foxes, muskrats, moles, shrews, and other mammals, but documentation of these species is lacking. It should be noted, however, that all of these latter species have been documented upriver from Somerville and therefore have the potential for occurring in the city.

Bird life is relatively varied in Somerville. Identified species include cardinals, chickadees, juncos, mocking birds, blue jays, downy woodpeckers, crows, mourning doves, robins, nuthatches, gulls, catbirds, grackles, mallards, Canada geese, red-tailed hawks (a pair of which nest atop the Somerville High School), swans, herons, terns, osprey and a reported pair of woodcocks near the Amelia Earhart Dam. All of these birds, however, are habitat specific and are not found throughout the city; many are limited in their occurrence and can only be found in specific habitats such as those along the Mystic River or in railroad rights-of-way.

Each spring, blue-back herring and alewife migrate up the lower Mystic River to the lower Mystic Lake, and up the Alewife Brook. There, the herring spawn and then return to the ocean. While there are no documented sites of herring spawning in Somerville, these herring do run through Somerville in the spring and fall and are a fishery resource within the city. Other fishery resources include the freshwater fisheries of the Mystic River and Alewife Brook system. The species that make up that system are not well inventoried, but it is known that carp have invaded both the river and the brook.

The major problem for fisheries and wildlife in Somerville is the fragmentation of available habitat areas. For instance, the normal upstream migration of blue-back herring and alewife into the lower Mystic River is inhibited by the presence of the Amelia Earhart Dam at Assembly Square. Although a fish ladder was installed at the dam, it is not in working condition. The migration is preserved only by the actions of DCR personnel who open the boat lock to allow fish passage several times during the spring, and by volunteers who wade into the water each spring to boost spawning herring from the Lower Mystic Lake into buckets over the dam and into the Upper Mystic Lake.

Although in past years Somerville's Conservation Commission has participated in the Commonwealth's Biodiversity Days, the wildlife of Somerville has not been formally catalogued; therefore, official statistics about biodiversity populations and nesting areas are not known. It is assumed, however, that there are no rare or endangered species inhabiting Somerville.

4. F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Scenic Landscapes

As described in Section 3.B., Somerville's historical legacy of residential development without planned open space has resulted in a series of small, scattered parks that must meet demanding community needs. Large, scenic landscapes are few, and those that exist, such as Central Hill Park or Foss Park, have suffered from accommodating changing community needs without a master plan to support trees, preserve unique character, and provide adequate maintenance.

Due to its unique physical geography, however, Somerville has an abundance of scenic perspectives in a very small land area. Some of the "seven hills of Somerville" command excellent views of the Boston metropolitan area, and hilltop open spaces offer cool breezes and respite in the summer. Protected lands along the Alewife Brook and Mystic River also provide valuable scenic views and a welcome refuge from the city's urban character. Finally, there are street corridors that also provide important scenic perspectives. From east to west through the city there are ten notable scenic vistas in Somerville (Figure 4.1):

1. From the banks of the Lower Mystic River near the Assembly Square Mall looking north and east in the direction of the Amelia Earhart Dam, and along Shore Drive looking north and east across the Mystic River toward Medford.
2. From the summit of Prospect Hill (particularly from the Prospect Hill Monument) in all directions. Excellent view of the Cambridge and Boston skylines.
3. From the center of the Labyrinth in the Growing Center.
4. From Central Hill looking toward the northern suburbs (the site of original cannon defenses) and southeast in the direction of the Boston skyline.
5. From Winter Hill looking southeast toward the Boston skyline, and west at sunset.
6. From the crest of Spring Hill (particularly along Summer Street at St. Catherine's Church and at the corner of Craigie Street) looking south and west over Cambridge.
7. Former and current railroad corridors: from any of the railroad bridges looking down the tracks, and along sections of the Community Path looking west toward Route 2 in Arlington at sunset.
8. From Nathan Tufts (Powderhouse) Park overlook looking northwest over Tufts University.
9. From Powderhouse Boulevard looking in either direction, for the tree canopy/setback.
10. From the open space along the shore of the Alewife Brook on Somerville's western boundary, in all directions.

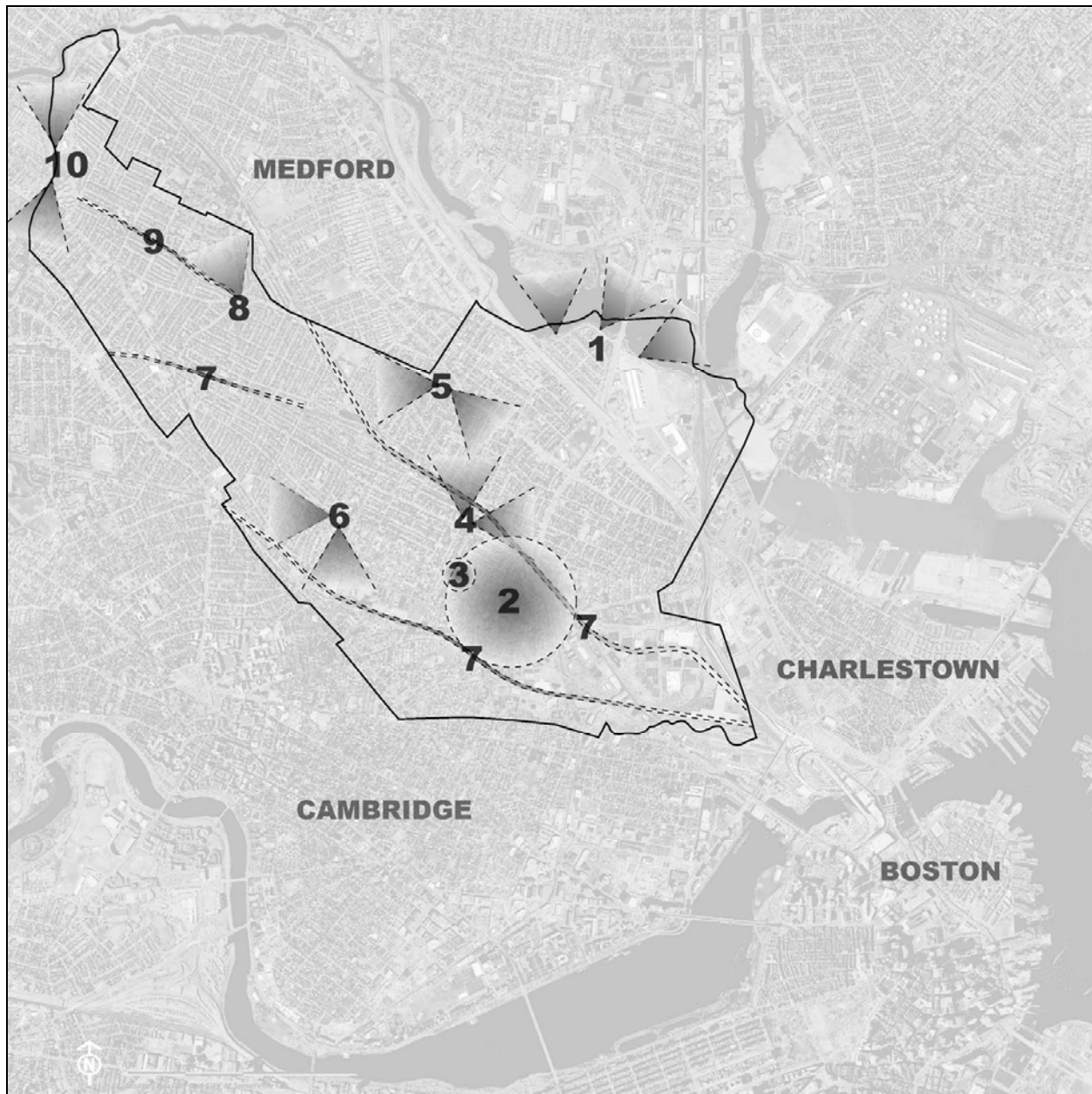


Figure 4.1: Scenic Vistas in Somerville. Source: OSPCD Parks
In Somerville, there is a strong relationship between topography and street and rail corridors to scenic vistas.

Historically Significant Areas

Somerville greatly values and commemorates its significant historic holdings, including many parks and open spaces. Several public landscapes are used for historic reenactments, celebrations, and other fun, educational events. The following open spaces are of particular historic and cultural interest (see Appendix A: Unique Features map):

- **Paul Revere Park**
This park is located at the junction of Broadway and Main Street, at the crest of Winter Hill. Often referred to locally as the smallest park in the world, the site is marked by a simple stone to commemorate the route taken by Paul Revere on his ride to Lexington and Concord. This is also the site of the Winter Hill Fort, a Revolutionary stronghold during the siege of Boston and a prisoner of war camp.
- **Milk Row Cemetery**
Milk Row cemetery is located on the south side of Somerville Avenue opposite the terminus of School Street. Originally part of the Samuel Tufts farm, this land was established as a cemetery in 1808 with the condition that the land be used only as a burying ground and that it always be fenced. The City of Somerville was given control of the site in 1893. The cemetery is no longer in active service but is featured in local historical walks and events. The first Civil War Memorial in the country, erected in 1863, is the main focal point of this site.
- **Nathan Tufts Park (also known as “Powderhouse Park”)**
This park is the site of a historic powderhouse, originally built in 1704 as a gristmill. In 1747 the mill was deeded to the Province of Massachusetts Bay for use as a public powderhouse. The first encounter of the American Revolution occurred here in 1774, when the British seized more than 200 barrels of gunpowder. The property was later owned by the Tufts family, which operated a large brickyard just east of the site. At the end of the 19th century the family conveyed the property to the City with the stipulation that a park be erected around the Powderhouse for public use. The Powderhouse was renovated by the City in the late 1990s and the renovation of Nathan Tufts Park completed in 2003.
- **Prospect Hill Park**
Prospect Hill, one of the highest of Somerville’s drumlins, was the site of camps and fortifications built after the Battle of Bunker Hill. The Battle of Prospect Hill occurred when the British troops were retreating from Lexington and Concord. The first flag of the United Colonists was raised on January 1, 1776, on the highest point of the hill. The top of the hill was later lowered to fill adjacent meadows and to form the Boston and Main Railroad yard in the Brickbottom area southeast of Prospect Hill. A monument erected at this site commemorates Somerville’s involvement in the Revolutionary War.

Archaeologically Significant Areas

Due to the extensive movement, extraction, and filling of lands that has occurred in the city in the past 200 years, there are no known areas of archaeological significance, although further research may reveal interesting industrial or municipal dump areas.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

According to DCR, there are no designated areas of Critical Environmental Concern within city limits¹⁰.

¹⁰ Source: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/accec/>

4. G. Environmental Challenges

Brownfields

Somerville contains 376 properties with known releases of petroleum or other hazardous substances, many of which are found near or within residential areas. A substantial portion of these qualify as brownfields. Somerville's dense built footprint makes the remediation and conversion of some of these sites to public green space a logical and attractive option; others will likely be used for commercial uses or mixed commercial/residential development.

None of the city's brownfields qualifies as a Superfund site under the U.S. EPA's jurisdiction; instead, these parcels are regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The majority of the city's brownfields are contaminated with petroleum-derived hydrocarbon products, a common characteristic of industrial and commercial sites, which are regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Site-based hydrocarbon pollution, however, can be mitigated at relatively low costs, given the technology and unique cleanup options (approved by DEP) available for remediation efforts. For instance, contamination at many sites can be localized to a few "hot spots" and then addressed by removing a small quantity of soil or by treating the contamination, with most of the soils kept intact at the site. (Groundwater remediation to drinking water standards is not required in Somerville since there are no drinking water wells serving the community.)

The City of Somerville's strategic position toward brownfields remediation is both aggressive and targeted, focusing on:

1. The prevention of further site degradation or contamination of new sites;
2. The investigation and listing of potentially contaminated sites to initiate these properties into compliance and/or a remediation schedule;
3. Encouragement of site remediation or outright purchase and cleanup to prevent long-term site abandonment and degradation.

Somerville's brownfields program is administered by the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), with assistance from Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), and the Department of Public Works (DPW). The program comprises several innovative initiatives to remediate brownfields owned by public, private, and non-profit redevelopers. These initiatives have resulted in new housing, parks, and commercial-end uses within Somerville. For instance, site investigation projects are eligible for funding through the City's site testing grant from the U.S. EPA. Also, the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund program, capitalized by a grant from the U.S. EPA, allows the City to establish a revolving loan program to assist property owners with the costs associated with remediation. Additionally, Somerville is one of nine cities in the United States chosen by the National Park Service with funds from the U.S. EPA to be a Groundwork community. Groundwork Somerville, a non-profit agency, assists with enhancement and improvement projects on or around brownfields.

OSPCD is in the process of updating its brownfields inventory and database to assist the City in identifying high-priority sites for future assessment and cleanup work. Development of a priority list of targeted sites is considered to be a critical component of maintaining the forward momentum of this program. Once OSPCD is able to identify and prioritize additional sites within Somerville, the parallel objective of renewing key EPA grants will be pursued. It is also expected that upcoming redevelopment activities in Assembly Square and Union Square have the potential to create a new round of interest in the city's Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund.

Success Story

Groundwork Somerville: The Green Team

The Green Team is a seven-week summer job skills program for youth ages 14-17 which engages young people in environmental work in their own communities. The 2008 team consists of 12 high school students, each working approximately 16-20 (paid) hours per week and required to complete 20 hours of volunteer community service over the course of the summer. In its second year, the Green Team has become a popular summer program among youth; GWS received over 25 applications for the 12 positions available.



The 2008 Green Team's theme was "Community Visioning, Community Trees, and Sustainability." The group will focused on two major challenges to the health and environmental safety of the residents of Somerville: air pollution and soil pollution. These challenges were addressed through the following programs: Data collection along the future Green Line extension corridors to be used in a community visioning process; green-roof creation at local businesses; and community tree planting. In its effort to implement these programs, the Green Team educated residents about environmental and health issues in Somerville, while allowing for that education to promote community stewardship by residents. Another overarching goal was to empower youth with valuable environmental job skills in order to guide them in their educational and career decisions



In addition to addressing environmental concerns in Somerville, the Green Team will traveled to service days in Lowell and Lawrence, took overnight trips to the Cape Cod National Seashore and Umbagog State Park in NH, and participated in a service day at the Minute Man National Historical Park in Lincoln.

For more information, visit the Groundwork Somerville website: www.groundworksomerville.org

Environmental Justice

The eastern portion of Somerville generally contains the highest proportion of low- and moderate-income residents in the City. It is also the area that bears the highest burden from transportation infrastructure, such as the elevated I-93 (which has been dubbed the ugliest piece of interstate highway in the country), Route 28, several rail lines that do not stop in East Somerville, and various regional truck routes. This poorly planned transportation infrastructure acts as a barrier to the area's many public parks, playgrounds, and open spaces, including Foss Park and other DCR parklands along the Mystic River.

Large portions of East Somerville have been designated a "Community of Environmental Justice Concern" by the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This status recognizes the high number of lower income and minority residents of that area and gives it some preference when the Boston MPO makes transportation investment decisions.

Landfills

All municipal solid waste generated in Somerville is unloaded from trucks at a transfer station in Somerville. All recyclable materials generated in Somerville are transported to a Materials Recovery Facility in Charlestown, MA. The City has no known defunct municipal landfills.

Erosion/Chronic Flooding

Neither erosion nor chronic flooding is an issue of relevance in the City of Somerville. Localized flooding due to stormwater runoff is addressed briefly in "Section 4.C. Water Resources."

Ground and Surface Water Pollution; Point and Non-Point and Development Impact

Water pollution is a critical issue to the fulfillment of Somerville's full open space and recreational potential. Point and non-point sources, from within and outside the city, combine to degrade the portions of the Alewife Brook and the Mystic River bounding Somerville. Several regional pollution problems are manifest in Somerville's water bodies due to their location near the mouth of the Mystic River.

Point-source pollution originates primarily from CSOs upstream from and outside the City's jurisdiction, as well as two remaining CSOs in Somerville, which make water bodies unusable for days following heavy rains. CSO impacts are magnified by the presence of illegal sewer hookups to stormwater collection systems. These problems are shared by most of Somerville's neighbors, although work is underway throughout the watershed to correct the problem.

Non-point source pollution issues arise from Somerville's urbanized development, particularly its expansive impermeable surfaces, such as paved residential yards and commercial lots. These impervious surfaces generate large volumes of stormwater runoff, which is commonly contaminated with road and highway dirt, auto leakage, animal waste, trash, and other contaminants. Again, Somerville shares these non-point water pollution issues with most neighboring communities. Currently, the Somerville Zoning Ordinance contains provisions limiting ground coverage with impervious surface on new developments and requiring landscaped areas on all lots.

Despite ongoing monitoring and containment efforts by City departments and Somerville's Conservation Commission, point and non-point source water pollution remains a major obstacle to the realization of the open space and recreational capacities of the City's water resources.

Sedimentation

The accumulation of sediment on the concrete bottom of the Alewife Brook represents one of the most significant occurrences of sedimentation in the city. This sedimentation continues to compromise the health of the Brook and the delicate riparian habitats which it supports. The City, in collaboration with state agencies and local community groups, continues to explore means for alleviating this issue.

Success Story

The Park at Somerville Junction

Opened in September 2008, the Park at Somerville Junction exemplifies the City's commitment to providing long-term quality of life improvements to its residents. Located along the proposed Cedar-Central extension of the Community Path, the area had long been a neglected and overgrown dumping ground, as well as a disreputable hang-out. Today, the new park features open lawns for activity and relaxation, landscaped perimeters, and a scenic view through the adjacent rail corridor.



The transformation of the area into a modern green space could not have happened without the dedication and collaboration of several public groups. In 2005, the City's Neighborhood Improvement Team took steps to encourage the land's then-owner, Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), to make long-term improvements to the parcel. The City's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, along with Shape-Up Somerville, Groundwork Somerville, and the Friends of the Community Path, then took on the challenge of advocating for the donation of the land from CHA, raising necessary funds for clean-up, park design and construction, and beginning the process for extending the Community Path from Cedar Street (its current terminus) to Central Street. Funds for the Park's design and construction came from many sources – a generous EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant, a MA DCS Urban Self-Help Grant, and matching City funds, including a Shape Up Somerville grant. The Board of Aldermen, Somerville's State House delegation, and Congressman Capuano all provided key support along the way.



The Park's name references the railroad history of Somerville and honors this land's past role as the location of the Somerville Junction station. With plans in the works to extend the MBTA Green Line through Somerville, the City hopes the Park will resume some of its historic function, serving as a key neighborhood link to a new subway station at Lowell Street.

Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreational Interest

As this Plan illustrates, the City of Somerville’s parks and open spaces comprise a vital resource for individuals, neighborhoods, and the city as a whole. All of these spaces are used extensively by the city’s nearly 80,000 residents. In light of the social and ecological benefits afforded by Somerville’s parks and open spaces, the City has made the protection and, where possible, expansion of these spaces a central objective.

Consistent with Somerville’s last Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002-2007), the City adheres to the following definition when identifying open space lands:

“Open space” is publicly owned, undeveloped land that is primarily vegetated, or paved areas that serve a recreational or cultural purpose. This includes, but is not limited to, parks, playgrounds, community gardens, walking or biking trails, cemeteries, civic plazas, and playing fields, regardless of the level of protection. Also included as open space are certain water bodies with recreational use, namely Alewife Brook and Mystic River. Not included in this definition, but recognized for their potential usefulness as open space are certain privately owned properties, such as lawns, memorial sites, and other landscaped areas.

The City of Somerville works diligently to ensure that its residents have access to as much green, open, and inviting space as possible. Table 5.1 below presents the population density of Somerville in comparison to surrounding communities.

Table 5.1. Population density of Somerville and surrounding communities¹¹.

City	Population	Land Area (sq. miles)	Land area (acres)	People/acre
Arlington	42,389	5.18	3315.2	12.78
Cambridge	101,355	6.43	4115.2	24.63
Chelsea	35,080	2.19	1401.6	25.03
Everett	38,037	3.38	2163.2	17.58
Malden	56,340	5.07	3244.8	17.36
Medford	55,765	8.14	5209.6	10.70
Somerville	77,478	4.10	2624.0	29.53

According to an inventory of parks and open space conducted in 2006 and revised in 2008, Somerville has a total of 75¹² public parks and open space areas. Uses range from playgrounds and sports fields, to community gardens, bike paths, and off-leash recreational areas (OLRAs) for dogs.

¹¹ Based on 2000 Census data

¹² Includes Tufts University, which does not fall under the category of public land. Residents of Somerville and Medford can reserve these spaces with permission from the University.

A full inventory of open space uses, sizes and amenities can be found in Appendix B. In total, open space in Somerville makes up 6.75% of the total land area of the city (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3).

Table 5.2. Public and Private Open Space, by ownership

Public Open Space	Acres
City Owned (Parks, Gardens, Playgrounds)	63.52
State Owned	77.50
Total Public Open Space (City & State)	141.02
Percentage of Open Space Land Area	5.37%
Private Open Space	Acres
Tufts University Fields	35.83
Powderhouse Circle	0.26
Total Private Open Space	36.09
Percentage of Open Space Land Area	1.38%
TOTAL OPEN SPACE (City, State, Private)	177.11
<i>TOTAL LAND AREA IN SOMERVILLE</i>	2,624
TOTAL PERCENTAGE OF OPEN SPACE LAND AREA	6.75%

Table 5.3. Open Space by Use

Type of Open Space	Total area (acres) ¹³	Number of Properties	% of Total Open Space
Active Recreation	109.13	32	61.62
Passive Recreation	132.29	20	74.69
Playground	78.19	37	44.14
OLRA	2.92	4	1.64
Community Gardens	1.12	8	.63

Open Space Uses

Somerville's open spaces fall under a number of usage categories, the most common of which are described below.

Active Recreation

As used in this Plan, active recreation refers to a mix of uses in parks or open spaces that includes at least one of the following activities or facilities: swimming, baseball, softball, basketball, ice hockey/skating, football, soccer, stick ball, street hockey, tennis court, handball/ tennis wall, track

¹³ Many areas have been counted in more than one category. Totals therefore are not applicable, as they would exceed the total amount of open space in the city.

Passive Recreation

A passive recreation area refers a mix of uses in a neighborhood park, undeveloped land or minimally improved lands which includes the following: landscaped area, natural area, ornamental garden, non-landscaped greenspace, bike/walking path, picnic area, water body, or trail without recreational staffing.

Playgrounds

As defined in this plan, playgrounds are structured areas in public parks and on school property, designed for children up to twelve years old. Some school playgrounds may not be available for public use except for weekends and special events.

Recognizing the importance and impact of developing healthy eating habits and active lifestyles at a young age, several schools across Somerville (and one community center) have been using gardening to teach children and parents about proper nutrition. Groundwork Somerville has been the driving force behind the creation of these educational gardens, providing programmatic and curricular support to many school groups (See “Groundwork Somerville Educational Gardens Success Story”). Opportunities to involve youth in hands-on projects while teaching about healthy living, the environment, and urban agriculture are invaluable experiences. Indeed, encouraging young people to develop healthy habits links directly to the work of Shape Up Somerville, a City initiative to promote healthier lifestyles and overall well-being through physical activity, proper nutrition, and active transportation (see “Shape Up Somerville Success Story”).

Off-Leash Recreation Areas

When properly planned and sited, Off-Leash Recreation Areas (OLRAs) are assets for community residents – dog owners and non-dog owners alike. OLRAs reduce the need for leash-law enforcement and, more important, provide a safe, secure environment for dogs and their owners to exercise and interact without needing to compete with other park users for open space or worrying about auto traffic and other potential hazards. Thanks largely to the planning and fund-raising efforts led by Somerville’s Dog Owners Task Force – a working group created in August 2004 by the Mayor’s Office – the City opened its first OLRA adjacent to Nunziato Field near Union Square in April 2006. Two years later, the second OLRA was opened in the Edward L. Leathers Community Park on Walnut Street. The Nunziato Field OLRA is approximately 8,700 square feet, while the Ed Leathers OLRA is approximately 1,800 square feet. Plans are underway to construct two more off-leash areas, one in East Somerville and another in Boynton Yards.

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide residents with needed access to and interaction with greenspace, offering the benefits of improved physical health and diet, as well as an opportunity for gardeners to build stronger community connections and to develop a deeper, more personal sense of place. Somerville currently has eight public community gardens, totaling 1.12 acres. Residents must register through the Conservation Commission in order to obtain a plot in a particular garden, and waiting lists are common.

Open Space Protection in Somerville

The following are all forms of open space protection used by the City of Somerville (see Table 5.4 below). Of these types of protection, only protection through deed restrictions, or funding through

the LWCF or Urban Self-Help programs (often requiring the placement of a deed restriction) are considered by the Division of Conservation Services (and this Plan) to be “in perpetuity”:

- **Open Space Zoning.** The Somerville Zoning Ordinance includes a provision for an “Open Space Zoning District,” which affords a degree of protection to open space parcels. Within this district, development is strictly limited, and the only permitted uses are those associated with recreation, farmers markets, outdoor seating, and certain protected institutional uses. Many of these uses require special permits from the Zoning Board of Appeals, providing an additional level of review and protection.
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund Protection/Urban Self-Help Funding Protection.** In the case of many Somerville playgrounds, the receipt of grant funding affords these parcels protection as parklands, essentially in perpetuity. Note that for these properties the protection of Article 97 (below) would apply as well.
- **Article 97 Protection.** A codification of the “Public Trust Doctrine,” Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects all publicly-owned lands used for conservation or recreation purposes. Before these properties can be sold, transferred, or even converted to a different use, this amendment requires a vote of the Conservation Commission and the Board of Aldermen as well as a roll-call vote of the State House and Senate.
- **Protection through Conservation Restrictions, Easements, or other Deed Instruments.** Due to the high costs of acquiring land, it has become increasingly popular to acquire conservation restrictions limiting future development. Similarly, access easements can provide permanent public access to a property. In certain situations, deed restrictions or easements may be granted by a private party as part of a development approval process (as is required under the “Useable Open Space” provisions of the SZO). As with any matters involving real property, care must be taken in the drafting of the restrictions to ensure the rights and interests of all parties are represented and clearly documented. Conservation Restrictions must be approved by the State Division of Conservation Services.
- **A Note about Schoolyards.** Many schoolyards are under a license agreement between the City of Somerville and the Somerville School Committee. This agreement permits the City to use the school grounds as neighborhood playgrounds. Schoolyards, however, do not have an individual zoning designation (with the exception of the University District for Tufts University) and fall into zoning districts as defined by the SZO. Schoolyards are not protected open space.

Table 5.4. Open Space Protection in Somerville

Level of Protection	Total area (acres)	Number of Parcels	% of Total Open Space
In perpetuity	111.72	34 ¹⁴	63.08
Open Space Protection	5.81	13	3.28
None	59.58	28	33.64
TOTALS	177.11	75	100

¹⁴ Includes Central Hill Park, 4.4 acres of which is protected in perpetuity

Table 5.5. Somerville Conservation and Recreation Properties

Name	Size (acres)	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition (2008)	Recreation Potential	Funding Type Used/Available to Renovate or Purchase Site	Public Access	Zoning	Degree of Protection
City Parks										
Albion Park	0.87	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Bailey Park	0.39	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	fair	medium	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Central Hill Park	8.94	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	poor	medium	local/state/CDBG	yes	OS/RC	4.4 acres OS in perpetuity; remainder RC
Conway Park East and West	5.66	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Corbett-McKenna Park	0.61	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	high	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Dickerman Playground	0.41	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	CDBG	yes	OS	OS protection
Florence Playground	0.26	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	high	CDBG	yes	OS	OS protection
Glen Park	2.34	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	high	CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Grimmons Park	0.46	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	local	yes	OS	OS protection
Harris Playground	0.29	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Henry Hansen Memorial Park	0.06	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	fair	low	local	yes	RB	none
Highland Road Gardens	0.21	City	DPW	garden	poor	low	local	yes	OS	OS protection
Hodgkins-Curtin Park	1.50	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Hoyt-Sullivan Playground	0.52	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Kenney Park	0.30	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local	yes	OS	OS protection
Edward L. Leathers Community Park	0.71	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	excellent	high	state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Lexington Park	0.31	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local	yes	OS	OS protection
Lincoln Park	6.60	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Marshall Street Playground	0.24	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	average	state/CDBG	yes	RB	in perpetuity
Morse-Kelley Playground	0.45	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Nathan Tufts Park (Powderhouse Park)	4.30	City	DPW, Recreation	historic, passive rec	excellent	average	local/state	yes	OS	in perpetuity
North Street/Veterans Playground	0.22	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	CDBG	yes	OS	OS protection
Nunziato Field and OLRA	1.10	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local/CDBG	yes	RB	none
Osgood Park	0.27	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	average	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Otis Playground	0.10	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	average	local	yes	OS	OS protection
Palmacci Playground	0.08	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	average	local	yes	OS	OS protection
Paul Revere Park	0.02	City	DPW	historic	fair	low	CDBG	yes	RC	none

Name	Size (acres)	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition (2008)	Recreation Potential	Funding Type Used/Available to Renovate or Purchase Site	Public Access	Zoning	Degree of Protection
Perkins Playground	0.15	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	high	state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Perry Park	1.25	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	excellent	high	CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Prospect Hill Park	2.10	City	DPW, Recreation	historic, passive rec	fair	high	CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Quincy Street Lot	0.11	City	DPW	vacant land	poor	high	CDBG	yes	OS	OS protection
Seven Hills Park	0.69	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	fair	high	local	yes	CBD	none
Somerville Community Growing Center	0.34	City	DPW, Recreation	educational garden	fair	low	CDBG	yes	RB	none
Somerville Junction Park	0.50	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	excellent	high	local/state/EPA	yes	OS	in perpetuity
111 South Street OLRA	0.36	City	DPW, Recreation	vacant land	poor	high	CDBG	yes	IP	none
Stone Place Park	0.12	City	DPW, Recreation	passive recreation	excellent	average	CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Trum Field	4.78	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	high	local/state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Trum Playground	0.46	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	average	state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Walnut Street Park	0.22	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	average	local/state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Woodstock Street Playground	0.22	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Zero New Washington Street OLRA	0.75	City	DPW, Recreation	vacant land	poor	high	CDBG	yes	IA	none
TOTAL CITY PARKS	49.27									
State Parks										
Alewife Brook Reservation (DCR)	9.43	State	DCR	conservation, passive rec	fair	average	n/a	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Community Path (MBTA)	5.79	State	City:DPW	active recreation	fair	high	n/a	yes	OS	none
Dilboy Field (DCR)	22.65	State	DPW, Recreation	Park	excellent	high	n/a	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Draw Seven Park (DCR)	2.35	State	DCR	active recreation	poor	high	n/a	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Foss Park (DCR)	14.62	State	DCR	active recreation	poor	high	n/a	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Mystic River Reservation (DCR)	22.66	State	DCR	conservation/passive rec	fair	average	n/a	yes	OS	in perpetuity
TOTAL STATE PARKS	77.50									
Community Gardens										
Allen Street Community Garden	0.13	City	DPW, Con Com	garden	excellent	low	state/EPA/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Avon Community Garden	0.12	Private	DPW, Con Com	garden	fair	low	local	yes	RA	none
Bikeway Community Garden	0.09	State	DPW, Con Com	garden	fair	low	local	yes	OS	none
Durell Pocket Park & Community Garden	0.18	City	DPW, Con Com	garden	excellent	low	local/state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Osgood Community Garden	0.06	City	DPW, Con Com	garden	fair	low	local	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Tufts Community Garden	0.17	Private	DPW, Con Com	garden	fair	low	n/a	yes	UN	none

Name	Size (acres)	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition (2008)	Recreation Potential	Funding Type Used/Available to Renovate or Purchase Site	Public Access	Zoning	Degree of Protection
Walnut Street Community Garden	0.08	City	DPW, Con Com	garden	fair	low	local/state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
Glen Community Garden	0.29	City	DPW, Con Com	garden	fair	low	CDBG	yes	OS	OS protection
TOTAL COMMUNITY GARDENS	1.12									
School Playgrounds and Fields										
Argenziano School (Dr. Albert F. Argenziano School at Lincoln Park)	2.76	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	high	local	yes	RB	none
Brown (Benjamin G.) School	0.22	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	local	yes	RA	none
James McCarthy Field (at Glen Park)	2.34	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	excellent	high	local/state	yes	OS	OS protection
Cummings (John A.) School	0.41	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	CDBG	yes	RA	none
East Somerville Community Playground	1.40	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	CDBG	yes	RB	none
Elderly Education Center	0.10	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	low	CDBG	yes	RB	none
Healey (Arthur D.) Elementary School	0.16	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	CDBG	yes	RB	none
Kennedy (John F.) School	0.50	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local	yes	RB/RC	none
Powderhouse Community School (Closed; Playground Open)	1.03	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	poor	high	local	yes	RA	none
West Somerville Neighborhood School	0.20	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local	yes	RA	none
Winter Hill Community School	0.98	City	DPW, Recreation	active recreation	fair	high	local	yes	RA	none
TOTAL SCHOOL OPEN SPACE	10.10									
Other Open Spaces										
Central Library Branch Lawn	0.61	City	DPW, Garden Club	open space	poor	low	local/state/CDBG	yes	OS	in perpetuity
East Branch Library Lawn	0.20	City	DPW	open space	fair	low	CDBG	yes	CBD	none
Milk Row Cemetery	0.72	City	DPW	cemetery	Fair	low	local/state	yes	OS	OS protection
Powderhouse Circle	0.26	Private	DPW, Garden Club	garden	Fair	low	n/a	yes	RB	none
Tufts University Fields	35.83	Private	Tufts University	active recreation	Excellent	high	n/a	yes	UN	none
Union Square Plaza	0.32	City	DPW	open space	Fair	low	local	yes	CBD	none
Veteran's Cemetery	0.80	City	DPW	cemetery	Fair	low	local	yes	RB	none
Union Square Triangle	0.15	City	DPW	open space	Fair	low	local	yes	CBD	none
West Branch Library Lawn	0.23	City	DPW, Garden Club	open space	Fair	low	local	yes	CBD	none
TOTAL 'OTHER' OPEN SPACE	39.12									

Success Story

Groundwork Somerville: Educational Garden Programs for Youth

Working together with the Growing Healthy collaborative* and local schools, Groundwork Somerville is transforming dormant school courtyards into vibrant educational gardens at five (soon to be seven) Somerville elementary schools. By providing opportunities for increased knowledge and awareness of healthy eating and environmental education, the gardens – along with school menu changes – reach youth as they are beginning to make their own choices about food. The gardens serve as an outdoor classroom where children experience the joy of planning, planting, tending, harvesting, and preparing good, healthy, local foods.



The Groundwork Somerville Gardens Program includes:

- After-school gardening and cooking sessions;
- Lunch clubs, which explore featured fruits and vegetables;
- A summer science and gardening camp at the Healey School with Community Schools;
- Raising seedlings in classrooms;
- Community-building activities;
- Special lunchtime events such as demonstrations, taste tests, and trivia games;
- Field trips to nearby organic farms and markets.



Beginning in 2007 and continuing in 2008, Groundwork Somerville hired a crew of middle-school youth workers to maintain the gardens at East Somerville Community School (Edgerly Center), Winter Hill Community School, Healey School, and the Argenziano School. The youth crew will join a team that is dedicated to learning about urban gardens, growing and harvesting fresh herbs and vegetables, and cooking, serving, tasting, and selling fresh veggies within the Somerville community. In recognition of their care of the gardens and completion of the program, each youth will receive a share of the profits made by

selling veggies monthly at the Union Square Farmer's Market – a stipend of \$100 dollars.

* Growing Healthy, a collaboration of the Institute for Community Health, CitySprouts, Groundwork Somerville, The Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets, and the Cambridge and Somerville Schools' Food Service Departments, is working to bring more locally grown foods into the lives of kids and families.

Success Story

Union Square Farmers Market

From the farms, fields, orchards and ovens of Massachusetts, the Union Square Farmers Market brings organic and local food to Somerville's residents. A collaboration of Union Square Main Streets, the City of Somerville, and the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets, the market is held every Saturday morning from June through October.



Held in the Union Square Plaza, the farmers market offers a wide selection of products from seasonal vendors, including fresh produce, home-grown herbs, and homemade baked goods and breads. Market-goers will find fruits and vegetables from Drumlin, Kimball, Parker, and Nicewicz Farms, baked goods from B&R Artisan Breads, and pies, jams and sweet breads from Cook's Farm Orchard. The Hmong farmers from

Yang Family Farm offer specialty produce, such as water spinach, pea tendrils and squash blossoms, while Stillman Farm offers flowers and free-range meats.

The "Grown in Somerville" booth at the Farmers Market welcomes urban growers and community organizations to move beyond the role of consumer to sell their own products. For instance, youth programs sell seedlings, local specialty food producers try out new products, and community advocates share information relevant to the neighborhood.

Key to the success of the market is the creation of a welcoming, positive environment for the whole family. Each week there are live musical and dance performances by local artists, as well as engaging activities for kids. Occasionally, theme days are held, e.g., Alternative Health Day, Kids in Motion, Doggie Day and a Harvest Fair all draw additional activity to the market, creating a festive and family-friendly atmosphere.

The Union Square Farmers Market attracts about 1,100 people each week. During its first two seasons, a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provided funding for specific outreach to help reduce the economic and cultural barriers for low-income families to participate. Outreach efforts also doubled the number of families with young children attending the market.

Surveys have shown the market's economic impact is nearly \$500,000 each season.



Success Story

East Somerville Community-Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between a local farm and a community of consumers. A CSA benefits consumers by offering them a direct relationship with the production of their food, as well as high-quality, locally grown products at a fair price. At the same time, the farmer reaps the financial benefit of offering products direct to the consumer, receiving payments shortly before the growing season, when they are needed most for purchasing seeds and necessary supplies. Consumers in this partnership are known as “shareholders” since they purchase “shares” of the harvest. Their dividends, therefore, are the weekly stock of produce they receive during the season.



The East Somerville CSA was launched in 2008 as an intensive collaboration among Farmer Dave’s Farm (in Dracut, MA), several community organizations, and local resident volunteers. The concept was brought to this part of the City in late 2007 when a Smith College student volunteered with the Somerville Community Growing Center, partnering with members of Shape-Up East Somerville to increase neighborhood access to healthy foods.

In early 2008, Farmer Dave’s expressed interest in starting a CSA in Somerville. After conducting community outreach, Growing Center staff determined that there was considerable interest in establishing a CSA in East Somerville, with its large population of low-income and immigrant residents. Shortly thereafter, East Somerville Main Streets (ESMS) joined the CSA partnership, bringing a strong connection to the Lower Broadway business community and recruiting Architectural Openings, a local business which offered its parking lot as the future site of the CSA drop-off and pick-up area.



In its first year, the East Somerville CSA was a considerable success, allowing residents from the neighborhood and from other parts of the city to get locally grown produce right in the heart of the community.

Working under a short deadline, the outreach team secured over 60 CSA shareholders, while establishing strong public-private partnership within East Somerville. Though the goal of enlisting low-income and immigrant families was not as successful as hoped, the existence of the CSA provides an opportunity next year to reach an even broader range of people involved.

Section 6: Accomplishments

The City of Somerville is proud of the accomplishments achieved during 2002-2007 for parks, open space and recreational areas. This reflects the work of a diverse team from many City departments:

- Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), which plans and manages renovation and construction of City parks and the Community Path;
- Capital Projects Management Department, which provides construction oversight on the built environment, including city recreational fields and schoolyard renovations;
- Law Office and Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), which lend advice and expertise during public bid projects;
- Purchasing Office, which handles all contracts and obtains the highest quality of services and supplies for the best price;
- Recreation Department, which designs and operates programs for residents of all ages in our open spaces;
- Health Department, which is taking on an expanded role in physical infrastructure improvements through the Shape Up Somerville initiative; and,
- Perhaps the most critical link of the team, the Buildings and Grounds Program at the Department of Public Works (DPW), which maintains and repairs all City-owned outdoor properties.

This team effort also includes the active support and dedication of many community partners. These nonprofits, public/private partnerships and other associations provide advocacy, education, funding, volunteers and other benefits to Somerville's open space network. Many of these groups' efforts are showcased in the "Success Stories" featured throughout this Plan. Without their contributions, the city's parks and recreational areas would not be where they are today.

2002-2007 Accomplishments

Open Space Advisory Committee

The City met the majority of goals outlined in the *2002-2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan*. One critical piece, which was recommended in both the 1997 and 2002 Plans, was the creation of an Open Space Advisory Committee. As has been shown throughout this Plan, Somerville is lucky to have numerous outside groups and City departments active in open space and recreation issues. Coordination is needed to focus this expertise and ensure that the ambitious goals and objectives of this Plan are achieved, to collaborate on grants and innovative funding strategies, and minimize duplicate efforts. The Open Space Advisory Committee was created to fill this strategic gap.

2002-2007 Action Plan

The City of Somerville proposed the following project-based Action Plan in the *2002-2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan* (see the *Action Plan Map* contained in the 2002 Plan):

Tier I:

- Restoration of Nathan Tufts (Powder House) Park
- Renovations to Corbett-McKenna Park on Prospect Hill
- Renovations to Florence Park in East Somerville
- Renovations to Trum Tot Lot on Cedar Street and Franey Road
- Renovation to Trum Field on Broadway (Phase I)
- Renovation of Skating Rink on Somerville Avenue (DCR property)

Tier II:

- A New Skate Park in Foss Park (DCR property)
- Renovation of Dilboy Field (DCR property)
- Renovation to Trum Field on Broadway (Phase II)
- Renovation to Somerville/Milk Row Cemetery
- Community Park on Walnut Street between Medford and Pearl Streets (now named Ed Leathers Community Park)
- New Construction of proposed Allen Street Park
- Renovation to Perkins Playground
- Expansion and renovation of Harris Park

Tier III:

- Renovation of Trum Field on Broadway (Phase III)
- Renovation of Palmacci Park
- Renovation of Perry Park
- Renovation of Stone Place
- Renovation of Foss Park (DCR property)
- Renovation of Draw Seven Park (DCR property)
- Mystic Waterfront Park (DCR property)

Success Story

Edward L. Leathers Community Park



Former Kemp Nuts site

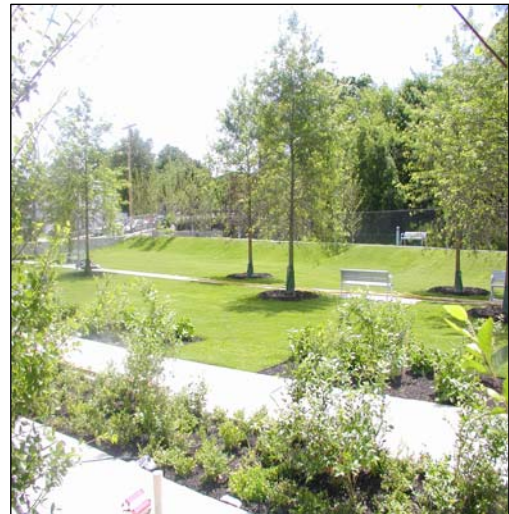
Opened in August 2008, Edward L. Leathers Community Park is the exemplary result of active community participation, sound City planning, and creative “green” design.

Situated on the former site of the old Kemp Nuts Factory, the 0.985-acre park is located in one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Somerville. When the City acquired the property in 1997, it began an extensive community outreach program to gauge residents’ preferences for how the space should be developed. Overwhelmingly, the residents who attended the community meetings (many of them low-income immigrants who speak English as a second language) opposed the City converting the site to active recreational space.

Instead, the community preferred more “passive” green space in which residents could “escape” from the bustle of their urban surroundings to an open, tree-filled landscape. Thus, as a result of this resounding call from the community, the vision of a green park was pursued and has been achieved.

The new Edward L. Leathers Community Park includes a large grassy open space, approximately 60 shade trees, hundreds of shrubs and groundcover plantings, a variety of play opportunities for children, and several walking paths which transition into surrounding neighborhoods and provide circulation within the park. Among the many notable design elements, there is a raised embankment along the rail corridor that serves as a viewing platform, a place to picnic, and a stage for community events and neighborhood cultural festivals. There is also an off-leash recreation area for dogs.

The nationally recognized landscape architectural firm Reed Hilderbrand Associates – which won the American Society of Landscape Architects “Presidents” award in 2007 for a project at the Arnold Arboretum – was contracted by the City to design the park.



Ed Leathers Park, now

Success Story

Perkins Park

Occupying just over a tenth of an acre in East Somerville, Perkins Park is an outstanding example of a successful urban park, demonstrating the importance of access to open space in cities. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, over 6,500 people live within a quarter-mile of the park; moreover, children in the Perkins Park neighborhood make up a higher percentage of the population than in any other community in Somerville. The park is also situated in an EJ community, with a 34% minority population and 58% living at low- to mid-income levels.

Prior to its renovation in 2006, Perkins Park was an aging playground with crumbling surfaces, deteriorating picnic tables and benches, and compromised playground equipment. Though relatively small, the newly designed park addresses the needs of many different users. New elements include interactive play features for younger children, a tire swing for older kids, a half-court basketball space for adolescents and adults, in-ground water spray jets, and tables and chairs. Vibrant yellow fencing surrounds the park area and helps to bring the space to life.

Designed by StoSS Landscape Urbanism, Perkins Park has superb graphic design elements which have been cited internationally in landscape architecture publications, including *International New Landscape* and *Landscape Design @ USA*. A majority of the funding for this renovation was provided by a state Urban Self-Help Grant, as well as federal CDBG funds.



Graphic surfaces double as play elements at Perkins Park, enhancing creative play.

Source: StoSS Landscape Urbanism

Success Story

Perry Park

Perry Park, located on Washington Street on the former site of the Perry School, has been a public park since 1974. Yet not until its recent renovation was its potential as a modern recreational space fully realized.

Re-opened in October 2007, the one-acre Perry Park is widely regarded today as one of the most attractive green spaces in the city. The park's renovation, which began in May 2007, involved the removal of most of the original asphalt paving (making up the old tennis and basketball courts), which was then replaced with various kinds of pervious surface. The park now features an expansive, rolling lawn, stone walls, large-caliper trees, an open sidewalk plaza, new lighting, and play features that attract both new and longtime residents to the area.

In addition to its model design, Perry Park is noteworthy for the level of involvement the community played in determining the character of the renovated space. During the redesign process for the park, residents from the surrounding neighborhood advocated strongly for passive green space to replace the old park. And once the park was reconstructed, many property owners abutting the new green space showed their approval by renovating their own backyard spaces and opening their view onto the park, thus "greening" the boundary between public and private.



Success Story

Trum Field House

Since 1903, Trum Field, located on Broadway between Cedar Street and Charles Ryan Road, has served as one of the major recreation centers in Somerville. In addition to serving approximately 60 baseball and little league teams, including the Somerville High School Junior Varsity and Varsity Baseball teams, Trum



Field is also a popular site for community events such as the Fourth of July Fireworks, the Recreation Commission's field days, numerous sports clinics and camps, city fundraisers, and a variety of musical concerts.

With Trum Field experiencing such constant demand over the decades, the field house itself fell into disrepair and eventually was unable to accommodate any use other than equipment storage. In 2003, thanks to the commitment of City funds, the assistance of an Urban Self Help Grant from the state Division of Conservation Services, and a private contribution from the Sloane family, the dilapidated field house was demolished and a new expanded structure was built in its place.

The new field house features ADA accessible ramps and restrooms, team changing rooms, a large open pavilion and viewing platform, and a dramatic vaulted roof. Renamed the Sloane Field House at Trum Field, the structure has become a significant focal point and architectural component in the City's redevelopment of the greater Broadway streetscape.

The City accomplished most projects from the 2002 Action Plan, as shown in Table 6.1 below. Projects not accomplished were a new skate park in Foss Park (DCR property; the City is now seeking other City-owned locations), expansion and renovation of Harris Park (now in planning stages for 2010), renovation of Draw Seven Park (DCR property, now in planning stages), and Mystic Waterfront Park (also DCR property, and now in planning as a public/private partnership). Dilboy Field and the Somerville Avenue skating rink are open to the public, but final completion of both projects by DCR is still underway as of November 2008. Phase 1 renovations for Milk Row Cemetery were completed, including rehabilitation of gravestones, tombstones, the Civil War monument, and ADA-accessible surfacing. Phase 2 renovations to the Cemetery are currently in the planning stages. All other projects from the 2002 Action Plan were completed. The City is proud of the fact that it managed 100% of the projects proposed in the 2002 Action Plan for City-owned properties, and fully completed 93% of those projects.

Project	Owner	Type*	Acres	Class	Year Complete	2002 Plan Tier
Allen Street Community Garden	City	CG	0.12	new	2007	Tier II
Corbett-McKenna Park	City	P/PL	0.61	existing	2004	Tier I
Dilboy Field	DCR	R	22.65	existing	In process	Tier II
Draw Seven Park	DCR	R, O	2.35	existing	-----	Tier III
Durell Pocket Park & Community Garden	City	CG	0.18	new	2007	NEW
Ed Leathers Community Park	City	P/ OLRA	0.7	new	2008	Tier II
Florence Playground	City	PL	0.26	existing	2004	Tier I
Foss Park (construction of new skateboard park)	DCR	-----	-----	-----	-----	Tier II
Foss Park (renovation)	DCR	R, P	14.62	existing	-----	Tier III
Harris Playground	City	P	0.29	existing	on hold	Tier II
Milk Row Cemetery	City	O	0.72	existing	2006 (Phase I)	Tier II
Mystic Waterfront Park	DCR	-----	-----	-----	-----	Tier III
Nathan Tufts Park	City	P	4.3	existing	2004	Tier I
Palmacci Playground	City	PL	0.08	existing	2005	Tier III
Perkins Playground	City	PL	0.15	existing	2006	Tier II
Perry Park	City	P	0.77	existing	2007	Tier III
Somerville Avenue Skating Rink	DCR	R	-----	existing	In process	Tier I
Stone Place Park	City	P	0.12	existing	2007	Tier III
Trum Field Phase I	City	R	N/A	existing	2003	Tier I
Trum Field Phase II	City	R	5.2	existing	2004	Tier II
Trum Field Phase III	City	R	N/A	existing	2007	Tier III
Trum Playground	City	PL	0.46	existing	2003	Tier I

* CG = community garden; P = park; PL = playground; OLRA = off-leash recreational area;
 R = recreational field or facility; O = other open space.

Success Story

Stone Place Park

Originally, Stone Place Park (located between Stone Place, Sanborn Court, and Homer Square) served as a play area for younger children. Yet as the demographics of the surrounding Union Square area changed over the years, the play structures at the park became underused. In 2007, when it came time for the City to renovate Stone Place, local residents expressed their desire to see the old “tot lot” transformed into a quiet neighborhood gathering space. And it has become just that.

“Though one of our smaller city parks,” said Ward 3 Alderman Tom Taylor at the reopening in October 2007, “Stone Place has really been turned into one of the [City’s] most unique open areas. What was largely underutilized now has great potential for many uses, from child play spaces to adult use.”

Since its reopening, Stone Place has become a popular place to have lunch or to relax in Union Square and is frequented by residents, businesses, and visitors alike. The redesigned Park – a little over a tenth of an acre in size – features a small lawn, a stone wall, colorful benches, new shrubs and ornamental grasses, three-season color, and privacy screening for neighbors abutting the space.

The newly renovated Stone Place Park, together with Perry Park and the Durell and Allen Street Community Gardens, represent the “first wave” of many open-space renovations proposed by the City in the coming years. These plans include not only the redesign of existing spaces but the construction of facilities for other types of parks users (e.g., an Off-Leash Recreation Area at Zero New Washington Street).



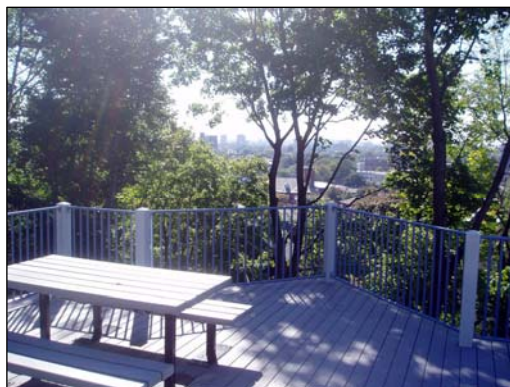
Success Story

Corbett-McKenna Park

Situated next to the famous Prospect Hill Tower (site of the nation's first flag-raising in 1776), Corbett-McKenna Park enjoys a superb setting overlooking the City of Somerville and the Boston skyline.

In 2003, the City allocated Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the park's renovation. With the funding in place, City staff recognized an opportunity to provide a new space for the community and then focused the renovation plans on a design that updated the park's physical amenities and accentuated its prominent scenic vista.

Re-opened in 2004, the half-acre Corbett-McKenna Park is a brightly colored, historically themed space built on two levels. The park consists of a basketball court, play features for different age groups, a water feature, and a balcony deck from which visitors can enjoy the splendid view.



Open Space Projects: Construction/Renovation

The City of Somerville committed to an aggressive schedule for the renovation of parks and open space in HUD-eligible areas. From 2002-2007, the City not only managed 11 renovations to existing properties, but also expanded the amount of dedicated open space, including the conversion of two brownfields to community gardens. In total, over one acre of new properties was added to Somerville's park and open space system.

The City of Somerville has expanded its grant writing efforts in order to fully maximize the potential of the funds it commits to parks and open space projects. The City has applied for and won several competitive Urban Self-Help Grants from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS), which have expanded project scope and design potential significantly. The City is particularly grateful for the continued support from DCS over the past five years. These funds, leveraged with federal Community Development Block Grants, and grants from the Environmental Protection Agency and Massachusetts Historical Commission, allowed Somerville to meet the majority of its 2002 goals. These grant monies were partnered with additional City funds for a successful funding strategy. The following table provides a more detailed picture of the funding strategy that leveraged nearly \$2,500,000 in outside awards for Somerville's recent parks and open space projects:

Table 6.2. Outside Financing for 2002-2007 Parks And Open Space Projects				
Project	Grant Source	Year of Award	Year Complete	Grant Amount
Trum Field Phase I	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 8	2002	2003	\$233,380
Trum Field Phase II	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 9	2002	2004	\$250,000
Trum Field Phase III	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 10	2004	2008	\$250,000
Milk Row Cemetery	Massachusetts Historical Commission	2004	2006	\$55,250
Perkins Park	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 11	2005	2006	\$235,294
Durell Pocket Park & Community Garden	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 13	2005	2007	\$115,100
Ed Leathers Community Park	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 12	2005	2008	\$325,066
Allen Street Community Garden	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 13	2005	2007	\$115,100
	EPA Brownfields Grant	2005	2007	\$100,000
The Park at Somerville Junction	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 14	2006	2008	\$192,904
	EPA Brownfields Grant	2007	2008	\$100,000
Central Hill Memorial Park (playground approved for CDBG funds)	EOEEA, DCS Urban Self Help Grant 15	2007	Projected 2010	\$494,942
TOTAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE LEVERAGED FUNDS				\$2,467,036

Open Space Projects: Acquisition and Expansion

In the past four years, the following park spaces were dedicated to be retained as open space in perpetuity by the City of Somerville:

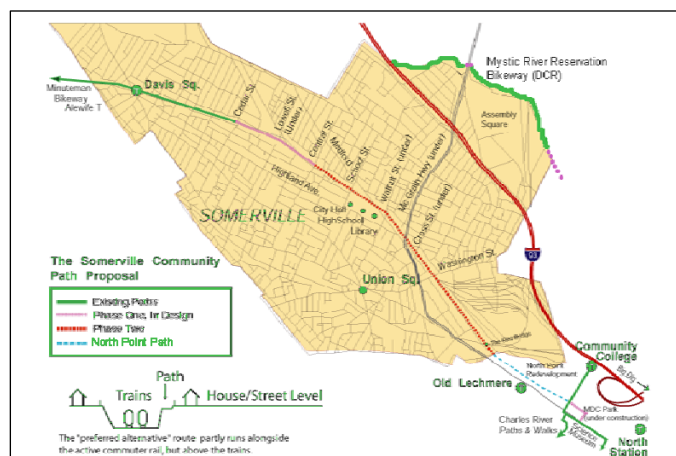
- Allen Street Community Garden;
- Central Hill Memorial Park (4.4 acres of total parcel);
- Durell Pocket Park and Community Gardens;
- Edward L. Leathers Community Park; and,
- The Park at Somerville Junction.

These parks total 6.44 acres of dedicated land. Of the five dedicated parcels, four are new City parks; the Park at Somerville Junction was also a City acquisition within the last five years. This parcel of industrial land was acquired and transformed into a neighborhood park in 2007. It also abuts the planned extension of the Community Path (see Somerville Community Path Success Story below).

Success Story

Somerville Community Path

The Somerville Community Path is an ambitious project to connect the Minuteman Bikeway and the Cambridge Linear Park to the Charles River and downtown Boston. A 0.8-mile stretch of the Path has been completed in Somerville heading east from Davis Square to Cedar Street. This 12-foot-wide, paved section is shared by hundreds of pedestrians, bicyclists and dog-walkers each day (motor vehicles are not permitted). The City has been working with the Friends of the Community Path and the MBTA on a proposed 2.5 mile extension that would continue east alongside the MBTA commuter rail and future Green Line extension rights-of-way. When complete, the proposed Community Path Extension will add approximately five acres to Somerville's current open space, and will create new possibilities for the addition of pocket parks and other smaller recreational spaces connected to the Path. The Path will serve as the main avenue for residents to reach the new Green Line stations as well as create an off-road route for bicyclists to reach the Charles River. The Path also serves as the final link in the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail that will run 104 miles from Boston to Northampton.



Since 2003, the City has achieved many objectives around improving and extending the Somerville Community Path. These goals correspond to three main project areas: (1) Path improvements in and around Davis Square, (2) Path extension from Cedar to Central Street, and (3) Path extension from Central Street to North Point in Cambridge. In 2004, with help from a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant, the City hired a manager to oversee these projects.

Davis Square to Cedar Street

City staff worked with the Davis Square Task Force, Bicycle Advisory Committee, MassHighway, and the MBTA to plan the development of the Path through Davis Square, thereby creating a continuous route between Linear Park to the west and Cedar Street to the east. These plans are part of a Transportation Improvement Program among Somerville, Cambridge, and Belmont, and are... (continued on next page)

Success Story

Somerville Community Path (cont.)

...expected be implemented in 2009. Also, the Somerville Garden Club developed a schematic for landscape improvements to the Path between Highland Road and Lexington Park. The City has committed \$160,000 to the design and construction, in 2009, of these improvements.

Cedar to Central Street Extension

The completion of the Park at Somerville Junction between Woodbine and Central Street was the capstone on several years of negotiations with the Cambridge Health Alliance which led to the donation of the land to the City. The City then secured an EPA Brownfields grant and a state Urban Self-Help grant to fund park design and construction. With input from community members, the City also completed a 25% design of the Path from Cedar to Central Street. Congressman Capuano secured \$800,000 in funds for this section, and the City secured an additional \$2.5 million in Congestion Management and Air Quality funds. The project is anticipated to be funded in FY 2011 and completed in 2012.

Central Street to North Point

In 2006, the City completed a feasibility study of the Path extension from School Street to North Point in Cambridge. This study explored an off-road alternative and options for connections to new Green Line stations at Gilman Square and Brickbottom/Inner Belt. Through the efforts of the City and community groups, the Secretary of Environmental Affairs required the MBTA to develop a 25% design of the Path in conjunction with the development of the initial design of the Green Line Extension. In August 2008, the MBTA released its preliminary concept for station locations and the Community Path.

Success Story

Somerville Garden Club

The Somerville Garden Club was founded in 1994 by a group of gardeners who wanted not only to share their gardening knowledge and experience, but to stimulate local interest in gardening, engage in civic beautification, encourage ecologically sound gardening, and provide a social forum for gardeners – beginners and masters alike.



In its early years, this all-volunteer group enjoyed the City's support through annual, \$2,500 Neighborhood Improvement Grants, which were used to beautify public areas in Somerville, including open spaces at major intersections, on library grounds, and along Somerville's Community Path. The Club is now financially self-supporting and boasts a membership of more than 220 individuals.

The Somerville Garden Club collaborates actively with the City and local non-profit organizations to promote green approaches to urban living. At its monthly meetings – which are open to the public and are often attended by more than 60 people – the Club provides information about the importance of public and private open space, gardening as recreation, environmentally sound land-use practices, native and invasive plants, companion planting, and a host of other subjects.

Additionally, a “round table” discussion at each meeting, an Internet forum, and a frequently updated website help gardeners to communicate and collaborate around gardening-related problems and issues.



The Club participates in many community outreach programs such as ArtBeat and Tufts University's Neighborhood Day, at which it distributes educational information to the public. It also holds a well-supported and eagerly anticipated plant sale every year in one of the city's squares.

Section 7: Analysis of Needs

7. A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Urban Forest Needs

In light of the tangible benefits a well-managed urban forest provides to any community, the maintenance, preservation, and expansion of Somerville's tree resources stands out among the City's open-space needs and priorities. Over 85% of people who responded to the Open Space and Recreation Survey indicated that increasing the city's tree canopy was either an "important" or "very important" priority. Somerville's trees comprise a vital natural resource that offers measurable benefits – ecological, economic, and social – to the community. From removing carbon dioxide and harmful pollutants from the air, to reducing storm-water runoff, increasing property values, and beautifying urban landscapes, trees are one of the most significant investments a city can make. Indeed, when properly planted and maintained, trees represent one of the few elements of municipal infrastructure that actually *increase* in value the more they mature.

In order to maximize the value of this "green infrastructure," the City must significantly increase the number of trees planted per year (currently approximately 150 annually), while also adhering to arboricultural best-practice in the selection of trees for specific urban growing environments. At the same time, more resources need to be channeled to existing City tree programs to bolster the proactive maintenance of Somerville's current tree stock.

Targeted tree plantings will do much to enhance the City's green corridors, which connect separate parcels of open space. Connected and related open spaces not only serve as wildlife passageways but also diffuse overcrowding in densely settled areas.

In order to meet these tree planting and maintenance needs, however, the City must first complete a comprehensive inventory of its public trees. Scheduled for completion by the summer of 2009, the street-tree inventory will not only provide concrete data about the composition and health of Somerville's public trees but will produce a baseline from which City programs (e.g., DPW and OSPCD) may develop a forward-thinking Urban Forest Management Plan. Such a management plan uses inventory data to establish goals around tree planting and maintenance; set priorities and schedules for tree pruning, trimming, and removal; determine staffing needs (in terms of both numbers and training); and make funding projections.

Tree inventories and urban forest management plans, in general, help to guide departmental decision-making and to justify requests for support for tree management. Moreover, they can inform (or even trigger) other municipal tree initiatives, like the development of tree-preservation ordinances or the formation of departments or divisions dedicated to urban forestry. Yet perhaps most important, by completing a tree inventory and drafting a management plan, a city demonstrates to residents and business owners a clear, active commitment to increasing the benefits of the urban forest and green infrastructure.

Water Resource Protection Needs

Despite considerable progress on the part of the City, MWRA, and local watershed groups, Somerville's water resources need greater protection and enhancement. In addition to non-point pollution runoff from streets, parking lots, and paved yards, two combined sewer overflow pipes in Somerville allow untreated sewerage to flow into the Alewife Brook and Mystic River after major storm events. Both of these problems must be addressed if the Mystic is to be truly suitable for recreational swimming, fishing, and boating by 2010 – a goal to which the City has committed.

More specific water resource needs relate to:

1) **The Mystic River Shoreline**

The two disjointed Mystic River shoreline areas, Shoreline Drive near Ten Hills and the Assembly Square area, require:

- better connections between each other and to the rest of Somerville (e.g., an undercarriage at the Wellington Bridge);
- greater accessibility by a broader, more diverse user population (e.g., cyclists, dog walkers, educational groups, etc.); and,
- improved access to the water for boating and fishing.

2) **Alewife Brook**

The underutilized strip of open space in Somerville adjoining the Alewife Brook needs greater access and visibility in order to increase its utility to Somerville residents. Water quality and safety issues (see Section 4.C.) must be addressed before more public use can be supported. Similar to the Lower Mystic River, the Alewife Brook shoreline needs stronger cross-municipality revitalization and wetlands protection.

Fisheries and Wildlife Protection Needs

Healthy fisheries need healthy water and access to it. Along with open space preservation and enhancement, efforts to protect surface water resources and wetlands protect the fish and wildlife habitats associated with those resources. As discussed in Section 4.E., the annual herring migration in particular is threatened or compromised by contamination events and man-made obstructions, including non-point source pollution and a broken fish ladder.

7. B. Summary of Community's Needs

Somerville's parks have seen a significant transformation over the past several years. Mayor Joseph Curtatone, along with the Board of Aldermen, the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, the Parks and Open Space Department, the Department of Public Works, the Conservation Commission, and Somerville residents have worked diligently to renovate, maintain, and, where possible, expand the City's parks and open spaces.

This Plan analyzes the challenges and assets of the City of Somerville regarding parks and open space, and has evaluated the accomplishments made during the prior plan. This has identified several community needs, as described below.

Increased Open Space

Somerville continually strives to expand and increase its inventory of permanently protected open space and recreation resources. The City has the opportunity to build on the successful acquisition of dedicated open space and resultant 1.4+ acres of new parks and community gardens constructed during the 2002-2007 period. One need is to expand the City's public open space holdings through outright purchase or dedication. Today, the majority of city residents are within a five-minute walk of some type of park or open space; however, a few areas of the city lie outside this boundary, and other neighborhoods are underserved in terms of relative acreage of open public space to population. It is necessary therefore to analyze those neighborhoods that are most underserved and develop a strategic plan to acquire additional parcels and construct new parks or selectively extend those existing parks identified as top priorities.

The City also needs to expand its supply of privately-held public open space through zoning provisions, development agreements, deed restrictions, public-private partnerships, and other means. With less than 7% of the City qualifying as public open space, providing as much open space as possible is necessary to maintaining and improving the quality of life for the Somerville community. By considering both public and private open space opportunities, innovative ways can be found to bolster the physical and emotional health of City residents, and provide a long-term sustainable urban environment.

Improved Open Space

In addition to expanding our open space acreage, a primary need is to continue to improve the quality of open space and recreational facilities and programs. Innovative, environmentally friendly, and accessible opportunities are needed for all residents. The City of Somerville manages 49 parks and open spaces; an estimated 20% are in need of renovation today. Typical residential concerns focus on unsafe/inaccessible surfaces and play equipment, lack of trees, inadequate lighting, and programmatic elements that only serve one age group (see Appendix E: Public Survey and Results). Addressing these renovation needs, particularly in the prioritized East Somerville and Union Square NRSAs, is a top priority of the current administration.

Somerville's current park system is aging. Many parks last renovated in the 1980s are typically paved recreational courts, with an accessory tot lot. These types of programmed spaces often do not reflect the programmatic needs of today's residents, who clamor for open green space. The City also wants to make a commitment to "green" practices in its public open spaces. Installing permeable park surfaces, whether lawn, groundcover, stonedust or unit pavers, serves many environmental objectives, including reduced stormwater runoff and increased groundwater recharge. Combining permeable surfaces with additional trees and vegetation serves to reduce the urban heat island effect, and has demonstrated benefits for mental and physical health. Good design can address both the active recreational needs of users and the need for tranquility and refuge.

Creating safe and engaging open space is a City priority. Without a ready supply of additional developable land, the pressure on the existing park system to provide refuge and recreational opportunities for 80,000 residents is intense. The need to renovate existing parks and open spaces is a clear mandate for the City to promote health, well-being, and safety for all residents.

Linkages to SCORP Data

As noted in Section 3.A (“Regional Planning Efforts”), the 2006 *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) outlines general “supply and demand” trends related to open space and recreation across the Commonwealth, and offers a statewide, open-space needs assessment based on survey data and inferential analyses. With few exceptions, the citywide preferences and needs identified in this *Open Space and Recreation Plan* closely mirror the SCORP findings from the Metropolitan Boston Region (where Somerville is located). In the OSRP public survey, a majority of Somerville residents, for instance, indicated the highest demand for playgrounds (and tot lots) and neighborhood parks that offer opportunities for gentle exercise and other forms of passive recreation, followed by areas (namely the Community Path) that allow for active recreational pursuits, particularly jogging/running and road bicycling. Somerville’s open-space usage trends also align with SCORP data. According to the SCORP, “walking is the most reported recreation activity in the [Metropolitan Boston Region], as in the state.” Similarly, in Somerville, 27.45% of survey respondents who use the Community Path reported that they used it for recreation walking, followed by bicycling (23.41%), and commuting (15%). In light of these reported preferences, it is not surprising that survey respondents identified the extension of the Community Path as among the highest facility needs for the City (second only to routine park maintenance). This echoes regional and statewide facility needs associated with trail-based activities.

ADA Compliance

As part of the need for improved open space, it is critical to address those parks that do not fully meet accessibility for all potential users. A citywide assessment is needed to determine which park properties need improvements to meet ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Improvements in these areas can then be prioritized as part of the City’s ongoing ADA compliance effort.

In December 2006, testimony was given at a public meeting regarding the importance of considering children and adults with disabilities when designing parks and open space. The Somerville DisAbilities Commission has discussed the potential of equal-level playing areas and sensory stimulation additions to the existing Somerville parks system. There is a clear need going forward to examine residential needs and to ensure equal accessibility wherever possible.

Facilities and Programs to Address Fitness Needs

As obesity rates soar, access to public recreational areas has become even more critical. This is particularly true in economically disadvantaged areas where populations are most vulnerable. Somerville has responded to the national childhood obesity crisis by partnering with Tufts University to sponsor the nationally-recognized Shape Up Somerville program.

Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Shape Up Somerville: Eat Smart. Play Hard” was a three-year (2002-2005), environmental change intervention designed to prevent obesity in culturally diverse, high-risk, early-elementary school children. The Shape Up team developed and implemented strategies designed to create energy balance for first- to third-graders in Somerville. In before-, during-, and after-school environments, interventions were focused on increasing the number of physical activity options available to children throughout the day and on improving dietary choices.

In 2003, 46% of Somerville's first- to third-grade population were at-risk of becoming overweight or were overweight. A BMI-z score (or BMI-for-age percentile) was recorded to report changes in weight gain among children who participated in the Shape Up Somerville (SUS) intervention, as compared to children in two socio-demographically similar communities in Massachusetts who did not receive the intervention. The study found that, on average, SUS reduced approximately one pound of weight gain over eight months for an eight-year-old child. This may seem small for an individual, but on a population level this reduction in weight gain, observed through a decrease in BMI-z score, would translate into large numbers of children moving out of the overweight category.

SUS is now working with Parks and Open Space to increase public education about healthy living choices by developing appropriate park signage and to create a parks map that shows walking distances/public transportation routes available from residential areas to the parks throughout the city. Improving access to parks and open space will be critical in order to continue the 2003 SUS results, and renovations to parks in SUS-target areas will be a priority.

Success Story

Shape Up Somerville

Shape Up Somerville (SUS) is a nationally recognized campaign to increase physical activity and healthy eating among Somerville youth and adults through advocacy, physical infrastructure improvements, and policy work. SUS works with all segments of our community, including schools, city government, civic organizations, community groups, businesses, and other people who live, work, and play in Somerville.



Shape Up Somerville began as a research study at Tufts University targeting first- through third-graders in the Somerville Public Schools. Today, SUS focuses on active and healthy living programs throughout the city and is supported by the Health Department and a Taskforce made up of 11 initiatives and 25 stakeholders. Among its many citywide initiatives, SUS strives to bring active-transit opportunities to city residents and make green spaces accessible to the community. SUS is also a valuable contributor to the active-living movement in Somerville. These partnerships are models for urban communities working to bring an active living infrastructure to diverse and high risk populations.

SUS is now working with the City's Parks and Open Space Department to increase public education about healthy living choices by developing appropriate park signage and to create a parks map that shows walking distances and public transportation routes available from residential areas to the parks throughout the city. Improving access to parks and open space is critical, and renovations to parks in SUS-target areas will be a priority. SUS has advocated strongly for the extension of the Somerville Community Path so that, ultimately, the community can walk or bike on a safe, dedicated path, while exploring a range of open spaces which include passive parks, playgrounds, and community gardens.

7. C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

Based on the results of surveys, public meetings, interdepartmental discussions, and onsite inventory of open space properties, this plan notes the following management needs:

- 1) Increased daily attention to maintenance and management, especially playground cleaning (litter, glass, and graffiti removal) and minor repairs (sprinklers, water fountains, and gate latches, etc.); public/private/neighborhood partnerships may prove essential here.
- 2) Improved programming of existing open spaces, to make full use of these limited resources.
- 3) Increased staffing and support for DPW/Buildings and Grounds, OSPCD/Parks, and Conservation Commission/Greenspace Coordinator.
- 4) Increased public involvement in parks maintenance and management beyond the design stage, including active “Friends of” groups and ongoing private support for parks.
- 5) Improved communication between City departments and residents concerning park program and maintenance schedules, tree management issues, reasons for delays or closures, and the like, as well as clearer channels to report specific problems (a staff- or intern-written newsletter or website on open space, for example).
- 6) Better coordination between City departments concerning open space issues, especially long-term planning related to open space priorities, acquisition, and the competing demands for public properties.
- 7) Better coordination between the City, its neighbors, DCR, MWRA, and other public and private groups dealing with open space and environmental issues on a regional level.

In essence, all of these can be distilled down to two principal needs:

- the need for increased funding and support for open space and recreation departments, activities, and properties; and,
- the need for improved communication and collaboration concerning open space and recreation issues, within the City administration, between the City and its residents, and also between the City and the various state and regional agencies.

Section 8: Community Vision

8. A. Description of the Process

Throughout the development of this report, public participation was integral to the planning process. Thus, this Plan includes and addresses the needs and concerns of the multitude of open space and recreation interests within the city, including City boards and departments, local and regional environmental groups, and the community at large.

The public participation process included three public meetings (held at different locations throughout the city), four Open Space Advisory Committee meetings, several public events (such as farmers markets, the annual Senior Picnic, and Somerville Growing Center gatherings), and a widely distributed Open Space and Recreation Survey.

The survey, conducted between May 1 and July 31, 2008, was meant to accomplish two primary goals: (1) to identify various park user groups and understand current park use and satisfaction levels, and (2) to analyze the gap between community needs and current open space opportunities. In addition to the web-based survey (which was offered in English), Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, and Spanish versions were posted for downloading on the City's website. Paper copies were also distributed citywide to businesses, organizations, and residents, as well as at public meetings.

Over 900 individuals responded to the survey (872 of them Somerville residents). While this was an impressive response for an online survey, the number represents only approximately 1% of the total Somerville population. In addition, they do not necessarily comprise a representative sample reflective of Somerville's diverse population of parks and open space users. That said, the responses to the survey are very valuable as a means for guiding the City's goals and objectives for parks and open space, and are of enormous benefit to the City's understanding and evaluation of current properties.

The goals, objectives, and five-year action plan described herein incorporate the sentiments expressed through these various public channels, as well as the collective knowledge and expertise of City staff, volunteers, and advocacy groups dedicated to open space and recreation.

Included in Appendix E are the results of the Open Space and Recreation Survey. Appendix F contains the agendas and minutes of Open Space Advisory Committee meeting, and Appendix G lists comments recorded at public meetings about the Plan process. Finally, central to this Plan is a critical evaluation of past progress on the action items contained within the previous plan, and a concerted effort to revise, reformulate, and redefine these tasks into a concrete, ambitious, and implementable plan for action.

Success Story

Somerville Growing Center: Maple Syrup Project

The idea for the Somerville Maple Syrup Project was born one fall day in 2003 at Gaining Ground, Inc., the Growing Center's partner farm in Concord, MA. Students from Somerville High School, under the guidance of their teacher Frank Carey, had been making field trips to the farm as part of a hands-on experiential learning class. Together with farmer Mark Waltermire, the students explored the possibility of collecting maple syrup at the Growing Center and other areas throughout the city. Five years later, the project has become one of the Growing Center's most successful programs.



The Maple Syrup Project provides hands-on environmental education (paired with math and language skills) to nearly 250 local high-school and elementary youth every year. It is an opportunity for students to explore the historic, economic, and scientific roots of an important New England tradition, as well as broader issues like Massachusetts agriculture, climate change, and subsidized corn syrup production. The project, which encourages residents to "volunteer" their trees for tapping, has also increased awareness of the importance of trees among Somerville youth and adults. During the past five years, thanks to collaborations with Tufts University, the Somerville School Food Service, the Department of Public Works, and organizations like Groundwork Somerville and the Eagle Eye Institute, the Growing Center has expanded the Maple Syrup Project's educational outreach and enlisted the help of community members for sap collection and boiling. Indeed, the sap buckets on trees near the Tufts campus are a testimony of the project's cooperative spirit and success.

At the annual Maple Boil event in March, youth and adults have a chance to learn about tree anatomy and physiology, experience first-hand the process of making fresh maple syrup, and enjoy tasty maple treats. Educators consistently rate this one-day event as a valuable learning opportunity; some student attendees have even returned as volunteers at the Growing Center. The Maple Boil wouldn't be possible if it weren't for the diligence and creativity of the Somerville High School metal-shop students who constructed the two sturdy fire boxes and state-of-the-art evaporator pans needed for the boiling process.



The Maple Syrup Project challenges and informs our perspectives about the roles and functions of urban trees, in a way that engages Somerville youth and residents. And it is an exciting outdoor activity that adds a bit of community warmth during the winter months, a time when many residents do not ordinarily consider using Somerville's open spaces.

8. B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Somerville's quality of life is greatly enriched by the many open spaces in which residents play, gather, garden and exercise. Open spaces provide a buffer against the clutter and clatter of urban life, while adding greatly to the health of residents by providing safe, clean, and ecologically beneficial environments in which to play, interact, or relax.

The eight open space and recreation goals for Somerville, listed below, support the existing open space of Somerville, enhance it with care, and encourage the expansion of open space and its benefits to the quality of life in the city. The goals described below respond to the substantive need to improve open space and recreation in the city, and to the organizational requirements for creating the administrative structures to achieve these ends.

Goals

1. Renovate existing parks and open spaces to improve the condition of Somerville's recreational areas and ensure attractive, safe, and accessible public lands.
2. Acquire more land to expand Somerville's total open space acreage and ensure access to recreational areas in every neighborhood.
3. Analyze and improve access for persons with disabilities to parks and open space, as part of ongoing ADA compliance.
4. Increase tree canopy and green spaces to improve urban health, promote sustainability, and reduce the heat-island effect.
5. Increase Off-Leash Recreational Area (OLRA) and skate boarding opportunities throughout the city, and create a new skate park.
6. Raise the bar for sustainable design and building practices in city parks and open space projects.
7. Reduce brownfields and convert to more desirable uses.
8. Improve accountability and set departmental vision through a series of strategic planning documents.

These eight goals comprise a comprehensive vision for open space in the City of Somerville, with emphasis on open-space acquisition and renovation, and improved management of existing spaces.

Success Story

Off-Leash Recreation in Somerville

Somerville opened its first fenced-in park for dog recreation (known as an Off-Leash Recreation Area, or OLRA) in April 2006. Situated adjacent to Nunziato Field near Union Square, this one-quarter-acre park exemplifies both a creative use of limited open space and a successful response to a specific residential need.

Off-leash recreation in Somerville is the outcome of an ongoing community-government partnership. In August 2004, Mayor Joseph Curtatone formed the City's Dog Owners Task Force to address the recreational needs of families with dogs and concerns about violations of the leash law in municipal parks. Made up of residents, representatives from the Office for Strategic Planning and Community Development, the Department of Public Works, and members of the Board of Aldermen, the Task Force reached out to local neighborhoods, elected officials, and other park-user groups around these issues. Two public meetings convened in 2005 demonstrated wide support for off-leash recreation.

Since the OLRA opened, violations of the leash law in the adjacent park have ceased, and Nunziato Field is more popular than ever among local residents who use it for various active and passive activities, such as picnics, frisbee, and touch football. Additionally, groups like the Somerville Youth Soccer League and the Open Air Circus continue to use the one-acre field for organized events.

Today, Somerville resident dog owners use the off-leash recreation area at Nunziato Field 365 days a year, making the park one of the most frequented open spaces in the city. Building on this success, in August 2008, Somerville opened its second fenced-in park for off-leash recreation in the Edward L. Leathers Community Park on Walnut Street. In the next year, the City plans to construct two more off-leash recreational areas, one in East Somerville and another near Union Square.



Section 9: Goals and Objectives

Vision

The City of Somerville will provide a system of attractive, safe, accessible, and sustainable parks and open spaces that meet the needs of multiple user groups.

Goals

1. Renovate existing parks and open spaces to improve the condition of Somerville's recreational areas and ensure attractive, safe, and accessible public lands.
2. Acquire more land to expand Somerville's total open space acreage and ensure access to open space in every neighborhood.
3. Analyze and improve access for persons with disabilities to parks and open space, as part of ongoing ADA compliance.
4. Increase tree canopy and green spaces to improve urban health, promote sustainability, and reduce the heat-island effect.
5. Increase Off-Leash Recreational Area (OLRA) and skate boarding opportunities throughout the city, and create a new skate park.
6. Raise the bar for sustainable design and building practices in city parks and open space projects.
7. Reduce brownfields and convert to more desirable uses.
8. Improve accountability and set departmental vision through a series of strategic planning documents.

Strategies/Objectives

Renovate Parks and Open Space

- 1.1 Analyze Somerville's parks and open spaces; rate their condition and their accessibility by underserved populations.
- 1.2 Develop a renovation schedule.
- 1.3 Improve community involvement/outreach in park renovation projects.
- 1.4 Leverage additional funding resources for park projects.

Acquire Additional Land

- 2.1 Develop a strategic plan for acquiring parcels of land.
- 2.2 Leverage additional funding resources for land acquisition.
- 2.3 Increase open space opportunities through public/private partnerships.
- 2.4 Identify other creative strategies for increasing open space.

Analyze and Improve Access

- 3.1 Identify priority locations for ADA improvements, in coordination with the Somerville ADA Coordinator.
- 3.2 Fund reconstruction of improvements at key locations.

Increase Tree Canopy and Green Spaces

- 4.1 Coordinate, execute, and maintain a comprehensive street-tree inventory.
- 4.2 Expand and strengthen street-tree planting/replacement programs.
- 4.3 Develop best-practices guidelines around proper tree planting and maintenance, to be utilized by contractors and existing City tree programs (i.e., DPW and OSPCD).
- 4.4 Increase educational outreach to residents and business owners about the ecological, economic and social benefits of trees and open space, and the importance of permeable surface area to reduce stormwater runoff and increase groundwater recharge.

Increase Off-Leash Recreational Areas and Create New Skate Parks

- 5.1 Identify areas of the city that would be best served with additional OLRAs.
- 5.2 Identify best locations in the City for a skate park.

Raise the Bar for Sustainable Practices

- 6.1 Identify and mandate sustainable practices in landscape projects.
- 6.2 Create a maintenance database for new environmental technologies installed in city parks.

Reduce Brownfields

- 7.1 Identify potential brownfields for City acquisition.
- 7.2 Continue to support brownfields programs to facilitate the clean up of privately owned parcels.

Set Vision through Strategic Planning Documents

- 8.1 Revise and submit *Somerville Open Space and Recreation Plan* (OSRP).
- 8.2 Participate in the creation of the *Union Square Open Space Plan* (USOSP).

Section 10: Five-Year Action Plan

The City of Somerville is proud of its accomplishments over the past five years, and proposes the following Five Year Action Plan for 2008-2013. While the current economic climate is unpredictable and demands a measured approach toward City resources and budget allocation, Somerville remains positive about the infrastructure projects proposed for the next five years. The City has spent resources wisely over the past five years and implemented management tools and systems that help the Administration make informed, strategic decisions about how to best invest in the City and continue to provide the services and facilities our residents need most.

Somerville has proven that it knows how to do more with less; and it has been rewarded for efficient, conservative fiscal management by an improved bond rating and a much broader commercial tax base. If 2008 is the beginning of a long national recession and results in further cuts in state aid or further loss of revenue, then that would naturally affect the following Five-Year Action Plan for open space and recreation. It has been proven, however, that investment in our common land leads to more growth and prosperity in the future. In this spirit, the City is committed to implementing the following strategic plan.

This Five-Year Action Plan provides an action and a proposed schedule for each open space and recreation objective listed in Section 9. A responsible lead within the various City departments is identified for each action. A priority is also assigned to each action, with a rating of 1-3, 1 being highest and 3 lowest. This gives an indication of the weight given to this item in relation to achieving the goals and objectives of this plan. The priority rating reflects current strategy and economic health and is subject to change.

2008-2013 Action Plan for Open Space and Recreation

Goal 1: Renovate Parks and Open Space

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1.1 Analyze Somerville's parks and open spaces; rate condition and accessibility to underserved populations.	1.1.1 Issue report with prioritized recommendations for renovation schedule.	OSPCD	Local/CDBG	2009	1
1.2 Develop a renovation schedule. (see Appendix C, 2008-2013 Renovation Schedule).	1.2.1 Renovate 6 parks/recreational areas in next 5 years.	OSPCD	Local/CDBG	2013	1
1.3 Improve community involvement and outreach in park renovation projects.	1.3.1 Regularly provide multilingual announcements of public meetings for park design.	OSPCD	Local/CDBG	ongoing	3

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1.4 Leverage additional funding resources for park projects.	1.4.1 Secure 3 state grants over the next 5 years.	OSPCD	TBD	2013	1

Goal 2: Acquire Additional Land

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
2.1 Develop a strategic plan for acquiring parcels of land.	2.1.1 Issue report with prioritized recommendations for land acquisition.	OSPCD	Local/CDBG	2010	1
2.2 Leverage additional funding resources for land acquisition.	2.2.1 Secure at least one outside grant to purchase new land.	OSPCD	TBD	2013	1
2.3 Increase open space opportunities through public/private partnerships.	2.3.1 Create 5 acres of open space in Assembly Square (see action item 3.D.on 2008-2013 Action Plan map, Appendix A).	OSPCD	Private/Local/CDBG	2012	2
2.4 Identify other creative strategies for increasing open space.	2.4.1 Expand zoning requirements for publicly usable open space (see Section 11, <i>Union Square Open Space Plan</i>).	OSPCD	TBD	2010	3

Goal 3: Analyze and Improve Access to Public Open Space

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
3.1 Identify priority locations for ADA improvements, in coordination with the Somerville ADA Coordinator.	3.1.1 Issue report with prioritized recommendations for park accessibility improvements.	OSPCD	Local/CDBG	2011	2

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
3.2 Fund reconstruction of ADA improvements at key locations.	3.2.1 Complete specific ADA improvements to 5 parks in next 5 years.	OSPCD	Local/ CDBG	2013	1

Goal 4: Increase Tree Canopy and Green Spaces

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
4.1 Coordinate, execute, and maintain a comprehensive street-tree inventory	4.1.1 Implement electronic management system for inventory data and tree work	OSPCD	Local	2009	1
	4.1.2. Develop a three- to five-year Urban Forest Management Plan	OSPCD	Local/ grant	2009	1
4.2 Expand and strengthen street tree planting/replacement programs.	4.2.1 Plant at least 100 trees per year with CDBG funds and 50 trees per year with City funds.	OSPCD / DPW	Local/ CDBG	ongoing	2
4.3 Develop best-practices guidelines around proper tree planting and maintenance, to be utilized by contractors and existing City tree programs (i.e., DPW and OSPCD).	4.3.1 Draft “Somerville Tree Manual” for distribution to City tree programs	OSPCD	Local/ grant	2010	3
	4.3.2 Conduct workshop(s) for DPW on tree program goals and best-practices.	OSPCD	Local/ grant	2010	3
4.4 Increase educational outreach to residents and business owners about the benefits of trees, open space, and permeable surfaces.	4.4.1 Increase visibility of the City’s Urban Forest Initiative (i.e., print materials, web presence)	OSPCD	Local/ grant	ongoing	1

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
	4.4.2 Conduct workshops / presentations for community groups and residents about Somerville's "green infrastructure initiatives	OSPCD	Local/ grant	ongoing	1

Goal 5: Increase Off-Leash Recreational Areas (OLRAs) and Create New Skate Park

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
5.1 Identify areas of the city that would be best served with additional OLRAs.	5.1.1 Construct 2 new OLRAs in Somerville.	OSPCD	Local/ CDBG	2010	1
5.2 Identify best locations in the City for skate park(s).	5.2.1 Construct a new skate park in Somerville.	OSPCD	Local/ CDBG	2011	1

Goal 6: Raise the Bar for Sustainable Practices

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
6.1 Identify and mandate sustainable practices in landscape projects.	6.1.1 Revise city specs for parks contracts to strengthen environmental accountability and quantify green products and practices used in project construction.	OSPCD	Local/ CDBG /grant	2009	1
6.2 Create a maintenance database for new environmental technologies installed in city parks.	6.2.1 Require contracted designers to submit a best practices manual for completed park projects to DPW and OSPCD.	OSPCD	Local/ CDBG /grant	ongoing	1

Goal 7: Reduce Brownfields

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
7.1 Identify potential brownfields for City acquisition.	7.1.1 Map locations of existing brownfields, rated according to City purchase potential and strategic location.	OSPCD	Local/CDBG /grant	2013	3

Goal 8: Set Vision through Strategic Planning Documents

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
8.1 Revise and submit <i>Somerville Open Space and Recreation Plan</i> to DCS.	8.1.1 OSRP completed and available to the public.	OSPCD	Local	2009	1
8.2 Participate in the creation of the <i>Union Square Open Space Plan</i> .	8.2.1 <i>Union Square Open Space Plan</i> completed and publicly available.	OSPCD	Local	2009	1

Central to the City’s economic and community development efforts within the next five years are three major initiatives notable for their potential to increase and diversify open-space opportunities in areas of Somerville where such opportunities are minimal or virtually non-existent. These large-scale redevelopment initiatives (depicted on the 2008-2013 Action Plan map in Appendix A) are described briefly below.

Assembly Square Redevelopment

The 145-acre Assembly Square Mixed-Use District holds considerable development potential, with its proximity to a new proposed Orange Line transit station, state and federal highways, and the Mystic riverfront. During the past decade, there has been a great deal of activity around the redevelopment of Assembly Square, including discussions of how new uses can help preserve and enhance Somerville’s open space network. A master plan for approximately 66.5 acres of the district currently guides redevelopment efforts, and is based on several key principles consistent with the goals of this *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, including improved access to the Mystic River; transit-oriented planning; mixed-use development; a connected series of pedestrian, bicycle, and open space amenities; thoughtful, multi-modal roadway design; improved connections to nearby neighborhoods.

Master Planning of Brickbottom/Inner Belt

This nine- to 12-month effort will result in a land-use plan, a proposed transportation network, an urban design concept, including concepts for the public realm and open space, and a market analysis, all of which will combine to form a comprehensive picture of the area’s significant

development potential. The master plan will also include a preliminary estimate of infrastructure costs and recommendations about how to structure needed financing.

Union Square Zoning Change/TODs

Union Square has become the subject of considerable attention recently, as increased development is anticipated with the opening of the Green Line Extension. The City's ongoing rezoning study sees this as an opportunity to promote (and in some cases mandate) mixed-use, and transit- and pedestrian-oriented development in the Union Square area. In turn, the proposed rezoning would require that development in the proposed Transit Oriented Districts (TODs) provide more usable open space than is available to the public. This includes a requirement that a minimum percentage of land area (i.e., between 10% and 15%) be set aside for publicly accessible open space. Section 11 describes in detail the development and open-space potential of the Union Square area.

Section 11: Union Square Open Space Plan

11. A. Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The Union Square Open Space Plan represents an opportunity to focus on a distinct area of Somerville that is anticipating future change as a result of the Green Line Extension. The plan is meant to help guide this transition and to ensure that accessible open space, whether on public or private property, is designed to meet community needs and goals. Although referred to as “Union Square,” this plan includes the Union Square Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) with the addition of several blocks on the west side of the McGrath Highway¹⁵ (see Appendix A: Union Square Open Space Plan maps, Figures 1-3). This plan not only puts forth goals to improve and increase public open space, but establishes policies for the development of usable open space on private property.

Planning Process and Public Participation

The importance of open space in Union Square has been the subject of longstanding discussion. In developing the rezoning proposal for Union Square and Boynton Yards (2008), the Union Square Rezoning Focus Group spent a portion of its time addressing the need for additional open space and how the rezoning could support an increase in publicly accessible open space on private property. As a result of this discussion, the new districts proposed will have higher requirements than anywhere else in Somerville outside of Assembly Square.

Furthermore, this Union Square-specific plan benefited from the extensive research and input gathered for the *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, including the citywide survey, the Open Space Advisory Committee, and the associated community meetings.

In addition, a community meeting specific to Union Square open space was held on January 6, 2009 at City Hall.

11. B. Community Setting

History of the Community

The intersection of Bow Street, Somerville Avenue, and Washington Street, while originally situated on marshland, forms the oldest and largest commercial district in Somerville – Union Square. With the filling of the marsh and construction of several quick routes to Boston, Union Square exploded with commercial and residential growth. This helped change the area from a small rest stop on the way to Boston to a thriving commercial district.

The original marshland and sandy soils of the Union Square area suggested its first name of “Sandpit Square.” The area originally contained a marsh at the edge of the Miller’s River near Allen Street. Bow Street followed the perimeter of a marsh, and Somerville Avenue was constructed over that

¹⁵ No residential population is located in these additional areas, so the population data used in this plan will be synonymous with the Union Square NRSA statistics.

marsh in 1813. Union Square emerged from the intersection of three main streets used as trade routes into Boston in the 17th and 18th centuries. Mainland Charlestown and other surrounding farms sent goods via Somerville Avenue (known as Milk Row at the time) to meet ferries or to be carried across bridges to Boston.

With the development of the Medford Turnpike (Mystic Avenue) in 1803, the volume of traffic in and around Union Square began to intensify, and businesses began to flourish. Businesses such as blacksmiths and wheelwrights serviced travelers passing through the area. Brickyards, slaughterhouses and the Union Glass Company (predecessor to modern day Corning Incorporated) were among the largest mid-19th century industries near the square. Franklin Hall, constructed in 1852, was the first multi-purpose building in the square. This building contained a Post Office, grain and grocery store, and a meeting hall.

As a result of the increased development of Union Square, a two-story wooden fire house on the corner of Washington and Prospect Streets was erected in 1838. The building was reconstructed in brick in 1856. The firefighters erected a flagpole in 1853 across the street from the engine house, lending the square its then name, “Liberty Pole Square.” When the Square was later used as a recruiting center during the Civil War, it acquired its present name of Union Square.

By the end of the 19th century, Union Square was home to several wood-working shops, ice businesses, and carriage factories. Union Square’s development opportunities were enhanced by the railroad – the first passenger rail opened in 1835 on the south side of Washington Street. The first horse-drawn streetcar system in the Boston area was established between Union Square and Harvard Square in 1852. In 1869, Union Square’s first major commercial block (Masonic Hall) was constructed, housing an apothecary, shoe shop, offices, and a meeting hall. Until this time, Union Square consisted mainly of dwellings and farms, but the development of Masonic Hall fueled the beginning of a high style of architecture in the commercial district. Buildings of red brick with granite sills and trim, dark bands of contrasting brick, patterned slate roofs trimmed with ornamental ironwork began to emerge. This began the development of the multi-unit row houses and apartment hotels such as the crescent-shaped apartment building at the corner of Bow and Summer Streets.

Development in the Boynton Yards area began in the mid-1800s with the founding of the Union Glass Works in 1854 and the Charles H. North slaughterhouse and packing plant in 1867. This development was aided by the completion of the Fitchburg Railroad in 1835 and the Grand Junction Railroad in 1855. By 1898 there were five slaughterhouses (including Boynton Packing) in Somerville, making it the third largest meat packing area in the nation and earning it the title of “Chicago of New England.”

By 1900, the Millers River was filled to alleviate pollution, and the marsh was filled in to make room for more businesses and more roads. Farms began leaving cities on the edges of Boston and moving farther west. With the development of the automobile, a farmer could move his farm a greater distance from the city to where land was less expensive, and still transport his goods to Boston in an affordable manner. The development of row houses and apartment hotels on the streetcar line made Union Square an attractive area for Boston commuters to live. In the early

1900s, electric streetcars made 88 stops a day in Union Square to bring commuters to their jobs in Boston.

Changes in transportation modes – particularly the widespread use of the automobile – provided consumers with greater mobility and led to changes in shopping patterns and location of new development. As is true for many historic commercial areas throughout the country, Union Square began to lose ground to newer, more competitive retailing establishments in outlying locations.

In 1980, the area was designated as an “Urban Renewal area,” where issues such as storefront improvements, traffic flow, public parking, and streetscape improvements were addressed. These improvements made a noticeable difference in the commercial center and the area. For example, the City constructed the Washington Street parking lot, the public safety building, and the public plaza. The City also reconstructed roads, planted street trees, and inaugurated the storefront improvement program; and new tenants filled the old fire and police facilities.

Planning Area Boundaries and Land Use

The boundaries of the Union Square Open Space Study Area are as follows (see Appendix A: Union Square Open Space Plan maps, Figures 1-3).

- West: Leland Street, Perry Street, Dane Street, Granite Street, School Street
- North: Highland Avenue, Walnut Street, Medford Street, Pearl Street, Flint Street
- East: Cross Street, Auburn Avenue, McGrath Highway
- South: Rufo Road, City of Cambridge border, Prospect Street, Webster Avenue, Newton Street, Concord Avenue

The study area totals about approximately 15 million square feet of land area or .54 square miles. Approximately 68% of the parcels and 33% of the land area in the study area are residential uses. The non-residential uses are predominantly the largely retail uses at the heart of Union Square, along Somerville Avenue and Washington Street, and in Twin Cities Plaza, together with light-industrial uses along Prospect Street, in Boynton Yards and at the Pat’s Tow Lot block.

Public parks constitute 4.3% of the land area. (See Section 4B for more detail.)

Population Characteristics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 57% of the residents included in the study area are of low- to moderate-income. This translates to nearly 5,700 lower-income persons within a short walking distance of Union Square (out of 9,925 residents within the study area). The greatest concentration of low income residents can be found in the Block Group north of the Lowell Line Commuter Rail right-of-way and bound by Pearl Street and Walnut Street, as well as in the blocks immediately to the east of Walnut Street from Bow Street up to the Lowell Line right-of-way. The area with the lowest concentration of low-income residents can be found on the eastern slope of Prospect Hill. When inflation is taken into account, incomes in the area did not rise more than 2% over the past decade, with the exception of the Block Group bounded by Washington Street, Medford Street/McGrath Highway, the Cambridge border, and Prospect Street (Block Group 351502) where incomes grew by approximately 6% per household.

There are approximately 30 residents per acre and 19,389 residents per square mile living in the study area (excluding the “Pat’s Tow” block between Medford Street and the McGrath Highway which has zero residential population).

The educational attainment in the study area is lower than the citywide average. In fact, most block groups in the area have fewer than 40% of residents over 25 years of age with a college degree (less than 25% of residents had a college degree in Block Group 351502 and 351407) whereas, across the city, 44.5% of residents had a college degree. The same pattern can be seen regarding attainment of high school diplomas; over 1,700 residents did not have high school diplomas in 2000. Not surprisingly, the number of residents enrolled in college at the time of the 2000 Census was significantly lower in the study area than the western parts of Somerville near Tufts University and closer to Harvard and MIT.

Ethnic diversity was substantially higher than the citywide average with nearly 30% of residents of the study area indicating that they were a member of a minority group, as compared to the citywide average of 23% minority population. A total of 1,739 households indicated that they spoke a language other than English at home.

The vast majority of the area meets more than one criterion for being considered an “Environmental Justice” community. As can be seen in throughout most of the study area, 25% or more of the population is foreign born, a racial or ethnic minority, or of low income (see Appendix A: Union Square Open Space Plan map, Figure 3).

Growth and Development Patterns

Infrastructure

The infrastructure in the Union Square area, as with much of Somerville, was built prior to the turn of the 20th century. In fact, one of the earliest public sewers was built in 1868 in Union Square, extending from Bow Street and draining into a creek in Webster Street, and most of the city’s present-day sewer system was built between 1880 and 1900. With the filling of the Millers River, the water flow was channeled into three 54-inch pipes. In 1962, these were removed and three 48-inch pipes were placed in their stead. Unfortunately, these pipelines have not been consistently maintained, and their conditions worsened when the Charles River Dam was built downstream of the confluence of the Millers River and the Charles River. When the dam was set in place, the area became a constant elevation basin with no chance of tidal cleaning. Thus, the three pipes have become almost entirely clogged with silt and sand, violating the State permit conditions and effectively land-locking stormwater flowing from most of East Somerville. This situation affects not only Union Square and Boynton Yards, but also Inner Belt, Brickbottom, and the Boston Engine Terminal (BET).

A separate planning effort is now underway to address subsurface infrastructure and transportation issues in Union Square and will result in the determination of needed improvements and associated costs.

Public Transportation

At present, the Union Square area is served by several bus lines. These provide connectivity to the Sullivan Square Orange Line Station, Central Square and Inman Square in Cambridge, and part of Boston. The 86 bus line is particularly well used and with an average daily weekday ridership of 5,139 in January 2008, it represents the 15th most used route of the 169 MBTA bus routes throughout the Boston region.

At present, engineering plans for the Green Line Extension, including a spur to Union Square, are at the concept stage and progressing rapidly. With the opening of the proposed Union Square station, residents and businesses in the study area will have significantly improved access to rapid transit. This will reconnect Union Square to the region and has the potential to spur significant revitalization in the area.

Future of Development

Increased attention is being paid to the future of Union Square, and increased development is anticipated with the opening of the Green Line Extension. The City's ongoing rezoning study sees this as an opportunity to promote mixed-use, transit-oriented development through reduced parking requirements, increased floor area ratios, and incentives for construction of green buildings. Design guidelines and development standards are proposed to encourage pedestrian-oriented uses on the ground floor, and in some parts of the area (Prospect Street, Union Square Plaza, parts of Somerville Avenue, and Boynton Yards) pedestrian oriented uses will be mandated. In turn, the proposed rezoning would require that development in Transit Oriented Districts (TODs) provide increased usable open space available to the public. This includes a requirement that 15% of land area in the TOD135 and 10% of land area in TOD70 and TOD100 be set aside for publicly accessible open space.

11. C. Environmental Inventory and Analysis

Geology, Soils, and Topography

In the Union Square area, the renowned hills of Somerville – Prospect Hill and Central Hill – meet the flatlands and former marshy area that previously included Millers River and the Charles River tidal estuary. The surrounding hills are composed of gannet while the flatlands are either Boston Blue clay or reclaimed tidal lands. Much of Union Square and the whole of Boynton Yards are within the Cambridge Plane, which fills the lower valley of the Charles River from Watertown to Boston Harbor.

Due to its proximity to filled marsh and the former Millers River, the area along the Fitchburg Commuter Rail right-of-way has a high water table. This area also requires expansive geotechnical engineering solutions which add significantly to the cost of new construction.

Landscape Character, Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

The character of the Union Square area is formed by its natural environment overlaid by a distinctive built environment. The Millers River, tidal estuary, and nearby hillsides all came together to create the unique form of Union Square. Today, only Prospect Hill and Spring Hill remain as clear elements of that landscape given that the Millers River and tidal estuary have been filled in.

Even the spring in Spring Hill is no longer recognized as part of the landscape since its waters are piped into the storm drain system and cannot be seen at the surface.

The built environment of the Union Square Central Business District is characterized by small-scale businesses lining the heart of the square: the “bowtie” intersections of Washington Street with Somerville Avenue, and of Bow Street with Somerville Avenue. Here one finds a variety of architectural styles, including such gems as the Georgian Revival Post Office and Old Police Station, the Mansard Bow Street Police Station (now converted to residences), the Greek Revival “Midnite Convenient” store, Victorian doctors’ offices, and Gothic and Romanesque Revival churches lining Bow Street.

Contrasting with the often monumental brick and stone buildings of the square’s center are the predominantly wood-frame construction on intersecting residential streets. Radiating from the commercial node are tree-lined streets, some patterned with simple 2.5-story gabled homes, and others (mostly those climbing the hills) displaying imposing historic residences in Colonial, Mansard, Queen Anne, and eclectic styles. To the south of Somerville Avenue and in flatter parts east and west of the square, homes tend toward simpler styles, with 2.5-story gabled structures and triple-deckers predominating.

Although it has taken perhaps some time to acknowledge the historic resources of Union Square, recent adaptive reuse of historic buildings has been common, such as the conversion of a 19th-century bank into a café, and the restoration of three historic Bow Street churches and their adaptation to residential use. New residential construction gives a nod to traditional patterns of development, such as affordable housing in the Linden Street area, which echoes historic triple-decker style housing while providing modern amenities and additional open space.

Prospect Hill is significant in Revolutionary history for its use as a fortified lookout and the site of the first raising of an American flag—the “Grand Union Flag”—by George Washington on New Year’s Day, 1776. Prospect Hill Tower was erected in 1902 to commemorate that event, which is recreated every year in a popular

local ceremony. The setting of the tower is a public park, which provides treasured views of the Boston skyline otherwise available only to residents of hillside homes. The Tower itself is a cherished sight from downhill, particularly on arrival into the Square from Prospect Street, where it rises above surrounding buildings as a seeming castle in the sky. In years past, residents sought out Prospect Hill as a means to avoid the offal and odors of the industrial businesses clustered along the Millers River. Today, they seek out these areas in part due to the vistas of Boston and Union Square Plaza that can be seen from the hillside.



View of the Boston skyline from Prospect Hill.
Source: OSPCD

Of similar significance, although lower in elevation, the Union Square Post Office and historic Fire Station together are distinctive features of the terminus of Prospect Street.

Water Resources, Vegetation, Fisheries and Wildlife

The Union Square Study Area is fully urbanized and does not have any natural water resources, vegetation, fisheries or wildlife other than wildlife typically found in highly urban areas (i.e., squirrels, skunks, etc.)

Environmental Challenges

Historically, Boynton Yards and parts of Union Square were the dumping ground for the metro area's dirty businesses. Today, the historic abattoirs, brick kilns, meat packing and glass works have been replaced by less noxious but still problematic uses such as salvage yards, scrap metal dealers, automobile maintenance, and other industries that take advantage of cheap land.

Not surprising, East Somerville, which includes Union Square and Boynton Yards, has a disproportionate share of brownfields. In the past few decades, the City has had some success assessing and remediating targeted sites. These include cleanups of the old Boynton Railroad Yards (site of the former Boynton Meat Packing plant), Union Glass (now the site of Royal Hospitality), Mills Sandblasting, and the former Nissenbaum auto-salvage yard on Harding Street.

Nevertheless, significant environmental challenges remain and there are an estimated 30 brownfields remaining in the study area. The City is using multiple strategies to address these sites including additional federal brownfield assessment and remediation grants, and State brownfield program and funding assistance from MassDevelopment.

While the City has had success in remediating sites and using them to increase open space, environmental issues continue to have a dampening effect on the opportunities for commercial development as well as the provision of public open space and parks. Additional funds will be needed, and new resources leveraged if the City is to attract the redevelopment it desires in the Union Square area.

11. D. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Private Parcels

There are no sizeable parcels of open space in the study area that are privately owned.

Public and Nonprofit Parcels

Public parks constitute 4.3% of the land area which includes Union Square Plaza, Prospect Hill Park, Corbett-McKenna Park, Lincoln Park, Stone Place Park, Milk Row Cemetery, Walnut Street Park and Garden, Nunziato Field and Off-Lease Recreation Area, the Community Growing Center, and Quincy Street Park. Combined, these parks total nearly 15 acres of open space and green space within the study area. This translates into approximately 1.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents, a figure that is less than of the citywide average of 1.7 acres per 1,000 residents. Moreover this figure is significantly lower than the ratios of nearby communities such as Cambridge (4.9 acres per

1,000) and Boston (8.3 acres per 1,000). Central Hill Park, while outside the study area, is immediately adjacent and represents the single largest city-owned open space in Somerville.

There are no sizeable parcels of open space in the study area that are in non-profit ownership.

11. E. Accomplishments (2003-2008)

As noted above, significant progress has been made in the Union Square area between 2002 and 2007. Accomplishments include the following projects (Table 11.1).

Project	Owner	Type*	Acres	Class	Year Complete
Allen Street Community Garden [†]	City	CG	0.12	New	2007
Corbett-McKenna Park [†]	City	P/PL	0.61	Renovation	2004
Ed Leathers Community Park [†]	City	P/ OLRA	0.70	New	2008
Milk Row Cemetery	City	O	0.72	Renovation	2006 (Phase I)
Palmacci Playground	City	PL	0.08	Renovation	2005
Stone Place Park [†]	City	P	0.12	Renovation	2007

* CG = community garden; P = park; PL = playground; OLRA = off-leash recreational area; R = recreational field or facility; O = other open space.

[†] See “Success Story” for this open space

These parks were developed through an array of funding sources including City, CDBG, Urban Self Help, and Brownfields grants.

Additionally, in recent years, through the efforts of the Arts Council and Union Square Main Streets (USMS), Union Square Plaza has benefited from new artist-created benches and from the programming of unique events including the Fluff Festival, “Second Wednesdays” Events, Winter Craft Market, Prospect Hill Flag Raising, Spring and Fall Cleanups, and the Harvest Festival. The City and USMS have partnered with the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets to bring a weekly market to the plaza on Saturdays from June through October. This brings hundreds of people and fresh vegetables, meat, and baked goods to the plaza each week.

The City has also gone through an extensive planning process to define a future for the Union Square area that not only includes the construction of new residential and commercial developments, but also the designation of publicly accessible open space on private property in some parts of the study area.



ArtsUnion and OSPCD commissioned local artisans to design new streetscape architecture in 2005. Pictured L-R: Kimo Griggs, bench (2006); Mitch Ryerson, bench (2006); Christina Lanzl/Phil Manker, trash barrel cover (2007). Source (all): Somerville Arts Council

11. F. Analysis of Needs

Summary of Resource Protection Needs

The study area does not have any significant natural areas in need of protection.

Summary of Community's Needs

The Union Square community has expressed a strong interest in increasing the amount and variety of open space in the area. It is fortunate that the area has so many assets that can be built upon. Some of these assets include:

- Two large playing fields: The fields at the Lincoln Park School and Nunziato Field offer space for organized sports, as well as less organized activities such as ball and Frisbee throwing.
- Events in Union Square Plaza: The efforts of the Union Square Main Streets and Arts Council in holding creative events in Union Square Plaza have brought thousands of people to the area and have helped stimulate the area's revitalization.
- Significant vistas: Although considerable attention is paid to views from Prospect Hill Tower, at least four significant vistas can be found within the heart of the square. Maintaining and emphasizing these vistas will help acknowledge Union Square's rich history and contribute to a way-finding system for visitors to the area. Significant vistas include:
 - View north along Prospect Street toward the Post Office (National Historic Register designated);
 - View up Prospect Hill towards the Prospect Hill Tower;
 - View east along Somerville Avenue from intersection at Bow Street towards the historic City fire station; and,
 - View north along Webster Street toward the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue.
- Gateways: The unique roadway configuration in the Union Square area provides opportunities to emphasize existing natural gateways. Emphasizing the gateways would help visitors recognize they had entered a distinctive area and would provide for new local

landmarks. These gateways could be used as opportunities to display public art and to help market the area. They could also be used as opportunities to display public art and to help market the area. Gateway opportunities include:

- Somerville Avenue at the western leg of Bow Street (near the Market Basket grocery store and Milk Row Cemetery);
- Washington Street westbound at McGrath Highway; and,
- Prospect Street / Webster Street intersection.

For all the assets that already exist in the Union Square study area, however, there are significant community needs that can be identified:

- **Additional open space.** As noted above, the amount of open space per capita in the Union Square area is less than the citywide average, which is already a figure lower than most cities across the country. As Union Square grows and develops with the construction of the new rapid-transit station, additional residents and workers will be drawn to the area. As a result, the provision of additional open space will be needed.

- **Public gathering space.** Union Square Plaza serves as the heart of Union Square and is home to many locally and regionally recognized special events including the Farmers Market, Fluff Festival, and a variety of seasonal celebrations such as the Winter Crafts Market and the Harvest Festival. That said, the existing space is quite modest in size and has a challenging configuration that substantially reduces flexibility in its use. Some of the impacts include the presence of surface parking on the former Washington Street connection, two areas of cobblestone elevated above the normal grade of the plaza, and street trees and street furniture put in place over time and without a comprehensive plan. If Union Square is to grow as a regional destination, its center will require increased gathering space that can be used for an array of purposes.



Union Square Farmers Market.
Source: OSPCD Parks

- **Active open space for children.** The only tot lot in the Union Square study area is at the top of Prospect Hill. Although it was successfully renovated during the period covered by the last Open Space and Recreation Plan, it is not accessible to many residents in the area. Space for small children is needed throughout the area today and this need will only increase with future residential development in the area.
- **Green open space / contemplative open space.** Stone Place Park – a pocket park with a path and natural features – was renovated in 2007. The strong support during the renovation process for grassy areas and little or no programming is evidence of a community desire for green open space, and space that allows for contemplative activities such as

reading, eating lunch, or simply enjoying a sunny day.

- **Street trees and streetscape.** In conjunction with the planning for the anticipated Union Square Green Line Station, increased focus on the streetscape as a means of transportation, but also as a public amenity and gathering space is needed. Sidewalks have an interesting role as being pathways to and from different destinations, but they can also be intersections where neighbors meet while doing their daily errands, or actual destinations where people can spend time and watch others pass by. As part of the Union Square rezoning proposal, a minimum sidewalk width of 15 feet is recommended along the major streets such as Prospect Street, Washington Street, and Somerville Avenue in the core Union Square area. With proper design, these sidewalks can become locations for outdoor dining, outdoor display, and places for people to sit and enjoy the environment.
- **Bicycle and pedestrian open space and connectivity.** At present, bicycle and pedestrian transit through the Union Square area is challenging at best given the clear dominance of motor vehicles. Yet even with the amount of roadway dedicated to motor vehicles, traffic congestion within the area is significant. With the upcoming mass transit station, it is clear that attention must be paid to increasing bicycle, pedestrian, and bus connectivity throughout the area while also ensuring that automobiles destined for Union Square can reach the area with relative ease. This will, in turn, benefit ridership on the Green Line Extension. Davis Square provides a vivid example of how easy pedestrian and bicycle access to a transit station translates into high ridership.
- **Water features.** Interestingly, no remnants remain that acknowledge Union Square's origins as a marshland immediately adjacent to a tidal river. While daylighting of the Millers River is not feasible given that it is underneath the Fitchburg Commuter Rail right-of-way, the construction of one or more water features in the area, such as a fountain with public art or children's play shower, would provide not only potential relief on hot days and interest throughout the year, but also would provide an opportunity to educate the public about the historical presence of the waterway.
- **Public art.** With the exception of the artist-created benches in Union Square Plaza, the Union Square area is generally bereft of public art. In fact, in 2007, two war memorials were relocated from Union Square to Central Hill Park where they will remain. Nevertheless, opportunity exists to enhance the gateways and vistas identified as assets in Union Square through the provision of additional public art.

Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

The citywide management needs referenced in Section 7.C. apply equally well in the Union Square area. However, Union Square Plaza today benefits from a very productive collaboration between the City, Arts Council, and Union Square Main Streets. As the area is further activated by physical improvements, new businesses, and event planning, some formalization of this relationship may be needed – especially related to the programming of activities within the plaza. One of the amenities that will likely be attractive to new businesses in the area, including major new employers, will be the opportunities for public activities within the plaza – e.g., lunchtime performances, weekday “after hours” events, and weekend festivals, all of which will benefit residents, workers, and shopkeepers.

There is a strong community desire for the historic center, including the plaza and the western part of the “bowtie,” to remain as the heart of Union Square; programming and event planning of this space is critical to its continued prominence within the area. A specific entity will need to be identified to coordinate the programming of the plaza and ensure that it is maintained to proper standards.

As noted above, change is anticipated within Union Square as it returns to the type of mixed-use, transit-oriented development that it originally was. One specific difference anticipated is the provision of publicly accessible open space to be developed and maintained on private property. Since this will be designed through the land-use permitting process (special permit with site plan review) under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board, it is vital that design guidelines and policies be in place to facilitate the approval of parks that will contribute to a network of open spaces for residents and workers in the area. For this reason, specific land-use policies are identified in Section 11.G.

11. G. Community Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Description of Process

The Union Square Open Space Plan benefited from all of the input in the citywide plan, coupled with discussion with the Union Square Rezoning Focus Group and a community meeting on January 6, 2009. At this community meeting the draft concepts for Union Square were described and input received.

Union Square Open Space Goals and Policies

Those actions anticipated by City government relative to open space in Union Square can be found in the Union Square Five-Year Action Plan (see Section 11. H.). However, the Union Square area is distinctive within Somerville (along with Assembly Square), due to the fact that, through the special permit review process required as part of the Union Square rezoning, improvements on private property are anticipated to contribute significantly to the provision of open space in the area. As a result, this section has been crafted to establish specific policies to guide the future decisions made by the Planning Board relative to private development in the area.

1. Union Square Open Space (USOS) Policy #1. In addition to the design guidelines included in the SZO, usable open space on private property in the Union Square study area should follow the following guidelines:
 - A. Usable open space must be designed in a manner that clearly indicates that it is open to the public. This can be accomplished through choice of materials, visual accessibility, signage, or other means. The design of surrounding architecture may be considered as part of what makes usable open space feel public or private.
 - B. New useable open space should respond to identified types and features of open space that are needed in the area, as listed in Section 11.F. above – gathering spaces, open space for children, green / contemplative open space, bicycle and pedestrian paths, water features, and public art – with the exception of street trees / streetscape, which shall generally be provided on public rights-of-way.

- C. Planted green space is generally encouraged in privately owned usable open space. Except in clearly useful plazas or as part of a community path, usable open spaces should include “softscape” as a complement to the square’s more urban character.
 - D. “Hardscaped” plazas should be placed primarily in commercial cores. These should be designed to accommodate a variety of uses, and should feature paving or other treatment to distinguish them from private property.
 - E. Atria or winter gardens should be considered as a means to provide a year-round accessible open space. Particular care will need to be paid to ensure that the space appears open to the public.
 - F. Upper level or roof top open space that includes the added amenity of providing views of downtown Boston or Somerville amenities should be considered, with particular attention to be paid to access, signage, and sense of openness to the public.
2. USOS Policy #2. The provision of new land for usable open space is a priority. Therefore, developer proposals for payment in lieu¹⁶ of open space should only be approved when the proposed development site truly cannot produce open space that would be of a size, location, or configuration that would enhance the community. A receiver site will need to be designated before the payment in lieu is received.
 3. USOS Policy #3. Union Square Plaza should retain its dominance as the central gathering point and activity area for the neighborhood, regardless of what other open space areas are developed. Programming of the space should take into account the different types of users, including residents, workers, visitors, nearby businesses, etc., and should include a diverse mix of activities to meet the needs of these users. That said, this policy shall not be construed to prevent public activities from being scheduled in other open space areas in the vicinity. Optimally, they should be scheduled in coordination with activities within the plaza.
 4. USOS Policy #4. Four key vistas within Union Square should be preserved to maintain the unique character of the area and connectivity to the Square’s place in history. These vistas include:
 - View north along Prospect Street toward the Post Office (National Historic Register designated);
 - View up Prospect Hill toward the Prospect Hill Tower;
 - View east along Somerville Avenue from intersection at Bow Street toward the historic City fire station; and,
 - View north along Webster Street toward the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue.

Development proposals that might have potential impact on these vistas should be required to submit “before-and-after” simulations showing the proposed new construction within the context of existing vistas. Particular attention should be paid to ensure that sidewalk widths along Prospect Street area increased to 15 feet and that, to the extent possible, open area is maintained along the western edge of the public safety block (current location of Ricky’s Flower Market).

¹⁶ Pursuant to the new zoning ordinance.

Attention should be paid to emphasizing the terminus of the vistas, particularly as it relates to the design of public infrastructure. For example, public art could be installed in a median or traffic island at the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue; and the vista of the Post Office could be emphasized through lighting, banners, and the placement/removal of street trees.

5. USOS Policy #5. Gateways into the Union Square area should be enhanced so that visitors recognize they have entered a distinct area of the city of Somerville. These include:
 - Somerville Avenue at the western leg of Bow Street (near the Market Basket grocery store and Milk Row Cemetery);
 - Washington Street westbound at McGrath Highway; and,
 - Prospect Street / Webster Street intersection.

6. USOS Policy #6. The provision of outdoor public art should be strongly encouraged throughout Union Square on both public and private property.

7. USOS Policy #7. The construction of a community path aligned with the Green Line Extension spur should be strongly encouraged. The City should seek a community path of 12-foot width minimum. The preferred alignment of this path should be included in the Urban Renewal Plan for Union Square/Boynton Yards. OSPCD anticipates that this will be a simpler project than the Community Path extension planned for the center of Somerville, as the Union Square area has minimal grade change. Publicly accessible open space will be required in the TODs as part of the Union Square rezoning. Once the City determines the proper alignment of the path, private properties should be required to dedicate (and preferably construct) their portion of the path as a condition of special permit approval. When built, this community path will add approximately 1.4 acres of open space to Somerville. In considering the alignment of the path, the City should consider how it could be integrated or interwoven with residential areas as found in Davis Square.

11. H. Five-Year Action Plan

Goal 1: Renovate Parks and Open Space

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1.1 Renovate and expand Union Square Plaza to serve as a gathering point and regional destination.	1.1.1 Complete Union Square Transportation Study in next year, prepare 100% engineering drawings within next 3 years, and complete construction within next 6 years.	OSPCD	2013	1

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1.2 Evaluate Lincoln Park relative to citywide and neighborhood outdoor recreation needs and develop renovation plan with substantial community input.	1.2.1 Renovate Lincoln Park within next 5 years.	OSPCD	2013	2
1.3 Improve community involvement/outreach in park renovation projects.	1.3.1 Regularly provide multilingual announcements of public meetings for park design.	OSPCD	2008	2
1.4 Leverage additional funding resources for park projects.	1.4.1 Secure 1 state grant over the next 5 years.	OSPCD	2014	1

UNION SQUARE PROJECTS				
Property Name	Owner	Project Type	Map ID #	Target Goal
111 South Street OLRA	City	New Construction	1.M.	2010
Central Hill Park (adjacent to study area)	City	Renovation	1.K.	2011
Community Path (Union Square spur)	City	New Construction	TBD	2013
Milk Row Cemetery	City	Renovation	1.H.	2013
Union Square Plaza	City	Enhancements	1.L.	2014

Goal 2: Acquire Additional Land

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
2.1 Develop a community path through the Union Square area in the vicinity of the Green Line spur.	2.1.1 Develop a concept plan in next four years and require private developers to contribute land and improvements.	OSPCD	2013	1

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
2.2 Evaluate the public safety block to identify opportunity for additional open space.	2.2.1 Complete master plan for City facilities within next three years and develop concept plan for public safety block within next four years.	OSPCD	2012	2
2.3 Evaluate the block bound by Prospect Street, Webster Street, and Newton Street to identify opportunity for additional open space.	2.3.1 Evaluate the block bound by Prospect Street, Webster Street, and Newton Street to identify opportunity for additional open space.	OSPCD	2010	2
2.4 Increase open space opportunities through requirement for publicly accessible open space	2.4.1 Adopt the Union Square rezoning with associated TODs Districts within the next year.	BOA	2009	1
2.5 Ensure that at least one large scale open space (40,000 s.f. or greater) is built within the Boynton Yards area.	2.5.1 Complete Urban Renewal Plan for Union Square / Boynton Yards area within next three years and identify parcels for acquisition or contribution by property owner(s).	OSPCD	2011	1
2.6 Efforts should be made to identify at least one additional location for a tot lot in the flatlands area of the Union Square study area	2.6.1 Identify 2-4 potential sites for construction of a tot lot within the next three years. Consider requiring as part of publicly usable open space on private property, as well as on City-owned property.	OSPCD	2011	1

Goal 3: Analyze and Improve Access to Public Open Space

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/ Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
3.1 Ensure that open space on private and public property in Union Square area is compliant with ADA requirements.	3.1.1 Require that developers of publicly accessible open space comply with ADA throughout the permitting process immediately.	OSPCD	2008	1
3.2 Ensure that streetscape design associated with Union Square Transportation Study is compliant with ADA requirements.	3.2.1 See Benchmark 1.1.1.	OSPCD	20013	1

Goal 4: Increase Tree Canopy and Green Spaces

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/ Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
4.1 Identify opportunities to improve the tree canopy in the vicinity of Union Square Plaza through the Union Square Transportation Study.	4.1.1 See Benchmark 1.1.1.	OSPCD	2009	2
4.2 Ensure that widened sidewalks along Prospect Street and Webster Street, as required by the Union Square rezoning include sufficient area for street trees.	4.2.1 Evaluate permit applications for development in these areas to ensure that street trees are planted in compliance with City standards.	OSPCD	2009	2

Goal 5: Increase Off-Leash Recreational Areas (OLRAs)

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/ Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
5.1 Identify areas of Union Square that would best be served with additional OLRAs	5.1.1 Initiate development of an OLRA at 111 South Street within next two years.	OSPCD	2010	2

Goal 6: Raise the Bar for Sustainable Practices

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/ Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
6.1 Direct that publicly accessible open space on private property follow best practices for green design and management.	6.1.1 Implement standard conditions of approval for permit applications within next three years.	OSPCD	2011	2

Goal 7: Reduce Brownfields

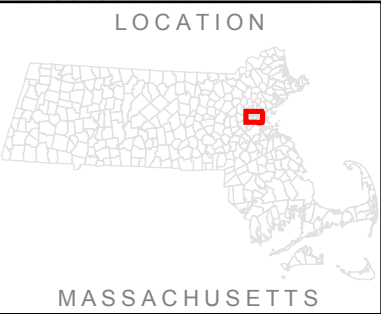
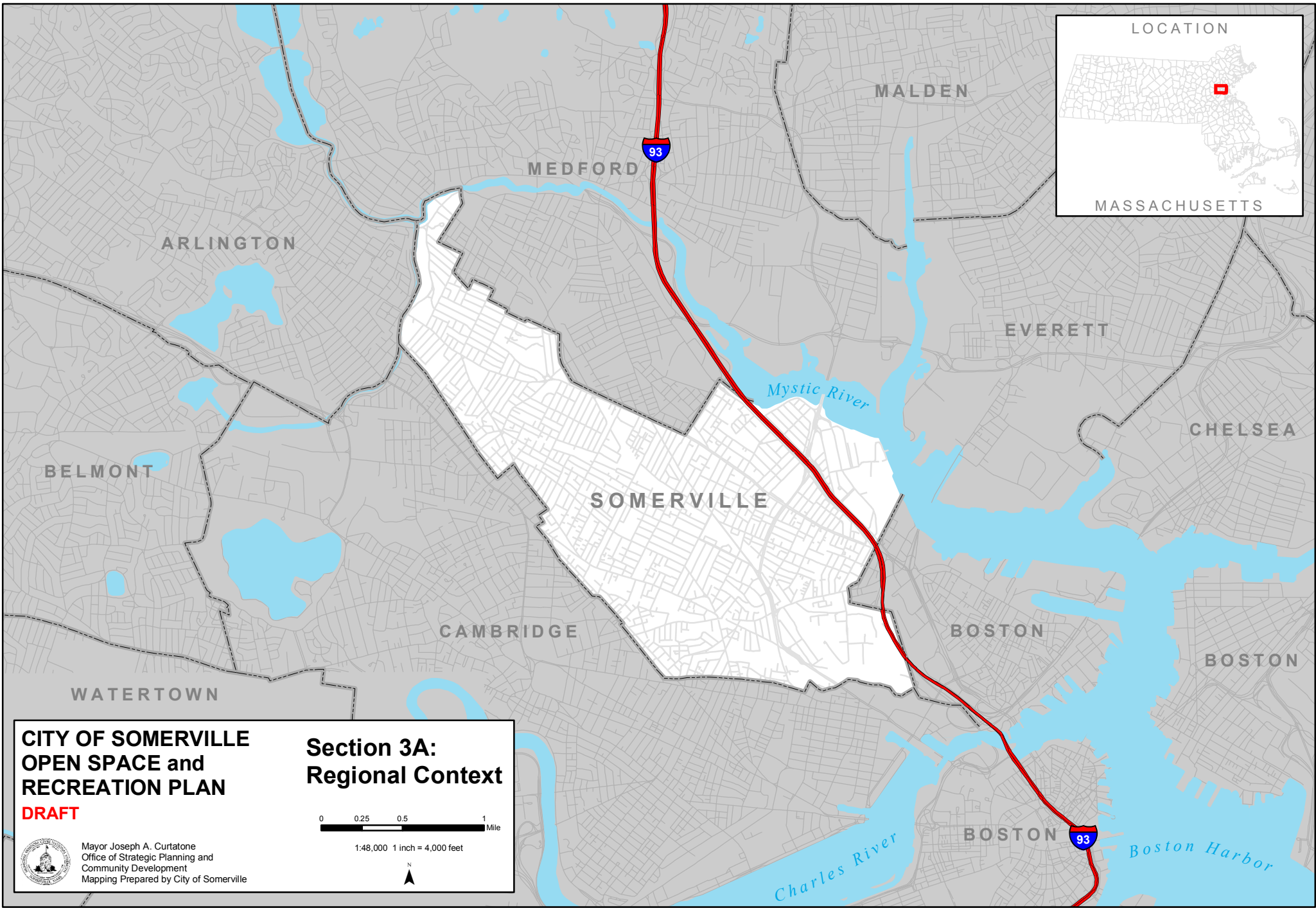
<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/ Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
7.1 Continue and accelerate, to the extent possible, brownfields clean up efforts in the Union Square area.	7.1.1 Complete evaluation of City-owned parcels within the next two years.	OSPCD	2009	1
	7.1.2 Seek additional grant funds or technical assistance to evaluate private parcels on the public safety block and along the west side of Prospect Street within the four years.	OSPCD	2012	1
	7.1.3 Complete the clean up of City-owned parcels within the next five years.	OSPCD	2013	1

Goal 8: Set Vision through Strategic Planning Documents

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action/ Benchmark</i>	<i>Responsible Lead</i>	<i>Proposed Completion</i>	<i>Priority</i>
8.1 Implement the <i>Union Square Open Space Plan</i> .	8.1.1 Initiate implementation upon adoption by the Board of Aldermen.	OSPCD	2014	1

Section 12: Appendices

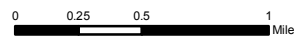
Appendix A: Maps



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN**

DRAFT

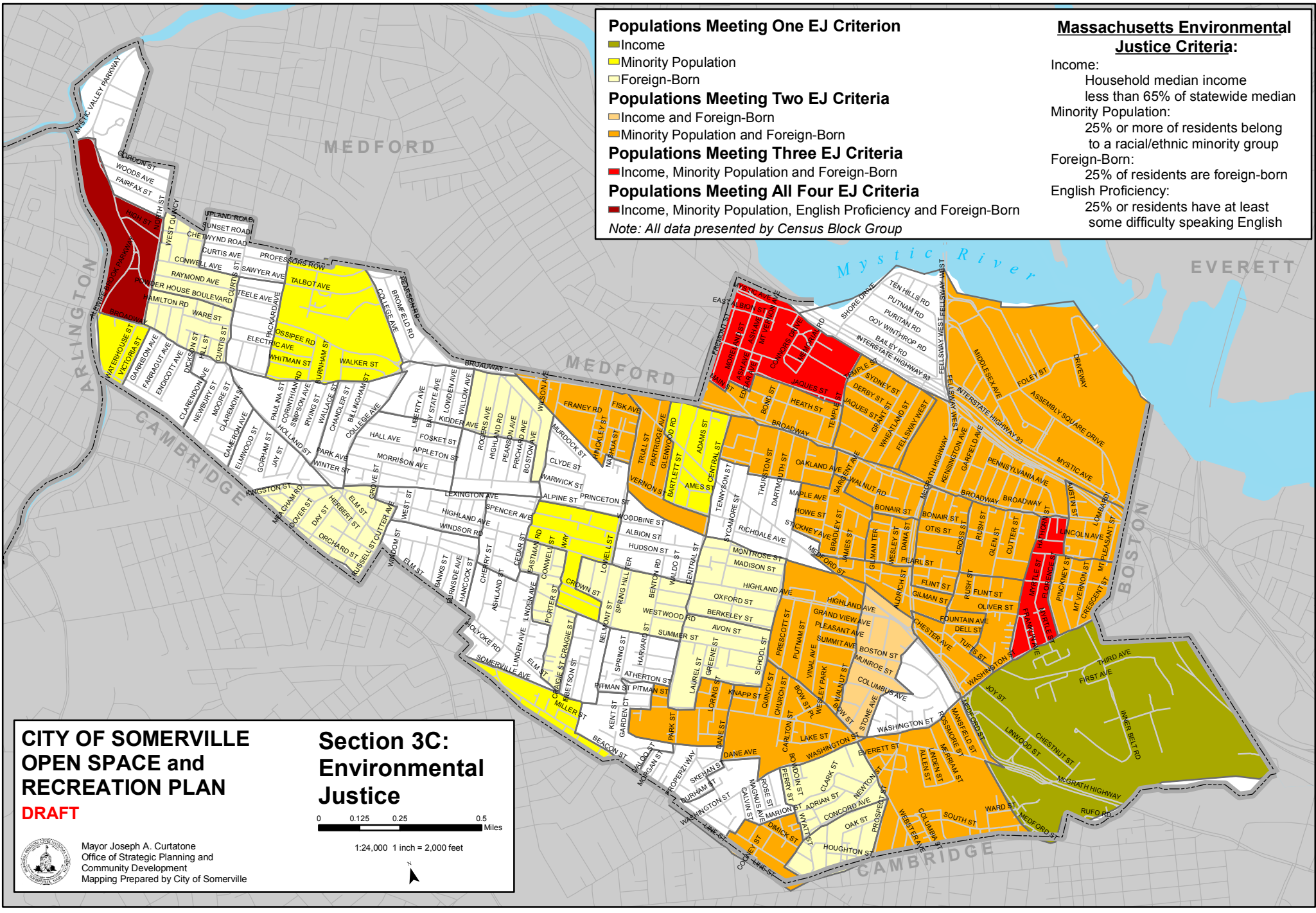
**Section 3A:
Regional Context**



1:48,000 1 inch = 4,000 feet



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Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville



Populations Meeting One EJ Criterion

- Income
- Minority Population
- Foreign-Born

Populations Meeting Two EJ Criteria

- Income and Foreign-Born
- Minority Population and Foreign-Born

Populations Meeting Three EJ Criteria

- Income, Minority Population and Foreign-Born

Populations Meeting All Four EJ Criteria

- Income, Minority Population, English Proficiency and Foreign-Born

Note: All data presented by Census Block Group

Massachusetts Environmental Justice Criteria:

Income:
Household median income less than 65% of statewide median

Minority Population:
25% or more of residents belong to a racial/ethnic minority group

Foreign-Born:
25% of residents are foreign-born

English Proficiency:
25% or residents have at least some difficulty speaking English

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OPEN SPACE and RECREATION PLAN
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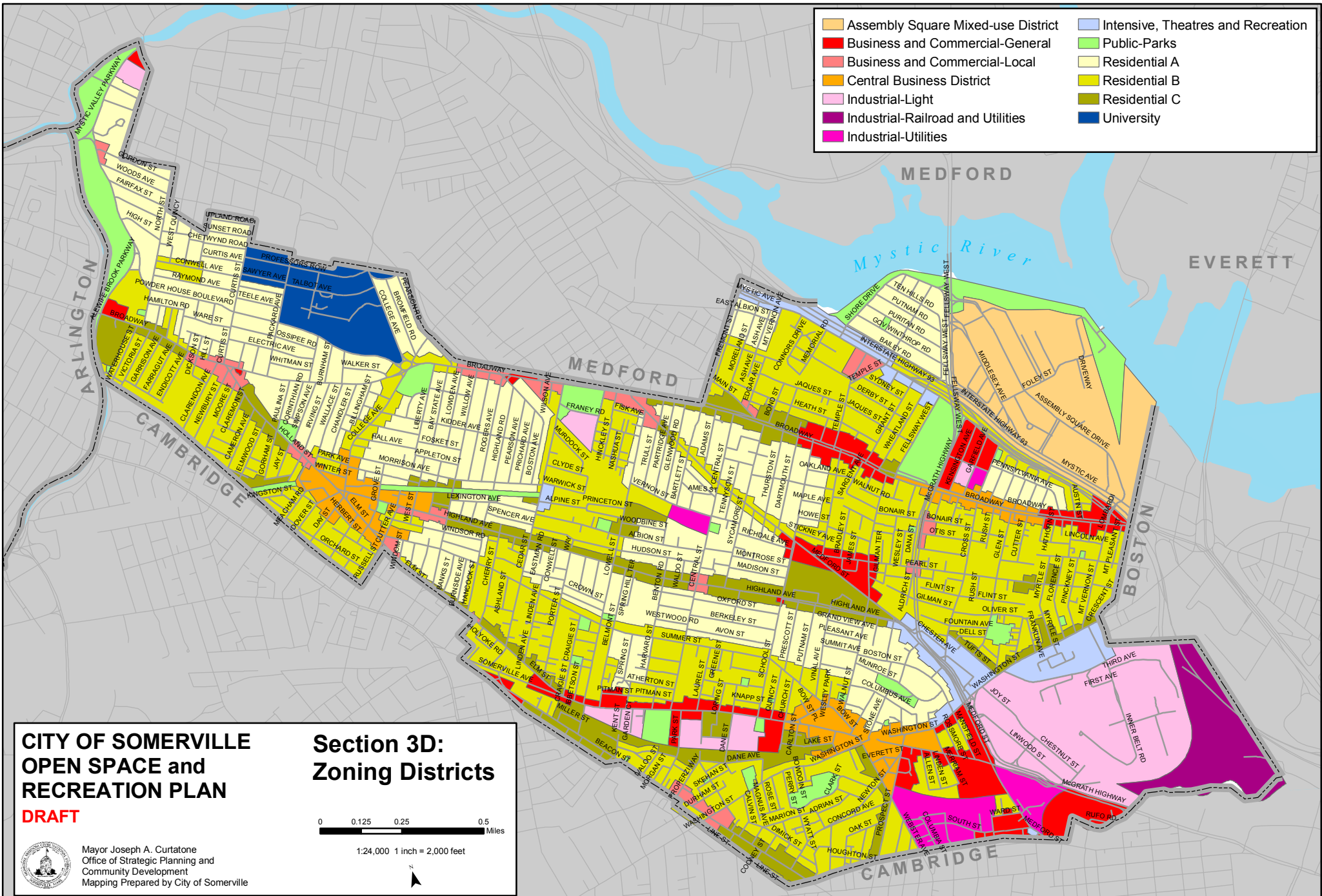
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 Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville

Section 3C:
Environmental Justice

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

1:24,000 1 inch = 2,000 feet

↑



- Assembly Square Mixed-use District
- Business and Commercial-General
- Business and Commercial-Local
- Central Business District
- Industrial-Light
- Industrial-Railroad and Utilities
- Industrial-Utilities
- Intensive, Theatres and Recreation
- Public-Parks
- Residential A
- Residential B
- Residential C
- University

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN

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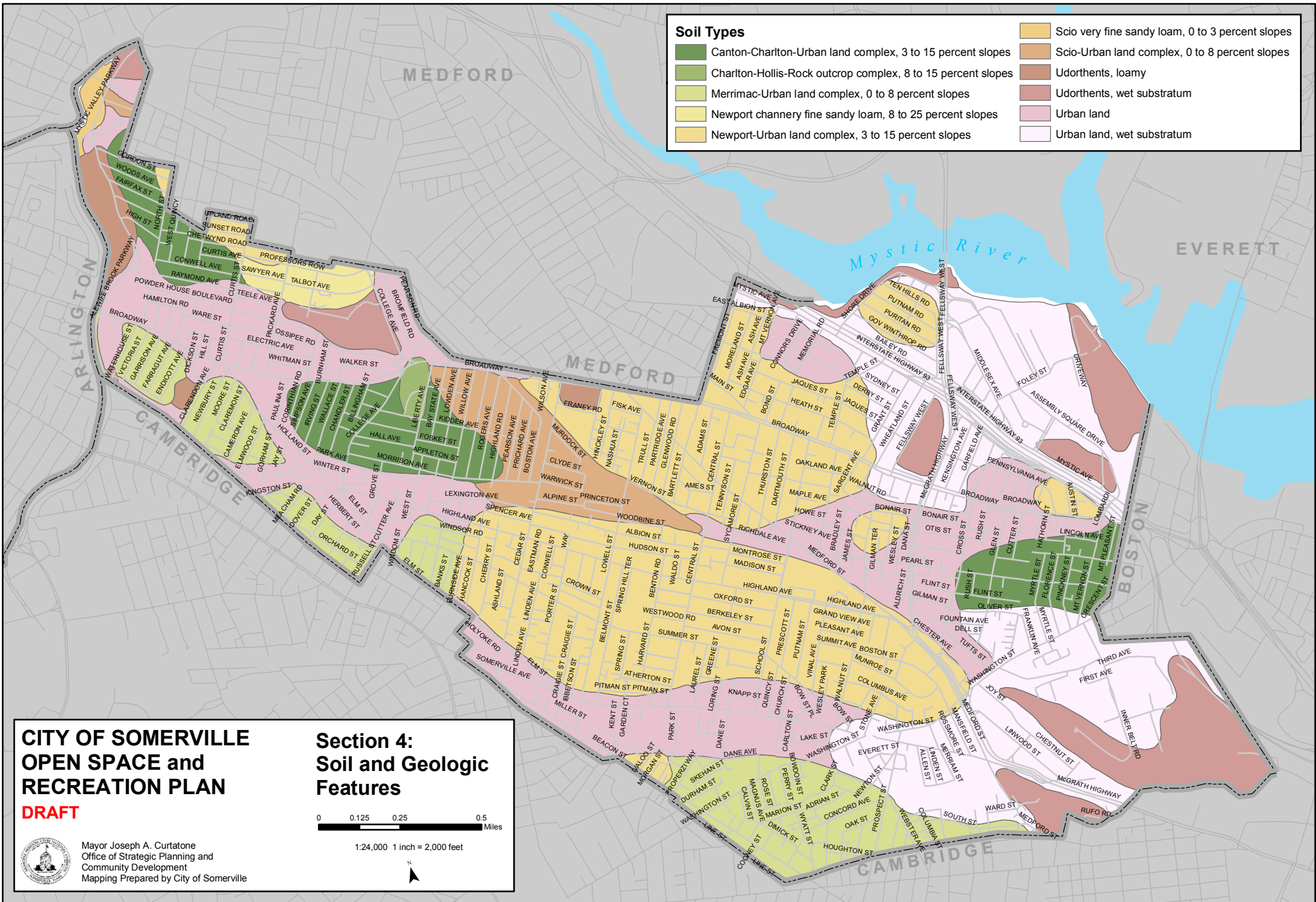
Section 3D:
Zoning Districts

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

1:24,000 1 inch = 2,000 feet



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 Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville



Soil Types

- Canton-Charlton-Urban land complex, 3 to 15 percent slopes
- Charlton-Hollis-Rock outcrop complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes
- Merrimac-Urban land complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes
- Newport channery fine sandy loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes
- Newport-Urban land complex, 3 to 15 percent slopes
- Scio very fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
- Scio-Urban land complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes
- Udorthents, loamy
- Udorthents, wet substratum
- Urban land
- Urban land, wet substratum

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN**

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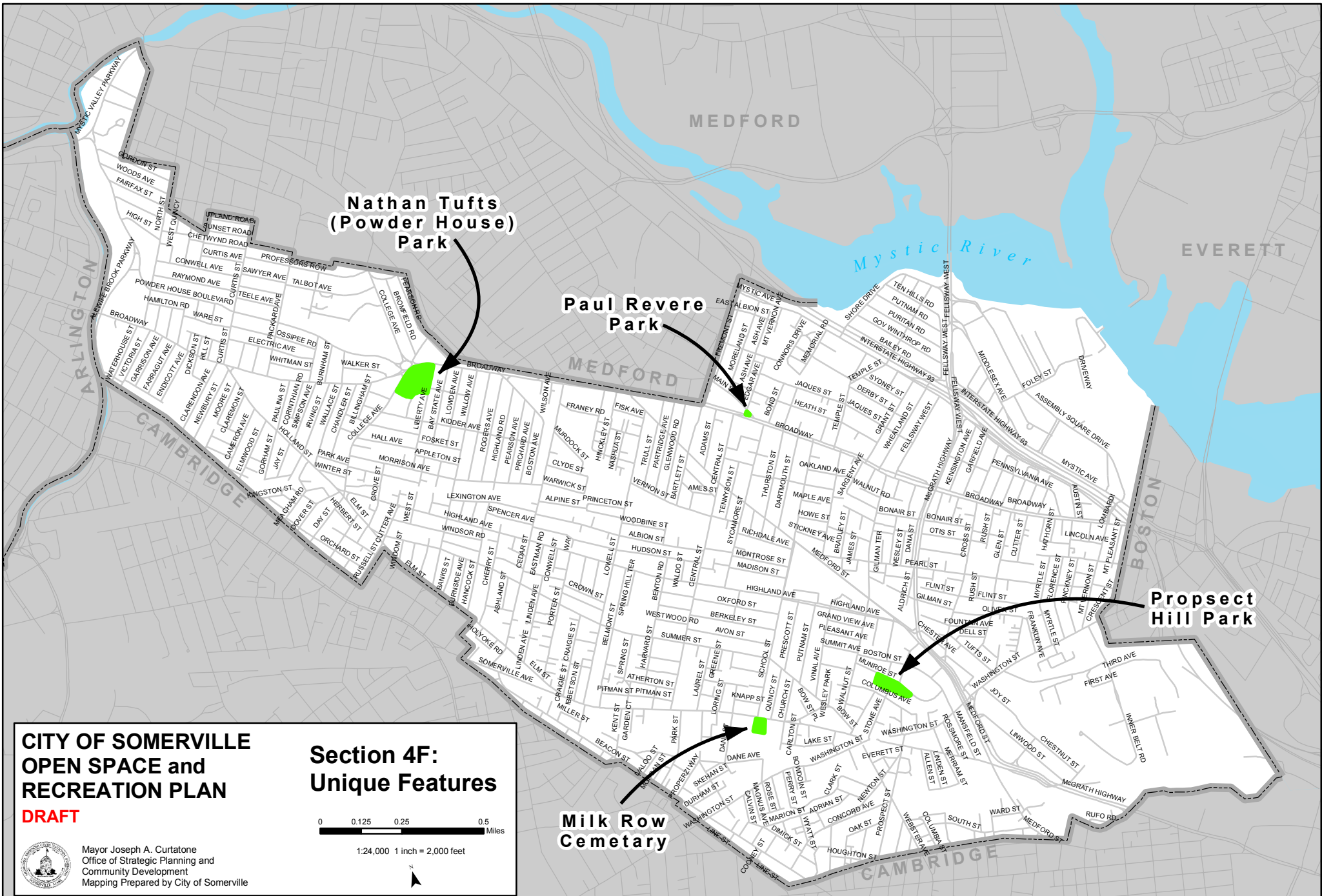
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Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville

**Section 4:
Soil and Geologic
Features**

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

1:24,000 1 inch = 2,000 feet

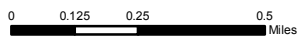




**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN**

DRAFT

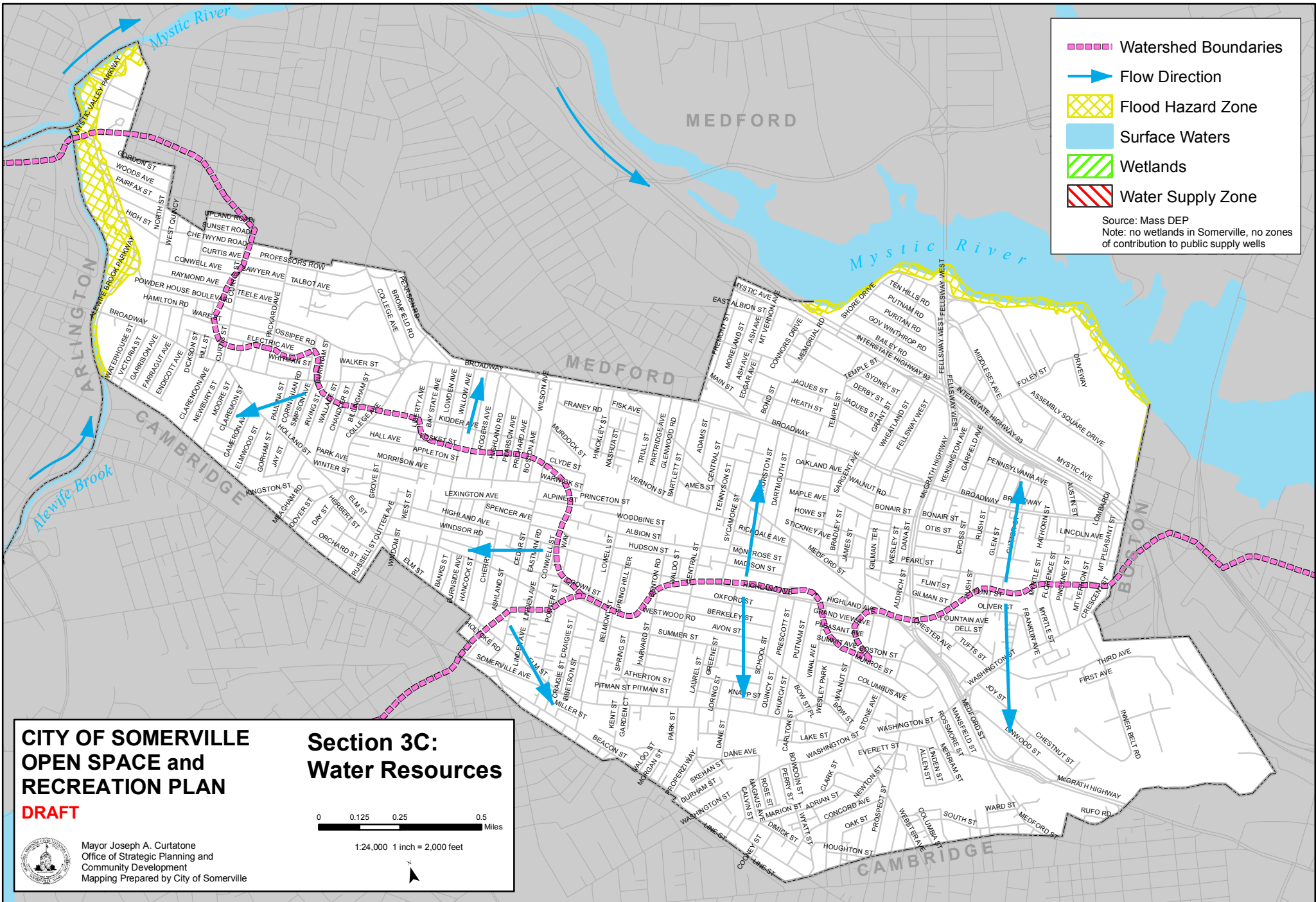
**Section 4F:
Unique Features**



1:24,000 1 inch = 2,000 feet



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- Watershed Boundaries
- Flow Direction
- Flood Hazard Zone
- Surface Waters
- Wetlands
- Water Supply Zone

Source: Mass DEP
 Note: no wetlands in Somerville, no zones of contribution to public supply wells

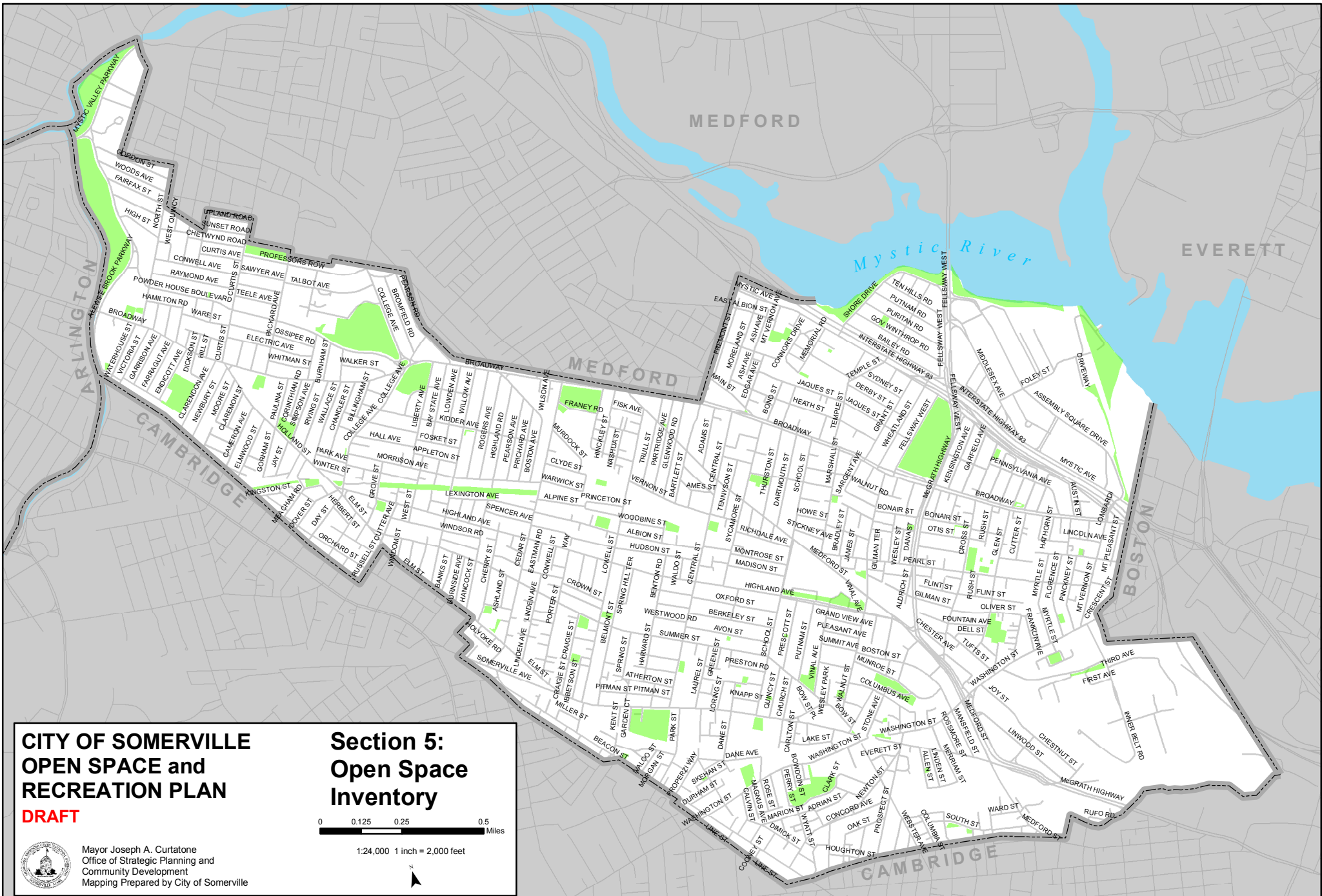
CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and RECREATION PLAN
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Section 3C:
Water Resources

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

1:24,000 1 inch = 2,000 feet

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OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN

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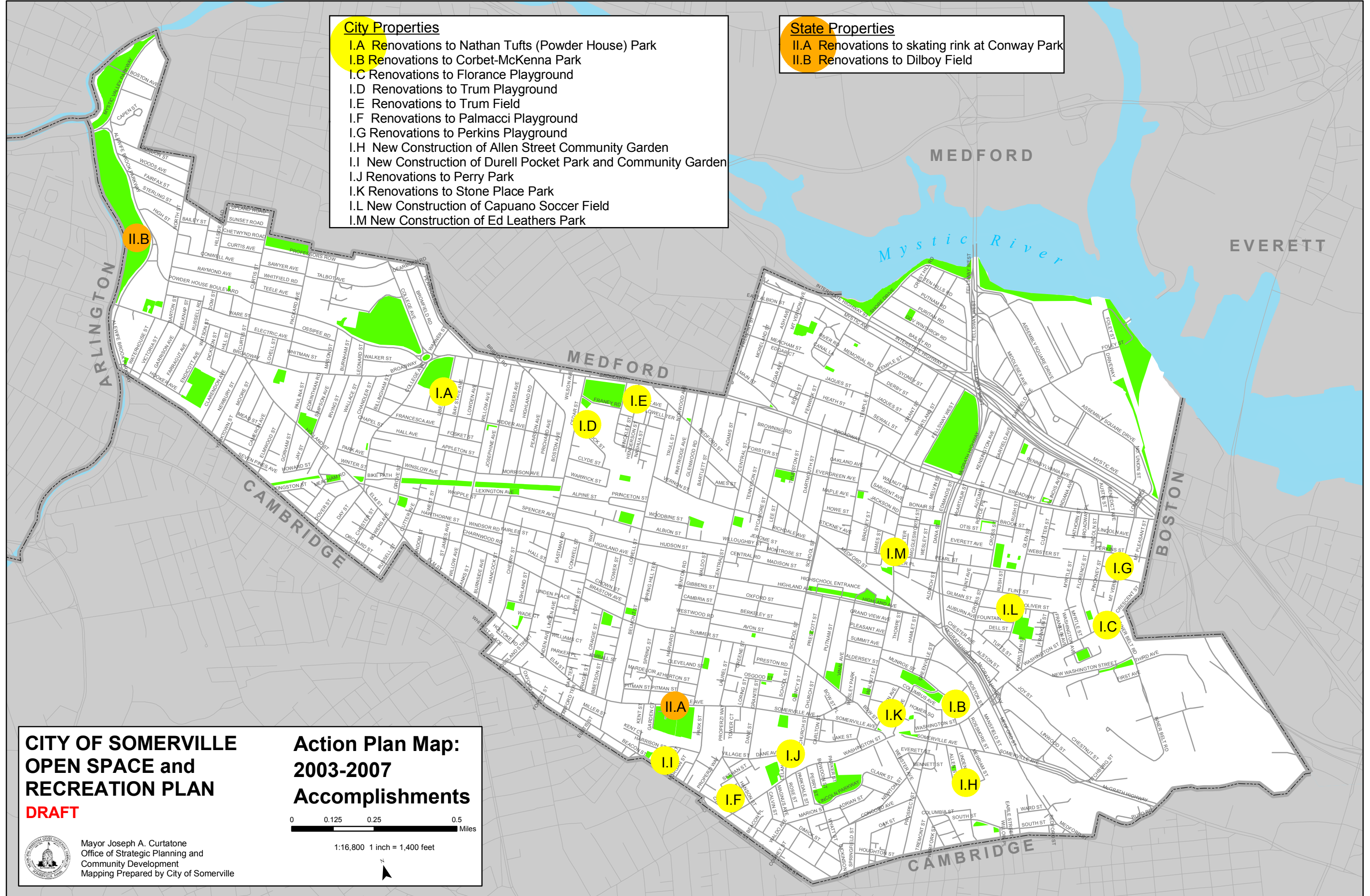
Section 5:
Open Space
Inventory

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 Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville



- City Properties**
- I.A Renovations to Nathan Tufts (Powder House) Park
 - I.B Renovations to Corbet-McKenna Park
 - I.C Renovations to Florance Playground
 - I.D Renovations to Trum Playground
 - I.E Renovations to Trum Field
 - I.F Renovations to Palmacci Playground
 - I.G Renovations to Perkins Playground
 - I.H New Construction of Allen Street Community Garden
 - I.I New Construction of Durell Pocket Park and Community Garden
 - I.J Renovations to Perry Park
 - I.K Renovations to Stone Place Park
 - I.L New Construction of Capuano Soccer Field
 - I.M New Construction of Ed Leathers Park

- State Properties**
- II.A Renovations to skating rink at Conway Park
 - II.B Renovations to Dilboy Field



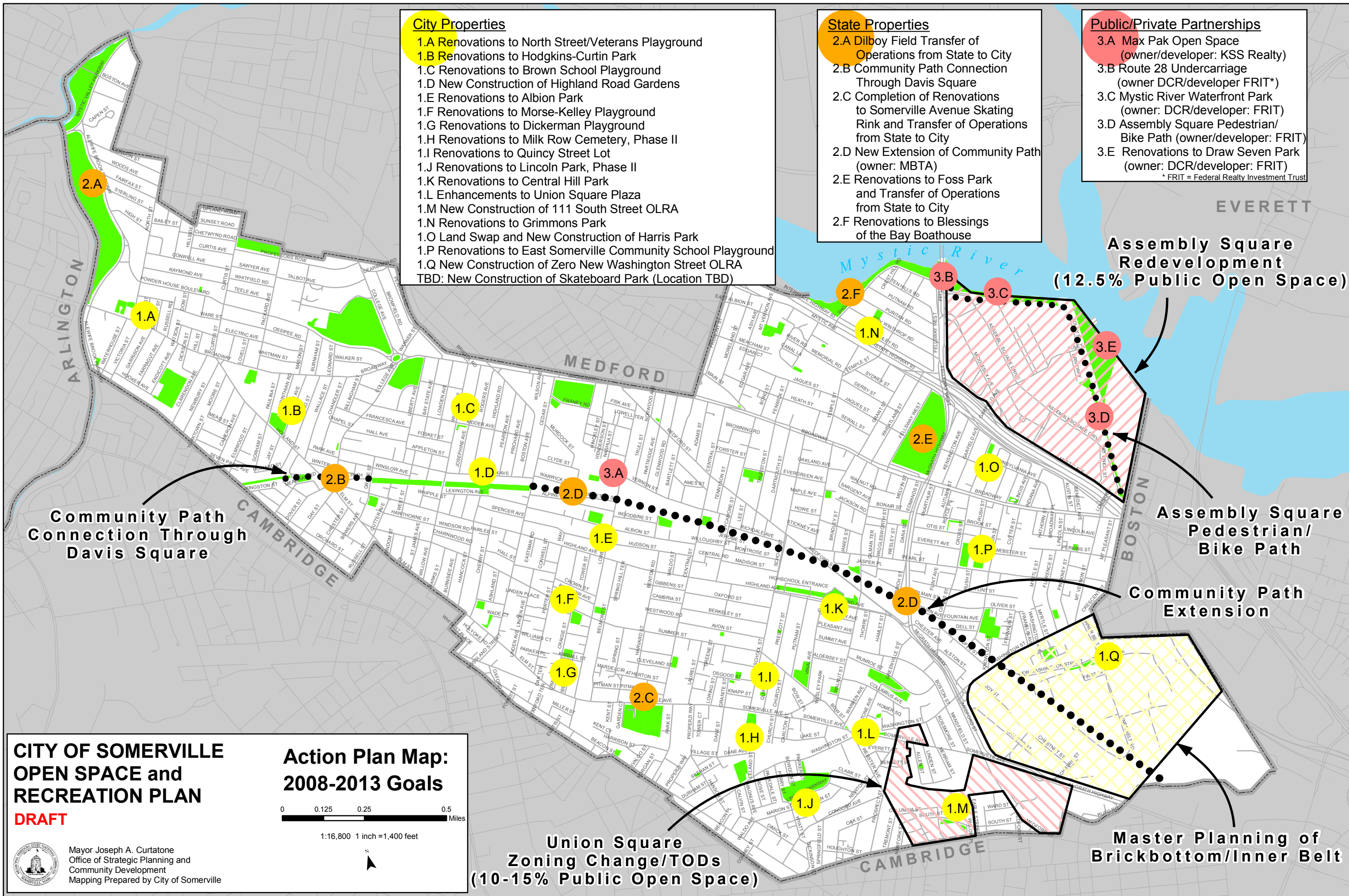
CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and RECREATION PLAN
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Action Plan Map: 2003-2007 Accomplishments

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

1:16,800 1 inch = 1,400 feet

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- City Properties**
- 1.A Renovations to North Street/Veterans Playground
 - 1.B Renovations to Hodgkins-Curtin Park
 - 1.C Renovations to Brown School Playground
 - 1.D New Construction of Highland Road Gardens
 - 1.E Renovations to Albion Park
 - 1.F Renovations to Morse-Kelley Playground
 - 1.G Renovations to Dickerman Playground
 - 1.H Renovations to Milk Row Cemetery, Phase II
 - 1.I Renovations to Quincy Street Lot
 - 1.J Renovations to Lincoln Park, Phase II
 - 1.K Renovations to Central Hill Park
 - 1.L Enhancements to Union Square Plaza
 - 1.M New Construction of 111 South Street OLRA
 - 1.N Renovations to Grimmons Park
 - 1.O Land Swap and New Construction of Harris Park
 - 1.P Renovations to East Somerville Community School Playground
 - 1.Q New Construction of Zero New Washington Street OLRA
 - TBD: New Construction of Skateboard Park (Location TBD)

- State Properties**
- 2.A Dilboy Field Transfer of Operations from State to City
 - 2.B Community Path Connection Through Davis Square
 - 2.C Completion of Renovations to Somerville Avenue Skating Rink and Transfer of Operations from State to City
 - 2.D New Extension of Community Path (owner: MBTA)
 - 2.E Renovations to Foss Park and Transfer of Operations from State to City
 - 2.F Renovations to Blessings of the Bay Boathouse

- Public/Private Partnerships**
- 3.A Max Pak Open Space (owner/developer: KSS Realty)
 - 3.B Route 28 Undercarriage (owner DCR/developer FRIT*)
 - 3.C Mystic River Waterfront Park (owner: DCR/developer: FRIT)
 - 3.D Assembly Square Pedestrian/Bike Path (owner/developer: FRIT)
 - 3.E Renovations to Draw Seven Park (owner: DCR/developer: FRIT)
- * FRIT = Federal Realty Investment Trust

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN**
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**Action Plan Map:
2008-2013 Goals**

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

1:16,800 1 inch = 1,400 feet

**Union Square
Zoning Change/TODs
(10-15% Public Open Space)**

**Master Planning of
Brickbottom/Inner Belt**

**Community Path
Connection Through
Davis Square**

**Assembly Square
Pedestrian/
Bike Path**

**Community Path
Extension**


**Assembly Square
Redevelopment
(12.5% Public Open Space)**



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 1:
Brickbottom/Inner Belt**

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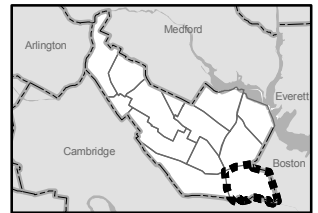
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

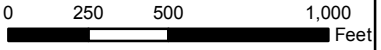
- 73. Zero New Washington Street OLRA (Proposed)**
- 87. Cobble Hill Apartments Lawn (Private)**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 2:
Davis Square**

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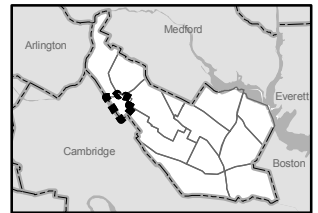
 Parks and Open Space

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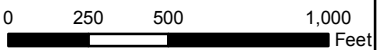
- 7. Community Path (MBTA)**
- 22. Kenney Park**
- 41. Seven Hills Park**
- 85. Davis Square Plaza**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



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1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet



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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 3:
East Somerville**

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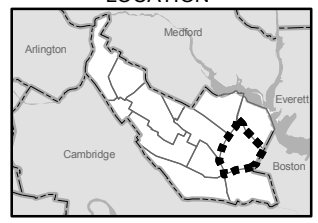
Parks and Open Space

SITES

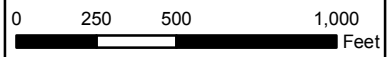
- 15. Florance Playground**
- 17. Capuano Field**
- 19. Harris Playground**
- 38. Perkins Playground**
- 54. Egerly Education Center**
- 58. East Somerville Community School**
- 59. Glen Park and Garden**
- 77. East Branch Library Lawn**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 4:
Magoun Square**

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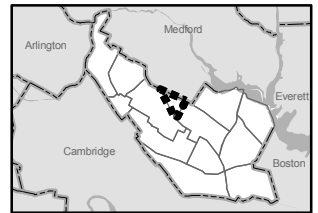
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

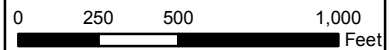
- 44. Trum Field**
- 45. Trum Playground**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



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1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 5:
Mystic River**

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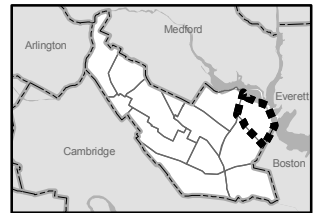
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

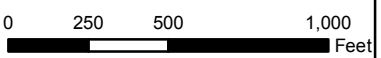
- 13. Draw 7 Park (DCR)**
- 28. Mystic River
Reservation (DCR)**
- 84. IKEA Bike Path
(Proposed)**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet



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Community Development
Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 6:
Powder House**

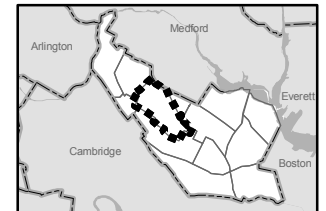
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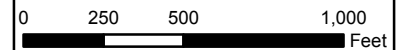
1. Albion Street Playground
7. Community Path (MBTA)
24. Lexington Park
29. Nathaniel Tufts/
Powder House Park
42. Somerville
Junction Park
52. Bikeway Gardens
53. Brown School
62. Highland Road
Gardens (Proposed)
83. MaxPak (Proposed)

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



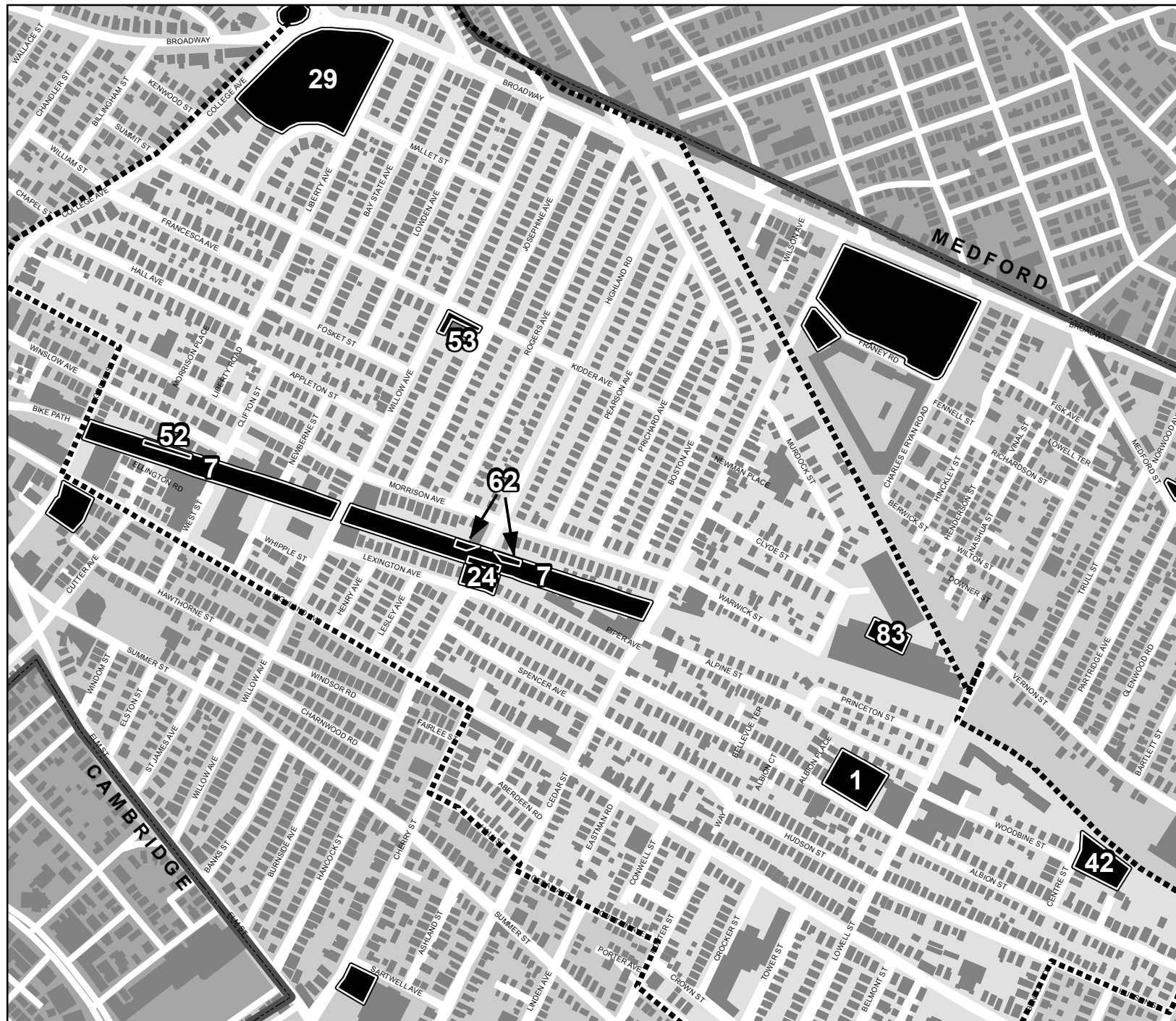
SOMERVILLE



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet



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Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville






**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

Figure 7: Prospect Hill

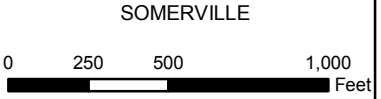
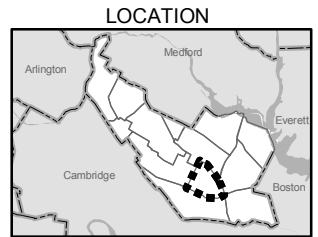
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 Parks and Open Space

SITES

- 5. Central Hill Park
- 6. Community Growing Center
- 10. Corbett-McKenna Park
- 31. Nunziato Field & OLRA
- 39. Prospect Hill Park
- 40. Quincy Street Park
- 43. Stone Place Playground
- 46. Walnut Street Park & Garden
- 55. Central Library Lawn
- 56. Cummings School
- 68. Union Square Plaza
- 69. Union Square Triangle

Source: City of Somerville GIS



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 8:
Spring Hill**

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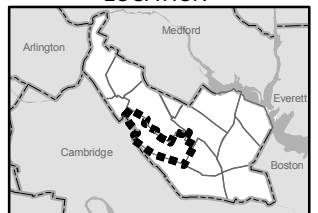
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

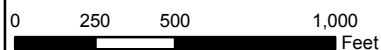
- 4. Bailey Park**
- 11. Dickerman Playground**
- 27. Morse-Kelley Playground**
- 32. Osgood Park & Garden**
- 51. Avon Street Garden**
- 63. Kennedy School**
- 82. Hellenic Association Lawn (Private)**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE




1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet



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Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 9:
Ten Hills Neighborhood
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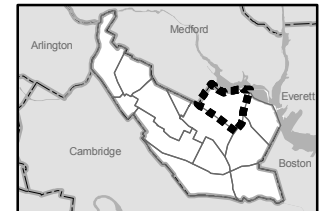
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

- 16. Foss Park (DCR)
- 18. Grimmons Park
- 28. Mystic River
Reservation (DCR)
- 35. Paul Revere Park
- 60. Healey School
- 78. Mystic Apartments
Tot Lot
- 79. Mystic Apartments
Community Garden

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE

0 250 500 1,000
Feet

1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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Mapping Prepared by City of Somerville



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 10:
Tufts Neighborhood**

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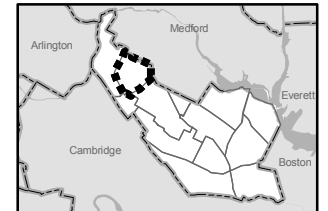
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

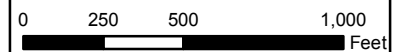
- 20. Hodgkins-Curtin Park
- 38. Powder House School Playground
- 65. Powder House Circle (Private)
- 66. Tufts Community Garden (Private)
- 67. Tufts Open Space (Private)
- 71. West Branch Library Lawn
- 76. Tufts Playing Fields (Private)
- 80. Tufts Tennis Courts (Private)

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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CITY OF SOMERVILLE OPEN SPACE and RECREATION PLAN 2008-2013

Figure 11(a): Union Square/Beacon Street

DRAFT

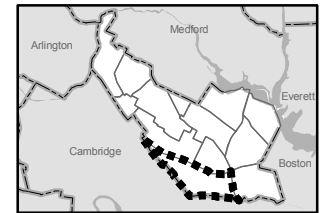
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

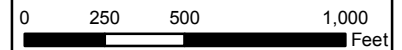
- 8. Conway Park East
- 9. Conway Park West
- 14. Durell Park & Garden
- 25. Lincoln Park
- 34. Palmacci Playground
- 37. Perry Park
- 64. Milk Row Cemetary

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE

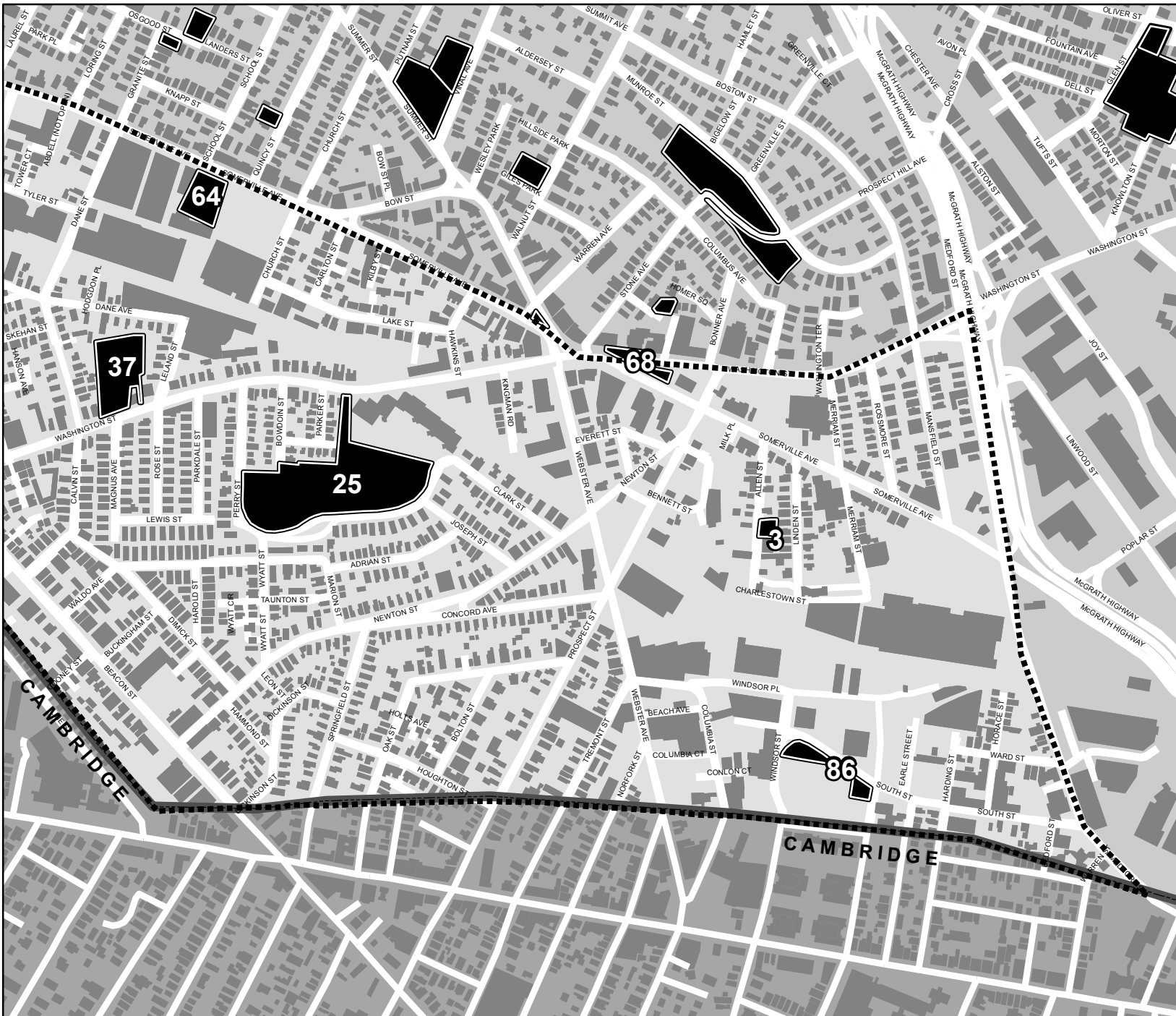


1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet



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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 11(b): Union
Square/Beacon Street**

DRAFT

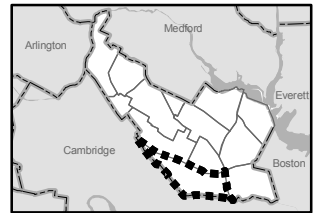
Parks and Open Space

SITES

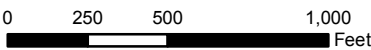
- 3. 30 Allen Street**
- 25. Lincoln Park**
- 34. Palmacci Playground**
- 37. Perry Park**
- 64. Milk Row Cemetary**
- 68. Union Square Plaza**
- 86. 111 South Street OLRA**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 12(a):
West Somerville**

DRAFT

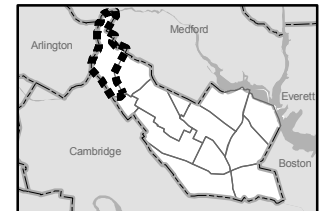
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

- 2. Alewife Brook Reservation (DCR)**
- 12. Dilboy Field (DCR)**
- 30. North Street/
Veterans Playground**
- 70. Veterans Cemetary**
- 72. West Somerville
Community School**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE

0 250 500 1,000
Feet

1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 12(b):
West Somerville**

DRAFT

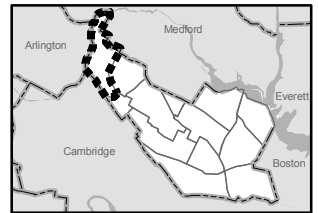
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

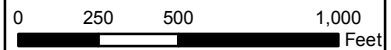
- 12. Dilboyl Field (DCR)
- 30. North Street/
Veterans Playground
- 48. Woodstock
Playground
- 70. Veterans Cemetary
- 72. West Somerville
Community School
- 81. Archdiocese
Ballfield (Private)

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE



1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet




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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN
2008-2013**

**Figure 13:
Winter Hill Neighborhood
DRAFT**

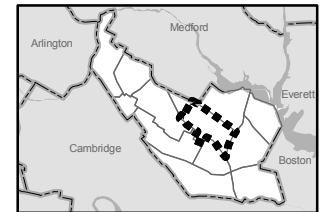
 Parks and Open Space

SITES

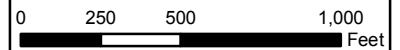
- 21. Hoyt-Sullivan
Playground**
- 23. Leathers
Community Park**
- 26. Marshall Street
Playground**
- 33. Otis Street Playground**
- 47. Winter Hill Playground**
- 61. Henry Hansen
Memorial Park**

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE

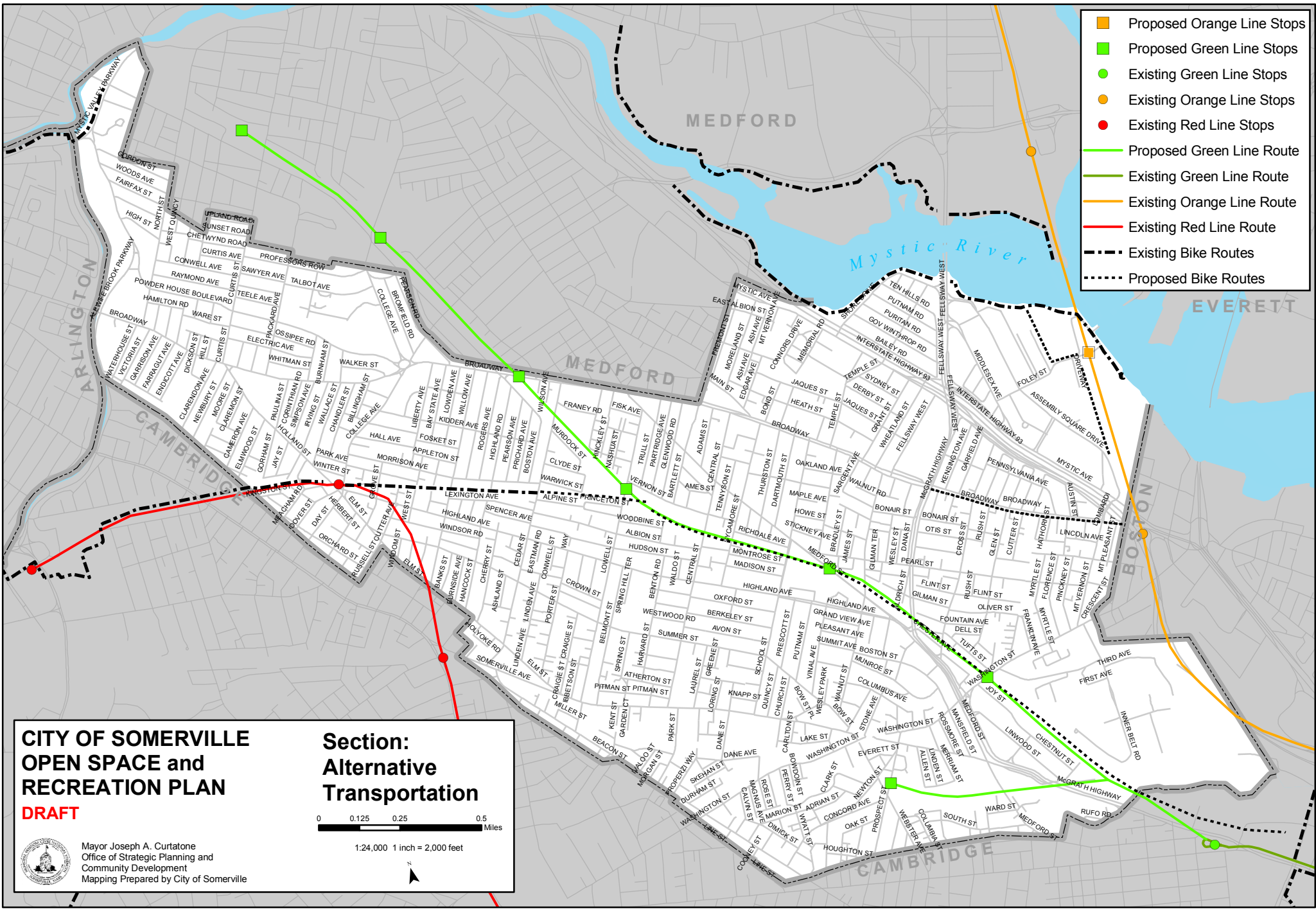


1:7,200 1 inch = 600 feet



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- Proposed Orange Line Stops
- Proposed Green Line Stops
- Existing Green Line Stops
- Existing Orange Line Stops
- Existing Red Line Stops
- Proposed Green Line Route
- Existing Green Line Route
- Existing Orange Line Route
- Existing Red Line Route
- Existing Bike Routes
- Proposed Bike Routes

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
OPEN SPACE and
RECREATION PLAN

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Section:
Alternative
Transportation

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

1:24,000 1 inch = 2,000 feet







CITY OF SOMERVILLE UNION SQUARE OPEN SPACE PLAN

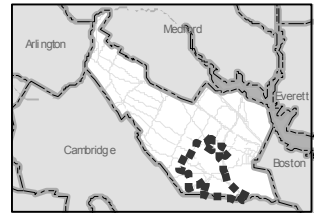
**Figure 1: Parks and
Open Space Locations**

DRAFT

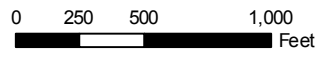
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Union Square Study Area

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



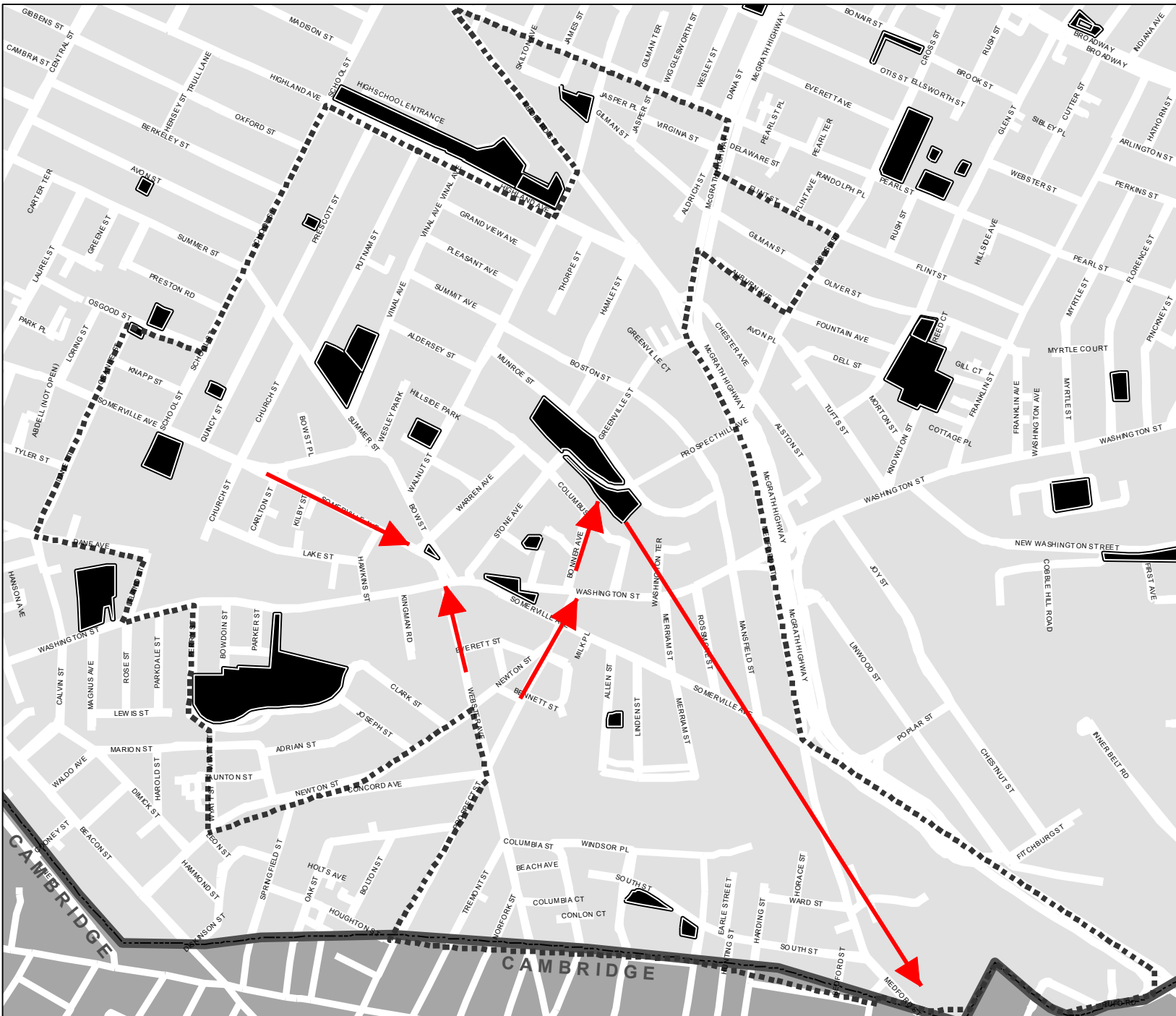
SOMERVILLE



1:9,000 1 inch = 750 feet






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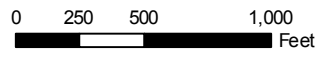
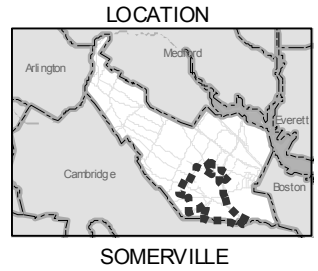


CITY OF SOMERVILLE UNION SQUARE OPEN SPACE PLAN

Figure 2: Key Vistas

DRAFT

-  Key Vistas
 -  Parks and Open Space
 -  Union Square Study Area
- Source: City of Somerville GIS



1:9,000 1 inch = 750 feet












CITY OF SOMERVILLE UNION SQUARE OPEN SPACE PLAN

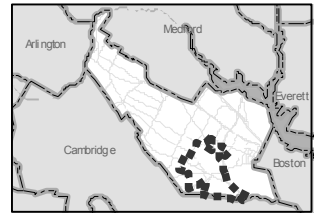
**Figure 3:
Household Median
Income (2000)**

DRAFT

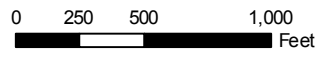
-  \$21,000 - \$22,000
-  \$30,000 - \$31,000
-  \$41,000 - \$42,000
-  \$44,000 - \$45,000
-  Not Applicable (no residents in area)
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Union Square Study Area

Source: City of Somerville GIS
Data presented by Census Block Group

LOCATION



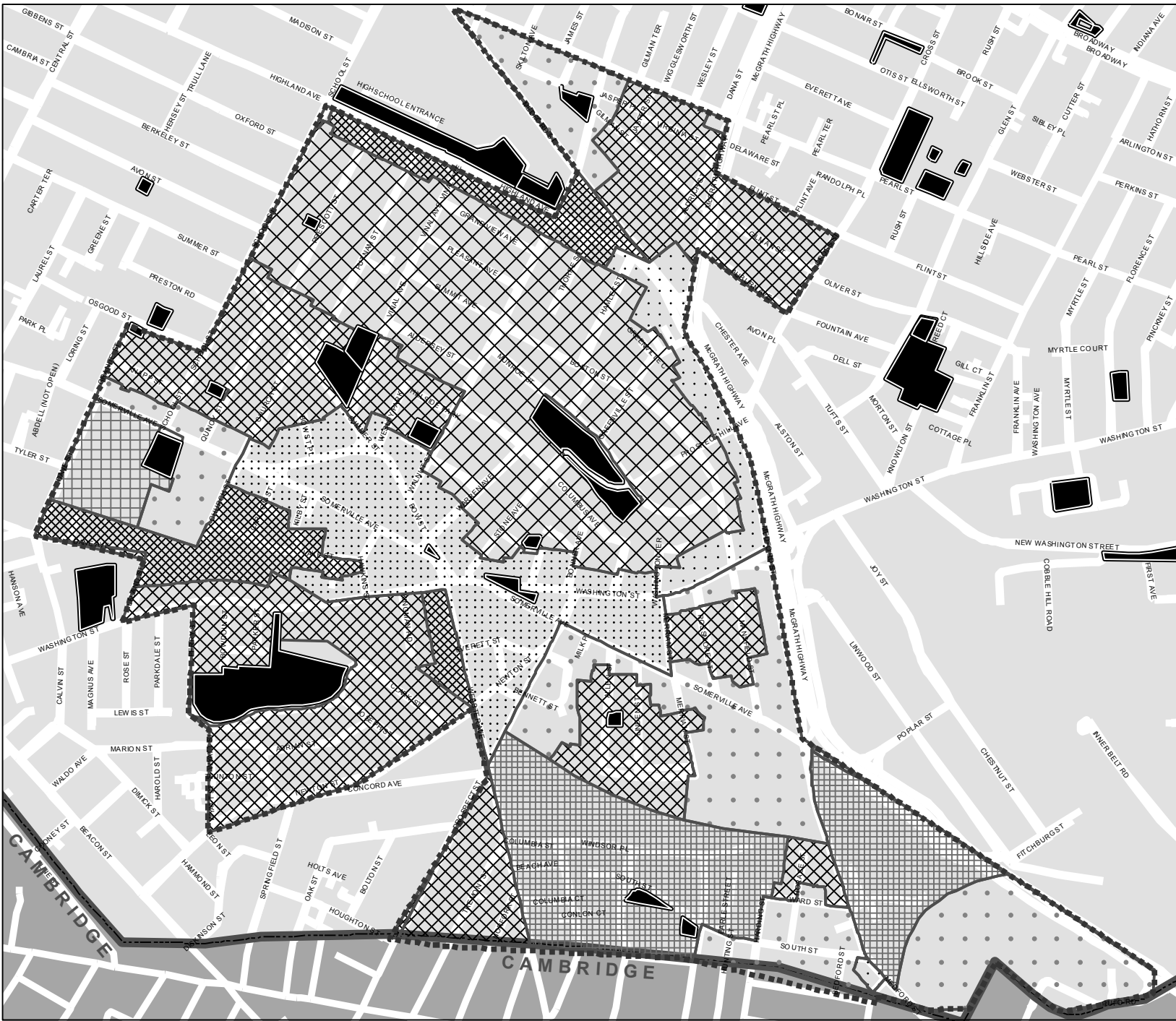
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CITY OF SOMERVILLE UNION SQUARE OPEN SPACE PLAN

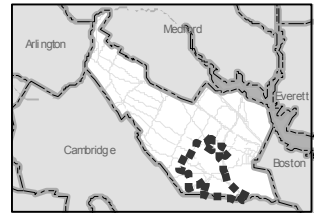
**Figure 4: Existing
Zoning Districts**

DRAFT

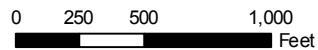
-  General Business
-  Local Business
-  Intensive Business
-  Central Business District
-  Light Industrial
-  Industrial - Utilities
-  Residential A
-  Residential B
-  Residential C
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Union Square Study Area

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



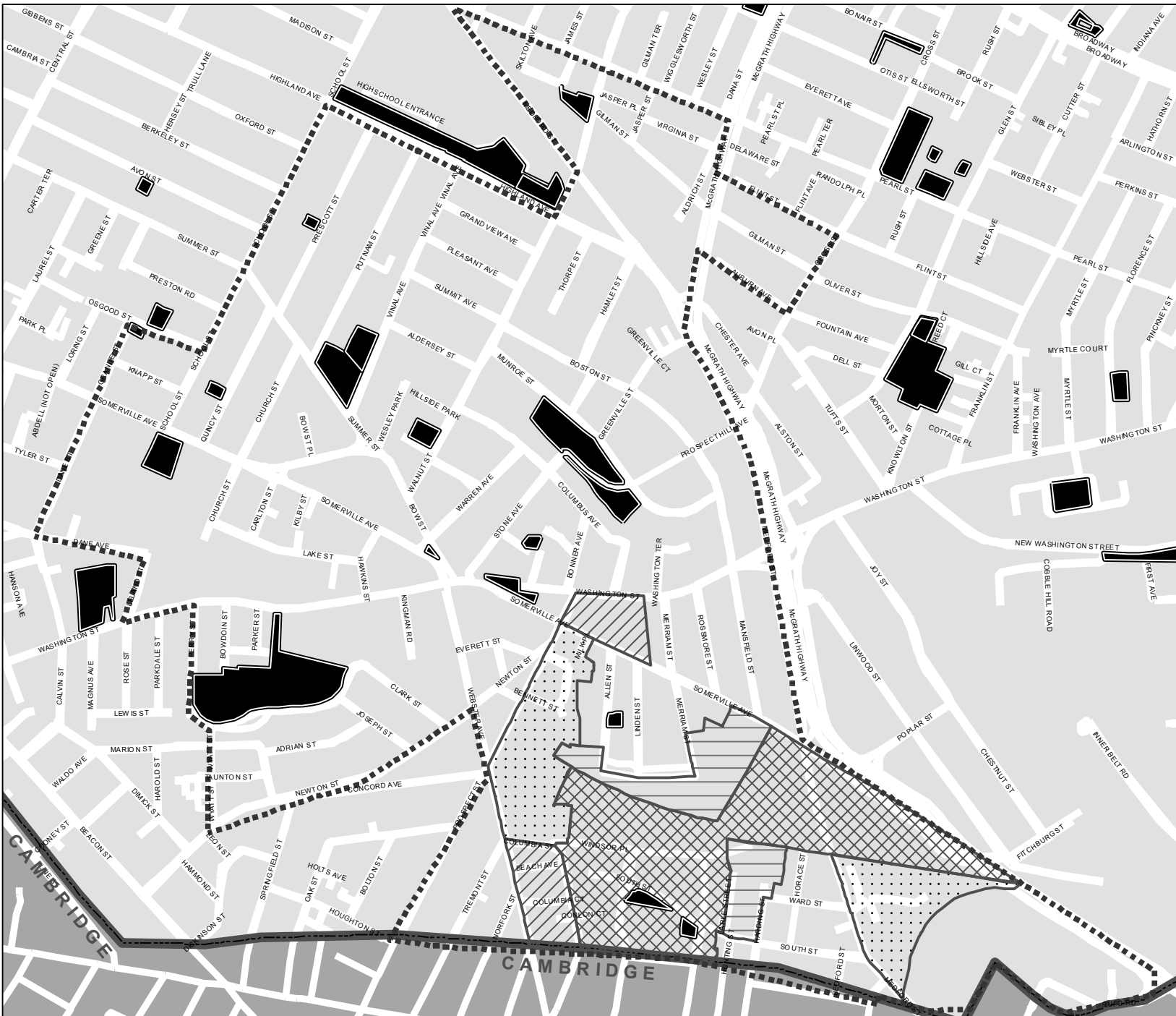
SOMERVILLE



1:9,000 1 inch = 750 feet









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CITY OF SOMERVILLE UNION SQUARE OPEN SPACE PLAN

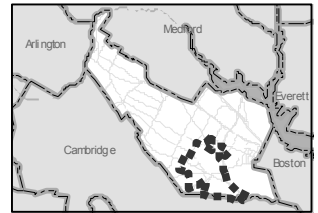
**Figure 5: Proposed
Zoning Districts**

DRAFT

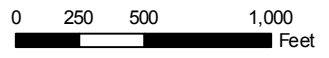
-  TOD 135 Zone
-  TOD 100 Zone
-  TOD 85 Zone
-  TOD 55 Zone
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Union Square Study Area

Source: City of Somerville GIS

LOCATION



SOMERVILLE



1:9,000 1 inch = 750 feet









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CITY OF SOMERVILLE UNION SQUARE OPEN SPACE PLAN

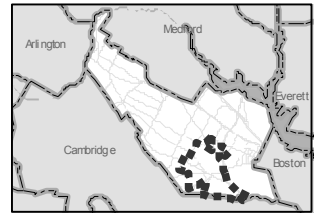
Figure 6: Environmental Justice Populations

DRAFT

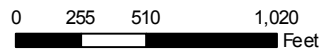
-  At least 25% of population is Foreign-Born
-  At least 25% of population is Foreign-Born and racial or ethnic minority
-  At least 25% of population is Foreign-Born and qualifies as Low-Income
-  Does not meet any state environmental justice criteria
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Union Square Study Area

Source: City of Somerville GIS
Data presented by Census Block Group

LOCATION



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Appendix B: Parks Inventory

Name	Size (acres)	Ward	ADA Access	In Design/Construction	Community Garden	Dog Park (OLRA)	Dogs Allowed (On-Leash)	Historical Property	Scenic Vista	Playground	Tot Lot	Baby Swings	Youth and Tire Swings	Pool	Water Play	Boathouse	Fishing	Baseball - Little League	Baseball - adult	Softball	Basketball	Ice Hockey/Skating	Football	Soccer	Stick Ball	Street Hockey	Tennis Court	Handball/Tennis Wall	Track	Bike/Walking Path	Gazebo/Shelter	Porto Potty	Restrooms	Table	Water Fountain	Lighting	Trees/Plantings
City Parks																																					
Albion Playground Albion Street between Cedar Street and Lowell Street	0.87	5	yes	X						X	X		X								X					X								X	X	X	X
Bailey Park Lowell Street between Summer Street and Highland Avenue	0.39	3	yes				X	X	X																												X
Central Hill Park Highland Avenue between Walnut Street and School Street	8.94	3	partial					X	X	X	X	X																	X					X	X		X
Conway Park East and West Somerville Avenue between Bleachery Row and Park Street	5.66	2	yes					X		X	X	X			X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X					X			X	X	X	
Corbett-McKenna Park Prospect Hill Avenue at Munroe Street	0.61	3	yes						X	X	X	X			X						X												X	X	X		
Dickerman Playground Kimball Street between Ibbertson Street and Craigie Street	0.41	3	partial							X	X	X			X						X												X	X	X		
Florence Playground 23 Florence Street	0.26	1	yes							X	X	X	X		X						X													X	X		X
Glen Park 150 Glen Street between Fountain Avenue and Oliver Street	2.34	1	partial		X					X	X	X									X			X					X	X			X	X	X	X	
Grimmons Park 87 Governor Winthrop Road	0.46	4	yes	X						X	X	X									X														X		X
Harris Playground Cross Street, at the end by Rt. 93	0.29	1	yes							X	X	X	X								X														X		X
Henry Hansen Memorial Park Medford Avenue at Partridge Avenue	0.06	5	no					X																													X
Highland Road Gardens To be built: On Community Path at Highland Road	0.21	5	n/a	X																									X						X	X	
Hodgkins-Curtin Park Holland Street between Simpson Avenue and Paulina Street	1.50	7	yes	X						X	X	X	X					X																	X	X	X
Hoyt-Sullivan Playground Central Street between Pembroke Street and Willoughby Street	0.52	5	yes							X	X	X									X													X	X		X
Kenney Park Corner of Highland Avenue and Grove Street in Davis Square	0.30	6	yes							X	X	X			X						X												X	X		X	
Edward L. Leathers Community Park Walnut Street at between Medford Street and Pearl Street	0.71	1	yes			X	X			X	X																		X					X	X		
Lexington Park Lexington Street at Hancock Street	0.31	5,6	yes							X	X	X			X						X								X					X	X		X
Lincoln Park Between Lincoln Parkway and Wyatt Street	6.60	2	partial							X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X				X					X					X	X	X	X
Marshall Street Playground Marshall Street at Mortimore Place	0.24	4	yes							X	X	X																					X	X		X	
Morse-Kelley Playground Craigie Street at Summer Street	0.45	3	partial							X											X				X										X		X
Nathan Tufts Park (Powderhouse Park) College Avenue and Broadway (Powderhouse Circle)	4.30	6	yes				X	X	X																				X						X	X	
North Street/Veterans Playground North Street between Broadway and Hamilton Road	0.22	7	no							X	X	X	X								X												X		X	X	
Nunziato Field and OLRA Summer Street between Vinal Avenue and Putnam Street	1.10	3	yes			X	X															X	X							X			X		X	X	

Name	Size (acres)	Ward	ADA Access	In Design/Construction	Community Garden	Dog Park (OLRA)	Dogs Allowed (On-Leash)	Historical Property	Scenic Vista	Playground	Tot Lot	Baby Swings	Youth and Tire Swings	Pool	Water Play	Boathouse	Fishing	Baseball - Little League	Baseball - adult	Softball	Basketball	Ice Hockey/Skating	Football	Soccer	Stick Ball	Street Hockey	Tennis Court	Handball/Tennis Wall	Track	Bike/Walking Path	Gazebo/Shelter	Porto Potty	Restrooms	Table	Water Fountain	Lighting	Trees/Plantings		
Osgood Park	0.27	2	yes		X		X				X	X	X																					X	X	X	X		
Osgood Street, at its end. Access Osgood Street via Granite Street																																							
Otis Playground	0.10	1	no							X	X	X	X		X																				X	X		X	
Otis Street at Dana Street																																							
Palmacci Playground	0.08	2	yes				X			X	X																							X	X	X	X		
Hanson Avenue at Skehan Street																																							
Paul Revere Park	0.02	5	n/a					X																													X		
Broadway at Main Street																																							
Perkins Playground	0.15	1	yes							X		X	X		X						X													X	X		X		
Perkins Street at Perkins Place																																							
Perry Park	1.25	2	yes				X			X		X																							X	X	X		
Washington Street between Dane Street and Leland Street																																							
Prospect Hill Park	2.10	3	partial				X	X	X																										X		X		
Prospect Hill Avenue at Munroe Street																																							
Quincy Street Lot	0.11	3	no				X																											X			X		
14 Quincy Street																																							
Seven Hills Park	0.69	6	yes				X	X																												X	X		
Between Meacham Road and Buena Vista Road																																							
Somerville Community Growing Center	0.34	3	yes						X																														
22 Vinal Avenue between Aldersey Street and Summer Street																																							
Somerville Junction Park	0.50	5	yes	X																																X	X	X	
Corner of Woodbine Street and Centre Street																																							
111 South Street OLRA	0.36	2	n/a	X		X	X																													X			
To be built at: 111 South Street																																							
Stone Place Park	0.12	3	yes																																	X		X	
Between Stone Place and Homer Square																																							
Trum Field	4.78	5	yes															X		X	X													X	X	X	X		
Broadway at Cedar Street																																							
Trum Playground	0.46	5	yes							X	X	X	X		X																			X	X		X		
Cedar Street at Franey Road																																							
Walnut Street Park	0.22	3	yes		X					X	X				X																			X	X		X		
Walnut Street at Giles Park																																							
Woodstock Street Playground	0.22	7	yes							X	X	X	X								X													X	X		X		
Woodstock Street at Mystic Highway																																							
Zero New Washington Street OLRA	0.75	1	n/a	X		X	X																													X			
To be built at: corner of New Washington Street and Inner Belt Road																																							
TOTAL CITY PARKS	49.27																																						

State Parks

Alewife Brook Reservation (DCR)	9.43	7	partial																																	X		X	
Alewife Brook Parkway to Mystic Valley Parkway																																							
Community Path (MBTA)	5.79	5,6,7	yes				X	X																													X	X	
Cedar Street through Davis Square, connecting to Linear Park, Cambridge, and Minuteman Bike Path. An extension is planned for Somerville that would run from Cedar Street east along the railway.																																							
Dilboy Field (DCR)	22.65	7	yes				X			X	X	X		X				X		X	X		X	X		X		X					X	X	X	X	X		
Alewife Brook Parkway between Broadway and Mystic Valley Parkway																																							
Draw Seven Park (DCR)	2.35	1	partial				X	X									X							X										X			X		
Foley Street, behind the Assembly Square Mall																																							

Name	Size (acres)	Ward	ADA Access	In Design/Construction	Community Garden	Dog Park (OLRA)	Dogs Allowed (On-Leash)	Historical Property	Scenic Vista	Playground	Tot Lot	Baby Swings	Youth and Tire Swings	Pool	Water Play	Boathouse	Fishing	Baseball - Little League	Baseball - adult	Softball	Basketball	Ice Hockey/Skating	Football	Soccer	Stick Ball	Street Hockey	Tennis Court	Handball/Tennis Wall	Track	Bike/Walking Path	Gazebo/Shelter	Porto Potty	Restrooms	Table	Water Fountain	Lighting	Trees/Plantings		
Foss Park (DCR)	14.62	1	partial				X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X			X			X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Broadway between Fellsway West and McGrath Highway																																							
Mystic River Reservation (DCR)	22.66	1,4	partial				X		X							X	X												X									X	
Shore Drive and along Mystic River edge of Assembly Square																																							
TOTAL STATE PARKS	77.50																																						

Community Gardens

Allen Street Community Garden	0.13	2	yes		X																																		
30 Allen Street																																							
Avon Community Garden	0.12	3	yes		X																																		
Avon Street, between Central Street and School Street																																							
Bikeway Community Garden	0.09	6	partial		X				X																														X
On Community Path behind Brooks Pharmacy																																							
Durell Pocket Park & Community Garden	0.18	2	yes		X																																		
Beacon Street between Kent Street and Ivaloo Street																																							
Osgood Community Garden	0.06	2	yes		X																																		
Osgood Street, at its end. Access Osgood Street via Granite Street																																							
Tufts Community Garden	0.17	6	no		X																																		X
Powderhouse Boulevard, across from Mason Street																																							
Walnut Street Community Garden	0.08	3	yes		X																																		
Walnut Street at Giles Park																																							
Glen Community Garden	0.29	1	partial		X																																		
150 Glen Street between Fountain Avenue and Oliver Street																																							
TOTAL COMMUNITY GARDENS	1.12																																						

School Playgrounds and Fields

Argenziano School (Dr. Albert F. Argenziano School at Lincoln Park)	2.76	2	yes																																				
Washington Street at Parker Street																																							
Brown (Benjamin G.) School	0.22	6	no							X											X																		X
201 Willow Avenue at Kidder Avenue																																							
Capuano Field	2.34	1	yes		X					X	X	X									X			X					X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
150 Glen Street between Fountain Avenue and Oliver Street																																							
Cummings (John A.) School	0.41	3	yes							X	X										X																	X	
93 School Street at Berkley Street																																							
East Somerville Community Playground	1.40	1	yes							X	X	X									X														X	X	X	X	
115 Pearl Street at Cross Street																																							
Elderly Education Center	0.10	1	yes																																				
8 Bonair Street at Cross Street																																							
Healey (Arthur D.) Elementary School	0.16	4	yes							X	X	X	X								X				X	X													
5 Meacham Street at Edgar Avenue																																							
Kennedy (John F.) School	0.50	5	yes							X	X	X		X							X														X	X			
5 Cherry Street at Elm Street																																							
Powderhouse Community School (Closed; Playground Open)	1.03	7	partial							X											X				X													X	
Powderhouse Boulevard at Packard Avenue																																							
West Somerville Neighborhood School	0.20	7	yes							X	X										X															X	X		
177 Powderhouse Boulevard at Harden Road																																							

Name	Size (acres)	Ward	ADA Access	In Design/Construction	Community Garden	Dog Park (OLRA)	Dogs Allowed (On-Leash)	Historical Property	Scenic Vista	Playground	Tot Lot	Baby Swings	Youth and Tire Swings	Pool	Water Play	Boathouse	Fishing	Baseball - Little League	Baseball - adult	Softball	Basketball	Ice Hockey/Skating	Football	Soccer	Stick Ball	Street Hockey	Tennis Court	Handball/Tennis Wall	Track	Bike/Walking Path	Gazebo/Shelter	Porto Potty	Restrooms	Table	Water Fountain	Lighting	Trees/Plantings	
Winter Hill Community School	0.98	3	partial							X	X										X																	
115 Sycamore Street at Medford Avenue																																						
TOTAL SCHOOL OPEN SPACE	10.10																																					

Other Open Spaces

Central Library Branch Lawn	0.61	3	yes					X																														
79 Highland Avenue between Walnut Street and Vinal Street																																						
East Branch Library Lawn	0.20	1	n/a																																			
115 Broadway between Michigan Avenue and Illinois Avenue																																						
Milk Row Cemetery	0.72	2	yes																																			
Somerville Avenue at School Street																																						
Powderhouse Circle (private - maintained by Somerville Garden Club)	0.26	6	yes																																			
At intersection of Powderhouse Boulevard/College Avenue/Broadway																																						
Tufts University Fields (private - maintained by Tufts University)	35.83	6	no																			X	X			X												
Powderhouse Boulevard at Powderhouse Circle																																						
Union Square Plaza	0.32	3,2	yes																																			
Union Square, between Stone Avenue and Prospect Street																																						
Veteran's Cemetery	0.80	7	yes																																			
Broadway, between Alewife Brook Parkway and North Street																																						
Union Square Triangle	0.15	3,2	n/a	X																																		
Somerville Avenue at Washington Street																																						
West Branch Library Lawn	0.23	6	yes																																			
40 College Avenue at Morrison Avenue																																						
TOTAL 'OTHER' OPEN SPACE	39.12																																					

NOTE: Many of the parks and open spaces listed here may be used as performance space. Please call 311 to determine access and reservations.

Appendix C: 2008-2013 Renovation Schedule

2008-2013 PARKS RENOVATION AND CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

This schedule accompanies the map “Action Plan Map: 2008-2013 Goals” in Appendix A. The properties are organized by owner on the map, and listed alphabetically by projected commencement date here (“Project Begins”). Note that projects typically begin with a substantial design phase prior to construction.

Property Name	Owner	Project Type	Map ID #	Project Begins
Albion Park	City	Renovation	1.E.	2008
Assembly Square Pedestrian/Bike Path	Private	New Construction	3.D.	2008
Central Hill Park	City	Renovation	1.K.	2008
Grimmons Park	City	Renovation	1.N.	2008
Harris Park	City	Land Swap and New Construction	1.O.	2008
Hodgkins-Curtin Park	City	Renovation	1.B.	2008
Max Pak Open Space	Private	New Construction	3.A.	2008
Milk Row Cemetery, Phase II	City	Renovation	1.H.	2008
111 South Street OLRA	City	New Construction	1.M.	2009
Community Path connection through Davis Square	DCR	New Construction	2.B.	2009
East Somerville Community School Playground	City	Renovation	1.P.	2009
Highland Road Gardens	City	New Construction	1.D.	2009
Route 28 Undercarriage	DCR	New Construction	3.B.	2009
Skateboard Park	City	New Construction	TBD	2009
Zero New Washington Street OLRA	City	New Construction	1.Q.	2009
Dickerman Playground	City	Renovation	1.G.	2010
Morse-Kelley Playground	City	Renovation	1.F.	2010
Mystic River Waterfront Park	DCR	New Construction	3.C.	2010
North Street/Veterans Playground	City	Renovation	1.A.	2010
Quincy Street Lot	City	Renovation	1.I.	2010
Union Square Plaza	City	Enhancements	1.L.	2010
Brown School Playground	City	Renovation	1.C.	2011
Blessings of the Bay Boathouse	DCR	Renovation	2.F.	2012
Lincoln Park, Phase II	City	Renovation	1.J.	2012
Community Path Extension	MBTA	New Construction	2.D.	2013
Draw Seven Park	DCR	Renovation	3.E.	2013
Dilboy Field	DCR	Transfer of Operations	2.A.	TBD
Foss Park	DCR	Renovation & Transfer of Operations	2.E.	TBD
Somerville Avenue Skating Rink	DCR	Renovation & Transfer of Operations	2.C.	TBD

Appendix D: ADA Self-Evaluation/City Practices

Part I: Administrative Requirements

1. Designation of the ADA Coordinator

The City has designated Carlene Campbell as the ADA Coordinator. Ms. Campbell is also the Assistant Director of Personnel. Her office is located in the Personnel Department at City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143. Her phone number is 617-625-6600 ext. 3303.

The City also has a Commission for Persons with Disabilities, established in 1992. The Commission holds monthly public meetings. More information on Commission reports and current activities can be found on the City of Somerville website, <http://www.somervillema.gov/>.

I attest that this information is correct.

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

Date

2. Grievance Procedures

Please consult the Personnel Department webpage at <http://www.somervillema.gov/> first for the current ADA Grievance Procedure. At the time of printing of this document, the procedure is as follows:



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Grievance Procedures

The following Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It may be used by anyone who wished to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in employment practices and policies of the provision of services, activities, programs and benefits by the City of Somerville.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date and description of the problem. Reasonable accommodations, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities who are unable to submit a written complaint.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Carlene Campbell - ADA Coordinator
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143
617-625-6600 x3303

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint the ADA Coordinator will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the ADA Coordinator, will respond in writing, and where appropriate in a format accessible to the complainant such as audiotape. The response will explain the position of the City of Somerville and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the Board of Alderman or their designee.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Board of Alderman or their designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting the Board of Alderman or their designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate in a format accessible to the complainant such as audiotape, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the Board of Alderman or their designee and responses from the ADA coordinator and the Board of Alderman or their designee will be kept by the City of Somerville - Human Resources Department for at least three years.

3. Public Notification Requirements

Public notice is given to employees and the general public that the City of Somerville is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Every effort is made to remove barriers to notification and attendance at all public meetings, including those held for the development of this Open Space & Recreation Plan.

The City is ready to provide any materials in alternate formats upon request, as well as to provide the required accommodations to individuals who are employed with the City or are applying for employment. In addition, the Commission for Persons with Disabilities has served as a strong advocate for their constituents and partnered with many City departments to ensure that all persons living, working and visiting the City of Somerville have full and equal access to all programs and services within the City, and to enable individuals with disabilities to achieve their full potential.

Part II: Program Accessibility

1. Facility Inventory

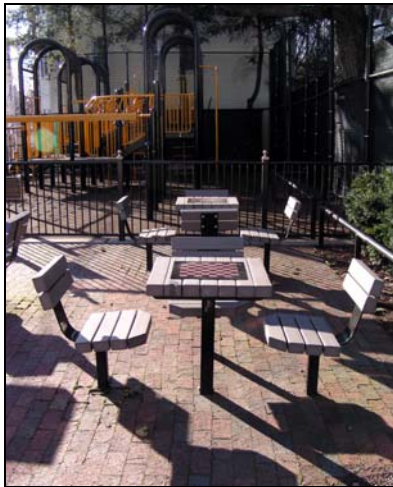
A facility inventory is included within the Parks Inventory (Appendix B). This information is based on the facility inventory published in the 2002-2007 Open Space & Recreation Plan. Those parcels that have been renovated within the last five years have been updated accordingly (see Section 6, Table 6.1. *2002 ACTION PLAN: RESULTS*, for a list of those renovated parcels). The Parks Inventory will continue to be updated for accessibility as renovations proceed over the next five years.

The establishment of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 resulted in refinement to Somerville's design approach to its parks and open spaces. The City ensures that all improvements meet the ADA Standards for Accessible Design, whether that is in new construction or the rehabilitation of existing spaces.

Recent projects have included the following modifications to improve accessibility:

- Handicapped ramps on public sidewalks;
- Accessible routes through parks and their entrances/exits;
- Safety surfacing in playgrounds, and accessible play structures;
- At least one provision for accessible planting beds in community gardens.

The City's ADA Coordinator helps the Parks and Open Space Department ensure that all new construction and renovation projects meet or exceed ADA requirements. Collaboration throughout the design process ensures that upgraded facilities are planned with all City residents in mind.



Palmacci Playground (2005)
Park table designed with three fixed chairs to accommodate wheelchair seating.



Perry Park (2007)
Water fountain has hand-operated push button with clear access and adequate knee space.



Perry Park (2007)
This swing is an example of accessible playground equipment that is usable for all children.

2. Transition Plan

The City is committed to continuing to meet or exceed ADA requirements for accessibility in all new construction projects and renovations of existing open spaces. Section 9 of this plan, *Goals and Objectives*, states a clear commitment to analyze and improve access as Goal 3. The Five-Year Action Plan (Section 10) additionally sets as a 2008-2013 goal the issuance of a report with prioritized recommendations for park accessibility improvements, written by the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development in coordination with the Somerville ADA Coordinator.

Part III: Employment Practices

The City's employment practices are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, including procedures for recruitment, personnel actions, leave administration, training, tests, medical examinations and questionnaires, social and recreational programs, fringe benefits, collective bargaining agreements, and wage and salary administration.

I attest that this information is correct.

Carlene Campbell
ADA Coordinator
City of Somerville, MA

Date

Appendix E: Public Survey & Results

2008-2013 Somerville Open Space & Recreation Plan survey

This survey is intended for anyone who uses the Somerville parks and open space system. The City would like to accomplish two goals through this survey:

1. Identify various park user groups and understand current park use and satisfaction levels;
2. Analyze the gap between community needs and current open space opportunities.

This survey is also available online through July 31, 2008 at <http://OSRP.speedsurvey.com>
Please encourage your friends and neighbors to participate!

Thank you for your time and help in completing this survey. The results will be part of the revision process for the City's 5-year strategic Open Space and Recreation Plan. For more information on the Plan, and translations of the survey in other languages, please visit <http://www.somervillema.gov> and follow the links to Departments → Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development → Parks & Open Space.

About You

- 1) What is the ZIP code for your primary residence? _____
- 2) Are you a Somerville resident?
 - Yes
 - No
- 3) If you are a Somerville resident, for how long have you lived in the City?
 - 0-5 years
 - 6-15 years
 - More than 15 years
- 4) Including you, how many people reside in your household? _____
- 5) What are the ages of your household members as of April 1, 2008? (Please check all that apply)
 - Under 5 years old
 - 5-9
 - 10-14
 - 15-19
 - 20-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-59
 - 60-64
 - 65-74
 - 75-84
 - 85 years or over

- 6) Are you aware of the City's 311 system as a means for reporting parks-related concerns?
- Yes
 - No
- 7) If you live in Somerville, what neighborhood do you live in? (see map on page 3)
- West Somerville
 - Tufts
 - Davis Square
 - Powder House
 - Spring Hill
 - Magoun Square
 - Winter Hill
 - Ten Hills
 - Mystic River
 - East Somerville
 - Prospect Hill
 - Union Square / Beacon Street
 - Brickbottom / Inner Belt
 - I don't know

About Your Park Usage

- 8) How often do you visit parks, open spaces, or community gardens in Somerville?
- Frequently (more than 12 times/year)
 - Occasionally (6-12 times/year)
 - Infrequently (1-5 times/year)
 - Never
- 9) How do you typically get to your favorite neighborhood park? (please pick one choice)
- Walk
 - Bicycle
 - Car
 - Bus
- 10) Using the scale below, please indicate how important the following activities are to you, according to your typical use of open space:

Activity	Rating			
	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important
Social interaction – picnics, group events, etc.	○	○	○	○
Active sports – baseball, soccer, basketball, etc.	○	○	○	○
Aerobic exercise – jogging, running, etc.	○	○	○	○
Gentle exercise – walking, tai chi, etc.	○	○	○	○
Playgrounds and young child activities	○	○	○	○
Dog walking/dog recreation	○	○	○	○
Reading, relaxation, or contemplation	○	○	○	○
Community gardening	○	○	○	○
Other: .	○	○	○	○



11) Do you most often visit Somerville parks and open spaces:

- Alone
- With an adult companion
- With a child (or children)
- With a pet
- In a group of three or more

12) If you use the Community Path, for what purpose do you use it? (Please choose all that apply.)

- Commuting
- Recreational walking
- Running/jogging
- Bicycling
- Rollerblading
- Dog walking
- Other: _____
- I do not use the Community Path

13) What is the name of the public park or open space to which you live closest?

14) What are the three public parks or open spaces in Somerville that you use the most?

About Park Programs and Activities

15) Have you or any member of your household attended any of the following park related events? (Please check all that apply.)

- Family Fun Day
- Spring Clean Up
- National Night Out
- Senior Picnic
- Growing Center programs
- Garden Club activities
- Movies
- Arts programs
- Neighborhood activities
- Organized sports activities (league games, road races)
- Nonprofit/community group-organized events
- Historic commemorations and/or events
- Other: _____

16) If you have participated in recreational programs and special events in Somerville's parks and open spaces (see Question 15), how would you rate their overall quality?

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Fair
- Poor

17) How have you learned of recreational programs and special events offered through Somerville's public parks and open spaces? (Please check all that apply.)

- Newspaper (e.g., Somerville Journal, Somerville News, El Mundo)
- Word of mouth
- Flyers
- Newsletters (please specify: _____)
- Websites / blogs (please specify: _____)
- Email lists (please specify: _____)
- Cable access television
- Other: _____
- I never hear about park programs and events

18) Do you think the City should encourage more community activities and recreation programs in your neighborhood park(s)?

- Yes
- No

19) If so, please list any particular community activities or recreation programs that you would like the City to offer in the future:

About Quality of Parks and Future Improvements

20) How would you rate the overall quality of maintenance of the City's parks and open spaces?

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Fair
- Poor

21) Using the scale below, please indicate how important it is to you for the City to enhance the following facilities or attributes in its parks and open spaces:

Facility or Attribute	Rating			
	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important
Community gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tables (e.g., picnic, gaming, café)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children's play equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interactive water sprays or features	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Covered areas for family gatherings and community events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public artwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community bulletin boards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historic signage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skateboard or rollerblade features	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports fields and courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spaces for relaxation and rest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog walking / on-leash access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Off-leash Recreation Areas (dog parks)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22) Using the following scale, please rate your overall satisfaction with the following aspects of the parks and opens spaces you use:

Description	Rating				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not applicable
Green open space (i.e., lawn, trees)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access for people with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog walking / on-leash access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Off-leash recreation areas (dog parks)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of sport surfaces (e.g., basketball and tennis courts, soccer fields)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spaces for public gatherings (e.g., picnics, events, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of paths, walkways, and stairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety / security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23) If you are dissatisfied with current safety / security measures in Somerville's parks and open spaces, please indicate below what changes you would like the City to make:

24) Using the scale below, please indicate how important each of the following City priorities is to you:

Priority	Rating			
	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important
Cleaning and routine maintenance of parks and open spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing more parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Renovating existing parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing more non-programmed green space (i.e., lawn, meadow)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing the City's tree canopy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing the number of Off-Leash Recreation Areas (dog parks)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adopting more environmentally responsible building and maintenance practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Converting industrial parcels (i.e., brownfields) to parks and open spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing opportunities for increased public feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing more playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving existing playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adding community gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extending the Community Path	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing park access for people with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing spaces for outdoor sports programs (e.g., playing fields)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing places for cultural programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing security in parks and open spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging open space as part of public/private development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25) Please indicate in the space below the factors or conditions that would increase your overall use of Somerville's parks and open spaces (for example, more personal time, improved park conditions, etc.):

26) In the space below, please describe what you think are the qualities and characteristics of an ideal urban plaza or city square? (Typically, an "urban plaza" is an open "hardscape" area located in a city's center that provides a space for a variety of activities.)

END OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SURVEY

Thank you for taking this survey. Please return it by **July 15, 2008** to:

City Hall
OSPCD Parks Division, 3rd Floor
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143
Att'n: Ellen Schneider

2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan Public Survey Data Analysis

Survey closed: 7/31/08
Final Survey Responses: 906

“About You”: Questions 1-7

Question 2: “Are you a Somerville resident?”

- 872 (96.2% of 906 respondents) Somerville Residents

Question 3: “If you are a Somerville resident, for how long have you lived in the City?”

- 0-5 yrs: 300
- 6-15 yrs: 297
- 15+ yrs: 281

Question 5: “What are the ages of your household members as of April 1, 2008? (Please check all that apply)”

Age Category	# Respondents	Percent
>5yrs	203	11.50
5-9	179	10.14
10-14	119	6.74
15-19	75	4.25
20-24	68	3.85
25-34	333	18.87
35-44	382	21.64
45-54	230	13.03
55-59	81	4.59
60-64	48	2.72
65-74	26	1.47
75-84	13	0.74
85+	8	0.45
Total	1,765	100.00

Question 7: “If you live in Somerville, what neighborhood do you live in?”

Neighborhood	# Respondents	% of Total
West Somerville	77	8.5
East Somerville	49	5.4
Prospect Hill	84	9.3
Union Square/Beacon Street	108	11.9
Brickbottom/Inner Belt	9	1.0
I don't know	5	.6
Tufts	50	5.5
Davis Square	106	11.7
Powder House	144	15.9
Spring Hill	142	15.7
Magoun Square	16	1.8
Winter Hill	79	8.7
Ten Hills	13	1.4
Total	882	97.4
Missing (No answer)	24	2.6
Total	906	100

“About your Park Usage”: Questions 8-14

Question 8: “How often do you visit parks, open spaces, or community gardens in Somerville?”

Frequency	# Respondents	% of Total
Never	3	.3
Infrequently (1-5x/yr)	65	7.2
Occasionally (6-12x/yr)	113	12.5
Frequently (12+/yr)	720	79.5
Total	901	99.4
Missing (No answer)	5	.6
Total	906	100.0

Question 9: “How do you typically get to your favorite neighborhood park? (please pick one choice)”

	# Respondents	% of Total
No Answer	6	0.66
Walk	731	80.68
Bicycle	60	6.62

	# Respondents	% of Total
Car	107	11.81
Bus	2	0.22
Total	906	100

Question 10: “Using the scale below, please indicate how important the following activities are to you, according to your typical use of open space.”

	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	No Answer
Social Interaction	278	332	205	65	26
Active sports	270	211	242	159	24
Aerobic exercise	189	274	279	132	32
Gentle exercise	286	332	184	72	32
Playgrounds	400	196	126	151	33
Dog Walking	238	110	151	378	29
Reading, Relaxing	297	331	186	63	29
Community Gardening	199	262	244	163	38

Question 11: “Do you most often visit Somerville parks and open spaces...”

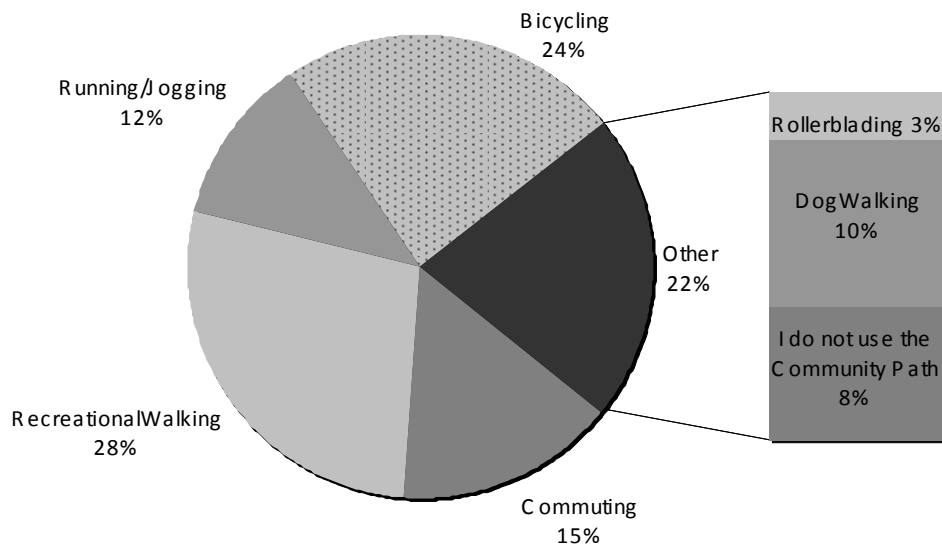
	# Respondents	% of Total
Alone	139	15.34
With Adult	182	20.08
With Child	337	37.19
With Pet	177	19.53
Group 3+	64	7.06
Total	899	99.22
No Answer	7	0.77
	906	100

Question 12: “If you use the Community Path, for what purpose do you use it? (Please choose all that apply.)”

Purpose	Responses	%
Commuting	271	15.00
Recreational Walking	496	27.45
Running/Jogging	212	11.73
Bicycling	423	23.41
Rollerblading	53	2.93
Dog Walking	184	10.18
Gardening	3	0.17

Purpose	Responses	%
Cross-Country Skiing	2	0.11
I do not use the Community Path	147	8.14
Socializing	4	0.22
Time with Family	5	0.28
Bird Watching	2	0.11
Skateboarding	1	0.06
Scooters	3	0.17
Events-Halloween	1	0.06
Total	1,807	100.00

How do you use the Community Path?



Questions 13 and 14: Most frequently used parks and open spaces in Somerville.

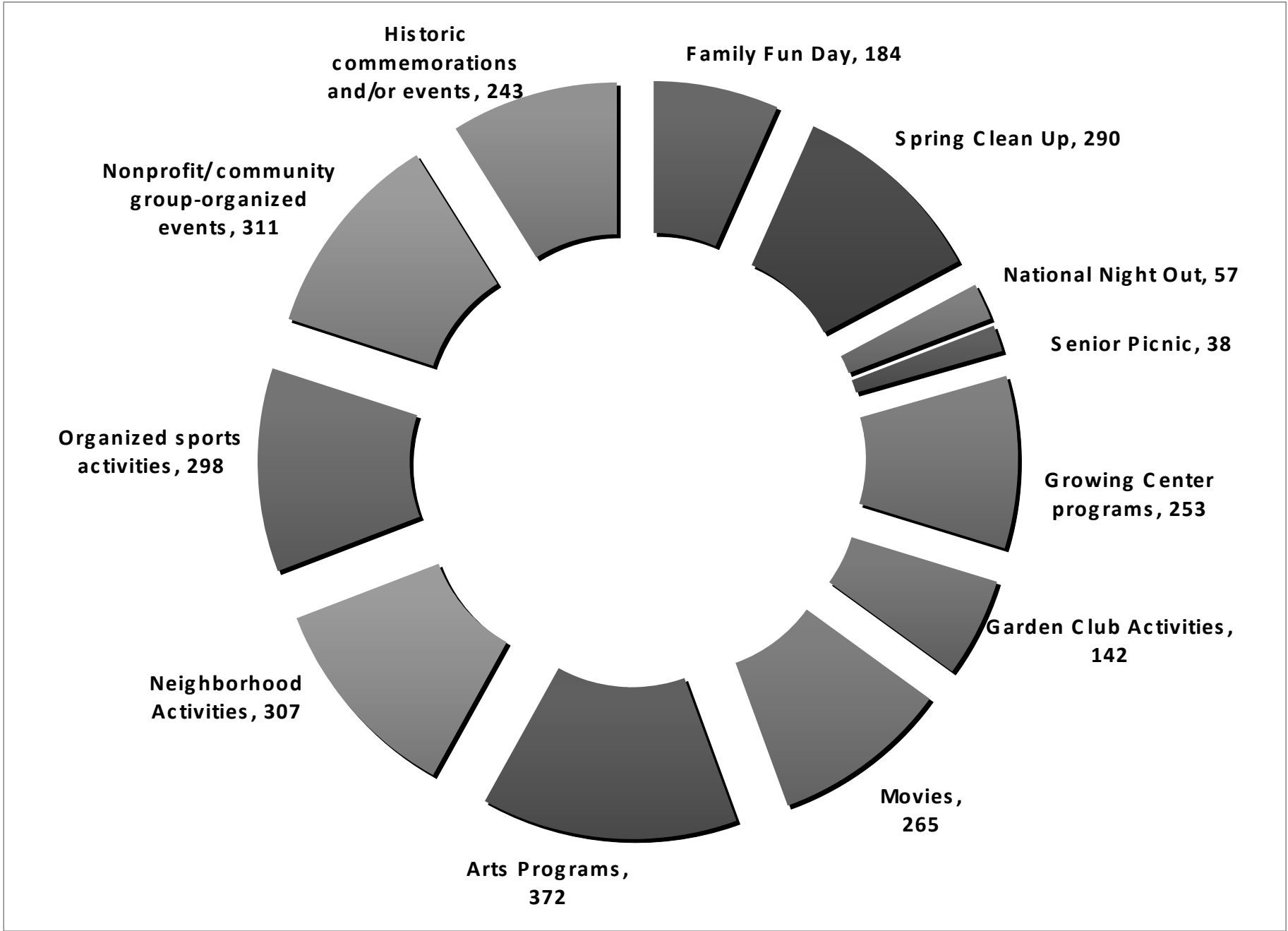
Park	# Responses	Percent
Community Path	329	15.99
Nunziato Field and OLRA	155	7.53
Nathan Tufts (Powderhouse) Park	144	7.00
Lexington Park	135	6.56
Foss Park	117	5.69
Hodgkins-Curtin Park	117	5.69
Conway Park	114	5.54
Prospect Hill Park	103	5.00
Trum Field	76	3.69
Tufts University Fields	61	2.96
Dilboy Field	60	2.92
Lincoln Park	56	2.72
Walnut Street Park	46	2.24

Park	# Responses	Percent
Central Hill Park	44	2.14
Seven Hills Park	44	2.14
Somerville Community Growing Center	41	1.99
Perry Park	40	1.94
Capuano Field	39	1.90
Davis Square Plaza	38	1.85
Kenney Park	35	1.70
Morse-Kelley Playground	23	1.12
Mystic River Reservation	23	1.12
Alewife Brook Reservation	22	1.07
Dickerman Playground	21	1.02
Minuteman Path	18	0.87
Draw Seven Park	17	0.83
Bailey Park	11	0.53
Healey Elementary School	10	0.49
Hoyt-Sullivan Playground	10	0.49
Albion Playground	8	0.39
Durell Pocket Park and Community Garden	7	0.34
Glen Park Playground	7	0.34
Corbett-McKenna Park	6	0.29
Palmacci Playground	6	0.29
Kennedy School	5	0.24
Osgood Park	5	0.24
Quincy Street Park	5	0.24
Stone Place Park	5	0.24
Argenziano School	4	0.19
Bikeway Community Garden	4	0.19
East Somerville Community Playground	4	0.19
Florence Playground	4	0.19
Glen Community Garden	4	0.19
Grimmons Park	4	0.19
Marshall Street Playground	3	0.15
North Street/ Veterans Playground	3	0.15
Osgood Community Garden	3	0.15
Tufts Community Garden	3	0.15
West Somerville Neighborhood School	3	0.15
Edward L. Leathers Community Park	2	0.10
Harris Playground	2	0.10
Otis Playground	2	0.10
Trum Playground	2	0.10
Winter Hill Community School	2	0.10
Woodstock Street Playground	2	0.10
Avon Community Garden	1	0.05
Cummings School	1	0.05
Perkins Playground	1	0.05
Powderhouse Community School	1	0.05
Total	2058	100.00

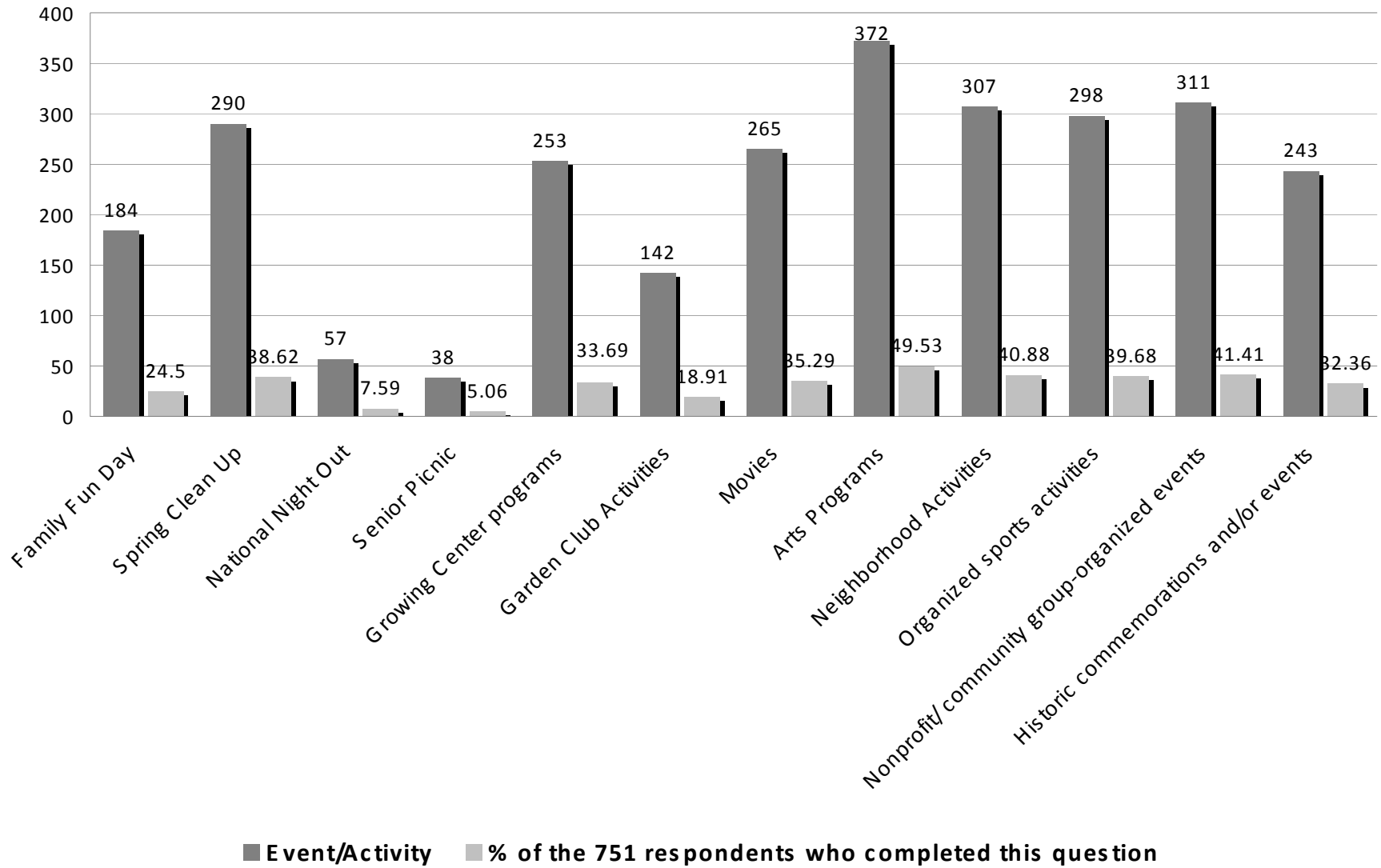
“About Park Programs and Activities”: Questions 15-19

Question 15: “Have you or any member of your household attended any of the following park related events? (Please check all that apply.)”

Event/Activity	# Respondents	%	% of the 751 respondents who completed this question
Family Fun Day	184	6.57	24.5
Spring Clean Up	290	10.35	38.62
National Night Out	57	2.03	7.59
Senior Picnic	38	1.36	5.06
Growing Center programs	253	9.03	33.69
Garden Club Activities	142	5.07	18.91
Movies	265	9.46	35.29
Arts Programs	372	13.28	49.53
Neighborhood Activities	307	10.96	40.88
Organized sports activities	298	10.64	39.68
Nonprofit/ community group-organized events	311	11.1	41.41
Historic commemorations and/or events	243	8.67	32.36
Plays in the Park	1	0.03	0.13
Easter Sunrise	1	0.03	0.13
July 4th Fireworks	14	0.5	1.86
SomDog Activities	2	0.07	0.26
Park Openings	2	0.07	0.26
Potlucks in the Park	2	0.07	0.27
"KidStop" -Dept of Rec.	1	0.036	0.13
None	3	0.11	0.40
ShapeUp Somerville Activities	2	0.07	0.27
Open Air Circus	7	0.25	0.93
Sunsetters	2	0.07	0.27
Halloween Stroll	4	0.14	0.53
Total	2,801	100	372.97



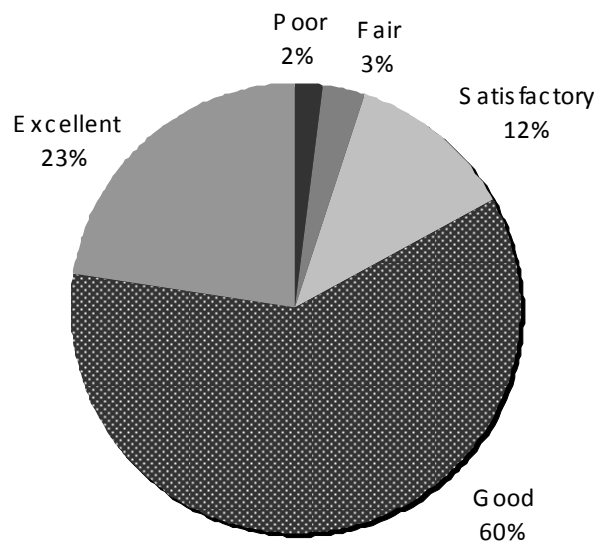
Attendance at Park-related Events



Question 16: “If you have participated in recreational programs and special events in Somerville’s parks and open spaces (see Question 15), how would you rate their overall quality?”

	Frequency	Percent
Poor	14	1.55
Fair	21	2.32
Satisfactory	84	9.27
Good	421	46.47
Excellent	158	17.44
Total	698	77.04
No Answer	208	22.96
Total	906	100

Overall Quality of Recreational Programs



Question 18: “Do you think the City should encourage more community activities and recreation programs in your neighborhood park(s)?”

- Yes: 768
- No: 103

Question 19: “If so, please list any particular community activities or recreation programs that you would like the City to offer in the future...”

- Please see qualitative responses to Question 19 in separate analysis.

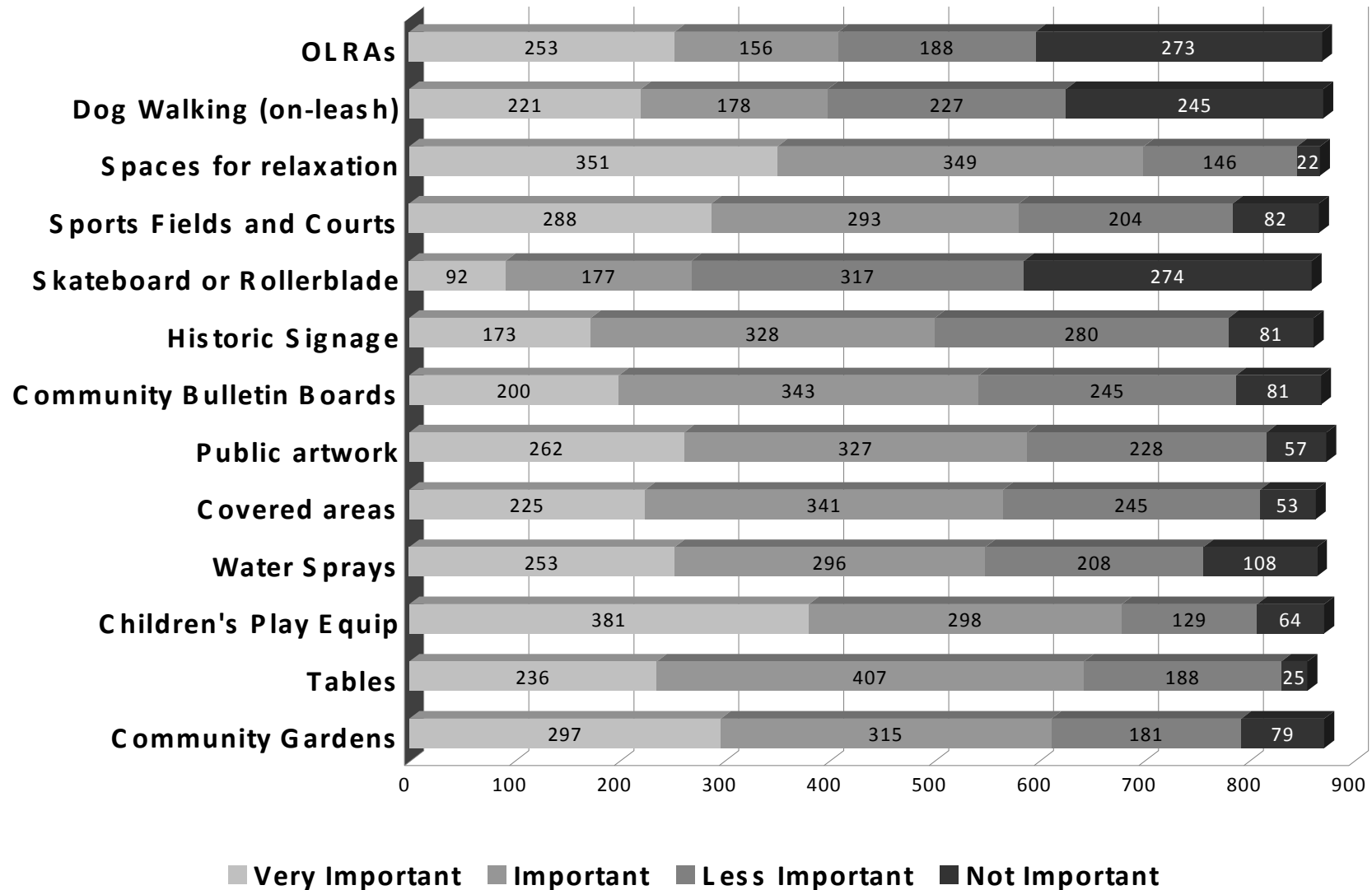
“About Quality of Parks and Future Improvements”: Questions 20-26

Question 20: “How would you rate the overall quality of maintenance of the City’s parks and open spaces?”

Quality of Maintenance	# Respondents	% of Total
Poor	43	4.74
Fair	113	12.47
Satisfactory	260	28.69
Good	377	41.61
Excellent	91	10.04
Total	884	97.57
No Answer	22	2.43
Total	906	100

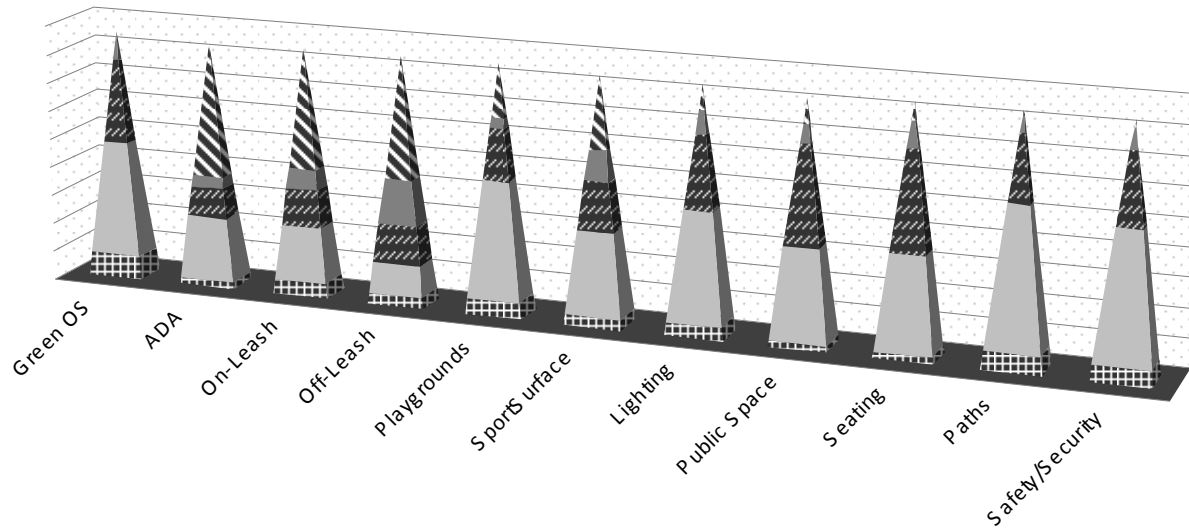
Question 21: “Using the scale below, please indicate how important it is to you for the City to enhance the following facilities or attributes in its parks and open spaces...”

Importance of enhancement/attribute (Question 21)



Question 22: “Using the following scale, please rate your overall satisfaction with the following aspects of the parks and opens spaces you use...”

Satisfaction with Aspects of Parks and Open Space



	Green OS	ADA	On-Leash	Off-Leash	Playgrounds	S portS urface	Lighting	Public S pace	Seating	Paths	Safety/S ecurity
Not Applicable	5	456	412	421	183	251	84	82	59	22	30
Very Dissatisfied	99	41	69	157	33	104	80	65	90	54	70
Somewhat Dissatisfied	290	103	129	133	181	172	252	340	345	229	249
Satisfied	397	221	192	109	406	287	382	320	331	486	449
Very Satisfied	77	21	51	37	56	35	46	21	20	61	53

Question 24: “Using the scale below, please indicate how important each of the following City priorities is to you...”

City Priority	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important
Routine park maintenance	623	233	12	1
Extending the Community Path	578	186	65	37
Brownfields to parks	570	238	47	14
Encourage pub/private development	554	221	54	20
Increase tree canopy	522	236	95	12
More environmentally responsible practices	517	258	72	19
More parks	427	261	167	11
Park renovations	413	326	114	5
Increased public feedback opportunities	374	363	112	9
Non-programmed green space	373	280	176	25
Playground renovations	304	319	188	43
Increased security	276	365	174	35
More community gardens	270	292	236	64
Outdoor sports space	264	278	242	69
Increasing access for disabilities	225	367	174	78
Increase # OLRA's	220	110	211	323
Cultural program spaces	194	363	259	42
More playgrounds	156	310	316	71

Question 25: “Please indicate in the space below the factors or conditions that would increase your overall use of Somerville’s parks and open spaces (for example, more personal time, improved park conditions, etc.)...”

- Please see qualitative responses to Question 25 in separate analysis.

Question 26: “In the space below, please describe what you think are the qualities and characteristics of an ideal urban plaza or city square? (Typically, an ‘urban plaza’ is an open ‘hardscape’ area located in a city’s center that provides a space for a variety of activities.)”

- Please see qualitative responses to Question 26 in separate analysis.

Appendix F: Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC)

I. Committee Membership, 2007-2008

Name	Affiliation
Carlene Campbell	City of Somerville, ADA Coordinator
Frank Santangelo	City of Somerville, Department of Public Works
Jessie Baker	City of Somerville, Mayor's Office
Brandon Wilson	City of Somerville, Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, Historic Preservation
Arn Franzen, Ellen Schneider	City of Somerville, Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, Parks & Open Space
Vithal Deshpande	City of Somerville, Office of Sustainability & Environment
James Halloran	City of Somerville, Recreation Department
Stephen Winslow	Conservation Commission/Bike Advisory Committee
Michele Biscoe	Dog Owners' Task Force
Carrie Dancy	East Somerville Main Streets
Jennifer Lawrence	Groundwork Somerville
Nicole Rioles	Shape Up Somerville
Lisa Brukilacchio	Somerville Growing Center

In addition to the Committee members listed above, the Somerville Garden Club asked to sit in on the Advisory Committee meetings and were of enormous assistance. OSAC Meetings were planned and run by the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD)'s Parks and Open Space team.

II. Meeting Schedule

The Open Space Advisory Committee was first convened on October 25, 2007, as part of a Focus Group reviewing the *2008-2013 Consolidated Plan*. The subsequent meetings were held on the *2008-2013 Open Space & Recreation Plan*:

Date	Venue
10/25/07	OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
1/24/08	Aldermanic Chambers, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
3/19/08	OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
5/29/08	OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
8/20/08	OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue

Parks and Open Space Committee

Meeting #1

Thursday, October 25, 2007. OSPCD Conference Room, 6-7:30 p.m.

Objectives

- Open Space Committee: what/why
- Introduction of Con Plan: Accomplishments/Data (powerpoint)
- Distribution of *2002-2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan*

Questions

- What should Somerville's strategic objectives be for Parks & Open Space for 2008-2013?
- What quantitative/qualitative data from your agency is available to incorporate into the 2008 Con Plan and OSRP? Can you provide us with a summary of your work and relevant contact information?
- Is your agency working on any Somerville projects specific to low/medium-income populations?
- How does your agency's work relate to Somerville's parks and open spaces?
- What other groups (neighborhood/city-wide) do you feel should be involved in setting Somerville parks and open space goals and strategies?
- Further questions/recommendations?

Next Steps

- Review Con Plan draft narrative (to be distributed November 2007)
- Meeting #2 (December 2007)

Contact Information

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Landscape Project Manager
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eschneider@ci.somerville.ma.us

Parks and Open Space Focus Group – Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 25 2007, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville

In Attendance

Steve Winslow – Conservation Commission/Bike Advocacy Committee

Michele Biscoe – Dog Owners’ Task Force

Steve Quinn – DPW Buildings and Grounds

Peter Mills – DPW Environmental Protection

Jennifer Lawrence – Groundwork Somerville

Jim Halloran – Recreation Department

Nicole Rioles – Shape Up Somerville

Jessie Baker – SomerStat

Lisa Brukilacchio – Somerville Growing Center

Daria Ovide – Trust for Public Land

Judy Eisenberg – Somerville Garden Club

Arn Frazen – Director of Parks and Open Space

Ellen Schneider – Landscape Project Manager

Joseph Crugnale – HUD Consolidated Plan Intern

1) Consolidated Plan Process/Open Space Committee

(a) Representation

(i) Representation from low and moderate income communities

(ii) Open forums

(iii) Possible new member suggestions

1. Jonathan, Garden Club
2. Green Line Community Forum
3. Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership
4. Organized User Groups
 - a. PTA, Little League, Welcome Project
5. East Somerville for Change
6. Mystic River Association
7. Park Specific User Groups
8. Foss Park
9. Lexington Park
10. Teen Empowerment
11. Leanne Dorego East Somerville Neighbors for Change
12. Groups represented at Nunziato Field Clean-Up Day

(b) Cooperation

(i) Clear direction and goal

1. Understanding what other groups are doing facilitates greater good
2. Exercise will allow everyone to be on the same page.
3. “Green Congress”
4. Can use collective input for Open Space Plan

(c) Setting Guidelines and Priorities

(i) Previous Con Plan great place to start

1. Look at what was accomplished, what wasn’t accomplished

- (ii) Open Space Plan
 - 1. Another great place to start from
- (iii) Old Parks
 - 1. Ideas
- (iv) Continue to look at all related groups to address needs and issues
 - 1. Con Plan place to start

2) Regionalism

- a) Regional Agencies
 - i) Mystic River Watershed Association *Jim has their information
 - ii) DCR
- b) Reaching out to surrounding communities
 - i) Jointly examining common issues
 - ii) Developing regional goals
 - iii) Leaving funding as individual responsibility
- c) Consciousness of area surrounding city border
 - i) Maps should include parks, open space, etc beyond Somerville's borders.

3) DCR

- a) Facilities
 - i) Foss Park
 - ii) Dilboy Field
 - iii) Skating Rink
 - (1) In perpetual disrepair (seems to be common theme in DCR facilities)
 - (2) People don't use because of poor state, which hampers effort to renovate
- b) Role in Somerville
 - i) Mediocre/poor record in maintaining its fields in city
 - ii) Shared agreement for Dilboy Field
- c) New Strategies
 - i) Matching Fund Programs
 - ii) Reverting parks to City control

4) Rediscovering the Mystic River

- a) Phenomenal resource
- b) Completely underutilized
 - i) Numbers of users (of boathouse) available

5) Sustainability

- a) State of Repairs
 - i) Inventory parks to inform residents what city offers
 - ii) Continuing maintenance of parks to ensure they are always ready
 - (1) Drainage/water issues, notably at Argenziano School
 - iii) Staying in contact with community to address problems as soon as possible
- b) Data Collection
 - i) Surveying park users

- (1) Knowing who is using park provides valuable insight on how to improve it
 - (2) Previous Surveys
 - (a) Somerville Community Group?
 - (b) Foss Park Survey?
 - (c) Dept. of Recreation occupancy counts
 - (3) Data Collection difficulties
 - (a) Data can be skewed as would be users of park do not use it because of its existing poor condition
 - ii) Applying actual park data to decision making
 - (1) Youth enrollment in sports programs, idea of what trends are
 - (2) Working with SomerStat
 - (3) Groups that “yell” the loudest can have a disproportionate effect on final decisions
 - (4) Perry Park Process example
- 6) Mapping and Accessibility**
- a) Utility of maps
 - i) Showing access points for elderly and disabled
 - ii) Proximity of park amenities to resident
 - iii) Overall making city more accessible
 - iv) Absence of maps can mean less accessibility and awareness of parks to residents
 - b) Maps of the parks in the proposed
 - i) Assembly Square Development
 - ii) Brickbottom
- 7) New Park Possibilities**
- a) New Park Acquisition
 - i) Has Mayor’s Support
 - ii) Identify strategic plan to develop this
 - (1) Concrete goals
 - (2) Linking and building upon existing network
 - iii) Work with Assessor’s office
 - (1) Identify absentee landowners
 - (2) Where there is opportunity to purchase cheap lands
 - (3) Paper Streets, city owned streets being used only to store vehicles
 - iv) Community Path
 - (1) New parcels for parks along Community Path already being examined
 - b) Other Opportunities
 - i) Opportunities for changing zoning in Industrial areas
 - ii) Assembly Square
- 8) Next Steps**
- a) Try to meet again in December

Open Space Advisory Committee: Meeting #2

Thursday, January 24, 2008. Aldermanic Committee Room, City Hall, 1-2:30 p.m.

Objectives

1. Update on *Consolidated Plan* + schedule forward
 - Review of **Vision** and **Strategic Goals** for Parks & Open Space (see attached sheets)
 - Full text of Con Plan available online on city website: <http://www.somervillema.gov/>: follow links to Departments → OSPCD → Planning → HUD 5-Year Consolidated Plan.
 - **Letters of Support** on the Draft Con Plan are requested important for the final document. Please encourage your local organizations to write letters of support and send them to:

Brianna O'Brien
Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

2. Update on *Open Space & Rec Plan*

- Schedule forward
- Review of meeting with MA Division of Conservation Services
- OSRP content: data needs
- OSRP process: public participation strategy

Next Steps

- Public Meeting, February 2008 (date + venue TBD)
- Next Open Space Advisory Committee meeting, March 2008 (date TBD)

Contact Information

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City Hall OSPCD, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143
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afranzen@ci.somerville.ma.us

Ellen Schneider
Landscape Project Manager
Phone: (617) 625-6600, x2529
eschneider@ci.somerville.ma.us

Open Space Advisory Committee: Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 24, 2008. Aldermanic Committee Room, City Hall, 1-2:30 p.m.

In Attendance: Jessie Baker, Michele Biscoe, Lisa Brukilacchio, Carlene Campbell, Vithal Deshpande, Arn Franzen, Jim Halloran, Jennifer Lawrence, Peter Mills, Nicole Rioles, Ellen Schneider, Stephen Winslow

Topics Covered:

I. Consolidated Plan

The *Consolidated Plan* is a five-year strategic plan for federal funds that will be submitted to HUD on February 15, 2008. HUD requires a Consolidated Plan in order for Somerville's eligible parks to qualify for Community Development Block Grant funds.

- a. Reviewed Parks & Open Space vision and goals for *2008-2013 Consolidated Plan*. The full text of the Con Plan is available online at: <http://www.somervillema.gov/>: follow links to Departments → OSPCD → Planning → HUD 5-Year Consolidated Plan.
- b. **Letters of Support** for the Draft Con Plan were requested from committee member organizations for the final document. Please encourage your local organizations to write letters of support and send them by **February 4** to:

Brianna O'Brien
Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

II. Open Space and Recreation Plan

The *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (OSRP) is a five-year strategic plan for the entire City. It will be submitted to the Department of Conservation Services in September 2008. The State uses the OSRP to help award its Urban Self Help grants.

- a. Reviewed **schedule forward** to September 2008 (see attached)
- b. Review of **meeting with Melissa Cryan, MA Division of Conservation Services**. Melissa reviewed goals and requirements of the OSRP with the Parks & Open Space team on January 10, 2008. Three items of note for the committee:
 - Current Somerville OSRP is excellent model for 2008 revision; we will therefore not be making major changes to document structure, but concentrating on revising content.
 - The State is interested in seeing public participation strategies that specifically target Economic Justice communities.
 - There is considerable interest in funding brownfield conversion projects.
- c. **OSRP content**. The committee reviewed data needs in order to update/write the OSRP. The Parks & Open Space team will be responsible for writing the document. We are currently compiling statistics and starting to update sections. We have a good amount of data, but could use more sources for some topics. The following comments and suggestions were made by the committee:

DATA – POTENTIAL SOURCES		<i>Open Space & Recreation Plan</i>
BIODIVERSITY	Animal/plant counts, statistics (Lisa B. has potential source)	
PARK USE	DPW park permits records Friends of Foss Park – do they keep records? Boathouse, stadium, pool – DCR records? Community Path – pedestrian counts taken by Institute for Community Health OLRAs – does the Dog Owners Task Force keep counts? For a baseline, get number of registered dogs in the City Growing Center – list of different partners, programs Community Gardens – ask Conservation Commission for wait list to show demand Arts programming – statistics on summer park program attendance	
NRSAs*/TARGET COMMUNITIES	Shape Up Somerville disparities grant – has some info on E. Somerville open space	
GRAPHICS	Historical photos (trees, landscapes, land use changes) Photos of current scenic views/corridors	

*NRSA = a HUD term; Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area.
 Somerville has two NRSA's – East Somerville NRSA and Union Square NRSA. See attached maps.

- d. **OSRP process.** The committee reviewed best practices for a public participation strategy. The following comments and suggestions were made by the committee:

PROCESS– POTENTIAL STRATEGIES		<i>Open Space & Recreation Plan</i>
PUBLIC OUTREACH	SomerStat will help coordinate the City website survey (March '08) written by Parks & Open Space Survey can be enabled to be taken more than once on a public computer Immigrant Service Providers group could be helpful with survey question development Provide link to survey through Somerville organization websites (e.g., Groundworks) Provide link to web survey through <i>Wicked Local</i> Parks & Open Space to write press release for Communications to distribute to media Appear on cable access show? <i>Council on Aging, Mayor's Report, City Tails?</i> Senior community: ask Cindy Hickey (Council on Aging) for advice Underrepresented/Economic Justice communities: ask Kenya Elisa-McLaren for advice Have first public meeting taped and shown on Somerville Cable Access Potential for Groundwork Somerville assist with neighborhood outreach efforts	
OTHER	Conservation Commission would like presentation on the OSRP by the Parks & Open Space team	

Next Steps:

- Parks and Open Space is coordinating the first Public Meeting, to be held in West Somerville in late February. More details to come.
- The next Open Space Advisory Committee meeting will be held in March – date and place to be determined.

Open Space Advisory Committee: Meeting #3

Wednesday, March 19, 2008. OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

Review of items since 1/24/08 meeting

- Update on *Consolidated Plan*: BOA approved and submitted to HUD 2/15/08. The final plan is available online: there is a link under "City Spotlight" on the home page, www.somervillema.gov.
- Public meeting #1: held at the TAB Building on 2/20/08. Minutes will be posted online.
- Presented to Resistat Parents Group 3/8/08, JFK School.
- Presented to Conservation Commission 3/12/08, City Hall.

Current Items

- Schedule forward: progress update (meetings, narrative revisions, map revisions)
- Data collection for OSRP: status
- Public participation process for OSRP: status
- Website survey
 - review questions
 - review definition of Environmental Justice communities
 - discuss distribution methods
 - set date for release
- Public meeting #2, April 2008
 - set date, location (East Somerville)
 - discuss best practices for advertisement (Communications Department, City agency and nonprofit email lists, etc).
- Website update – posting information on Parks and Open Space page
- Other

Next Steps

- Public Meeting #2, April 2008
 - date, place and time to be determined with Aldermen Roche and Pero
 - April 30 best date for Parks & Open Space department
- Next Open Space Advisory Committee meeting, May 2008
 - set meeting date and time for week of May 19-23

Open Space Advisory Committee: Meeting #4

Thursday May 29, 2008

6:30-7:30 p.m.

OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall

In attendance: Patricia E. Singer (Somerville Garden Club), Arn Franzen, Jessie Baker, Brad Arndt, Tammy Zborel, Ellen Schneider, Nicole Rioles, James Halloran, Carrie Dancy, Michele Biscoe, Jen Lawrence, Carlene Campbell, Steve Winslow

Meeting Notes

1. Review purpose of OSRP
2. Progress and Status Updates
 - a. OSRP Action Plan updates
 - b. Map revisions, i.e. Environmental Justice
 - c. Summary of Public Meeting #2
3. Data collection for OSRP
 - a. Review goals from 2003 OSRP
 - b. Environmental education activities/outreach programs developed since last plan (Goal 3):
 - SomerGreen Festival
 - SomDog – “No Pile Left Behind” initiative
 - Groundwork Somerville gardening programs
 - e.g., East Somerville Garden inventory and “Growing Healthy” curriculum
 - Collaboration with Somerville and Cambridge to provide more locally grown foods to children and families
 - 6 schools currently participating; Grades 4-8
 - Nutrition education; School gardens
 - Somerville Garden Club– collaboration with Friends of Fresh Pond (?)
 - Tours of Somerville Gardens
 - Environmentally responsible gardening strategies
 - Companion planting; Focus on Natives; Non-synthetics or chemicals
 - Office of Sustainability and Environment (City of Somerville) – citywide initiatives (e.g., recycling program)
 - Since the creation of OSE recycling rates have increased; possible success story to highlight?
 - East Somerville Main Streets (ESMS): Anti-littering campaigns; Library programs
 - Farmer’s markets and community supported agriculture (2 CSAs in Somerville)
 - “Made in Somerville” Local First initiative
 - Foss Park Neighborhood Association – monthly clean-ups
 - Greater Boston League – local high-school rowing teams using Malden & Mystic Rivers (combine with Goal 4, Regionalism)
 - Art in the Garden
 - c. Section-Specific Data
 - Permeable/impermeable surfaces – Groundwork intern recently completed (and presented to the mayor) a permeable pavement study – follow up with Jen Lawrence
 - Assembly Square waterfront park – Possibly highlight as a success story

- Trees of historical significance – Somerville Garden Club member collected info about historical trees – follow up with Tricia
- Dedicated vs. non-dedicated land – Land receiving funding through Urban Self-Help Grants must be dedicated
- Photos: Recreation photo albums are on-line

4. Success Stories

- Zero New Washington – use “before & after” format (Carlene)
- Dog Owner’s Task Force – Created new dog park
- 30 Allen St. – Good example of collaboration (i.e. EPA, Groundwork Somerville, FCC, etc.)
- Argenziano School – good example of response to public process and community focus on building new green space
- Union Square Farmer’s Market (Carlene – has photos)
 - Increasing access to healthy foods to low-income communities
 - Established WIC program
- ShapeUp Somerville Maps: Citywide, Walking, Parks (in progress)
- Growing Center
- East Somerville CSA
- Dilboy Stadium renovations
- Community Path
- Trum Field
- Conway Park – Conversion of a brownfield to a park

5. July public meeting – Set a date and location

- Options
 - Trum Field (under new awning)
 - Armory
 - Growing Center – could use Aldermanic Chambers for rain-date location
- Link public meeting to Family Fun Days?
- Dates to avoid: First week in July, 7/16, 7/21-23; Thursdays (BOA meetings)
- Bring laptop to allow meeting participants to complete survey online?

6. Website survey:

- Want to reach out to and encourage the involvement of underrepresented groups, especially youth, seniors, and immigrant populations
- Currently there have been 618 completed on-line surveys – excellent response rate
- Make sure to allow time for data analysis (will require familiarity with MS Access and/or SPSS)
- Outreach ideas:
 - Make surveys (or a laptop) available at Family Fun Day (Let Carlene know)
 - Use small-sheet format – on back, print one-line instructions in three different languages for accessing survey
 - Contact EDs of cultural associations – Ask best methods to contact their members
 - Visit parks with laptop, ask people to take the survey there
 - Department of Recreation will distribute small slips with recreation applications

7. Definition of “open space”

- Future plans should include an inventory of green roofs and green walls

Open Space Advisory Committee: Meeting #4

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Review of items since 5/29/08 meeting
3. Current Items
 - Progress update (narrative revisions, map revisions)
 - Website survey analysis
 - Neighborhood distribution
 - Parks usage
 - Parks programs and activities
 - Quality of parks and future improvements
 - Success stories
 - Other suggestions?
 - Map revisions
 - Production schedule
4. Public Meeting #3 – September 2008
 - Set a date and location – suggestions?
5. Next Steps
 - Next Public Meeting, July 2008
 - Suggests or comments?

Open Space Advisory Committee: Meeting #5

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

9:00-10:00 AM

OSPCD Conference Room, City Hall

In attendance: Judy Eisenberg (Somerville Garden Club), Arn Franzen, Brad Arndt, Tammy Zborel, Ellen Schneider, Nicole Rioles, James Halloran, Carrie Dancy, Sophie Feintoch, Lisa Brukilacchio

Meeting Notes

1. Progress updates since 5/29/08 meeting:

- Website survey analysis
 - Neighborhood distribution:
 - Highest frequency of responses from Powder House, Spring Hill, Union Square, and Davis Square
 - Parks usage:
 - **79.5%** of respondents report visiting parks “Frequently (12+/yr)”
 - **81%** of all respondents walk to parks/ open space
 - Parks programs and activities:
 - **83%** of respondents rated the quality as “excellent” or “good”
 - Quality of parks and future improvements:
 - **53%** of respondents rated the quality as “excellent” or “good”
- Success stories
 - 13 success stories have been drafted or are in process
 - OSAC members should send additional suggestions to Ellen or Brad
- Map revisions – in process
- Production schedule
 - Public meeting to present Draft OSRP: **Week of 9/1/08 or 9/12/08**
 - Mayor’s Letter/Introduction for Draft OSRP: **9/15/08**
 - OSPCD makes final edits to Draft OSRP: **Week of 9/15/08**
 - Present Draft OSRP to Board of Aldermen: **9/25/08**
 - Draft OSRP sent to DCS: **end of September**
 - Receive comments from DCS: **Fall 2008**
 - Final version of OSRP submitted to DCS and distributed to community: **Winter/Spring 2009**

2. Public Meeting #3 – September 2008

- Waiting to hear back from Alderman O’Donovan re: availability to host
- Location – Trum Field House or Visiting Nurses Association

3. Next Steps

- Next Public Meeting, September 2008
- Ellen will send draft OSRP to Advisory Committee members in mid- to late-September

Appendix G: Public Comments

PUBLIC COMMENTS
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
FEBRUARY 20, 2008
TAB BUILDING, 167 HOLLAND STREET
6:30 - 8:00 PM

Note: public comments were grouped by category after the meeting in order to facilitate comparisons.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN: process

- How will the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* overlap/inform other City strategic plans?
- When you place the maps from the *2003-2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan* online, please make into separate small PDFs.
- How will the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* tie into the Union Square NRSA Open Space Plan (referred to in the City's 2008-2013 Consolidated Plan)?

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN: content

- Agree with City goals for improving open space/sustainability. How does the City define "open space"?
- Interesting that the DCR parcels (Foss Park, Mystic River Reservation, Alewife Reservation) equal 60% of Somerville's open space.

CREATING MORE OPEN SPACE

- New acquisitions possible. Kemp Nut Park is a new City park.
- How can City acquire more land? Important to keep parcels as open space vs. developers acquiring for private condos. What are the City strategies for acquiring more open space?
- Large developments = opportunities for creating open space (Assembly Square)
- Boston has committed to 6 acres open space/1000 residents. Could be a long-term goal for Somerville?
- Another example from Boston: Fan Pier. 40% dedicated to open space.
- Zoning is flexible – City is able to set development goals/ thresholds.
- North Point, Cambridge: good example of open space tied into development. New 10-acre park and landscape "fingers".
- Development vs. open space: are there areas for City to acquire new parcels? Encourage more open space in Union Square redevelopment.

RECREATION and ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

- Need to complete Cedar – Central extension of Community Path → Lechmere.
- Coordinate Green Line extension with Community Path development.
- Alewife paths not suitable for bike/pedestrian use. What are options for enlarging/improving access along the Somerville-Arlington edge?
- Assembly Square – access to waterfront from Sullivan Square. Get bike/community path in place, to encourage alternate transportation routes.
- Fencing is needed for cyclists near OLRAs.
- Build pedestrian/bike path along future orange line route.

PARKS and RECREATION PROGRAMMING

- Any plans for more swimming pools in the parks system?
- Frisbee golf is a low cost sport, and great opportunity for Somerville. Very popular activity in New Hampshire, dedicated local players here.

- Ice rink parking lot – could it be resurfaced for flexible seasonal use? Possible use for dog walkers in the warmer months.

STREET TREES

- What are the City's specific ideas for increasing street trees?
- What is the street tree selection process?
- A good resource in DC is the Casey Tree foundation. Barbara Deutsch, former Loeb Fellow at Harvard, worked with Casey Tree.

MYSTIC RIVER WATERFRONT

- Mystic River a great resource.
- Mystic River Reservation, Draw 7 Park need pedestrian access from Ten Hills/Assembly Square neighborhoods.
- Consider more regional connections along Somerville waterfront.
- Access to water important for emotional and physical health. Very interested that there is mention of a "Somerville Beach" in the last *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. More riverside opportunities needed in Somerville.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Please test for original chemicals and potential degradates when conducting environmental testing.
- Foss Park: kiddy park location near 93. Better planning needed to avoid health problems.
- Need standards for environmental accountability: chemical use in maintenance, etc. City policy/practices for pesticides/herbicides?

SPECIFIC PARKS

- Hodgkins Park – where are we in planning process? Please keep large, open green space in the design.
- Foss Park restoration: fence on eastern edge blocks access, divides neighborhoods.
- Foss Park fence is important for child safety: fence borders McGrath Highway, prevents accidents.
- Consider keeping Dilboy Stadium open for extended hours.
- Foss Park – no water bubblers available?
- Lincoln Park – park and buildings developed together. Could this be a future model as well?
- Foss Park – concerns with City taking control without appropriate maintenance funding.
- Bike Path Community Garden is a mess. Is there a policy for when garden plots are neglected/abandoned? Who is in charge?

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

- Recent development in Inman Square/Ward 2 → lots of City innovations.
- City needs to work with the State on more collaboration/opportunities.
- Dog Parks: what is the City's plan for more off-leash recreational areas?
- Feel that it's important to find a principled way to balance community needs with abutter needs when planning park renovations.
- What is the process for creating and regulating community gardens? What are the City's target goals?

PUBLIC COMMENTS
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
APRIL 30, 2008
ELIZABETH PEABODY HOUSE, 277 BROADWAY
6:30 - 8:00 PM

Note: public comments were grouped by category after the meeting in order to facilitate comparisons.

SPECIFIC SOMERVILLE PARKS

- **Foss Park** needs more police activity. Drug use occurs during times of soccer practice.
- Shared use – **Conway Park** is a great example (many programs, fields, play areas: multi-age, etc.)
- **Morse-Kelley Park** is an enormous paved area. Only appropriate for stickball and bike riding – the parks could be much more. **Dickerman Park** has a water play feature (currently broken), basketball, tot lot....I like to see several things happening in a city park.
- **Community Path** is an example of great development.
- **Lexington Park** – city said it was going to be multi-use but it isn't. **Perry Park** seems to have only one use (passive walking and relaxation). Would like to see more opportunities for teens, etc. in the parks.
- **Powder House (Nathan Tufts) Park** is underutilized – as resource \$\$\$ becomes available, please connect parks with people. For example, Powder House had few youth activities in the past or the present renovation.
- **Morse-Kelley Park** – could have installed a tree instead of a pavilion for shade. Kids need nature – the book Last Child in the Woods has very good information. Could balance natural areas with active recreation needs – for example, explore the design options for field buffer zones, etc. Costs more but it is important.
- Mystic River is a huge resource. **Draw 7 Park** could make a stronger connection to Somerville. Boathouse on the **Mystic River Reservation** is good but more opportunities exist.
- Great opportunities at the **Somerville Growing Center**. Small area, but diverse programs – outdoor concerts, etc. SomerGreen and the Park Clean up will be there this Saturday.

PARK USERS AND NEEDS

- Please extend evening hours and lights at parks (similar to Trum Field and Foss Park). Let park spaces be available to younger people/teens.
- Environmental Justice: focus on the needs of the local community (i.e., soccer) for Draw 7 and Foss Park.

PARK RENOVATION PROCESS

- It would be nice to see central coordination: process usually turns into one group vs. another group. Everyone has legitimate uses.
- How does the State grant process work? How is the money allocated to a project?
- Does the City have a list of prioritized park renovations?

- The Lexington Park/Save Our Somerville (SOS) effort was a good collaboration but there still seem to be people who can't use Lexington Park. Just make park renovations inclusive instead of "theme park" (i.e., *dog park* or *green space*).
- Yes, it is important for youth to be considered in the design process; but youth also have to come to the table. The community has the responsibility to ensure that everyone is present at public meetings.

RECREATIONAL FIELDS and FACILITIES

- Only a small number of fields are available for soccer, and what is available is often sub-par (i.e., dirt, no lines or turf, etc).
- The city doesn't have any full-size adult soccer fields available under its control (Lincoln Park is half-size).
- Baseball fields are less used – city should move to mixed-use fields.
- The Conway skating rink is an unbelievable resource for the city. Need to emphasize recreation: better use, control, publicity, etc.
- Cambridge had more convenient ice rink hours than Somerville did this year.
- Can you define 'playground'? Does it mean hard pavement surfaces only? Is there a way that the city can consider getting kids to school playgrounds in summer to relieve burden on permeable fields, etc?
- Isn't Dilboy Stadium/Field available? How can we use it for sports?
- Better coordination needed of open space uses\hours\availability for residents.

STATE-OWNED (DCR) VS. CITY-OWNED PARKS

- Decisions should be made and handled locally. Foss Park should be under local control. Is there a vehicle (private funds, a development offset) to allow more community governance? One example to consider might be the Boston Friends of the Public Garden.
- State grants only apply to city-owned parks, correct? How can we create a system to bring \$\$ and community feedback to State parks within the City of Somerville?
- How can we take tonight's feedback on Foss and filter that to the State?
- Dilboy Field is terribly underutilized and very expensive to have access to stadium. Danehy Park in Cambridge has better rates and even free for some uses.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN / PUBLIC SURVEY

- How will the survey results be tabulated and used at City Hall? Will the Mayor and Board of Aldermen have copies of the results?
- Would like *children* recognized in the text for the Open Space & Recreation Plan. Very important, especially with the current obesity crisis, Shape Up Somerville efforts, etc. Please emphasize the city's youth in the Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
OCTOBER 1, 2008
VNA BUILDING, 259 LOWELL STREET
7:00 - 8:30 PM

Note: public comments were grouped by category after the meeting in order to facilitate comparisons. Two City Aldermen were present and their comments are credited. Representatives of the Somerville Dog Owners Group and Shape Up Somerville also spoke for their constituencies. Other comments are from members of the public and their privacy is protected.

The majority of the comments from the October 1 meeting concerned youth recreation issues and skateboard parks. Two points of clarification were offered by OSPCD Parks and Open Space in response to a few statements with incorrect information:

1. There are two off leash recreational areas in the City and 13 other Somerville parks that allow dogs on-leash (9 city parks and 4 state parks). A brochure is available on the City website with this information.
2. The skateboarding community recently collected signatures on a petition supporting a skateboard park in Somerville; however, the petition did not state where the skateboard park might be built.

YOUTH ISSUES

- It's difficult to get youth involved in public participation.
- Some of the statistics in tonight's presentation about youth preferences seem skewed and unrepresentative.
- It's hard for kids to get around (i.e., many of them don't have licenses) but a lot of dog owners could more easily drive to other cities to use their dog parks. No more Off-Leash Recreation Areas (OLRAs) are needed in Somerville!
- It's important to remember that as kids grow up, their needs and interests change. There seem to be a lot of play activities for little kids but very few for teens (like a skateboard park!)
- More activities are needed for ALL teenagers in order to address health and obesity issues. Also, more access to recreational opportunities is needed.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS: SKATEBOARD PARKS AND DOG PARKS

- Why are there so many dog parks but no skateboard parks?
- Residents, dog owners, and community groups (like SomDog) organized and advocated for an OLRA, and the City responded to that community need. Skateboard park advocates should adopt this same strategy.
- Alderman Taylor stated that the Board of Aldermen (BOA) supports the construction of a skateboard park in the city.
- Alderman Taylor explained the history of the Nunziato OLRA:
 - After several development proposals for the Nunziato parcel were rejected, the space was developed solely as a playing field but then was split after the community successfully advocated for an OLRA;
 - The OLRA immediately became popular and quickly got overused;
 - Another OLRA (at Ed Leathers Community Park) was created to reduce demand and wear at Nunziato.
- Dog owners and skateboard-park supporters should work together.
- Designated areas are needed for safe OLRAs and safe skateboard parks.
- The two groups should avoid competition – we all care about open space and recreation in the city!
- [A statement was read by the Somerville Dog Owners' Group in support of the community organizing efforts for a skateboard park].

- OLRA representatives will share information with skateboard park supporters and help them form partnerships.
- The City should allow more on-leash dog recreation in more parks. Residents should at least be able to walk through parks with their dogs.
- Alderman Connelly requested that the OSRP include a section stating the City's commitment to constructing a skateboard park, as well as suggestions for possible locations.
- Would it be possible to designate season-specific OLRAs? That is, certain parks would allow off-leash use after seasonal recreation activity had ceased.
- Shape Up Somerville fully supports the skateboard-park initiative – and any program that increases the number and types of physical activities available to Somerville youth.
- Could a “temporary” skateboard park be designated by the City during the time it takes to approve and construct a permanent one? Residents could be notified by signage of this temporary setup.
- Skateboard parks appeal to all ages, unlike traditional play areas that are geared toward younger children.
- A local police officer suggested that skateboarders work with the SHS carpentry department to build skateboard elements for use at the school [note: police officers were not present at meeting].
- DPW staff told youth that any temporary skateboard elements used and left in parks would be taken away [note: DPW staff were not present at meeting].
- Has the City considered “stacking” skateboard elements with other recreational uses, like basketball courts? Is a double-level space feasible? What are the liability and funding limitations?
- Residential objections to skateboard parks typically hinge on anticipated noise increases and inappropriate carousing.
- There's no place in Somerville where the City could put a skateboard park and residents wouldn't object to it. There has to be room for informed compromise as the City moves forward with its plan to build a skateboard park. You can't give abutters a carte blanche veto of skateboard parks or OLRAs!
- If not here, where do we send our kids for the kinds of recreation they're asking for (e.g., skateboard park)?

OTHER OPEN SPACE ISSUES

- Entire parks in the city are turning into unusable fields (e.g., Perry Park seems intentionally designed to discourage active recreation).
- Parks should allow a diversity of uses. Relaxation needs should be met without sacrificing other, more active uses.
- Shape Up Somerville and the City's Parks and Open Space Department will soon release a parks map showing every public park and listing what facilities and recreation options are available at each one.
- The gates at Argenziano Field are locked when permitted users aren't there. Where does this policy come from? It seems draconian to prohibit non-permitted residents from accessing open spaces. This issue should be addressed in the OSRP.

Appendix H: Letters of Support



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

May 8, 2009

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Division of Conservation Services
ATTN: Melissa Cryan, Grants Manager
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

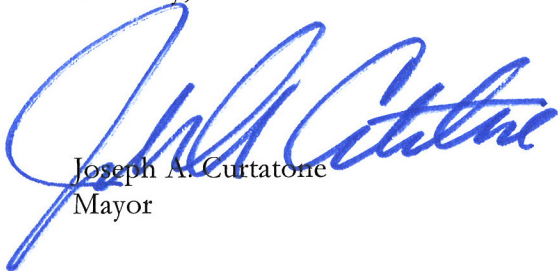
Dear Ms. Cryan:

It is with great pleasure that I submit the City of Somerville's *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* to the Division of Conservation Services. This exemplary plan is the product of months of outreach, public participation, and research, and represents a comprehensive documentation of past, current, and future efforts to improve, enhance, and increase open space and recreational opportunities in the city.

Somerville is a densely populated urban community in which our precious open space is highly valued by residents. It is vitally important for the City to rely on its *Open Space and Recreation Plan* as a guide for informing its short- and long-term strategic vision around open space. The City is grateful for the ongoing support from the Commonwealth that has made it possible to acquire new open space, construct new spaces, and revitalize many of our existing parks, playgrounds, and recreational fields.

I enthusiastically approve this plan and, with its submission, pledge on behalf of the City to continue the essential work that contributes so substantially to a better quality of life for all residents of Somerville.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Curtatone
Mayor





CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

March 19, 2009

Monica R. Lamboy, Executive Director
City of Somerville
City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Ms. Lamboy:

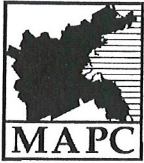
On behalf of the City of Somerville Planning Board, I am writing in support of the Draft *2008-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan*. The Board has participated in a presentation of this document and had the opportunity to ask a number of questions of its authors.

We understand and endorse the goals and objectives of the OSRP, and we approve the draft (with errata), with no substantive revisions recommended. The Planning Board voted 4-0 at our March 19, 2009 meeting to endorse the plan.

Congratulations on the completion of this important document for the City of Somerville.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Moroney
Acting Chairman



Metropolitan Area Planning Council

60 Temple Place, Boston, Massachusetts 02111 617-451-2770 fax 617-482-7185 www.mapc.org

Serving 101 cities and towns in metropolitan Boston

April 15, 2009

Brad Arndt
Coordinator, Urban Forest Initiative
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

RECEIVED
APR 21 2009

Dear Mr. Arndt:

Thank you for submitting the Somerville Open Space and Recreation Plan 2008-2013 to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for review.

The Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requires that all open space plans must be submitted to the regional planning agency for review. This review is advisory and only DCS has the power to approve a municipal open space plan. While DCS reviews open space plans for compliance with their guidelines, MAPC reviews these plans for their attention to regional issues generally and more specifically for consistency with *MetroFuture*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area.

Recommended revisions to the plan

The following are MAPC's recommendations for amendments to the Somerville Open Space and Recreation Plan that will serve to bring a more regional perspective to the plan.

Surrounding Communities - Within the discussion of the regional context, there should be mention made of the open space planning activities and open space plans of surrounding communities. Connections between those communities and the open space needs and objectives of Somerville should be explored. We encourage all communities to consult with their neighbors concerning their open space plans and initiatives especially since open space parcels and similar resources often occur near municipal boundaries and can be influenced by the actions of neighbors.

Regional Planning Efforts – The draft we reviewed included a section on regional planning efforts but failed to mention two major regional efforts: *MetroFuture* and the Mystic River Corridor Strategy Project. We brought this to the attention of Steve Winslow who provided us with an errata sheet that was prepared in response to a variety of comments. We appreciate the effort that has gone into revisions to this plan and have some additional minor comments on the supplemental text in the errata sheet.

Jay Ash, *President* Michelle Ciccolo, *Vice President* Grace S. Shepard, *Treasurer* Marilyn Contreas, *Secretary*

Marc D. Draisen, *Executive Director*

It should be noted that *MetroFuture* is a collaborative regional planning effort initiated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the reader should be advised that more information on the plan can be found at <http://www.metrofuture.org>.

Mystic River Corridor Strategy Project – The errata sheet which we reviewed now addresses the Mystic River Corridor Strategy Project but this section would benefit from some additional detail. We recommend that the following text be inserted into this section.

The Mystic River Corridor Strategy includes a number of recommendations specific to Somerville. These are as follows:

Strategy 1A: MAPC and the six cities will work cooperatively to advocate for the completion of the open space system, with a focus on eleven high priority open space initiatives including the Assembly Square Land Swap, the Draw 7-Sullivan Square Connector trail and improvements to the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse.

Strategy 3E: MAPC and the six cities will work to complete the gaps in the multi-use path system along the Mystic River.

1. MAPC and the six cities will work to further multi-use path projects already identified in Strategy #1.
2. MAPC and the six cities will work with DCR to ensure that the Mystic River Reservation Master Plan and subsequent capital improvements will ensure a complete path system throughout the reservation.

Strategy 4C2: MAPC and the six cities will work with DCR to expand its master plan to all land owned by DCR along the Mystic and its tributaries and to ensure that there is sufficient funding for capital improvements and maintenance activities.

The inclusion of this text into the body of the final plan will more fully reflect the level of leadership and effort that Somerville put into this exciting regional collaboration.

Five Year Action Plan – The six communities involved in the Mystic River Corridor Strategy project are currently developing a scope of work for the implementation phase. We recommend including an action item under Goal #8 that addresses on-going collaboration with the other five Mystic River communities. This does not appear to have been added in the errata sheet.

Environmental Justice – We note that the plan incorporates environmental justice as required by the new 2008 guidelines for preparing an open space plan. The plan includes the required map and integrates information on environmental justice throughout the plan. The city is to be commended for its outreach during the public participation phase and by providing the survey in languages other than English.

Consistency with MetroFuture

MetroFuture is the official regional plan for Greater Boston, adopted consistent with the requirements of MGL Ch. 40B. The plan includes goals and objectives as well as thirteen detailed implementation strategies for accomplishing these goals.

The plan does an excellent job of addressing many of the key urban open space issues identified in *MetroFuture* including the following:

- *Increase bicycle, pedestrian and transit accessibility and safety*
- *Increase the urban tree canopy*
- *Expand urban farms and community gardens*

With the addition of revised language on *MetroFuture* and the Mystic River Corridor Strategy noted above we believe that the Somerville plan will stand as an excellent example of an urban open space plan which is consistent with *MetroFuture*.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan.

Sincerely,



Marc D. Draisen
Executive Director

cc: Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone, MAPC Representative, City of Somerville
Melissa Cryan, Division of Conservation Services