

Public Launch Meeting
January 15, 2019





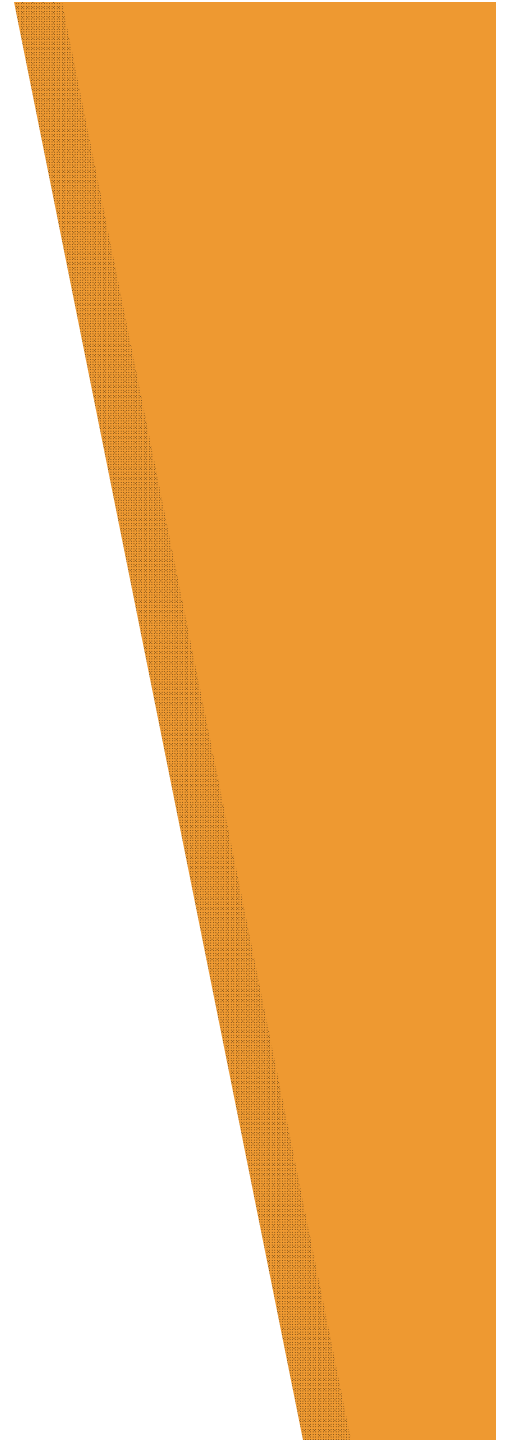
City of Somerville
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone



Public Launch Meeting
January 15, 2019

Public Launch Agenda

- What's a Comprehensive Plan Update?
- Group Activity
- Progress Report - Where We Are Today



*“A vision without a plan is just a dream.
A plan without a vision is just drudgery.
But a vision with a plan can change the
world..” –Old Proverb*

What’s a Comprehensive Plan Update?



What is a Comprehensive Plan/Comprehensive Plan Update?

A comprehensive plan is a policy document that

- Establishes a community vision
- Helps guide future development decisions
- Coordinates planning efforts



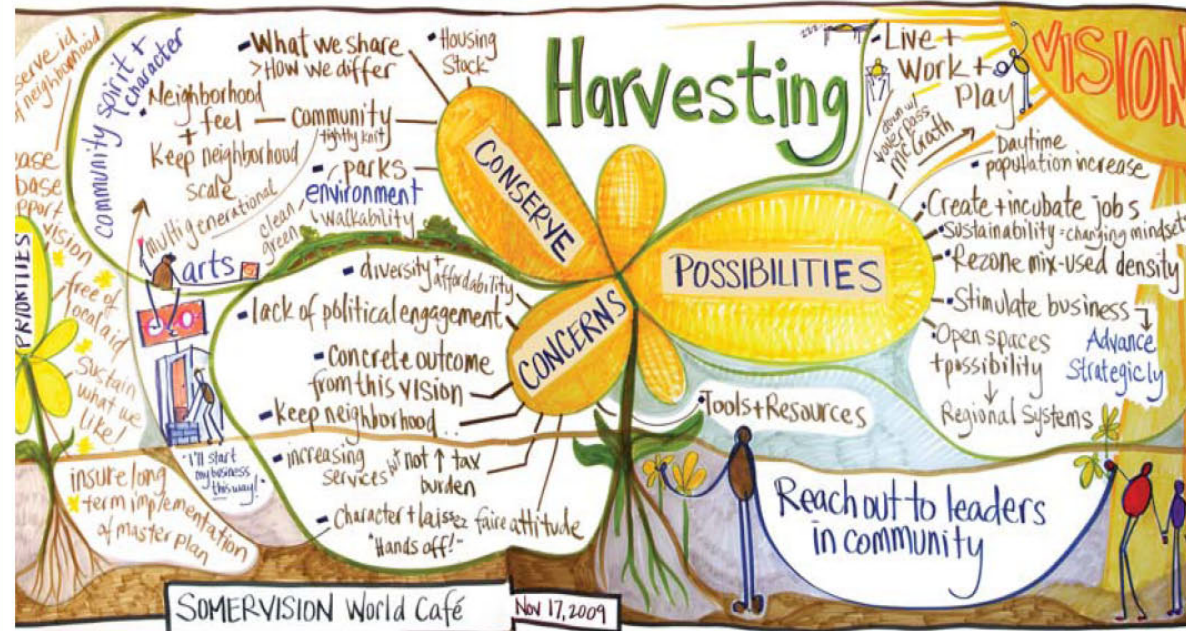


Somerville Vision

City of Somerville, Massachusetts
Comprehensive Plan | 2010-2030

Endorsed by the
Somerville Board of Aldermen
April 12th, 2012

Adopted by the
Somerville Planning Board
April 19th, 2012



*Somerville: an Exceptional Place to
Live, Work, Play, and Raise a Family*



Foreword: Our Shared Values

Somerville Vision

It's all about values.

In 2009, a series of public workshops gave Somerville residents the opportunity to articulate what is most important to them. Even though our neighborhoods and backgrounds are unique, there is a remarkable consensus as to what matters most in our community.



Page 4

In Somerville, We:

Celebrate the **diversity** of our people, cultures, housing and economy.

Foster the unique character of our residents, neighborhoods, hills and squares, and the strength of our **community** spirit as expressed in our history, our cultural and social life, and our deep sense of civic engagement.

Invest in the growth of a resilient **economic base** that is centered around transit, generates a wide variety of job opportunities, creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses, and secures fiscal self-sufficiency.

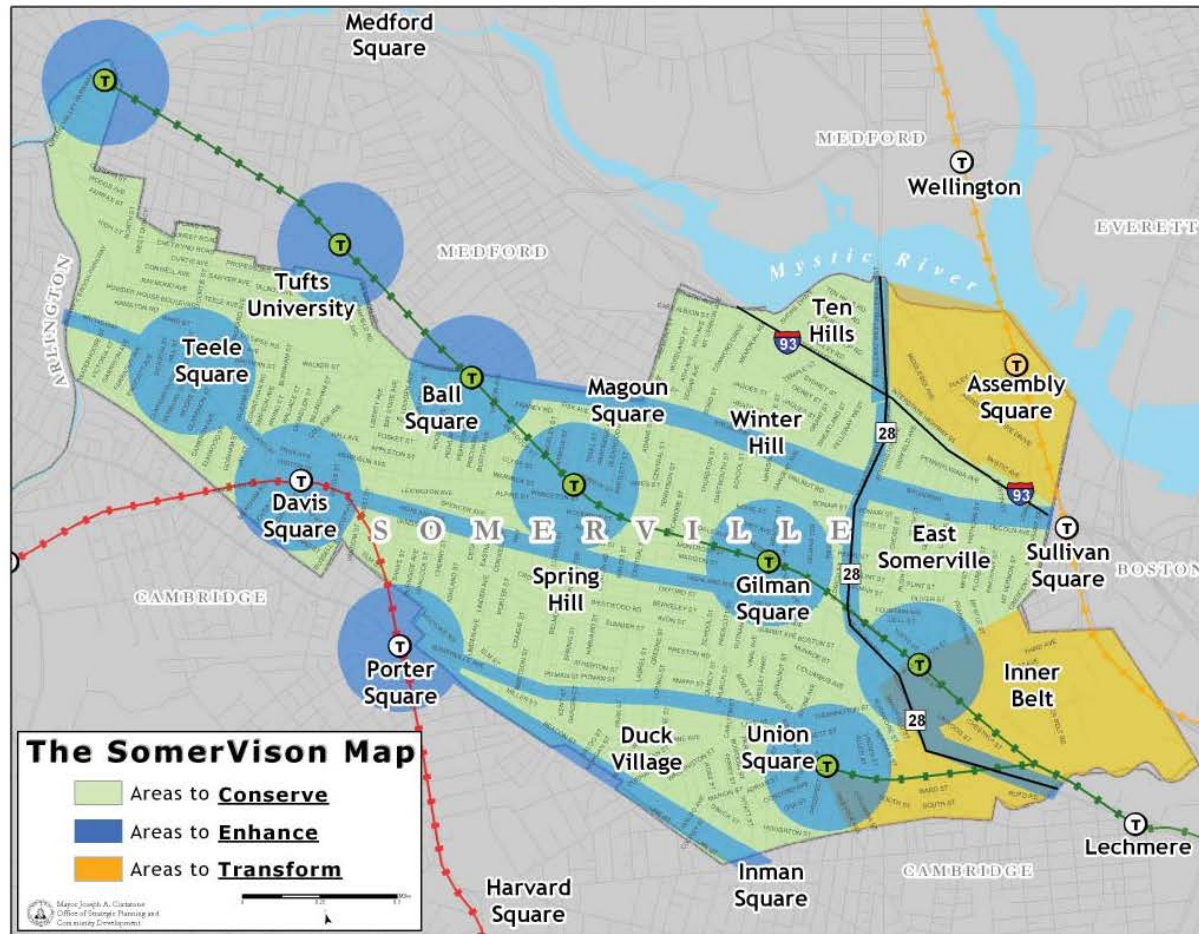
Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces dependence on the automobile, and is **accessible**, inviting and safe for all pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.

Build a **sustainable** future through strong environmental leadership, balanced transportation modes, engaging recreational and community spaces, exceptional schools and educational opportunities, improved community health, varied and affordable housing options, and effective stewardship of our natural resources.

Commit to continued **innovation** and affirm our responsibility to current and future generations in all of our endeavors: business, technology, education, arts and government.

***Somerville: an Exceptional Place to
Live, Work, Play, and Raise a Family***

Our Vision: The SomerVision Map



The SomerVision Map illustrates our Vision for the community to:

Conserve

our great residential neighborhoods

Enhance

our funky squares and commercial corridors

Transform

opportunity areas on the eastern and southern edges of Somerville.



Photo: Juliette Melton



4. Somerville Vision Goals



The Somerville Vision Goal Statements were written by the sixty Somerville residents serving on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. They were reviewed with the public during a series of workshops in 2011, as well as through an online survey. They are intended to guide the Comprehensive Plan's recommended Policies and Actions. For a complete list of Policies and Actions, see Appendix 1.

A. Neighborhoods

- I. **Engage** community members in civic life and decision-making, seeking diverse representation and participation.
- II. **Strengthen** and support neighborhood commercial centers that integrate residential uses, offer lively destinations and contribute to Somerville's unique identity.
- III. **Protect** and promote a diverse, interesting mix of small-scale businesses in Somerville's neighborhoods.
- IV. **Preserve** and enhance the character of Somerville's neighborhoods, enable sensitive, economically feasible maintenance and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and respect neighborhood form and patterns while expanding Somerville's architectural legacy.
- V. **Facilitate** transit-oriented, neighborhood infill development when it enhances the lively, human-scaled and walkable character of Somerville blocks and neighborhoods.
- VI. **Improve** our shared neighborhood environmental quality.
- VII. **Foster** vital, healthy, inclusive and distinctive urban neighborhoods that are the best possible places to live, work, play, do business, learn and serve.

Somerville: an Exceptional Place to Live, Work, Play, and Raise a Family



4. SomerVision Goals

500+



Goals, Policies, & Actions

The SomerVision Goal Statements were written by the sixty Somerville residents serving on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. They were reviewed with the public during a series of workshops in 2011, as well as through an online survey. They are intended to guide the Comprehensive Plan's recommended Policies and Actions. For a complete list of Policies and Actions, see Appendix 1.

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5. Implementation Priorities



The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range policy plan. It sets the table for specific projects and programs to implement its goals. These six short-term and medium-term implementation priorities will allow us to address many of the most pressing goals, policies and actions recommended in the Somerville Plan. For the complete Implementation Plan, please see Appendix 3.

A. **Station Area Planning:** The Comprehensive Plan can't do it all. Area plans must be prepared by residents of individual neighborhoods, since all neighborhoods have a unique role in making Somerville a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. The plans for each area will focus on land use, urban design and transportation, with other topics to be determined by participants. Federal funding from a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities grant will help to launch area plans around the six Green Line stations in 2012.

Station Area Planning Should Include:

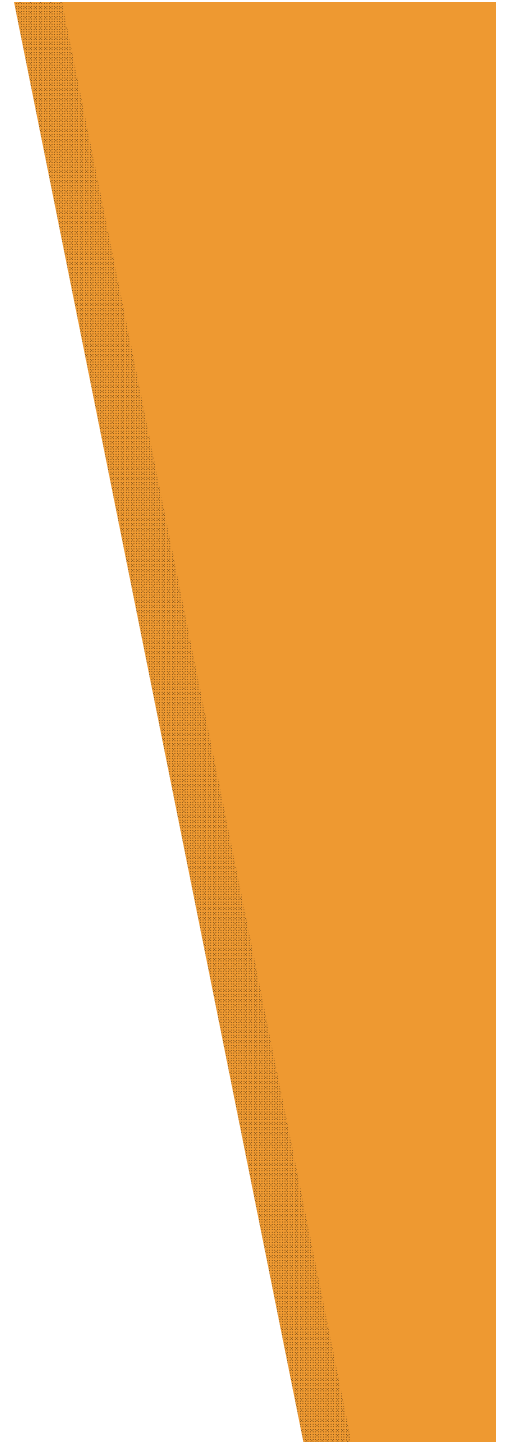
- a. Union Square / Boynton Yards
- b. Inner Belt / Brickbottom / McGrath Highway
- c. Gilman Square
- d. Lowell Street / Somerville Junction / Magoun Square
- e. Ball Square
- f. Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway
- g. Assembly Square / Sullivan Square
- f. Davis Square / Porter Square

Somerville: an Exceptional Place to Live, Work, Play, and Raise a Family

A Comprehensive Plan/Comprehensive Plan Update is NOT

- A regulation
- An ordinance
- Zoning
- A duplication of existing plans

Why update?



Why update?

Professional Planning Practice

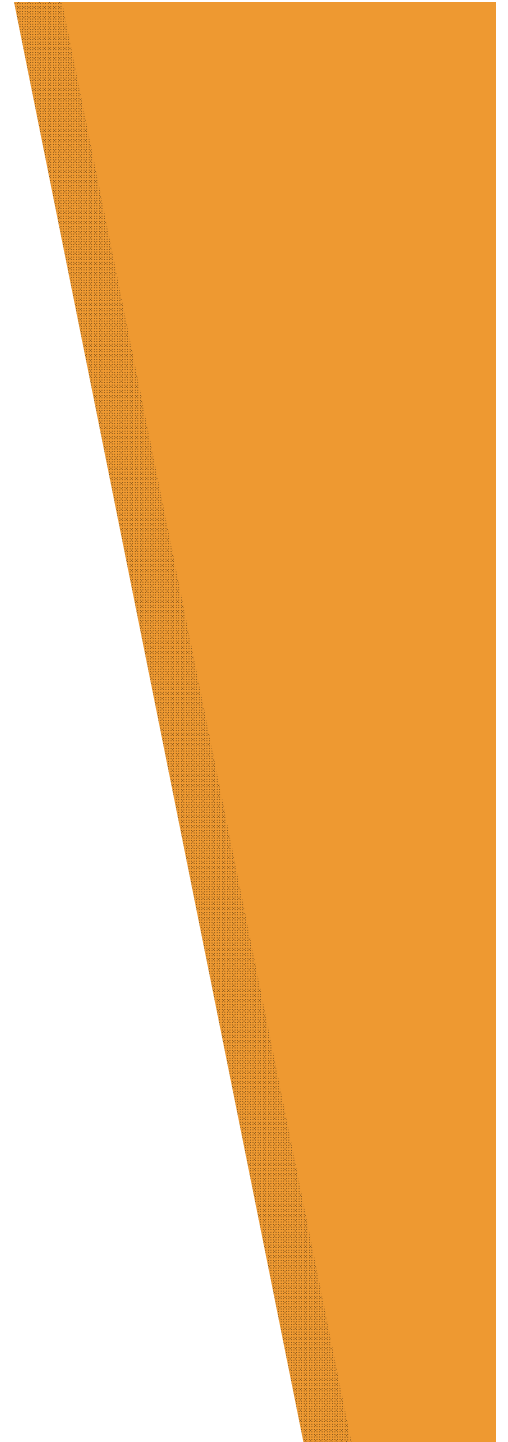
- Update plans every 5-10 years

Why now...

- Big divides in levels of government and parties of government
- Gone from the Great Recession to one of the strongest economic cycles on record
- National movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too could be part of local conversation



Who is a comprehensive plan for?



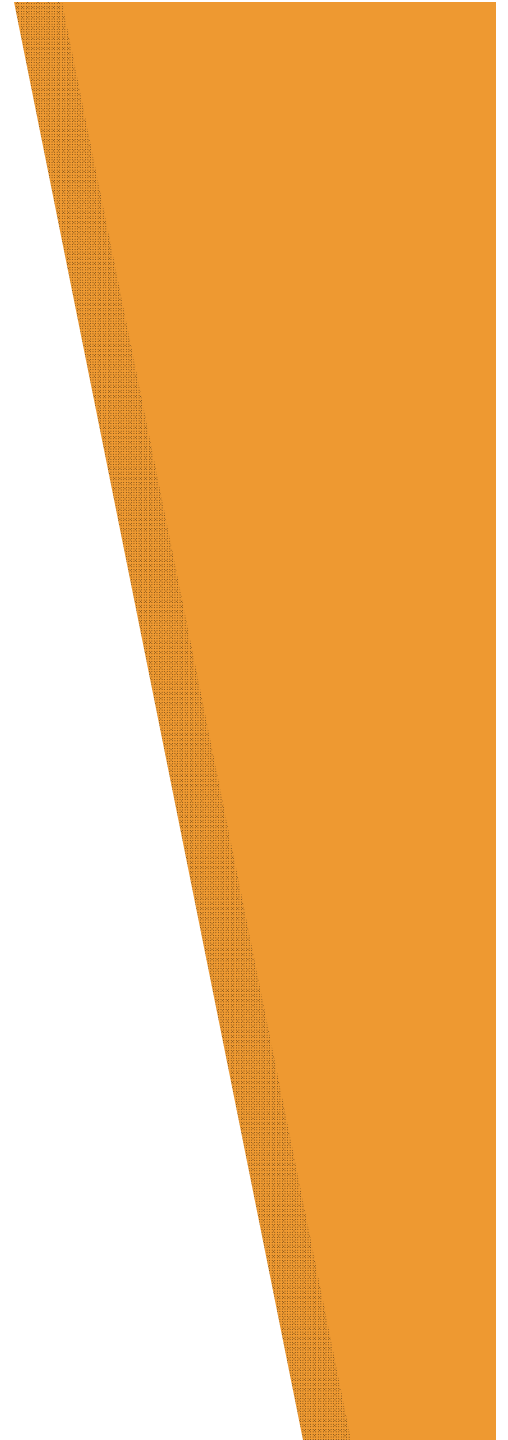
Who is a comprehensive plan for?



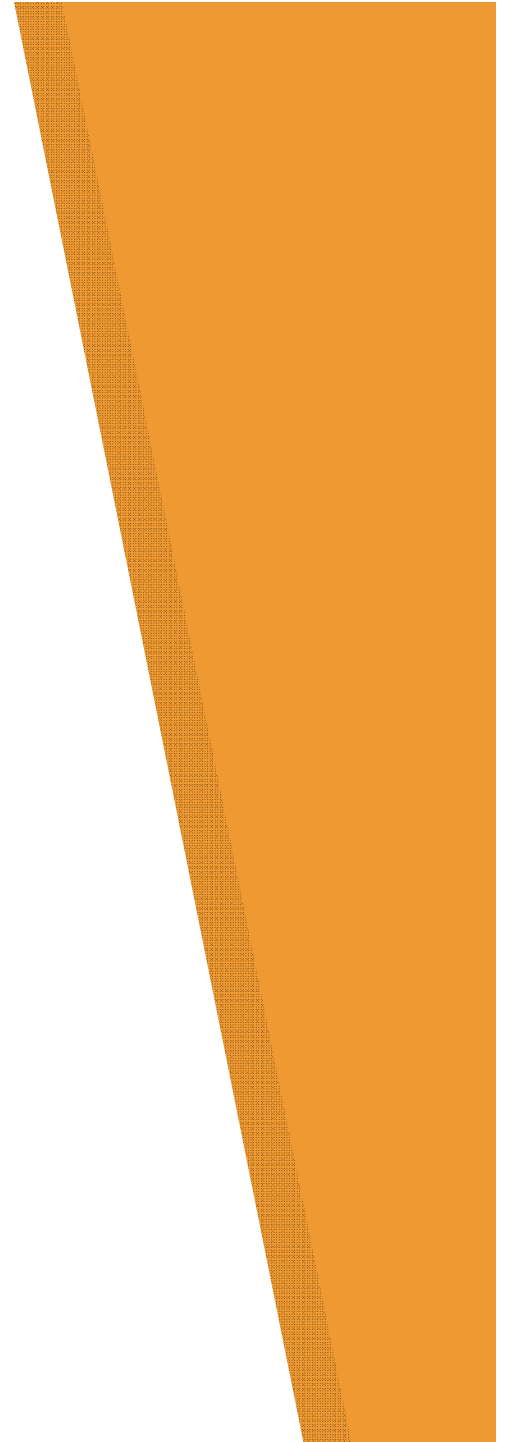
The SomerVision Project Team

- Melissa Woods
- Lauren Drago
- Cortni Desir
- Victor Nascimento

With support from every department of
the City of Somerville



What about you?



What about you?

Please introduce yourself to a few people sitting next to you.

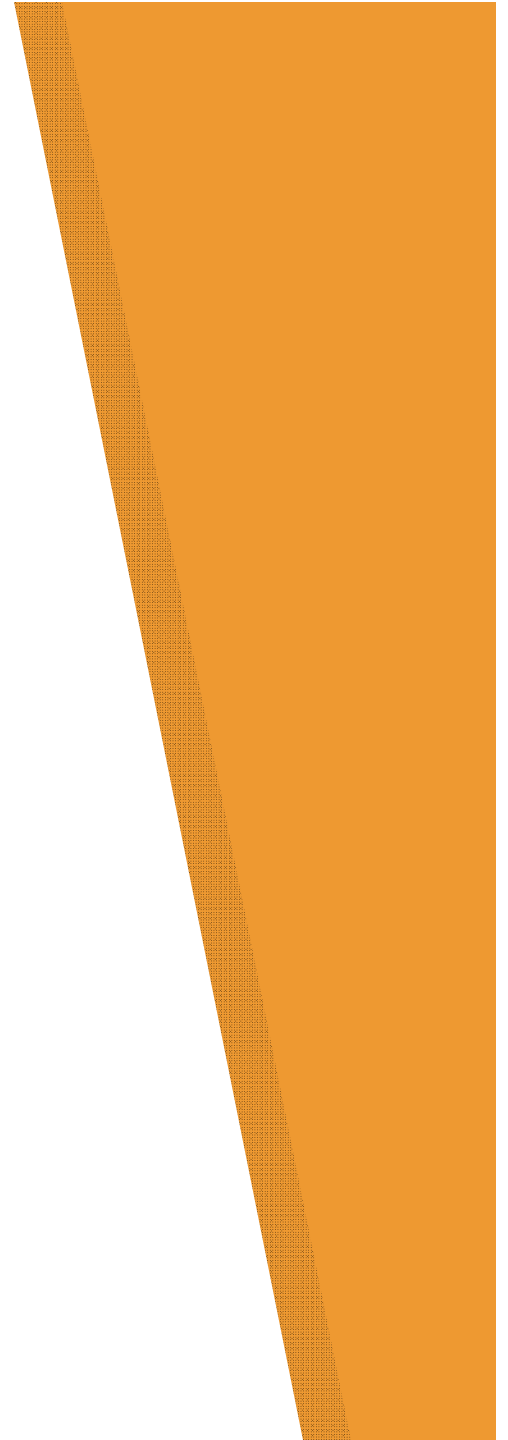
Some ideas

- What neighborhood you live in
- Why you live in Somerville
- Why it was important for you to be here tonight



When you came in, we asked you

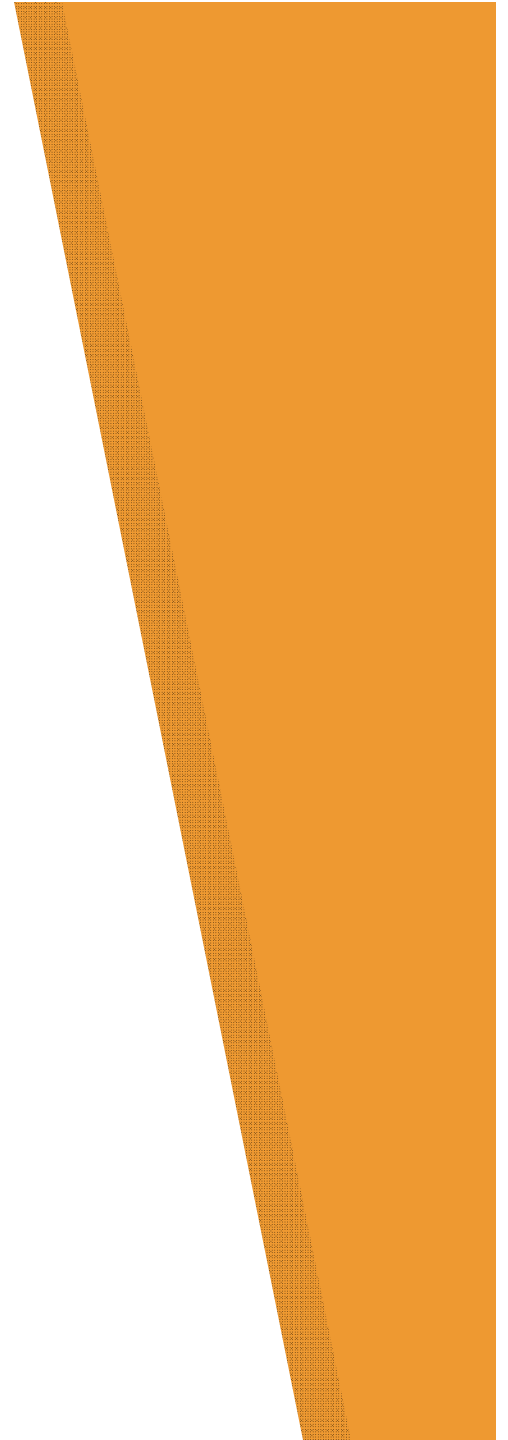
- Where do you live?
- How long have you lived in Somerville?
- Where do you work or go to school?
- Do you rent, own, or other?



When you came in, we asked you

- Where do you live?
- How long have you lived in Somerville?
- Where do you work or go to school?
- Do you rent, own, or other?

How can you help us fill in gaps?



When you came in, we asked you

- Where do you live?
- How long have you lived in Somerville?
- Where do you work or go to school?
- Do you rent, own, or other?

How can you help us fill in gaps?

- Invite a neighbor, coworker, or friend
- Share with your school, daycare, or church
- Spread the word!

“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.” –Eleanor Roosevelt

The Update Process



Key Deliverables

One of the key goals of the City during this process is to create a “Living” Comprehensive Plan Website that:

- Is in a format that is easy to scan and interpret while still providing necessary detail and analysis.
- Is translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian-Creole.
- Provides guidance on the most important actions for the next five years.
- Is updated regularly to track progress.

SomerVision2040.com



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[Goals ▾](#)

[Progress](#)

[Documents ▾](#)

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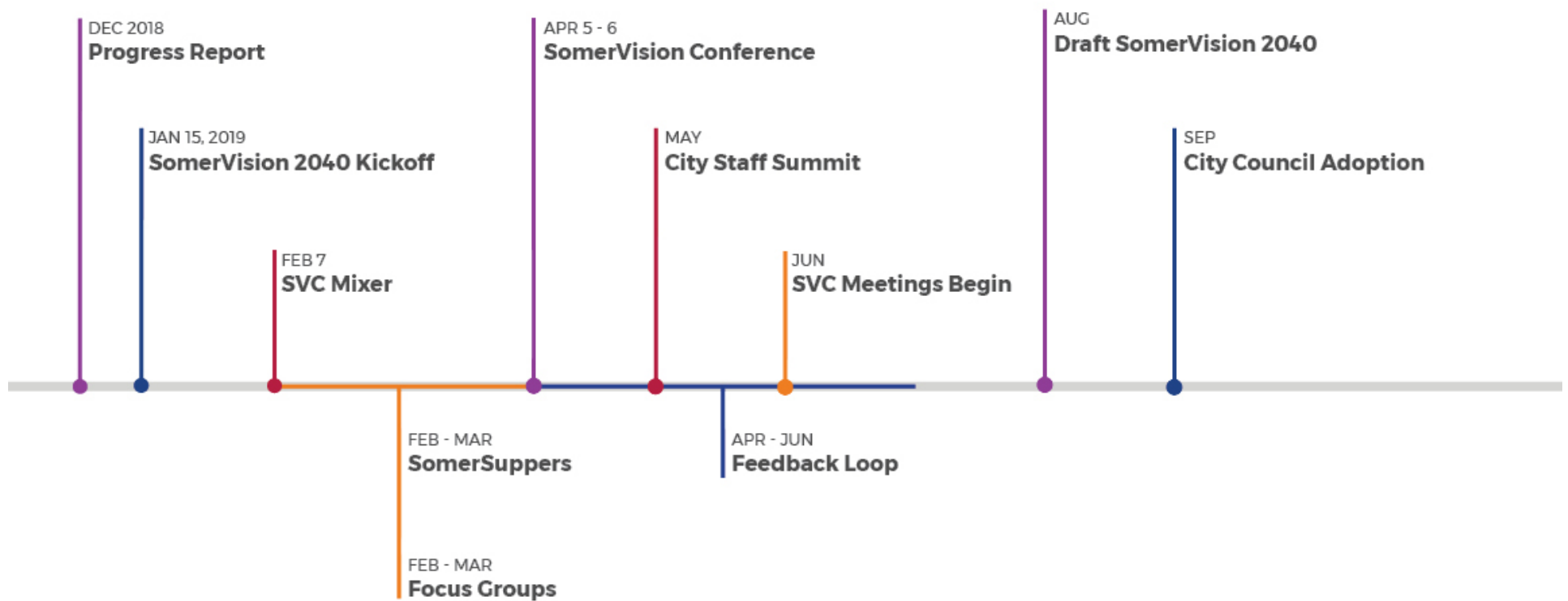


 [English](#)

Process Goals

- Provides access to everyone in some way, whether online or in person.
- Encourages civil, engaging dialogues built on mutual respect and compassion, even when the subject is difficult.
- Provide an opportunity for people to get to know each other & understand different perspectives.
- Is inclusive and welcoming, but also targeted and efficient; is respectful of participants' time.
- Is open to and appreciative of constructive feedback.

SomerVision 2040 Process



How to be involved!

- Attend public meetings
 - Public Launch Meeting – January 15th
 - SomerVision Conference – April 5th & 6th
- Read The Path Since 2010
- Attend or Host a SomerSupper
- Engage Online
 - Look for survey links on [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#) at Somerville Neighborhood Updates/@SomerUpdates
- Record a Somerville Story
- Apply to join the SV2040 Committee

SomerVision 2040 Committee (SVC)

- Attend a few extra meetings
 - SVC Meet & Greet – February 7th
 - SVC Conference Follow Up – Date TBD
- Liaise with their constituency

Apply at SomerVision2040.com/getinvolved by January 25th

SomerVision 2040 Committee

We've requested representatives from...

- Political Representatives
- School Committee
- Planning Board & ZBA
- Somerville Redevelopment Authority
- Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Bike Committee
- Vision Zero Committee
- Commission on Energy Use & Climate Change
- Commission for Persons w/Disabilities
- Community Preservation Commission
- SomerPromise
- Commission for Women
- Sanctuary City Steering Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Condo Review Board
- Fair Housing Commission
- Chamber of Commerce
- East Somerville & Union Sq Main Streets
- The Welcome Project
- Teen Empowerment
- Somerville Community Corporation
- Somerville Homeless Coalition
- Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership
- Green & Open Somerville
- Union Square Council
- Cambridge Somerville Legal Services
- Clarendon Residents Units
- Mystic Tenants Association
- Scalabrini Center
- CAAS
- Groundwork Somerville
- Partners HealthCare
- Tufts University
- Greentown Labs
- Cambridge Health Alliance
- FRIT
- US2
- Blue Bikes
- MBTA
- MAPC
- Somerville Housing Authority

Host or Attend a SomerSupper

- An informal gathering, likely with food
- A chance to have a guided SomerVision conversation in a small group setting
- Toolkit will be available soon at SomerVision2040.com

Record a Somerville Story

- We want to hear about how living or working in Somerville has impacted you
- It's a 2 minute video recording or written submission
- We are recording 10 tonight during the group activity – see Victor Nascimento
- Additional opportunities for recording available by appointment, email planning@somervillema.gov

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“Give me six hours to chop down a tree
and I will spend the first four sharpening
the axe.” -Abraham Lincoln

Group Activity





Foreword: Our Shared Values

Somerville Vision

It's all about values.

In 2009, a series of public workshops gave Somerville residents the opportunity to articulate what is most important to them. Even though our neighborhoods and backgrounds are unique, there is a remarkable consensus as to what matters most in our community.



Page 4

In Somerville, We:

Celebrate the **diversity** of our people, cultures, housing and economy.

Foster the unique character of our residents, neighborhoods, hills and squares, and the strength of our **community** spirit as expressed in our history, our cultural and social life, and our deep sense of civic engagement.

Invest in the growth of a resilient **economic base** that is centered around transit, generates a wide variety of job opportunities, creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses, and secures fiscal self-sufficiency.

Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces dependence on the automobile, and is **accessible**, inviting and safe for all pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.

Build a **sustainable** future through strong environmental leadership, balanced transportation modes, engaging recreational and community spaces, exceptional schools and educational opportunities, improved community health, varied and affordable housing options, and effective stewardship of our natural resources.

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***Somerville: an Exceptional Place to
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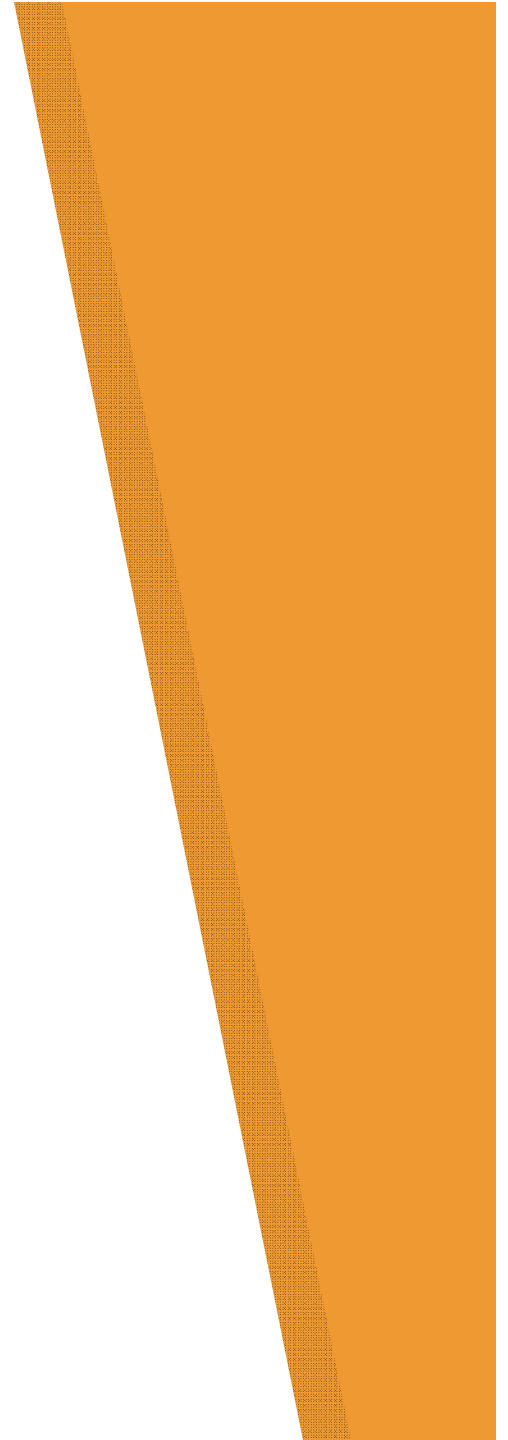
The SomerVision Values

- Activity Goal:
 - To collect feedback on the SomerVision 2030 Values and collect ideas for new/edited values for SomerVision 2040
- Activity Description
 - Work in a group, for 5 minutes each, reflect on each value
 - Answer the following questions:
 - Should this value be edited in any way?
 - What are we doing well as a community?
 - What can we be doing better as a community?

The SomerVision Values

Celebrate the **diversity** of...

- Our people,
- Cultures,
- Housing,
- and Economy



The SomerVision Values

Foster the unique character of our residents, neighbors, hills and squares, and the strength of our **community** spirit as expressed in our...

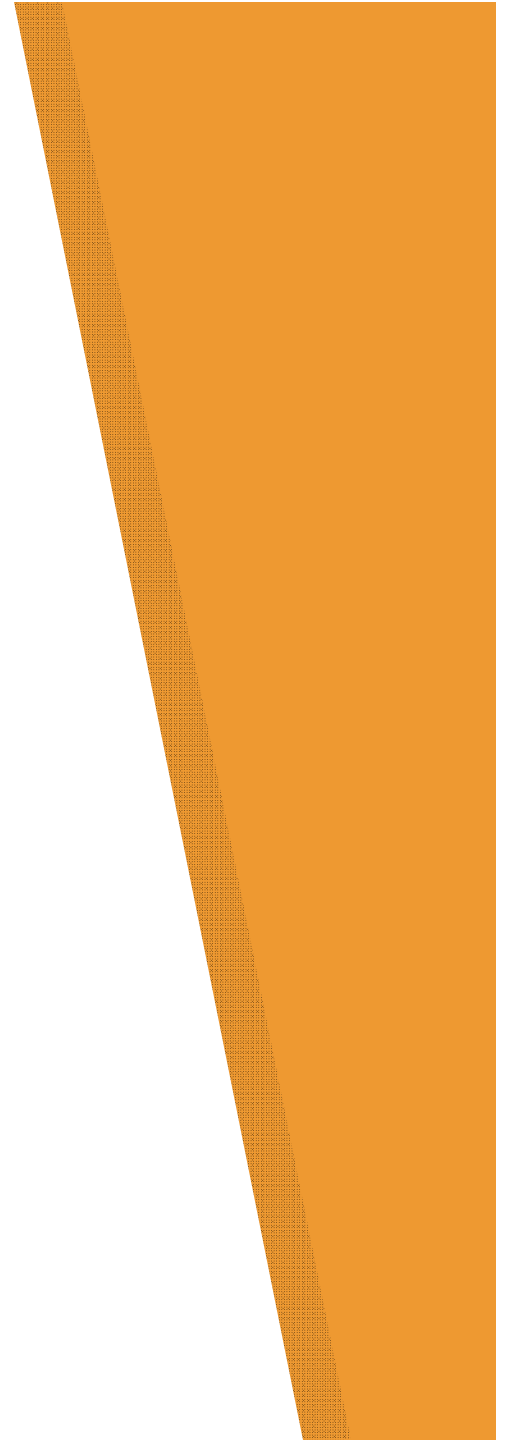
- History,
- Cultural and social life,
- And our deep sense of civic engagement



The SomerVision Values

Invest in the growth of a resilient **economic base** that is...

- Centered around transit,
- Generates a wide variety of job opportunities,
- Creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses,
- And secures fiscal self-sufficiency.



The SomerVision Values

Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces dependence on the automobile, and is **accessible**, inviting and safe for all...

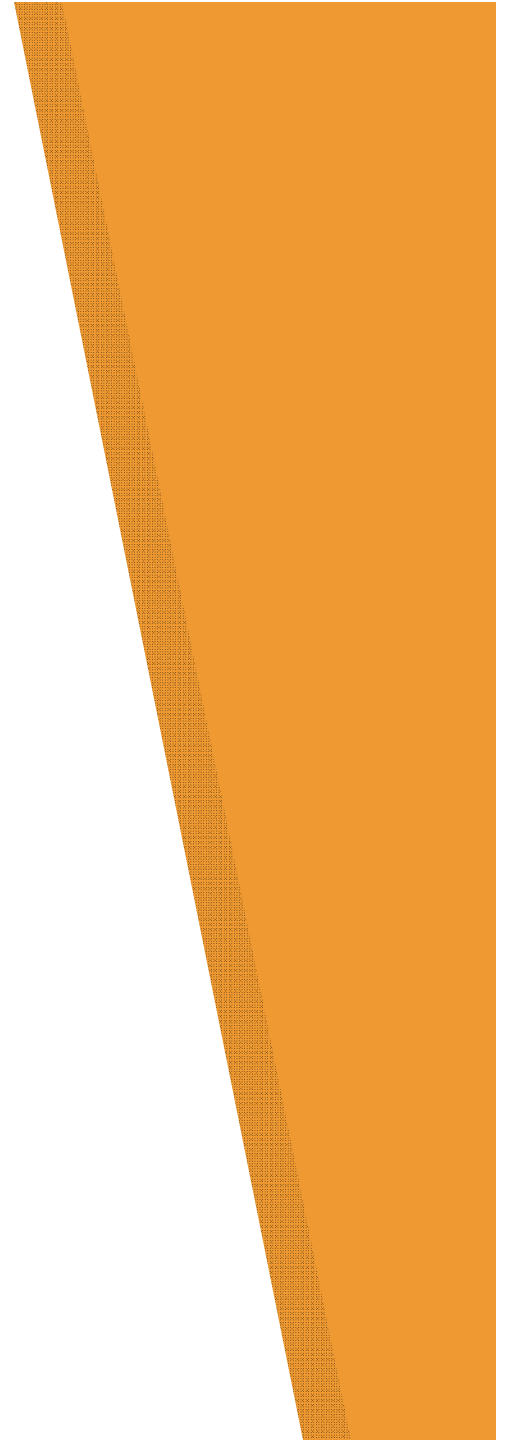
- pedestrians,
- bicyclists, and
- transit riders



The SomerVision Values

Build a **sustainable** future through...

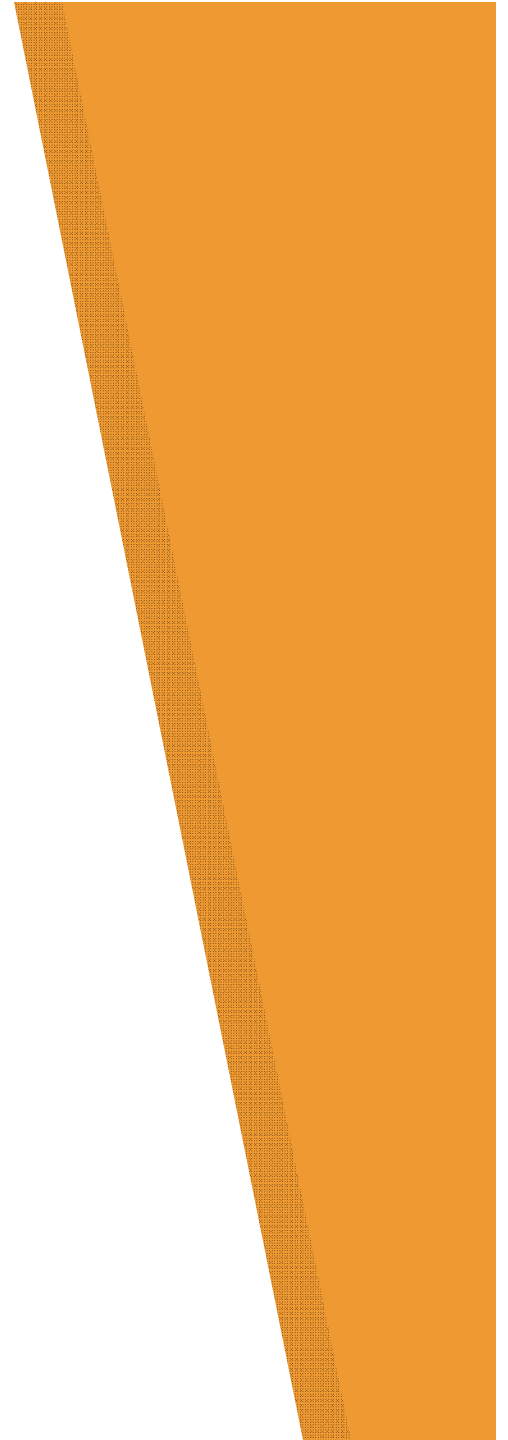
- Strong environmental leadership,
- Balanced transportation modes,
- Engaging recreational and community spaces,
- Exceptional schools and educational opportunities,
- Improved community health,
- Variety and affordable housing options,
- And effective stewardship of our natural resources



The SomerVision Values

Commit to continued **innovation** and affirm our responsibility to current and future generations in all of our endeavors:

- Business,
- Technology,
- Education,
- Arts,
- and Government



The SomerVision Values

What's missing?



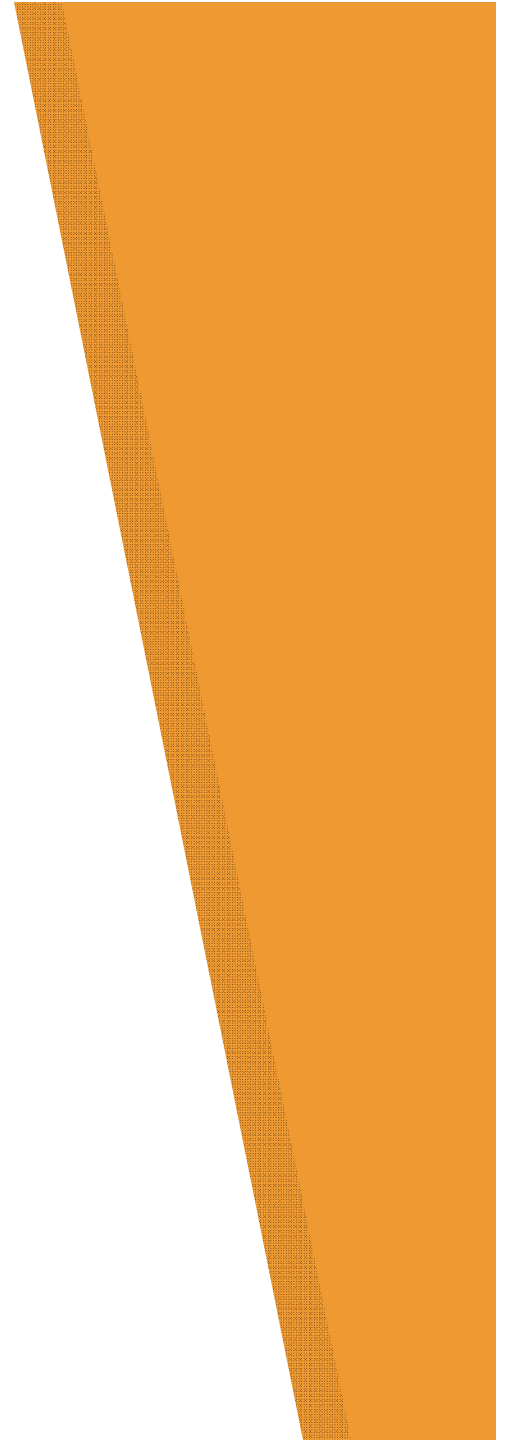
“If you don’t know where you’re going
you’ll end up someplace else.” –Yogi
Berra

How We’re Doing



SomerVision 2030

- Implementation Priorities
- Goals
- The SomerVision Metrics



THE PATH SINCE 2010

A Progress Report for SomerVision

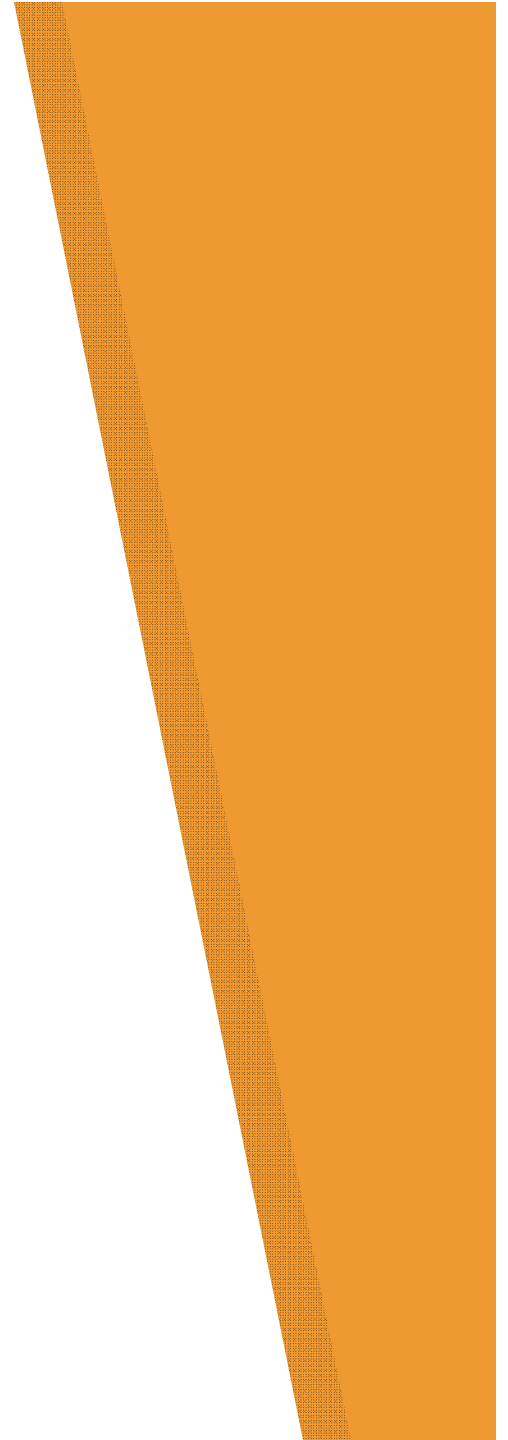
City of Somerville
December 2018
SomerVision2040.com



 **SOMERVISION2040**

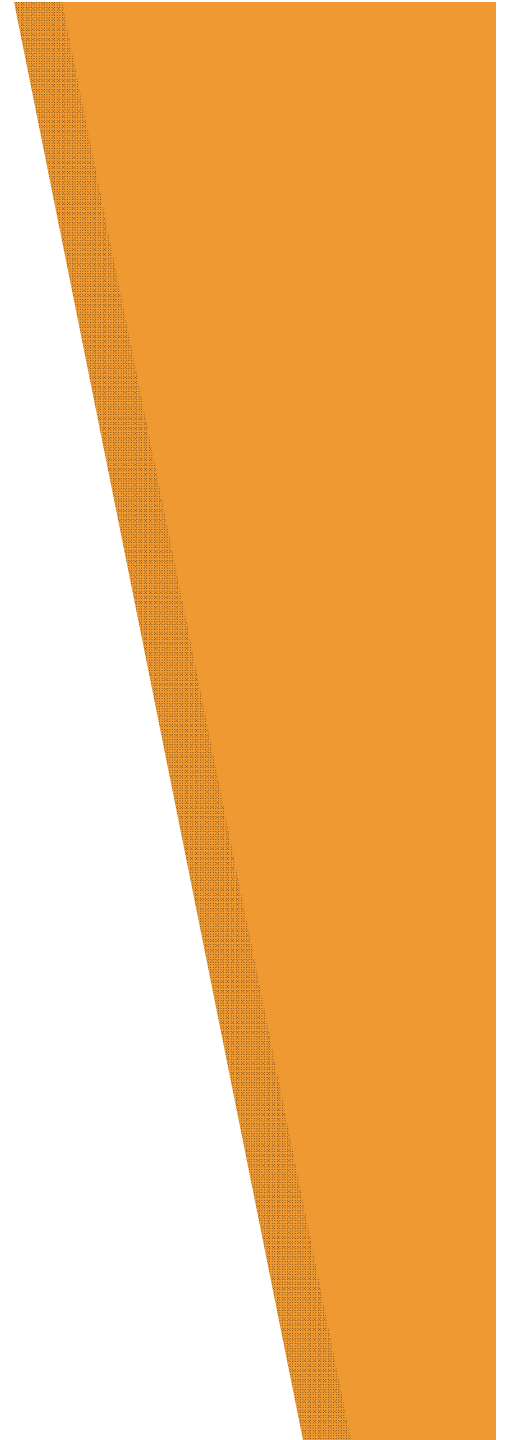
SomerVision 2030

- **Implementation Priorities**
- Goals
- The SomerVision Metrics

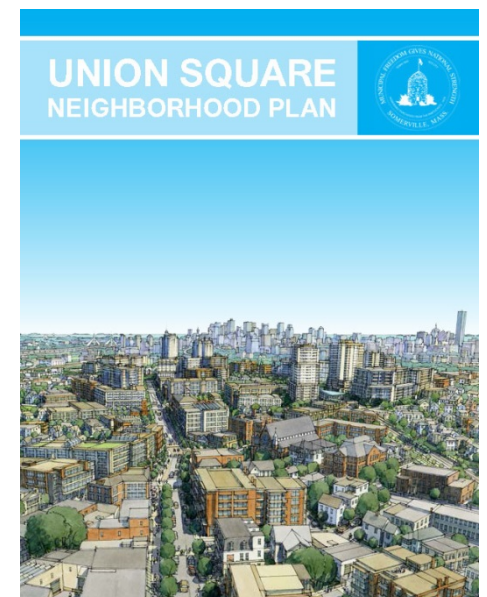
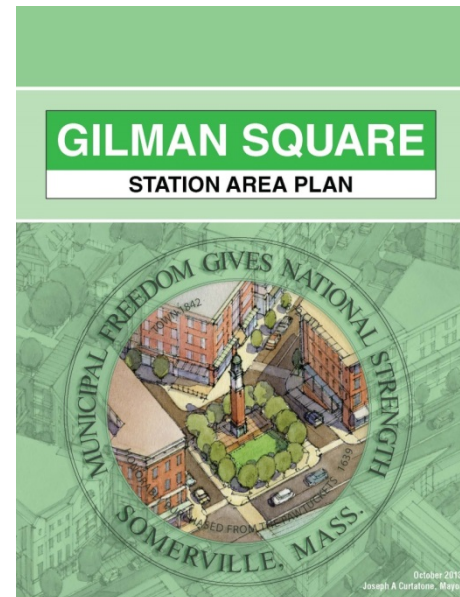


SomerVision 2030 Implementation Priorities

- Station Area Planning
- Quality of Life Strategies
- Housing Activities
- Sustainability Programs
- Infrastructure and Transportation Improvements
- Zoning Code Overhaul



Station Area Planning



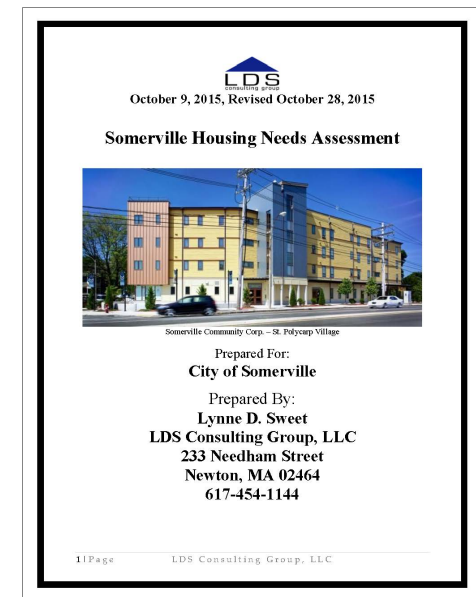
Quality of Life Strategies

- Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP)
- SomerLearning 2030
- Clean and Open Elections Task Force
- Small Business Support



Housing Activities

- Housing Needs Assessment
- Record Setting Housing Production
- 20% Inclusionary Requirement
- Creation of the Office of Housing Stability



Sustainability Programs

- Somerville's Climate Change Plan, Climate Forward
- Heat Smart/Cool Smart
- Community Choice Electricity
- Infiltration & Inflow Mitigation



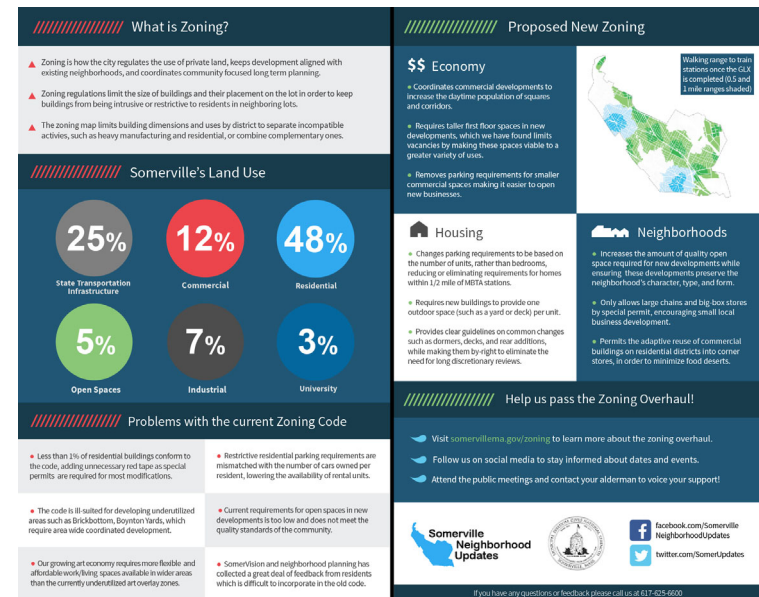
Infrastructure & Transportation Improvements

- Green Line Extension
- Vision Zero
- Sewer Separation Projects
- Neighborways



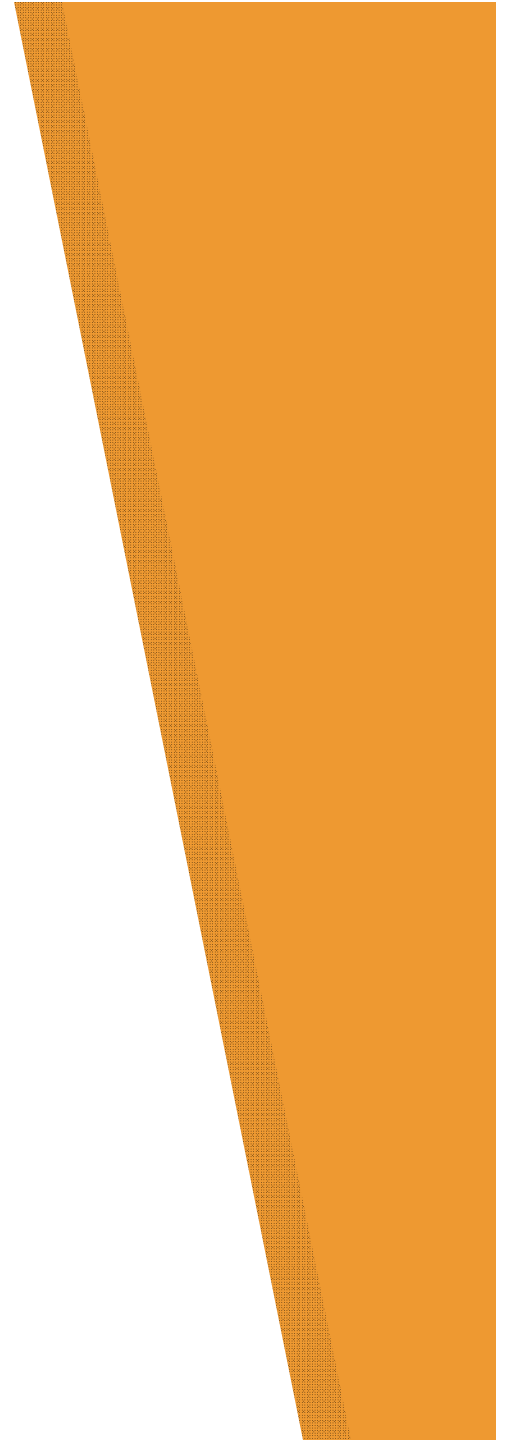
Zoning Code Overhaul

- Board of Aldermen are deliberating on the administration's third submittal
- Want to know more?
 - Somervillezoning.com



SomerVision 2030

- Implementation Priorities
- **Goals**
- The SomerVision Metrics





Progressing

TOWARD OUR

Vision

SQUARES & MAIN STREETS

The **Squares & Main Streets** section, renamed from “Commercial Corridors, Squares, and Growth Districts” as it appears in SomerVision 2030, includes a number of goals focused on commercial development in Somerville and how it relates to priorities like workforce development, fiscal responsibility, and job creation.



► Summary of Goals

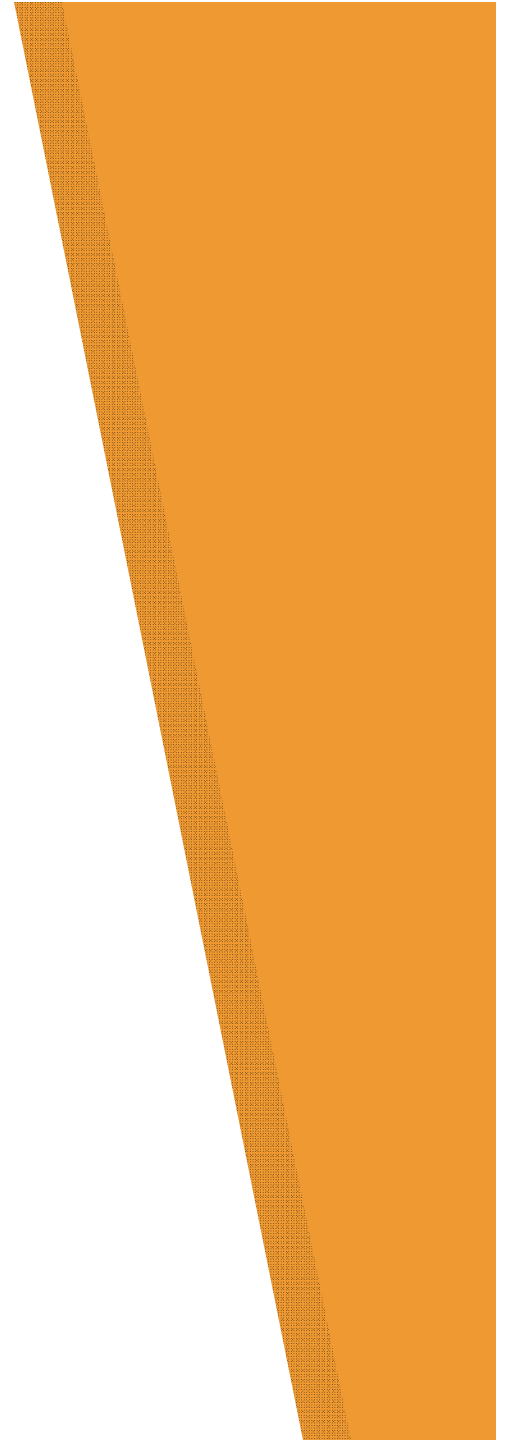
▲ Initiatives

- **District Improvement Financing (DIF):** This tool has been invaluable for using anticipated property appreciation to pay for necessary infrastructure improvements. For example, the necessary sewer separation project currently underway in Union Square was paid for in part by the Union Square DIF and a number of infrastructure improvements in Assembly Square were funded by the Assembly DIF.
- **Minibonds:** In May 2018, the City partnered with Neighborly to offer Somerville residents the opportunity to purchase municipal minibonds. During the one-week sale, the minibonds sold out with 87 residents purchasing \$557,000 worth of minibonds that will finance future capital projects.
- **Powder House School Redevelopment:** After the Powder House School was closed in 2005, the City went through a process to solicit bids to redevelop the site into an asset for the neighborhood. The winner of that process, MarKa, is currently constructing a project that includes market rate, affordable, and senior residential units, as well as commercial space including retail and maker space, and **Powderhouse Studios**, a small, new high school.
- **iFund:** The City has provided flexible financing for businesses with innovative products or models to help them move to or stay in Somerville. Examples include working capital loans to Greentown Labs and Somerville Brewing Company to help these businesses expand.
- **Platinum Bio-Ready Community:** The Massachusetts Biotechnology Council gave Somerville its highest designation for readiness to support biotech companies.
- **Small Business Support:** This program provides free coaching and reimbursement grants to qualifying small and home-based

Residents raised
\$557,000 for
capital projects
through **minibonds**
on a platform
called Neighborly.

SomerVision 2030

- Implementation Priorities
- Goals
- **The SomerVision Metrics**



The SomerVision Metrics

- 30,000 New Jobs
- 125 New Acres of Open Space
- 6,000 New Units of Housing
 - 1,200 affordable
- 50% of new trips via sustainable modes
- 85% of new development in transformational areas

Appendix 2






The Numbers and the Maps: The SomerVision Numbers

Aspirational Targets

What's it all about?

Comprehensive Plans allow communities to take into account all their priorities. Based on our shared values, and using the SomerVision Map, the SomerVision Numbers are our achievable but aspirational targets. SomerVision seeks to achieve the goals on this page by 2030.

By 2030, Somerville will achieve:

-  **30,000 New Jobs** as part of a responsible plan to create opportunity for all Somerville workers and entrepreneurs.
-  **125 New Acres of Publicly-Accessible Open Space** as part of our realistic plan to provide high-quality and well-programmed community spaces.
-  **6,000 New Housing Units - 1,200 Permanently Affordable** as part of a sensitive plan to attract and retain Somerville's best asset: its people.
-  **50% of New Trips via Transit, Bike, or Walking** as part of an equitable plan for access and circulation to and through the City.
-  **85% of New Development in Transformative Areas** as part of a predictable land use plan that protects neighborhood character.

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

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SomerVision - Somerville's Comprehensive Plan

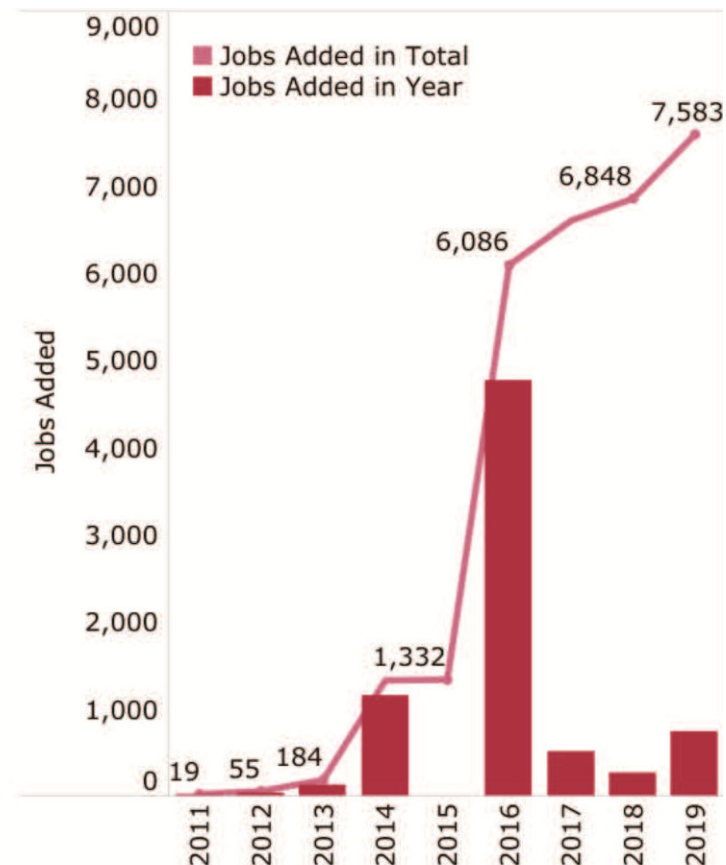
30,000 New Jobs

7,583 new jobs

Complete:
4,500 at Partners

Projected in 2019:
585 at Northpoint J/K

On the Horizon:
1,300 at ASQ Block 5B



Opportunities & Challenges

- Establishing Somerville neighborhoods as a job centers
- Government primarily facilitates job training not job creation
- Commercial development is the most difficult type of development
- Planning & Zoning Ready

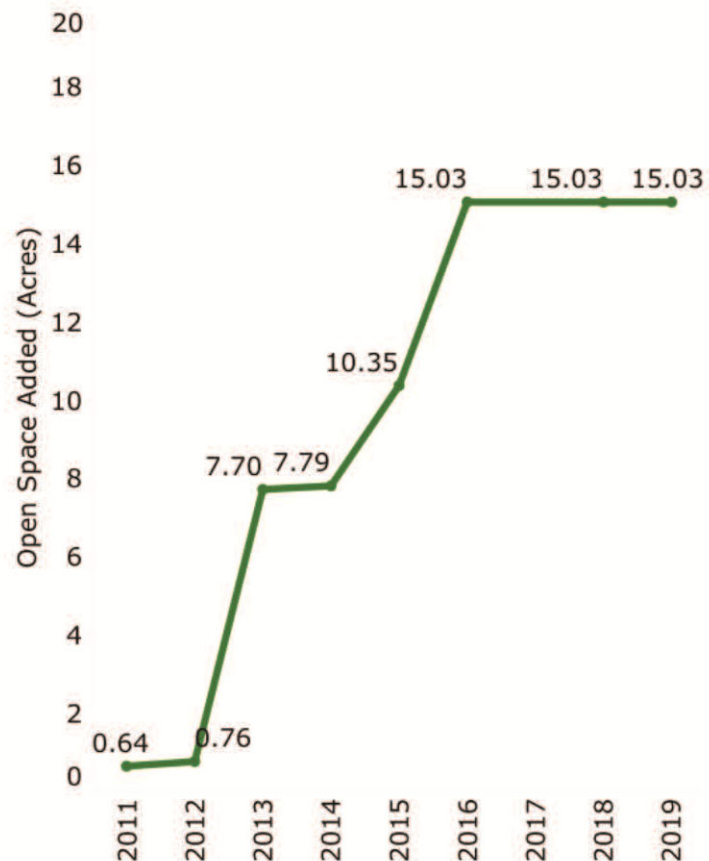


125 Acres of Open Space

15 Acres

Complete:
Baxter Park
Symphony Park

In Construction:
Comm. Path Extension
ArtFarm



Opportunities & Challenges

- We are all in agreement, we need more open space
- An acreage goal is not comprehensive
- Cost

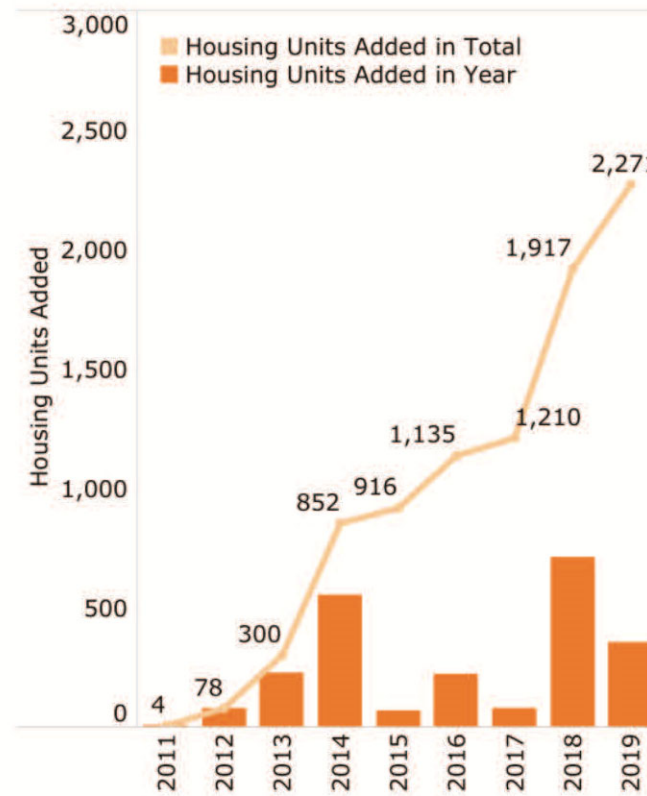


6,000 New Housing Units

2,271 New Units

Complete:
ASQ Blocks 1, 4, 5A, & 6
Millbrook Lofts

In Construction:
ASQ Block 8



Opportunities & Challenges

- Somerville is an established residential market
- Affordability of units
- Type of housing units
- Planning & Zoning Ready

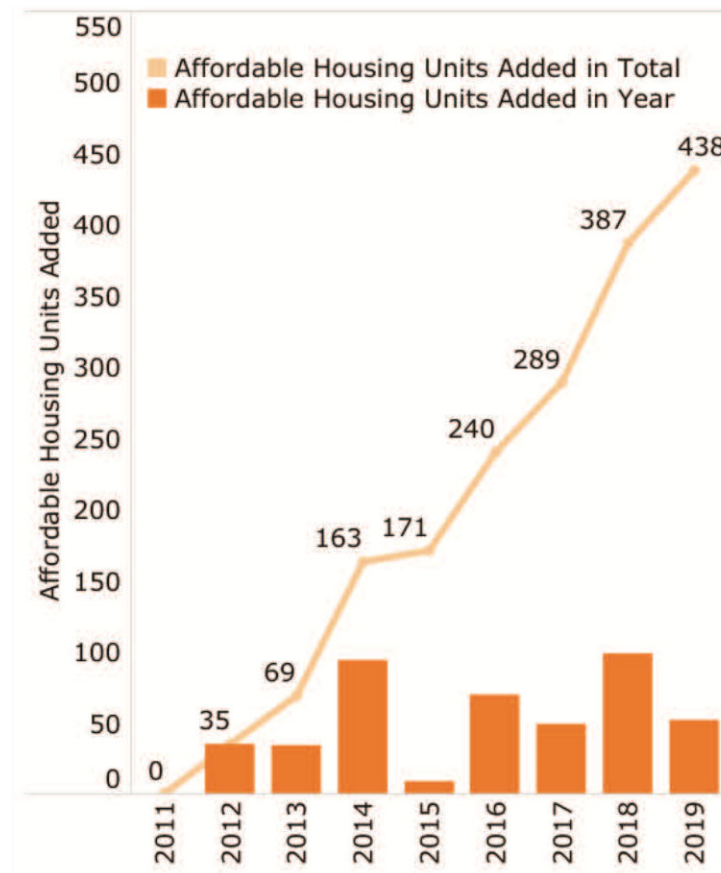


...of which 1,200 Affordable

438 New Units

We've facilitated more affordable housing development since 2010 than since our inclusionary zoning was adopted in 1990.

**47 - 100 Homes
Acquisitions**

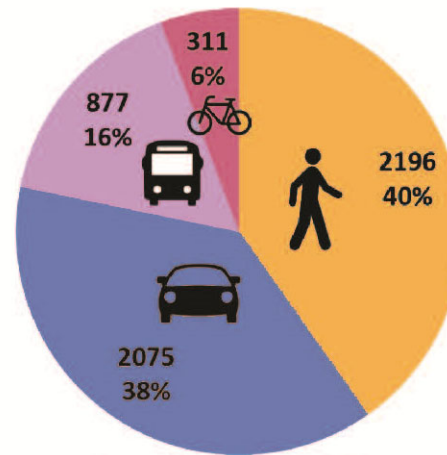


50% of New Trips by Sustainable Modes

We have positive indicators but no actual measurement of goal.

There was also no baseline measurement.

Fig. 13: Travel Modes of Arrivals in Davis Square, AM



Opportunities & Challenges

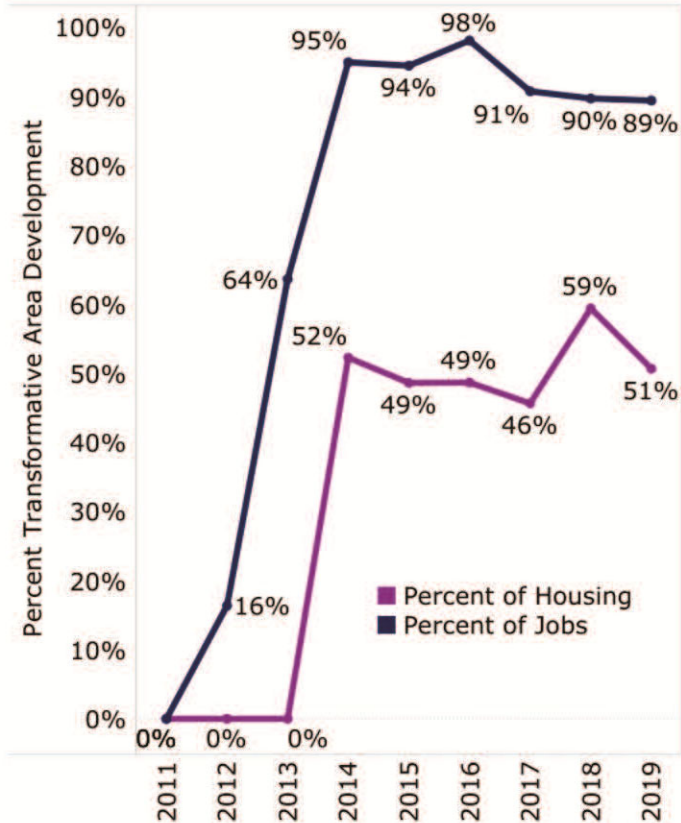
- Law that requires mobility management
- Behavioral Change is the toughest type of change
- Collaboration with state agencies
- Infrastructure to make people comfortable walking and biking is expensive



85% of New Development in Transformative Areas

5.7 million SF developed

65% in transform areas



Opportunities & Challenges

- These neighborhoods are where we can achieve our metrics
- Planning & Zoning Ready
- Infrastructure Investment



The SomerVision Metrics

- 30,000 New Jobs
- 125 New Acres of Open Space
- 6,000 New Units of Housing
 - 1,200 affordable
- 50% of new trips via sustainable modes
- 85% of new development in transformational areas

Appendix 2






The Numbers and the Maps: The SomerVision Numbers

Aspirational Targets

What's it all about?

Comprehensive Plans allow communities to take into account all their priorities. Based on our shared values, and using the SomerVision Map, the SomerVision Numbers are our achievable but aspirational targets. SomerVision seeks to achieve the goals on this page by 2030.

By 2030, Somerville will achieve:

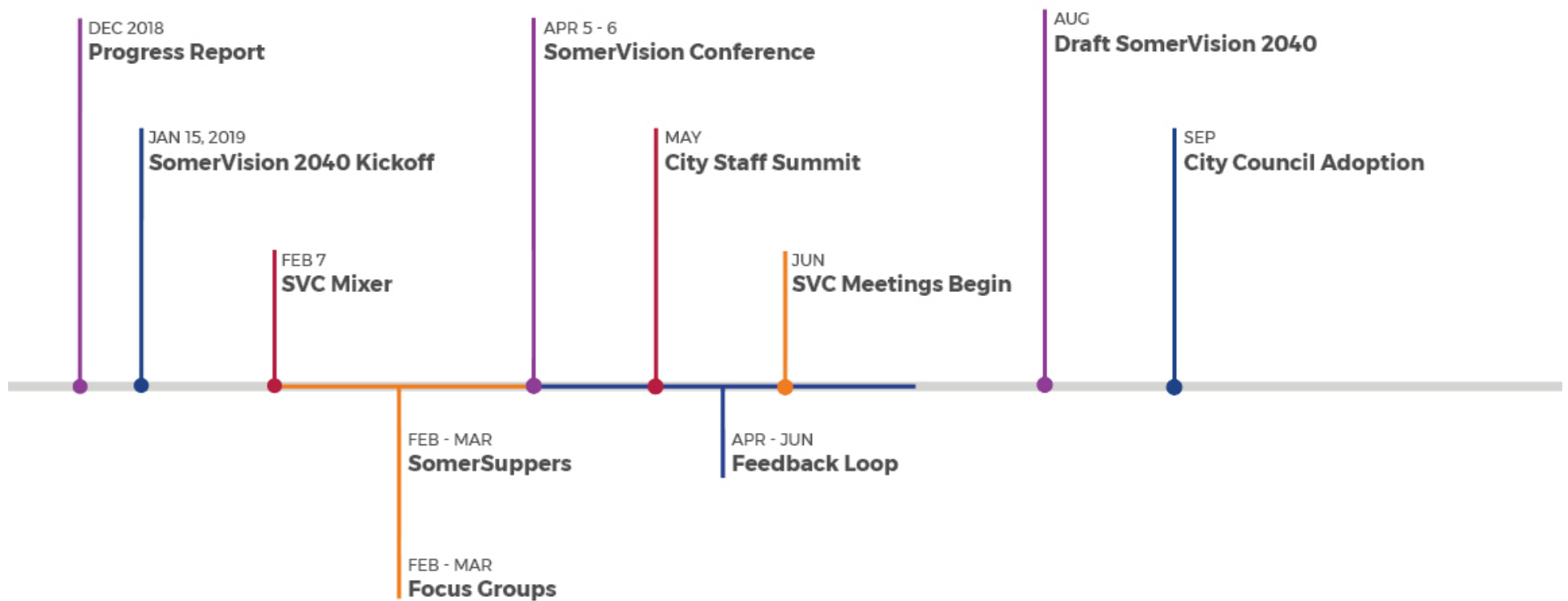
-  **30,000 New Jobs** as part of a responsible plan to create opportunity for all Somerville workers and entrepreneurs.
-  **125 New Acres of Publicly-Accessible Open Space** as part of our realistic plan to provide high-quality and well-programmed community spaces.
-  **6,000 New Housing Units - 1,200 Permanently Affordable** as part of a sensitive plan to attract and retain Somerville's best asset: its people.
-  **50% of New Trips via Transit, Bike, or Walking** as part of an equitable plan for access and circulation to and through the City.
-  **85% of New Development in Transformative Areas** as part of a predictable land use plan that protects neighborhood character.

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

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SomerVision - Somerville's Comprehensive Plan

SomerVision 2040 Process



How to be involved!

- Attend public meetings
 - Public Launch Meeting – January 15th
 - SomerVision Conference – April 5th & 6th
- Read The Path Since 2010
- Attend or Host a SomerSupper
- Engage Online
 - Look for survey links on [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#) at Somerville Neighborhood Updates/@SomerUpdates
- Record a Somerville Story
- Apply to join the SV2040 Committee

Thank You!

