



SOMERVISION2040

Sustainability • Diversity • Opportunity • Connectivity • Community

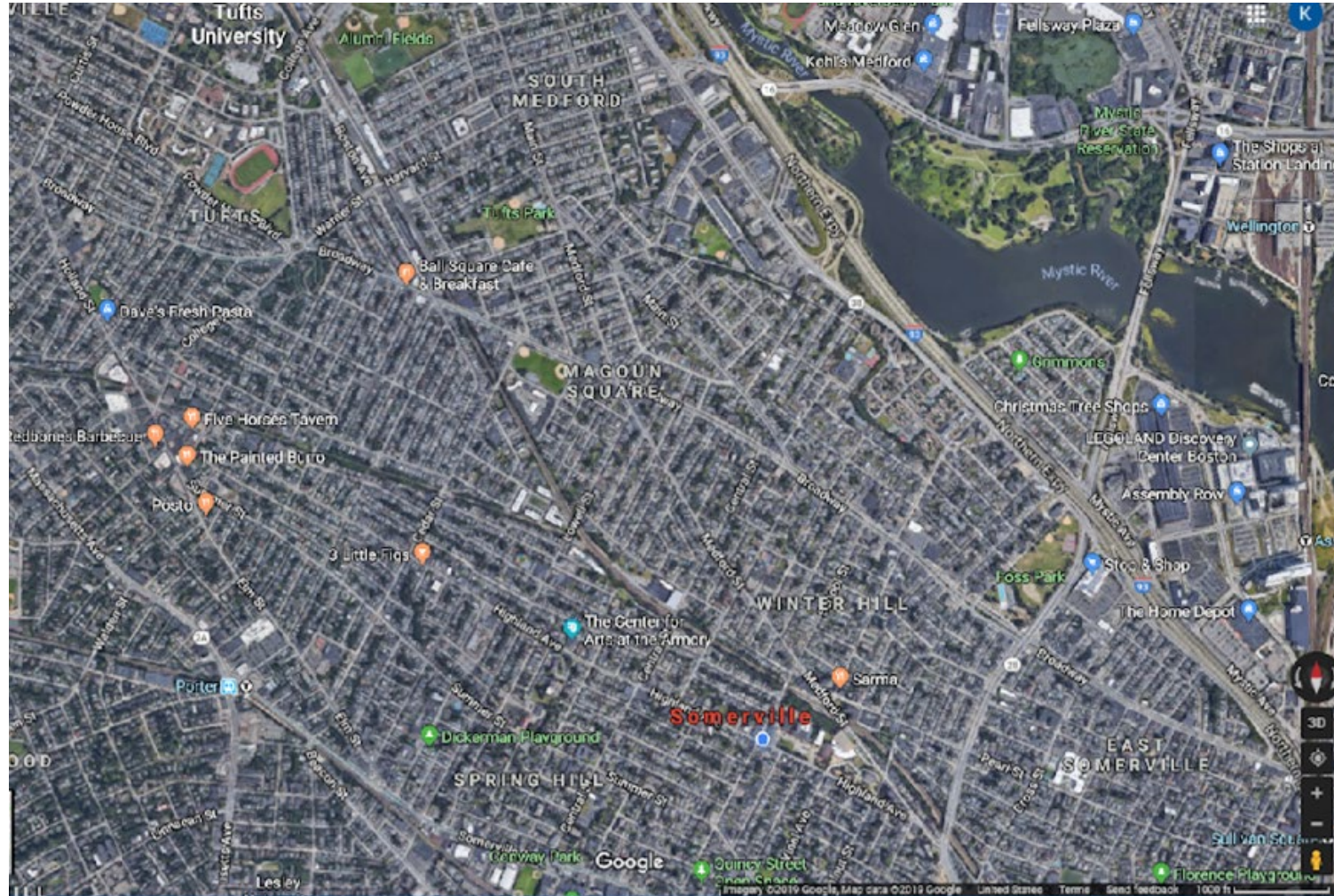
ENSURING QUALITY OPEN SPACE

Kristen Stelljes and Luisa Oliveira



City of Somerville
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

We all agree there is **not** enough open space in Somerville



City of Somerville
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

...and we want high quality open space

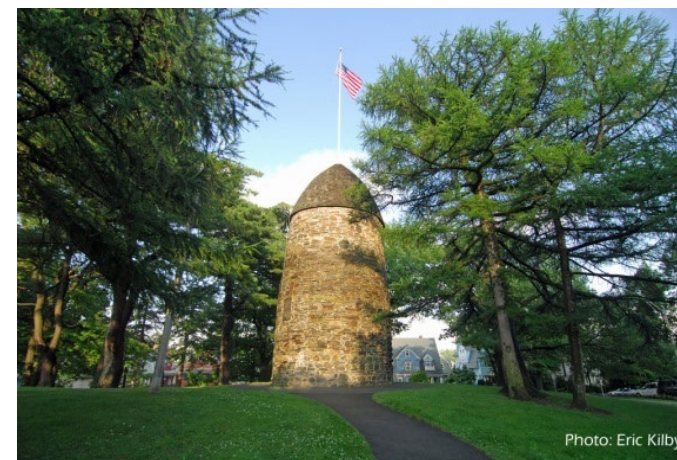


Photo: Eric Kilby



City of Somerville
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Open Space Creation Task Force

Purpose: Develop a strategic plan for the creation of new open space in Somerville

- Amber Christoffersen, Mystic River Watershed Association
- Michael Fager, Conservation Commission
- Kat Rutkin, Groundwork Somerville
- Renée Scott, Green & Open Somerville
- Dan Bartman, Zoning Planner
- Ed Bean, City Auditor
- Luisa Oliveira, Senior Planner for Landscape Design
- Sue Thomas, Planner, Economic Development

Facilitator: Kristen Stelljes



Ensuring Good Urban Design: 4 Principals

- **Walkable Structure**

- Modest Block Lengths
- Safe Streets & Sidewalks

- **Spatial Enclosure**

- Width to Height Ratio
- Streetwall Continuity

- **Density & Intensity**

- People
- Floors & Floor Space

- **Variety & Activity**

- Variety of: Buildings, Spaces, Uses, Dwellings
- Interesting Facades



#1 Walkable Structure

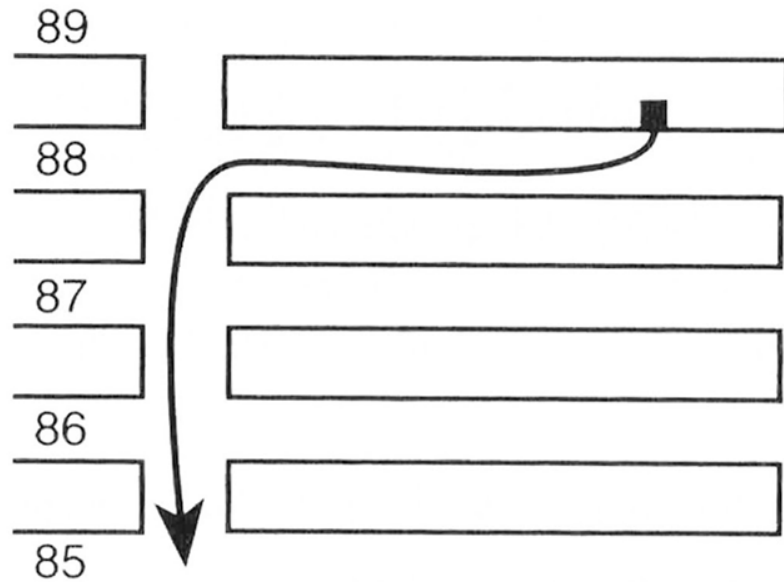


Fig. 2 - Movement across Long Blocks

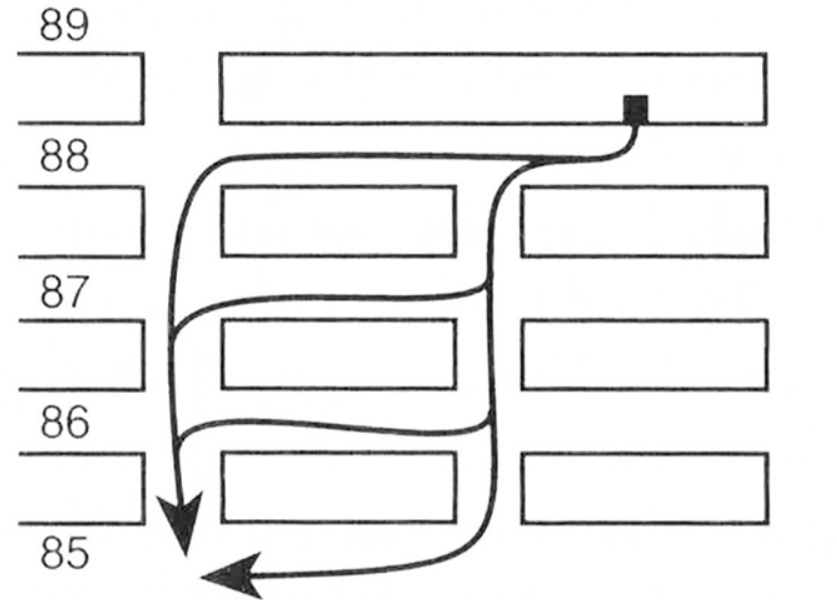


Fig. 3 - Movement across Short Blocks



#1 Walkable Structure



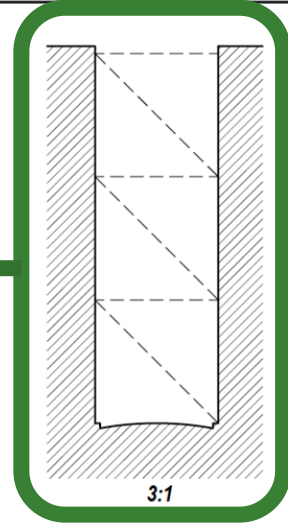
#2 Spatial Enclosure

Research suggests people prefer defined spaces that are not too wide-open or too highly enclosed

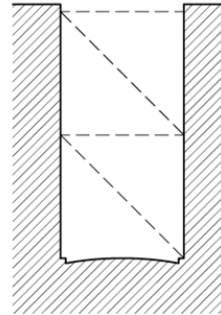


SPATIAL DEFINITION BY HEIGHT-TO-WIDTH RATIO

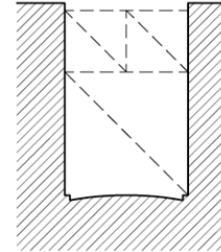
180 ft
(15-17 stories)



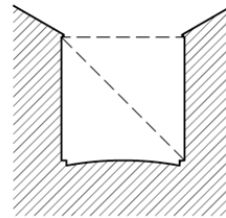
3:1



2:1

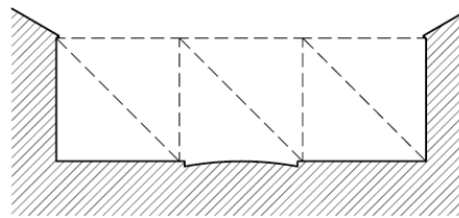


1.5:1



1:1

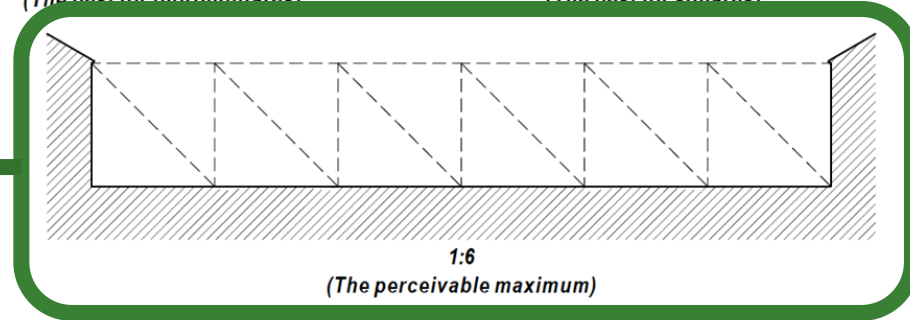
(The best for thoroughfares)



1:3

(The best for squares)

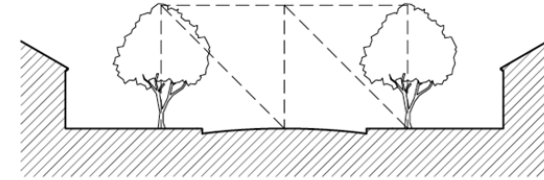
10 ft
(1 story)



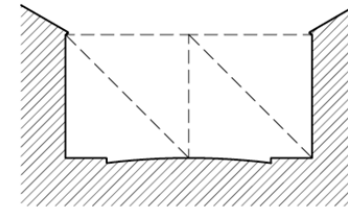
1:6

(The perceivable maximum)

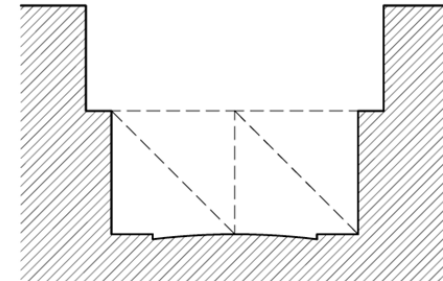
SPATIAL DEFINITION IN SECTION



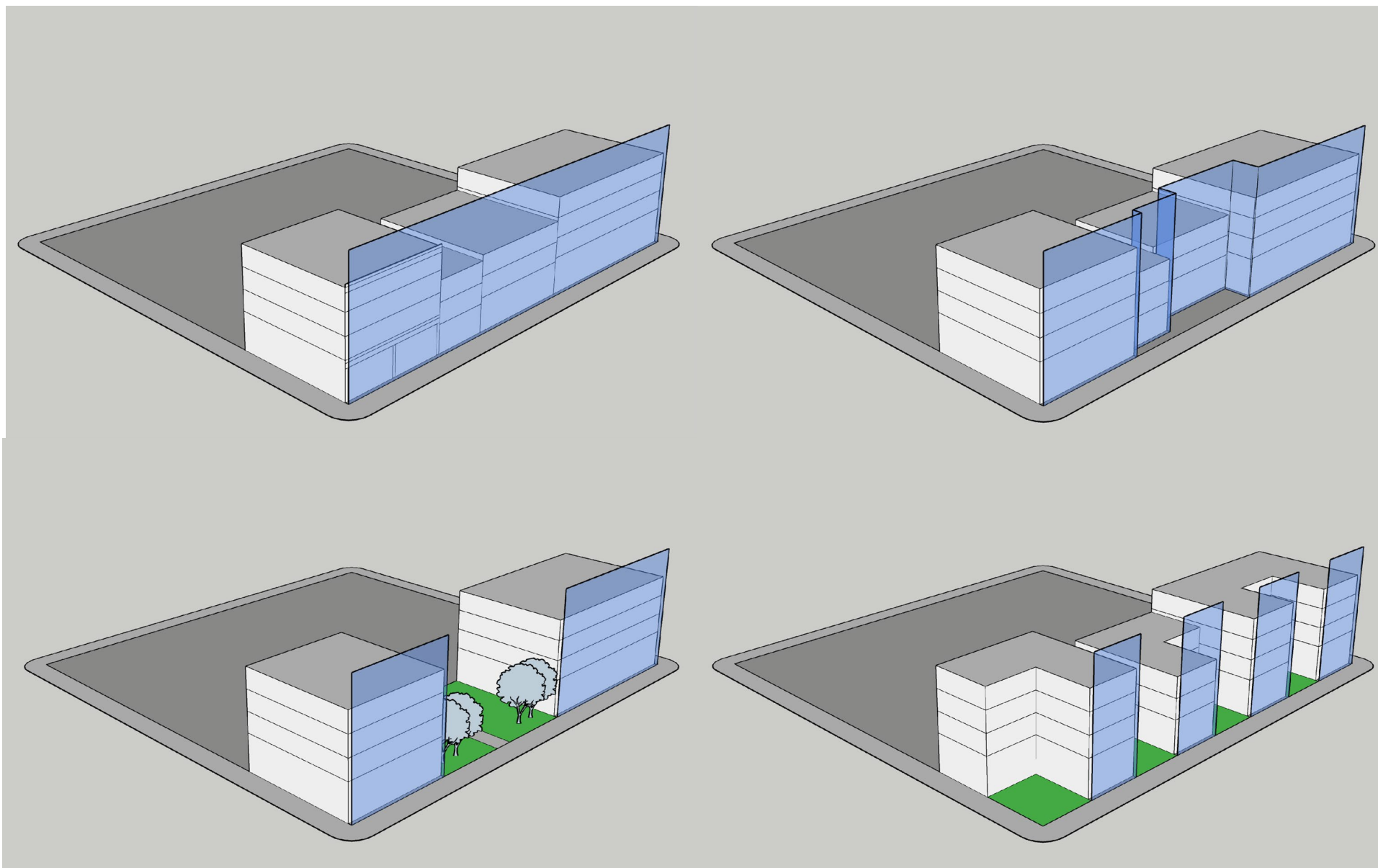
Spatial enclosure by tree canopy



Spatial enclosure by building height



Spatial enclosure by recess line



#3 Density & Intensity




#4 Variety & Activity








**SOMERVILLE
OPEN
SPACE
& RECREATION
PLAN 2016-2021**



SomerVision

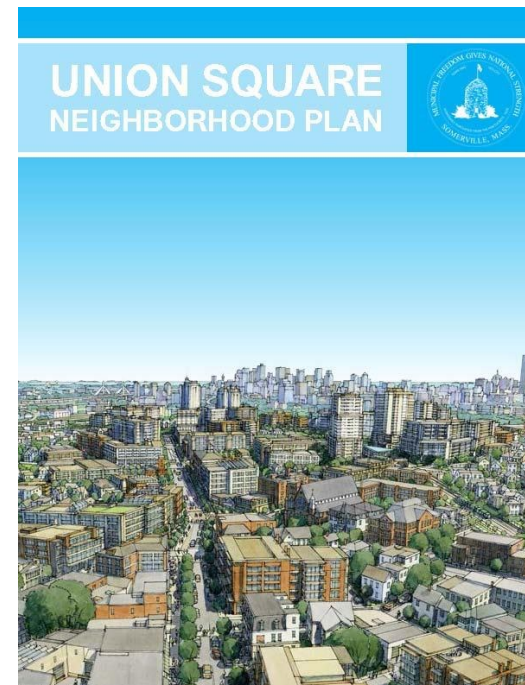
City of Somerville, Massachusetts
Comprehensive Plan | 2010-2030



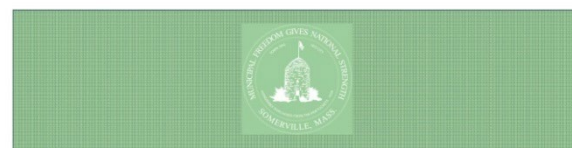
Endorsed by the
Somerville Board of Aldermen
April 12th, 2012

Adopted by the
Somerville Planning Board
April 19th, 2012

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



**UNION SQUARE
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**



ATHLETIC FIELDS MASTER PLANNING Staff Report: Public Hearing

Jill Lathan, Director of Parks & Recreation
Luisa Oliveira, ASLA, Senior Planner for Landscape Design, OSPCD
Emily Monea, SomerStat Director
November 15, 2016
Somerville, MA



City of Somerville
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

What makes good open space?

A network!

- Provides equitable access to open space
- Increases sociability
- Increases opportunities for exercise
- Provides for wildlife corridors and patches
- Ecoservice benefits are greater

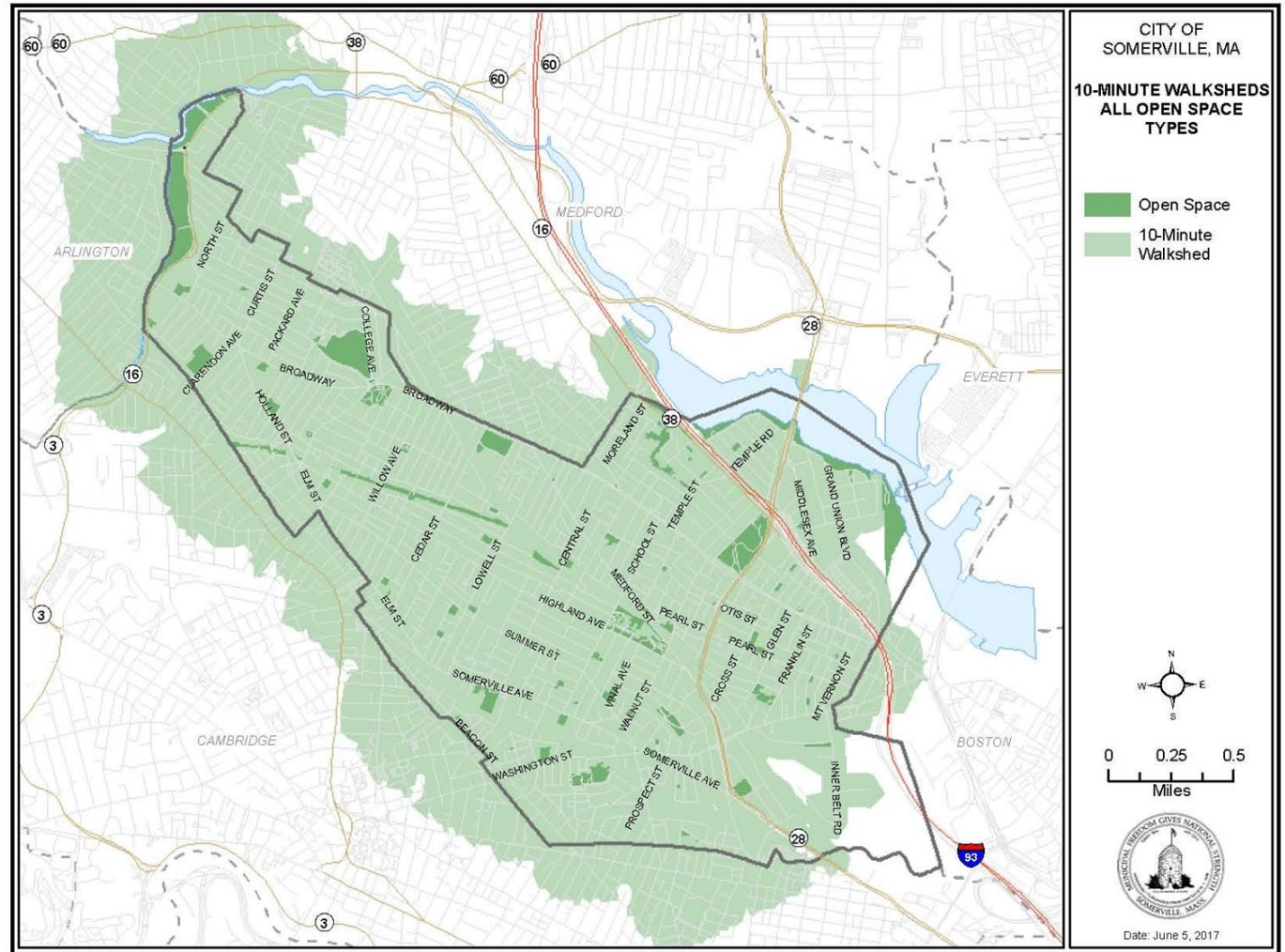


City as Backyard

Network of varied,
multiuse and accessible
open spaces that
accommodate a variety of
users and goals that are
easy to get to



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Somerville 10 minute open space walkshed (.5 mile)

What makes good open space?

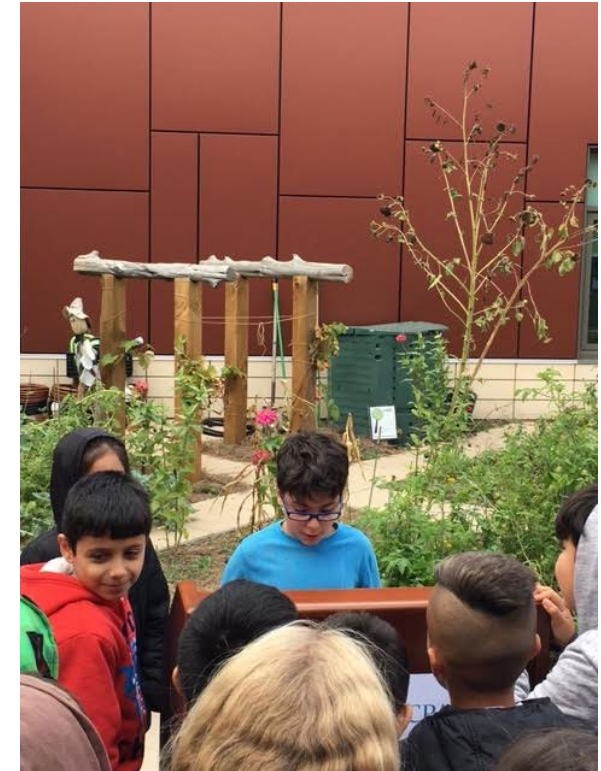
- Meet the needs of the demographics
- Variety of uses
- Quality of materials
- Multi-use
- **Maintainability**
- Opportunities for sociability
- Opportunities for exercise
- Wildlife corridors and patches
- Ecoservice benefits



How to make 80,000 people (and their dogs) happy

Landscape Use Types

- Playground
- Community Garden
- Athletic Field
- Passive
- Dog Park
- Landmark
- Schoolyard
- Urban Farm
- Café Space
- Performance Space



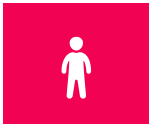
Performance Landscapes: Ecosystem Services/Benefits



Food Production



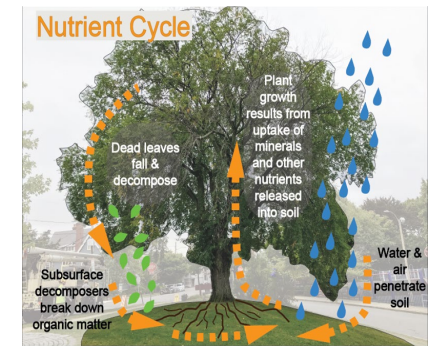
Regulate Natural Phenomena



Cultural services



Support existing natural processes

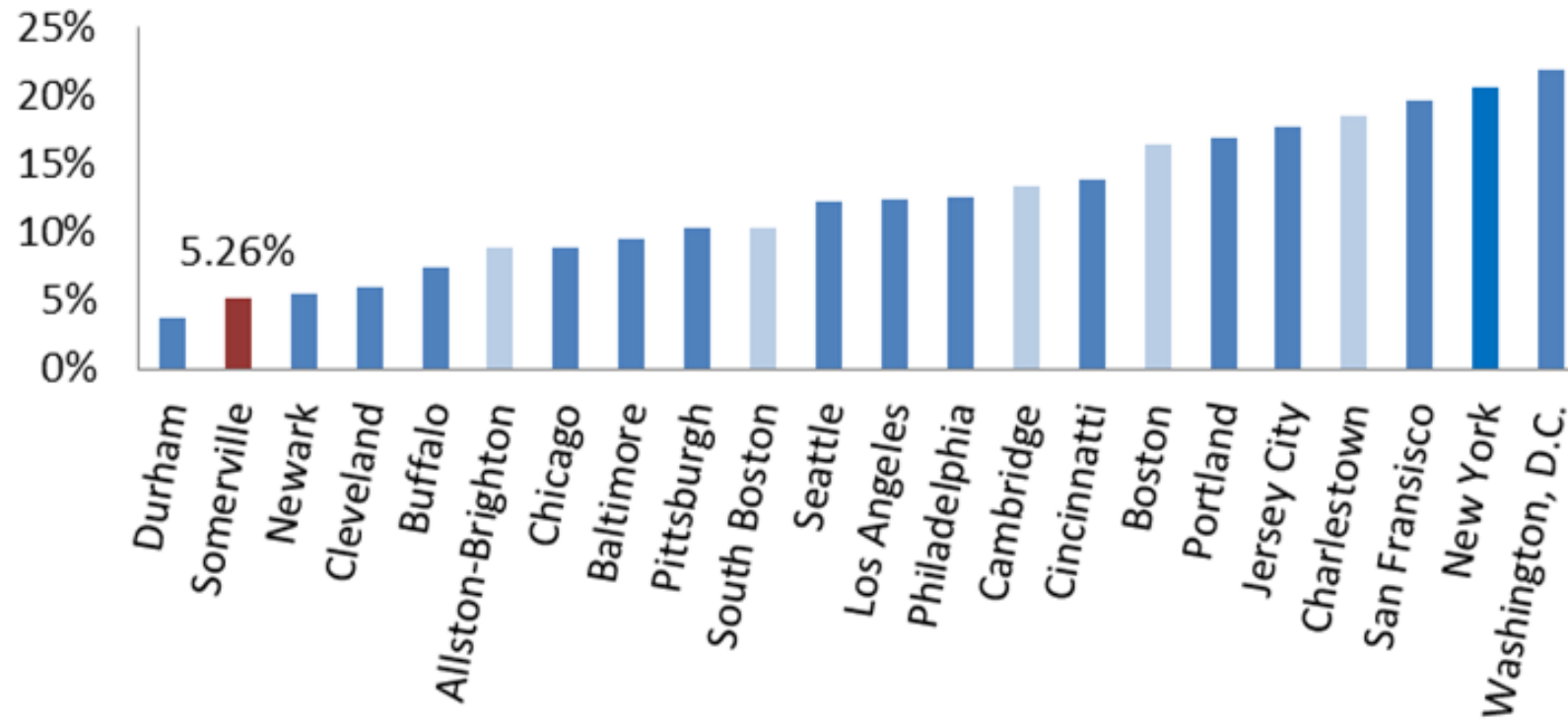


How do we measure the quality of our open spaces?



Open Space as % of Land Area

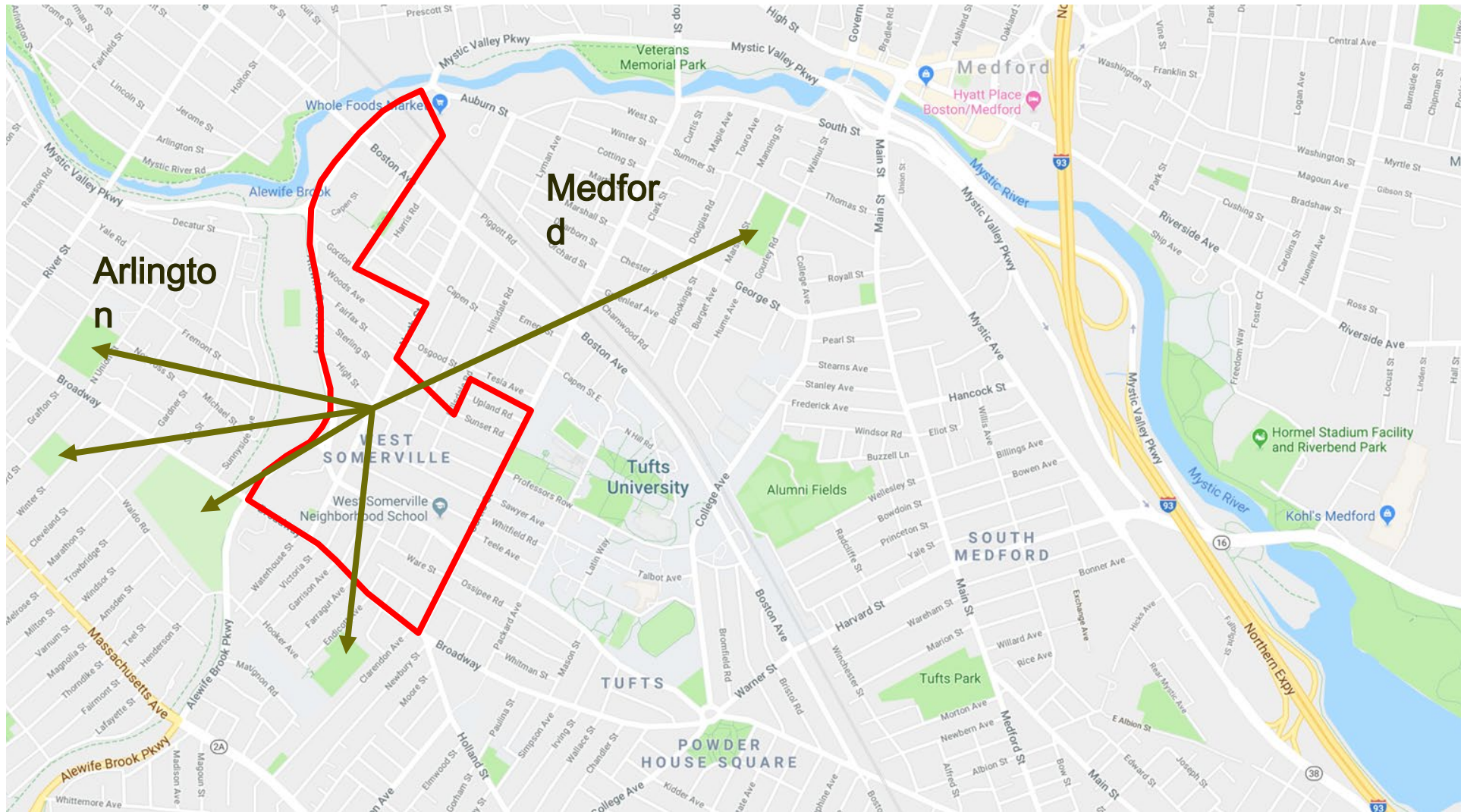
Public Open Space as % of Land Area



Data source: Trust for Public Land 2017 City Park Facts, Boston OSRP 2015 -2021, Cambridge Open Space Plan 2009-2016

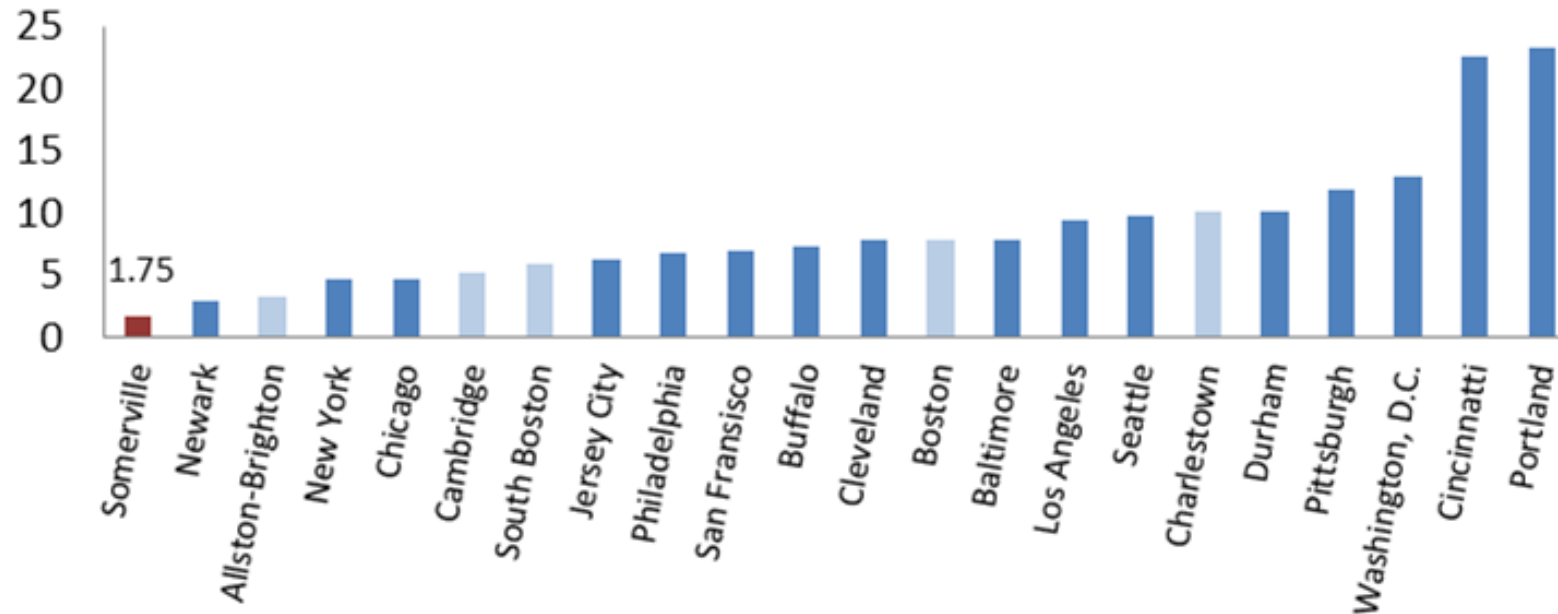


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Open Space Per Capita

Public Open Space per 1,000 Residents



Data source: Trust for Public Land 2017 City Park Facts, Boston OSRP 2015 -2021, Cambridge Open Space Plan 2009-2016



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Recommendations for Open Space Per Capita have changed over time



THE
TRUST
for PUBLIC
LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

6 acres per 1,000 residents



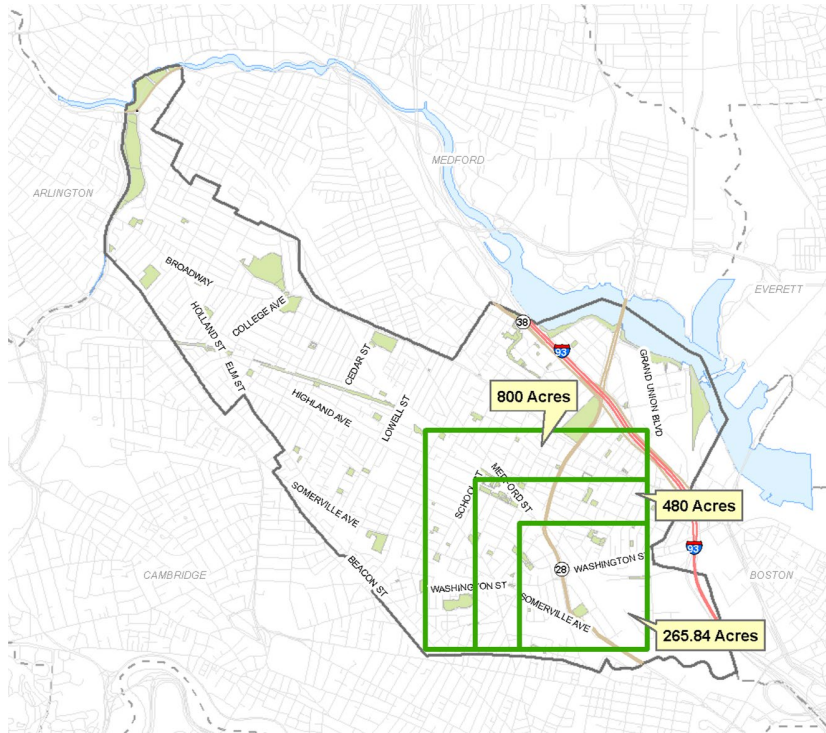
NRPA National Recreation
and Park Association

10 acres per 1,000 residents



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Somerville has 1,945 acres



6 acres per 1,000 residents =
480 acres (25%)

10 acres per 1,000 residents =
800 acres (41%)

SomerVision = 3.3 acres per 1,000 residents
265.84 acres (13.7%)





In the 1990's the NRPA, dropped the 10 acres per 1,000 residents metric because small, built-out communities had no hope of ever meeting the standard.



The TPL stopped recommending 6 acres per 1,000 residents and created a weighted scoring system to evaluate city park systems that uses replacement metrics:

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



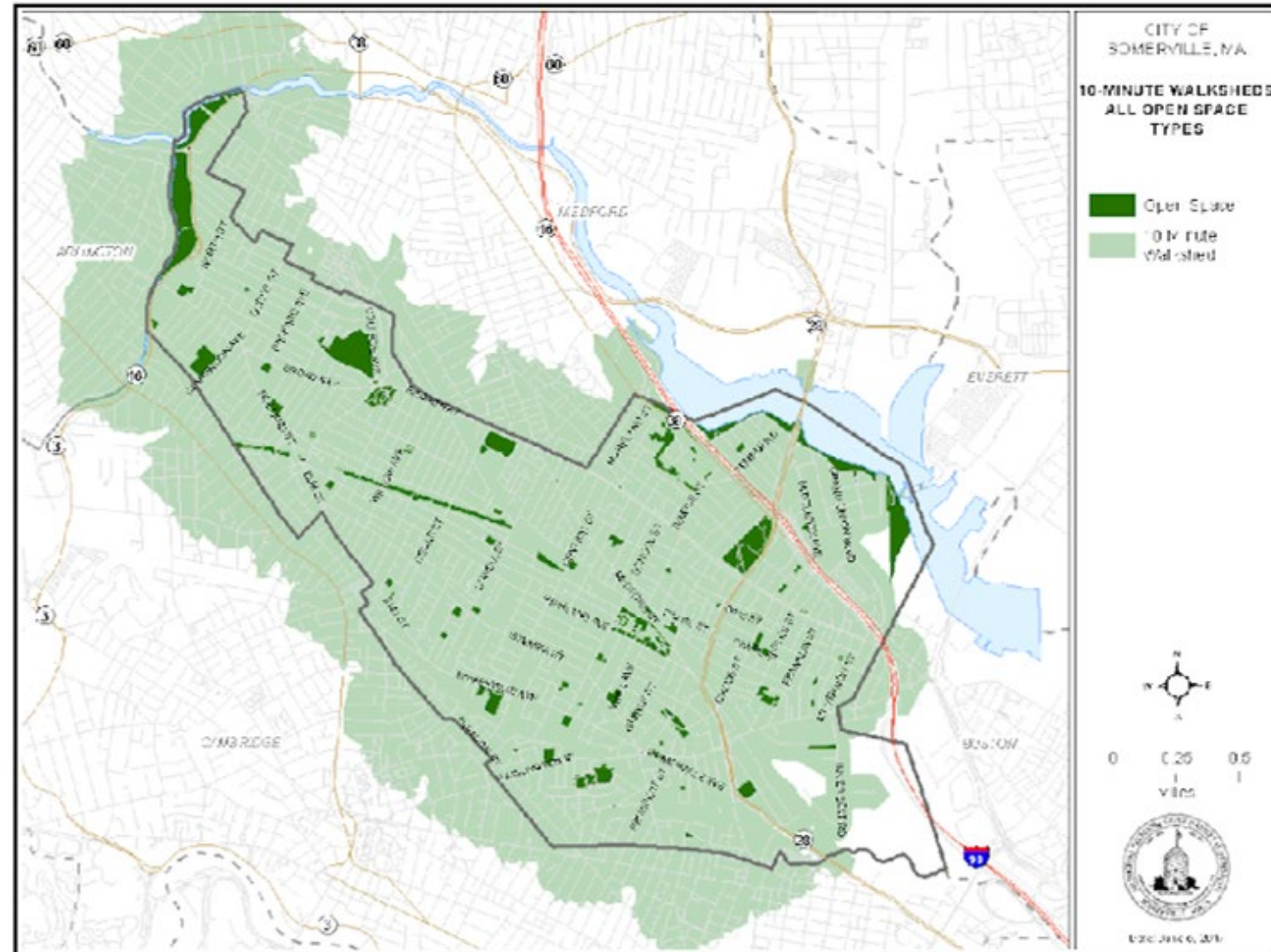
Access to Open Space

10 minute walk (1/2 mile) standard used by:

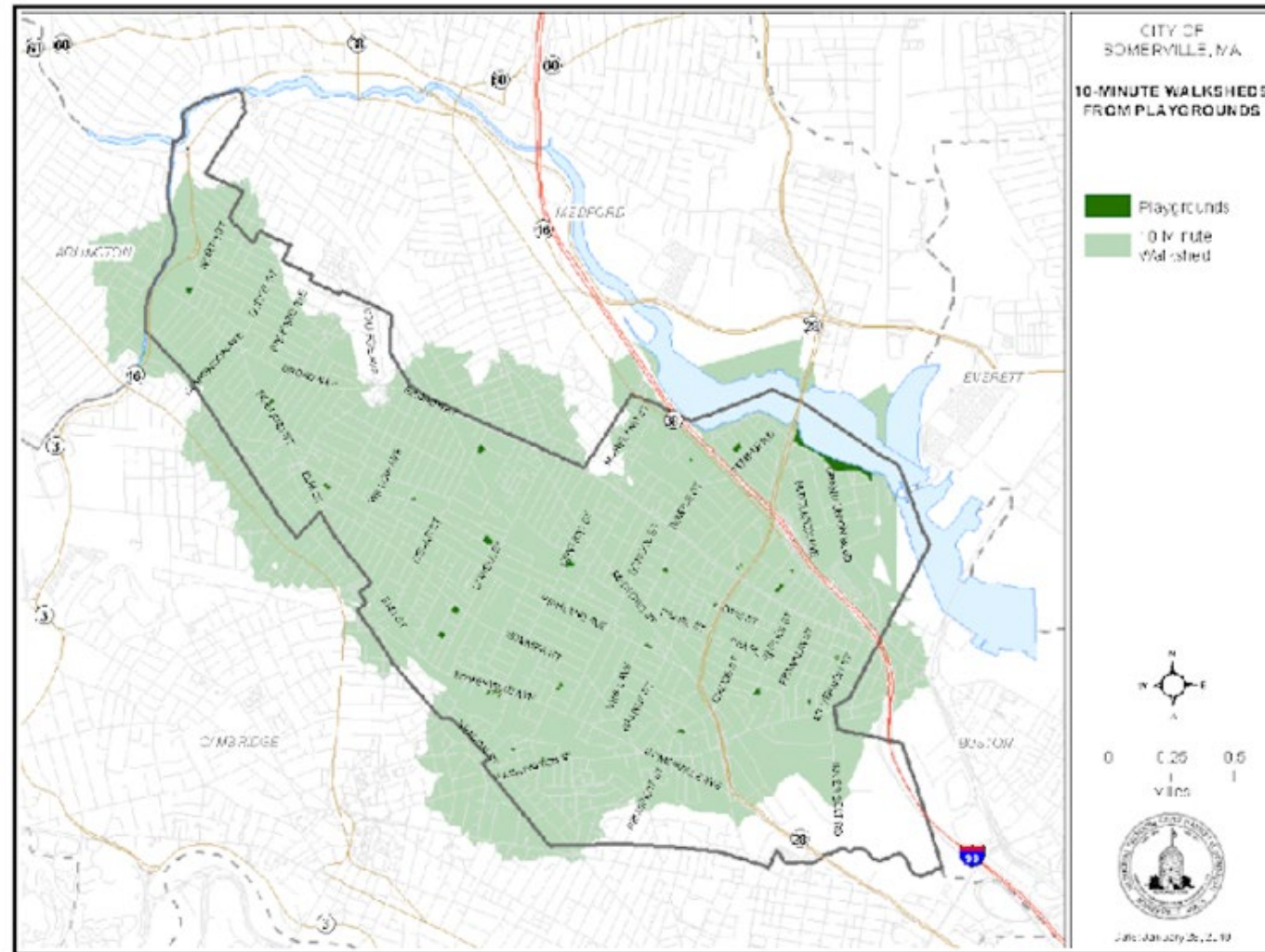
- Trust for Public Land
- National Recreation and Park Association
- Urban Land Institute



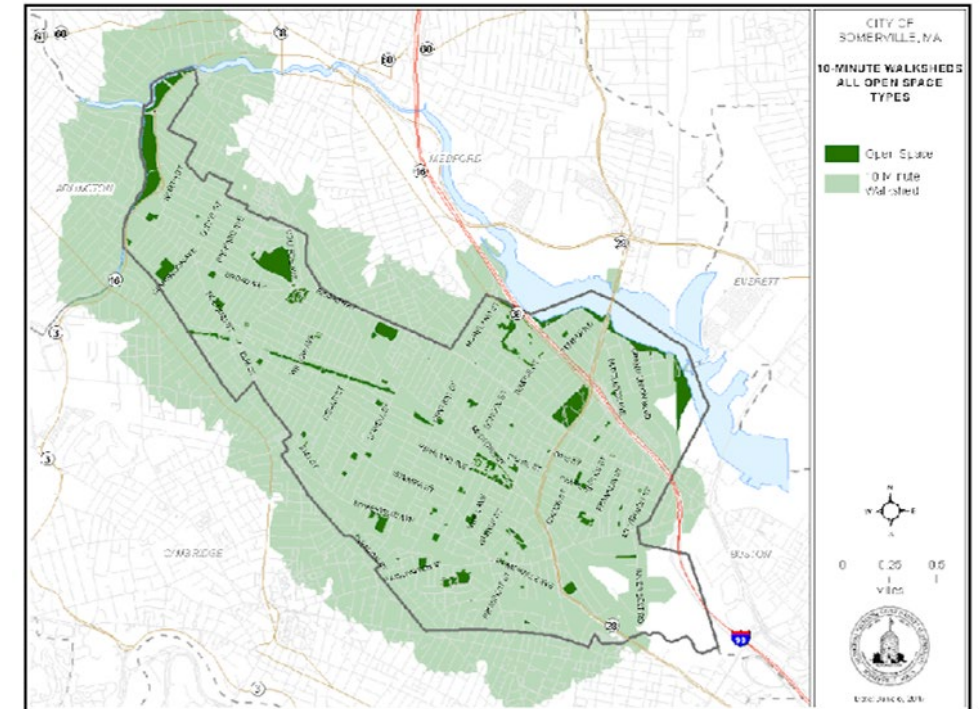
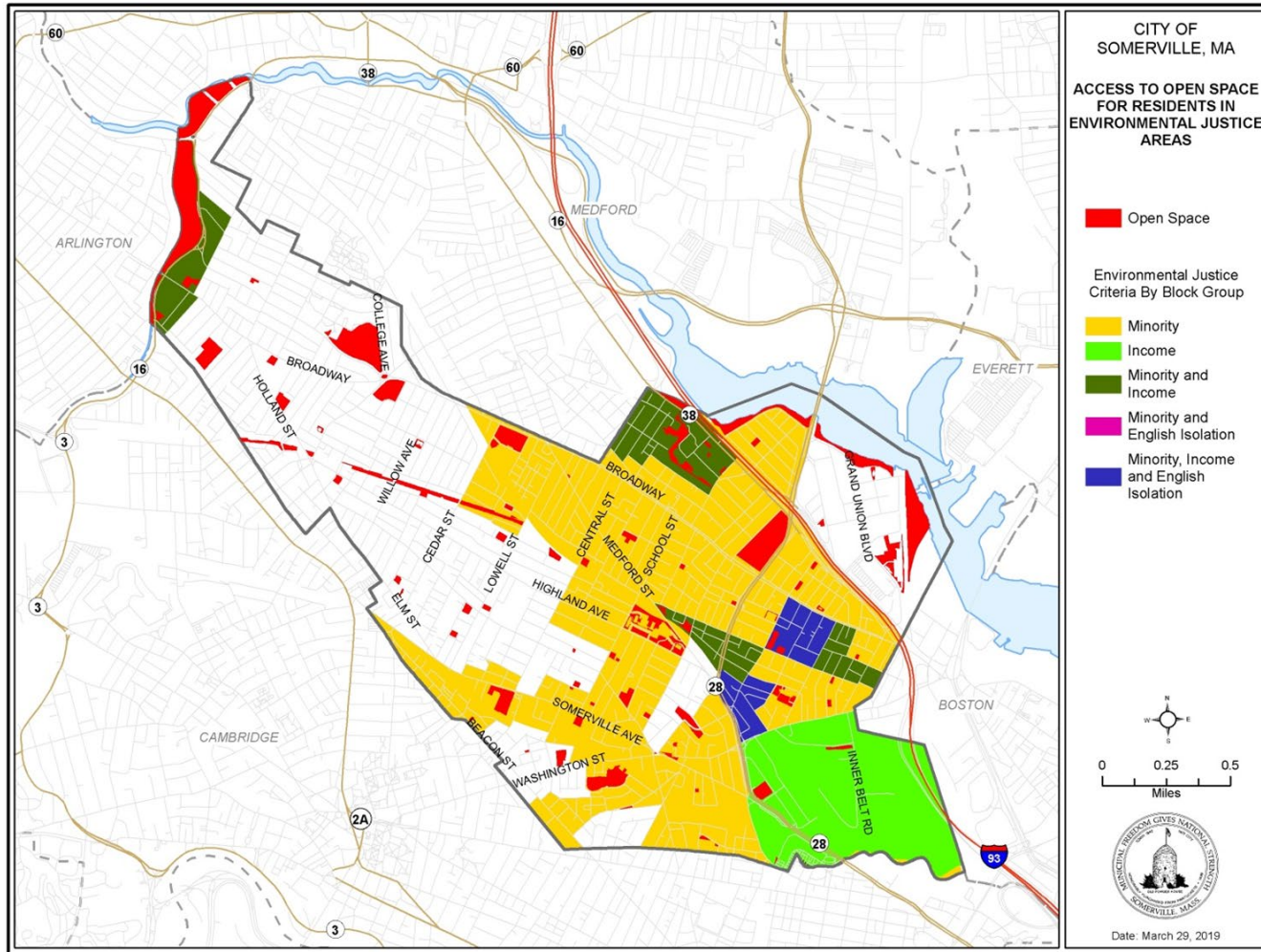
Somerville's 10 Minute Walkshed: Overall



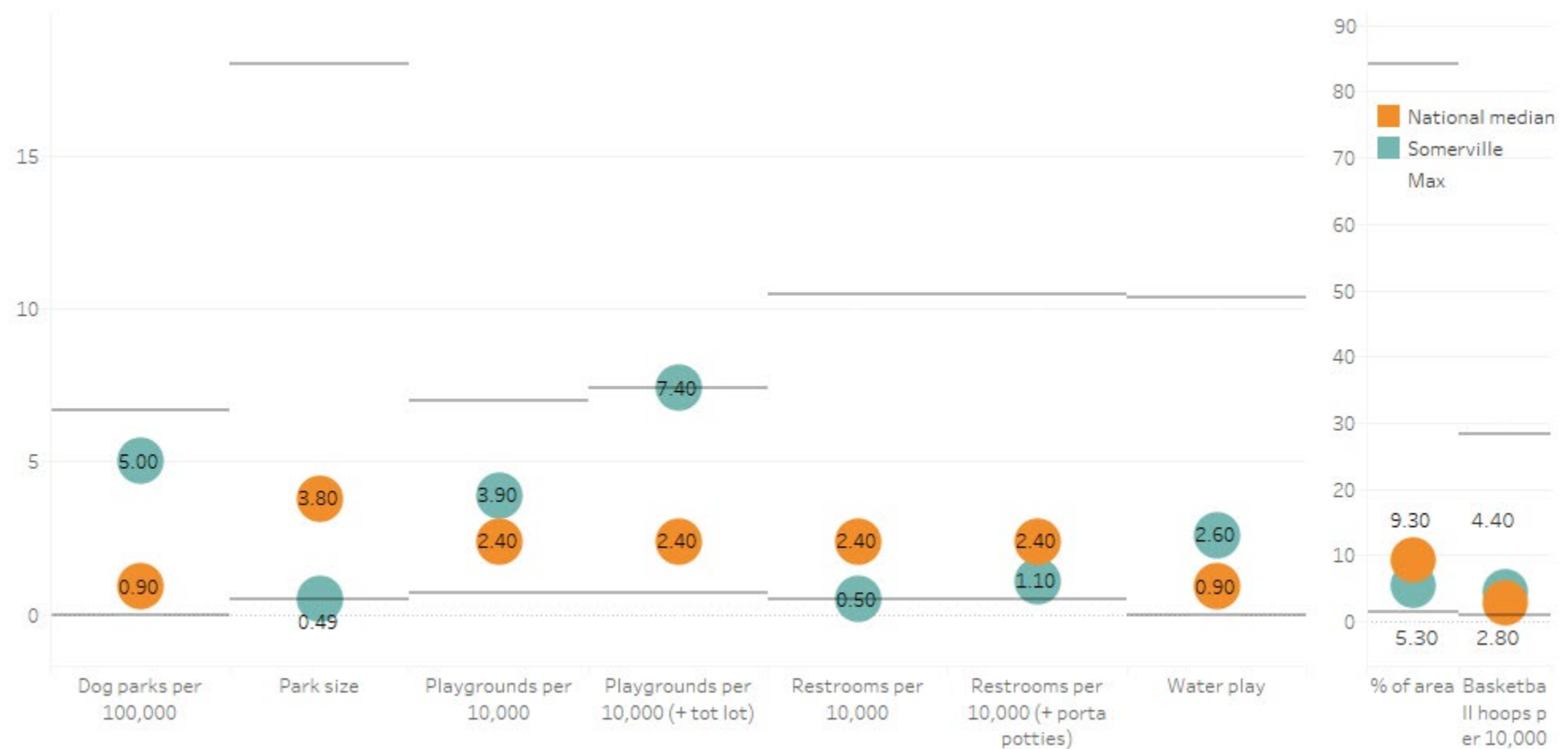
Somerville's 10 Minute Walkshed: Playgrounds



Somerville's Access for Environmental Justice Communities



Somerville's Access to Amenities Compared to 100 Most Populous Cities in the US



Need: Community Gardens & Athletic Fields

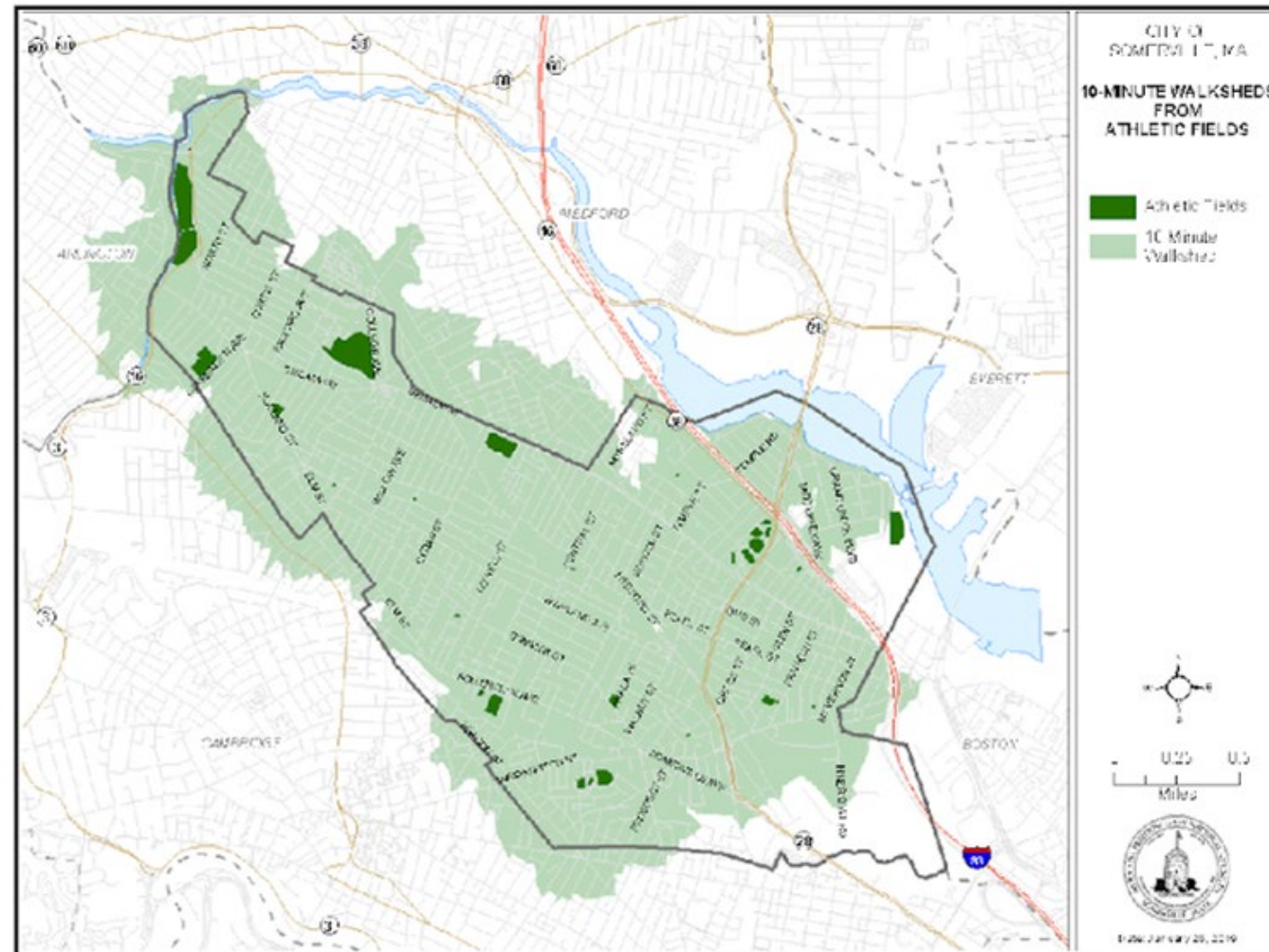
Community Gardens:
~160 people on the waitlist



Athletic Fields:
3,000 requested hours not permitted



Somerville's 10 Minute Walkshed: Athletic Fields

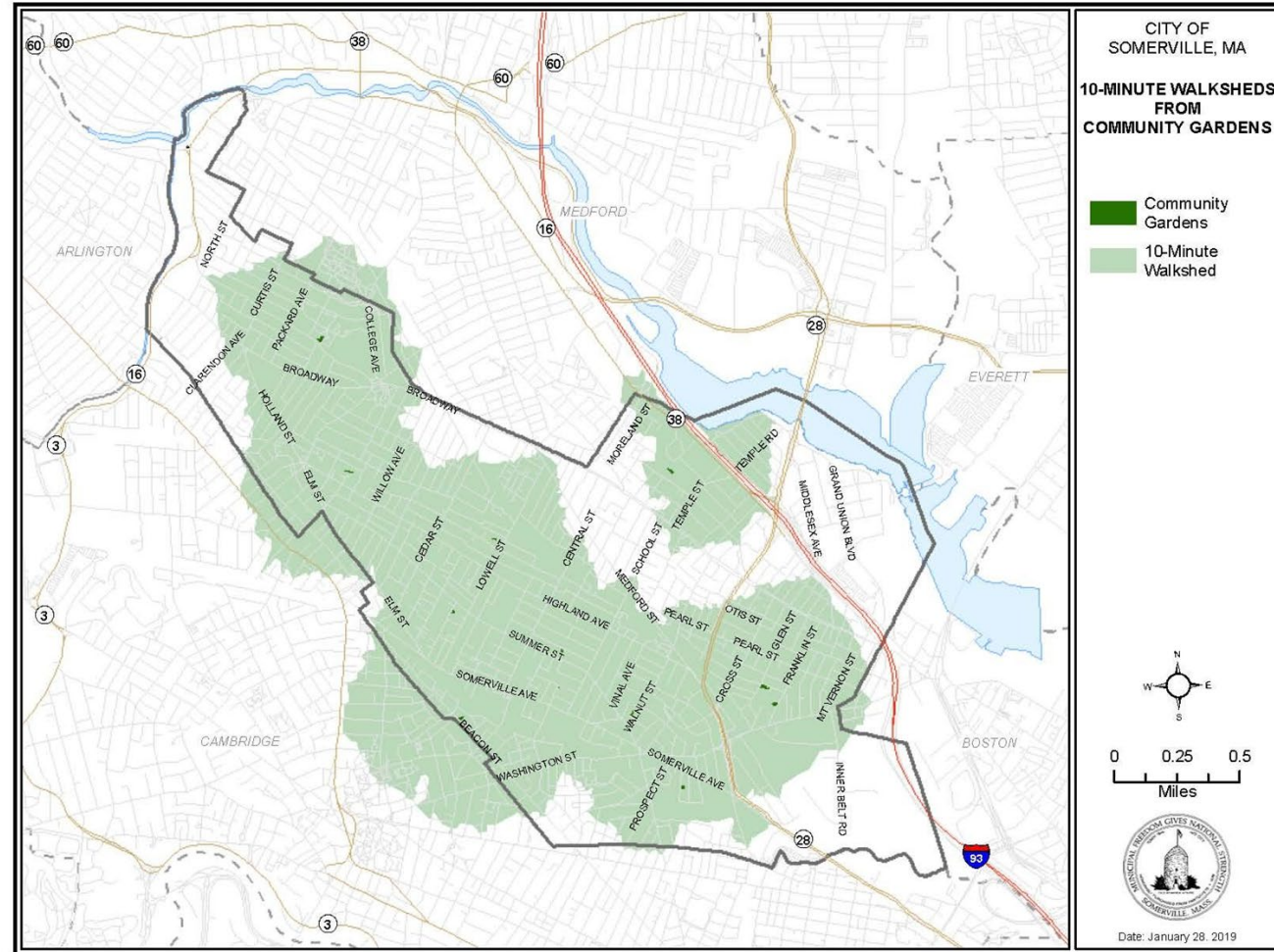


Current Plans to Expand Field Capacity

Anticipated New Athletic Field Capacity	Year Open	Size	Added Peak Hours
Dilboy Auxiliary (adding lights)	2021 or 2022	U14/Large	546
Somerville High School	2021	U12/Medium (non-regulation)	1,638
Healey School	2022	U12/Medium	1,638
Charlestown St.	TBD	TBD size and number	1,638+
Total new peak hours:			5,460



Somerville's 10 Minute Walkshed: Community Gardens



Community Garden Data

122 unique individuals on waitlist with 8/12 gardens reporting

Waitlist by Garden	
Allen	8
Chuckie-Harris	15
Durell	25
Lincoln	26
Morse-Kelly	16
Osgood	24
Tufts	29
Walnut	13



Physical Condition



AT&T 4:54 PM docs.google.com

PARKS ASSESSMENT FORM

Somerville parks condition assessment.

The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Not ckirk@somervillema.gov? [Switch account](#)

PARK NAME:

Your answer

DATE OF ASSESSMENT:

MM DD YYYY
1/1/2020



Activity



20% more people in the plaza after the movable chairs were deployed.

40% increase in sitting after the chairs were deployed.



Quality

12 KEY QUALITY CRITERIA

PROTECTION

FEELING SAFE

- Protection against traffic and accidents
- Protection for pedestrians
- Eliminating fear of traffic
- Low vehicle speeds

FEELING SECURE

- Protection against crime and violence
- Lively public realm
- Eyes on the street
- Overlapping functions day and night
- Good lighting

MICROCLIMATE

- Sun/shade
- Heat/coolness
- Shelter from wind/breeze
- Minimize pollution
- Minimize dust, noise, glare

COMFORT

WALKABLE

- Part of a network
- Links to destinations
- Room for walking
- No obstacles
- Good surfaces
- Accessibility for everyone

SIT & STAY

- Edge effect/attractive zones for standing/staying
- Zones for sitting and resting
- Good places to sit with view, sun, people

SEEING

- Easy orientation
- Reasonable viewing distances
- Unhindered views
- Orientation at night

TALK & LISTEN

- Low noise levels
- Dimensions that stimulates meeting others
- Street furniture that provides "talkscapes"

ACTIVITY

- Physical activity, exercise
- Play and street entertainment by day and night
- In summer and winter
- Activity for all user groups

MIXED FUNCTIONS

- Variety of functions that stimulates activity
- Interaction and transparency between inside and outside

ENJOYMENT

HUMAN SCALE

- Buildings and spaces designed to human scale
- Dimensions and detailing that stimulate our senses
- Spatial enclosure

IDENTITY

- History
- Sense of place
- Local identity
- Amenity values

SENSES

- Good design and detailing
- Good materials
- Fine views
- Trees, plants, water

A Snapshot of Public Space, Public Life in Somerville, MA

Prepared for
City of Somerville

by Gehl Studio
2016

Gehl



Location:

+ = YES # = IN-BETWEEN - = NO

Protection

Protection against Vehicular Traffic

- Traffic accidents
- Obstacles, fences, barriers
- Visibility

Protection against Crime & Violence

- Well lit
- Allow for passive surveillance
- Overlapping functions in space and time

Protection against Unpleasant Sensory Experiences

- Wind/Sun, Rain/Snow
- Cold / Heat, Pollution

Comfort

Invitations for Walking

- Routes for walking
- Accessibility to key areas
- Interesting facilities
- Clear obstacles

Invitations for Standing & Staying

- Attractive and functional design
- Defined spots for sitting
- Objects to lean against
- Or street level for

Invitations for Sitting

- Defined zones for sitting
- Attractive elements
- Placed views, people watching
- Good mix of public and semi-private seating

Delight

Dimensioned at a Human Scale

- Dimensions of spaces respects the human dimensions of users
- Proportions, scale & feel scale

Positive Aspects of Climate

- Sun / shade
- Seasonal changes
- Shelter / enclosure

Aesthetic Quality

- Quality design, fine detailing, robust materials
- Views / vistas
- Rich sensory experiences

Public Space Quality Criteria

Gehl Architects



City of Somerville
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

New Acres of Open Space

125 = SomerVision goal for publically accessible
new acres



Progress toward SomerVision Goal: Created + In Progress

Open Space Acres Created Since 2010: Public + POPS									
Public		Zero New Washington	Quincy St.	Baxter	Chuckie Harris	North St. Veterans	Symphony	Path (Cedar/Lowell)	Total
	Acres	0.64	0.12	5.45	0.41	0.09	0.21	2.35	9.27
POPS		Block 2A Plaza	Maxwell's Green	50 Middlesex	Partners	Milbrook Park			
	Acres	0.33	0.46	0.29	4.60	0.08			5.76
In Progress		ArtFarm	5 Palmer	35 Richardson	Community Path Extension				4.87
	Acres	2.1	0.04	.13	2.6				
									Total
									19.9



Progress toward SomerVision Goal: Planned

Public Space in Planning: Identified by Neighborhood Plans (acres)			
	Developer	City Share	Total
Gilman Square	0	0.25	0.25
Winter Hill	0.85	0.25	1.10
Union Square	2.00	7.55	9.55
Davis Square	0	0.50	0.50
Somerville Junction II	0.85	0	0.85
Total	3.7	8.55	12.25



Progress toward SomerVision Goal: Summary

	Acres	Remaining to 125
Created	15.03	109.97
In Progress	4.87	105.1
Planned	12.25	92.85
Transformative Areas (OS Task Force recommendation)	61	31.85



Estimated Cost to Create Open Space

Minimum City Contribution (8.55 acres)

\$53 million

(40% or .40 times cost of City contribution to High School project)

Maximum City Contribution (105.1 acres)

\$652 million

(490% or 4.9 times the cost of the City contribution to High School project)



Options for Creating Open Space

- Buy & build
- Repurpose existing land
- Asphalt reclamation
- Asking developers to create Privately Owned Public Space (POPS)
- (Future) Land Trust and/or Community Foundation purchases or receives as donations



Options for Funding Open Space

1. Developers create open space
 1. Creating POPS
 2. Open space linkage payment (home rule petition)
2. City purchases:
 - a. Bond with debt service being paid by General Fund
 - b. With funds appropriated to a land acquisition fund
 - c. With funds appropriated to a conservation fund managed by the Conservation Commission
 - d. With Community Preservation Act Funds
3. Community partner purchases:
 - a. Conservation Land Trust
 - b. Community Foundation



Case Study: Northampton

Open Space Acquisition & Management

Community
Foundation of
Western Mass.

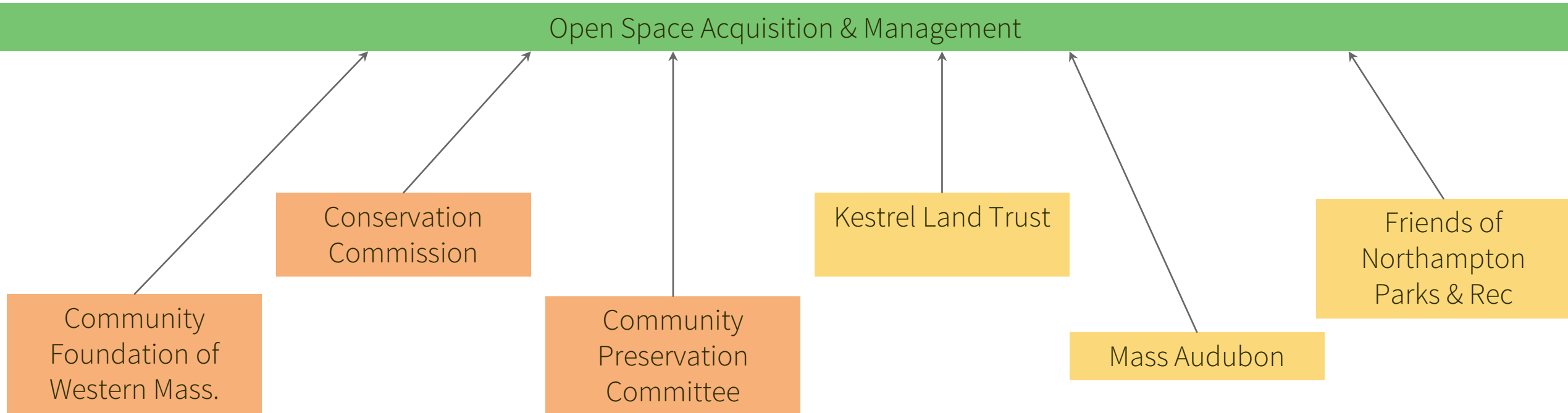
Conservation
Commission

Community
Preservation
Committee

Kestrel Land Trust

Mass Audubon

Friends of
Northampton
Parks & Rec





SOMERVISION2040

Sustainability • Diversity • Opportunity • Connectivity • Community

Thank you for attending!

This presentation will be posted on www.somervision2040.com



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Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone