

Comprehensive Plan Policies & Actions - Steering Committee

9.30.10

Housing Sub-Committee

Housing Choice

Goal: Preserve and expand an integrated mix of safe, affordable and environmentally sound housing options for households of all types and from diverse social and economic groups.

Policy: The City should adopt programs and regulations to support the increased provision of affordable housing.

Actions: Conduct a "Housing Needs Assessment" to determine the current and future housing requirements of our city.

Action: Study current Zoning Ordinance to promote more affordable housing.

Action: Incentivize the development of units of all sizes to encourage residents to stay in the community by reducing parking requirements, providing density bonuses and requiring housing units to be designed to be usable by all people without the need for adaptation.

Action: Increase the percentage set aside of affordable units as mandated in the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Action: Allow the Housing Director more flexibility and discretion to adjust for changing circumstances in the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in order to promote increased units of affordable housing and family sized housing.

Action: Consider adopting Somerville area median income limits to expand the affordability of housing units.

Action: Create incentives to encourage rental or homeownership units as the market fluctuates.

Policy: The City should promote policies that protect tenant and landlord rights and clarify landlord and tenant responsibilities (in re: Conversion?)

Suggestion: Two different action; one is general and other is condo conversion.
Add new action to clarify its general as well.

Action: Adopt a revised Condominium Conversion Ordinance to strengthen tenant rights, and clearly define a process to meet or exceed state standards that is enforceable.

Action: Conduct a public education program to provide information to residents, homeowners and elected officials to clearly delineate the obligations, predictability and public benefits in the process for granting and denying permits under the ordinance.

Policy: The City should encourage the development of rental housing throughout the City.

Action: Expand rental housing development in all areas of the City particularly along transit corridors.

Suggestion: more forceful action needed here – i.e. what incentive will be used?

Policy: The City should promote the development of Senior Housing.

Action: Adopt a Senior Housing Ordinance, which protects Seniors from losing their homes.

Action: Reduce parking requirements, increase density bonuses.

Action: Require more handicapped accessible and universal design guidelines to enable elders to age in place.

Action: Encourage accessory units.

Policy: New development should promote the adoption of housing designs that incorporate green building technologies and amenities and that include more open "green space."

Action: Establish an educational program for the community to discuss new green building guidelines and technologies.

Action: Work with utility companies, housing developers and commercial businesses to establish programs to provide incentives to homeowners and renters to adopt “green building” designs.
Action: Research other “model programs “from communities that have adopted “green building” design requirements.
Action: Access national programs/funders for funding of green building or energy retrofit practices.
Action: Adopt a zoning ordinance that incentivizes development of housing that incorporates green building technologies.

Mixed-Use Transit-Oriented Development

Goal: Promote mixed-use, mixed-income transit-oriented development to provide new housing and employment options.

Policy: The City should promote mixed Income and mixed generational neighborhoods by providing all residents with equal access to civic, educational, economic and social opportunities.
Action: Reduce parking requirements for housing units close to transit stations.
Action: Amend zoning to encourage more mixed-use development in commercial districts through Transit-Oriented Development zoning incentives.
Action: Require compact development and higher density development in selected transit areas.
Action: Organize and coordinate community stakeholders to promote mixed-use development.
Action: Incentivize the development of affordable housing by creating Tax Increment Financing or District Improvement Financing areas particularly along the “Green Line Corridor” and proposed transit stations.
Action: Limit the amount of paving permitted to prevent the change from green to paved space.

Resources and Capacity

Goal: Expand financial, organizational, programmatic, and other resources available for housing.

Policy: The City should promote activities to access state funds for affordable housing development.
Action: Conduct a public education program to encourage passage of the Community Preservation Act.
Action: Create a real estate “transfer tax” to support the development of affordable housing.
Action: Establish a local bank task force to develop guidelines for expanding their Community Reinvestment Act benefits to the community.

Policy: The City should ensure that there is an established basis for fees on development.
Action: Conduct an updated nexus study of our current linkage fee ordinance.
Action: Review current model linkage ordinances from other cities and towns.
Action: Review and update the current fee and square foot thresholds every 3 years.
Suggestion: Enact regular updating and enforce this (come up with a period of time that makes sense, 10 years?)

Policy: The City should encourage energy efficiency in housing throughout the City.
Action: Establish an Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Program.
Action: Broaden income qualification guidelines to qualify residents between 60% and 120% of area median income.
Action: Establish a partnership with utility companies that service the Somerville area.
Action: Encourage utility companies to expand public education programs and offer greater incentives to utilize “energy star” appliances and other energy efficient systems.

Policy: The City should promote policies that plan for highest and best use of City-owned assets.

Action: Create a formal process for the disposition of publically-owned properties that require incorporating an affordable housing component.

Action: Include language in RFPs for disposition of publicly owned properties that give preference to affordable housing.

Homelessness

Goal: Create a diversity of programs that prevent homelessness and address the housing needs of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

Policy: The City should promote the development of enough affordable housing so that no one in Somerville becomes homeless and promote programs to rapidly rehouse anyone who does become homeless.

Action: Target job training and programs to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless so that they can earn a living wage.

Action: Earmark local, state and federal funds to develop permanent, affordable housing.

Action: Create a continuum of housing from independent living to supportive housing so that families and individuals can be successfully housed.

Action: Create additional funds to prevent families and individuals from ever becoming homeless.

Action: Expand a more regional collaboration for addressing homelessness.

Action: Create additional transitional units with support services for individuals and families.

Action: Explore a more regional collaboration approach for solutions.

Action: Promote the Hearth reauthorization act to emphasize prevention and rapid rehousing as the solution to homelessness.

Action: Educate the community about homelessness and its costs - both financial and emotional - and how we as a community can best address the problem.

Displacement

Goal: Mitigate displacement of low and moderate income residents by retaining the existing affordable housing stock and by creating policies that allow residents to remain in their homes in the face of a changing city.

Policy: The City should encourage economic development that mitigates the negative effects of gentrification along expanded Green and Orange line transit corridors.

Action: Conduct a public education program that describes gentrification and its impacts in a community.

Action: Establish a tenant purchase and/or rent-to-own program.

Action: Increase affordability restrictions on public and subsidized housing units by limiting rent increases and expanding the length of time that units are affordable. MOVE TO HOUSING CHOICE?

Action: Encourage new and existing businesses to train and hire existing residents to enable them to afford to rent or purchase housing units. (Move to or included in HOMELESSNESS?)_

Action: Increase affordable housing set asides in selected areas along transit nodes and corridors.

Action: Create regulatory support and remove barriers to develop affordable housing along transit nodes and corridors.

Action: Provide financial and technical support to non-profit developers of affordable housing to acquire "expiring use" properties.

Action: Encourage partnerships with for-profit and non-profit developers of housing.

Action: Encourage area universities to work with Somerville to create more housing on campus.

Action: Establish reduced parking requirements for housing within the Green Line that includes affordable housing units.

Action: Mitigate displacement by encouraging property owners planning to sell to non-profit developers of affordable housing in development hot spots near transit. (by providing information and making connections?)

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Comprehensive Plan Policies & Actions - Steering Committee

10.5.10

CCSGD Sub-Committee

Financial Self-Sufficiency

Goal: Promote municipal financial self-determination and reduce fiscal dependence on state aid and residential taxes and fees.

Policy: The City should use land use planning and zoning to increase the commercial tax base.

Action: Develop Area Plans for Commercial Corridors, Squares and Growth Districts that establish minimum development criteria and specific financial targets.

Action: Analyze the City's zoning ordinance to identify barriers to commercial redevelopment.

Action: Rewrite the City's zoning ordinance to eliminate barriers to commercial redevelopment.

Policy: The City should leverage creative financing options to foster commercial development

Action: Implement a District Improvement Financing (DIF) program to reinvest in public infrastructure and economic development projects.

Action: Explore Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to attract and support catalytic development projects.

Action: Encourage establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BID) to improve services and amenities in commercial areas.

Policy: City-owned property should, where feasible, be utilized to stimulate economic development activities or serve as catalysts for such activities.

Action: Implement recommendations from 2010 Municipal Facilities Master Plan regarding consolidation or relocation of municipal facilities

Action: Prepare surplus City-owned parcels for redevelopment and/or disposition.

Job Development

Goal: Make Somerville a regional employment center with a mix of diverse and high quality jobs.

Policy: The City should support Business Development.

Action: Strengthen partnerships with local business advocacy groups, including the Somerville Chamber of Commerce, Main Streets Organizations, Somerville Local First, the Davis Area Resident-Business Initiative, and others.

Action: Maintain existing support for partner organizations that provide small business development assistance (including business planning, financial management, marketing, and other counseling and technical assistance).

Action: Work with partner organizations to create, maintain and market a Somerville Business Directory.

Policy: The City should promote job creation, with a long-range goal of reaching a one-to-one match between jobs and resident workforce in Somerville.

Action: Consider the number of new jobs created when reviewing land use permit applications.

Action: Develop job creation criteria for commercial development projects seeking City subsidy.

Policy: The City should promote growth in strategically-targeted economic sectors.

Action: Analyze trends in existing and emerging economic sectors.

Action: Establish incentives for incubator, start up, and other shared space business centers.

Action: Plan for development of a Regional Medical Center and Level I Trauma Center.

Action: Pursue Commonwealth designation as a Platinum BioReady Community.

Business Environment

Goal: Support a business-friendly environment to attract and retain a diverse mix of businesses that can start here, grow here and stay here.

Policy: The City and its partners should market Somerville as a location for business.

Action: Partner with business advocacy groups and institutions to develop high quality print and multi-media collateral to attract new and expanding businesses.

Action: Develop an online database of available properties for re-tenanting, reuse and redevelopment.

Action: Develop a Business Retention Program to keep existing businesses in Somerville.

Policy: The City should continue efforts around permit streamlining to facilitate the process of opening a business in Somerville, while ensuring a transparent public review process.

Action: Update and expand the City's Business Welcome Kit.

Action: Create an online permit and license application system.

Action: Create a publicly-available electronic tracking system for license and permit applications.

Action: Create an in-house permit ombudsman position to guide applicants through the regulatory process.

Policy: The City should support the development and retention of incubator, entry-level and mid-level business space.

Action: Work with property owners and real estate professionals to analyze, improve and market existing commercial spaces

Action: Work to develop flexible and affordable commercial spaces that are managed by nonprofits

Action: Update the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate barriers to home-based businesses.

Policy: The City should update its business permit parking program

Action: ?

PARKING LOT:

Action: Establish a mitigation plan.

Action: Provide for a broader range of information on capital resources.

Action: Provide networking opportunities. (be more specific?)

Human Capital

Goal: Invest in the talents, skills and education of people to support growth and provide opportunities to residents of all social and economic levels.

Policy: The City should continue to support existing workforce development programs

Action: Publicize existing collaborations with community stakeholders to develop programs for preparing residents for "new economy" jobs as well as traditional jobs, with a particular emphasis on youth, transitional workers, and immigrant populations.

Action: Continue and expand the Mayor's Summer Jobs program.

Action: Expand school-to-work programs and improve adult education and ESL classes.

Action: Support and encourage a wider participation from non-profits in job-training and workforce readiness efforts.

Action: Identify a Somerville representative for the State’s Workforce Board.

Policy: The City should strive to improve residents’ access to jobs.

Action: Analyze best practices in local hiring agreements

Action: Develop model agreements for local hiring and workforce development

Action: Disseminate information to the public regarding job opportunities created by the Green Line construction, particularly around the federal HUD Section 3 requirement for local hiring.

PARKING LOT:

Policy: The City should support efforts to develop and sustain a diverse array of employment opportunities.

Policy: The City and its neighborhood partners should encourage greater corporate participation in elementary and secondary school curriculum development.

Connectivity

Goal: Link Somerville’s Commercial Corridors, Squares and Growth Districts to support future development and economic activity.

Policy: The City should plan for transit to connect Commercial Corridors, Squares and Growth Districts.

Action: Develop actionable Area Plans, Transportation Plans and Infrastructure Plans as appropriate for Commercial Corridors, Squares and Growth Districts, with priority given to Transformative Districts.

Action: Continue to advocate for transit improvements, including the extension of the Green Line to Route 16, the extension of the Green Line to Porter Square, the Urban Ring Rapid Bus Transit system, and new north-south bus routes in Somerville.

Action: Develop plans for the “Boulevarding” of Rte. 28/McGrath Highway.

Policy: The City should plan for streetscape improvements within existing Commercial Corridors and Squares that enhance pedestrian safety, access and amenities.

Action: Implement an annual review of streetscape improvement priorities

Action: Explore development standards for existing commercial districts that encourage infrastructure improvements such as undergrounding of utility lines, widening of sidewalks, etc.

Action: Investigate opportunities to build municipal or private garage parking structures

Transformative Development

Goal: Transform key opportunity areas, such as Assembly Square, Inner Belt, Brickbottom, Boynton Yards, and the southeastern portion of Union Square into dynamic, mixed-use and transit-oriented districts that serve as economic engines and compliment the neighborhoods of Somerville.

Policy: The City should initiate the creation of Area Plans for transformative districts that speak to the character of these districts, include a clear vision for the desired scale and type of redevelopment, and that balance landowner flexibility with public process protections.

Action: Complete Area Plans that are currently underway for Inner Belt and Boynton Yards

Action: Area Plans should be flexible enough to respond to changing economic and development patterns.

Policy: Development in transformative districts should have a positive net fiscal impact to the City.

Action: Develop metrics by which development proposals in each transformative district are to be judged.

Action: Require that land use permit applications include projected fiscal impacts of the proposed development to the City.

Policy: The City should promote site assemblage and redevelopment.
Action: Identify gateway and early win sites where redevelopment would have the most impact.
Action: Work with property owners and developers to prepare assemblage and redevelopment plans that support the district's Area Plan.
Action: Identify sites where parcels are too small, too isolated or otherwise risky for transformative development and consider City-led site assemblage activities.

Policy: The City should support Public and Non-Profit Sector Catalytic Projects that advance Area Plans.
Action: Identify opportunities for projects that serve a regional market such as performing arts venues, museums, health care and sports facilities

Commercial Reuse & Infill

Goal: Facilitate thoughtfully designed, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development and reuse opportunities in Commercial Corridors, Squares and around transit stations that are sensitive to neighborhood context, and serve existing and future residents and businesses.

Policy: Zoning should support commercial development and redevelopment in Somerville's Commercial Corridors, Squares and Growth Districts.
Action: Rewrite zoning to increase FAR and Height limits in Commercial Corridors and Squares.

Policy: Zoning requirements for off-street parking should be relaxed to promote commercial re-use and infill.
Action: Rewrite zoning to reduce parking requirements in Commercial Corridors, Squares and Growth Districts.
Action: Create a Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Parking program.

Policy: Infill development should be encouraged around transit stations and existing commercial districts.
Action: Develop Area Plans to encourage increased density around existing and new transit stations.
Action: Update zoning to eliminate barriers to commercial re-use and infill development.

Policy: The interface of commercial and residential uses should be defined.
Action: Update zoning to utilize graduated height and density limits that scale downward closer to residential interfaces.

PARKING LOT:

Policy: Reuse and infill efforts should seek to preserve existing businesses.
Action:

Comprehensive Plan Policies & Actions - Steering Committee

Update 10.13.10 DRAFT

Neighborhoods Sub-Committee

Neighborhood Quality of Life

Goal: Foster vital, healthy, inclusive, and distinctive urban neighborhoods that are the best possible places to live, work, do business, learn, serve, and play.

Policy: TBD

Civic Engagement

Goal: Engage community members in civic life and decision-making, seeking diverse representation and participation.

Policy: Somerville should have no barriers to participation in civic activities and should increase diversity in civic activities to reflect the diversity of the City population.

Action: Encourage volunteer neighborhood-level participation that reflects the geographic parts of the city and provides forums for discussion of local issues and neighborhood impacts.

Action: Encourage use of translators at meetings when appropriate.

Action: Provide opportunities for input through multiple means.

Action: Ensure that meetings are held in accessible buildings.

Action: Explore and implement more collaborative processes for engaging neighborhoods in review of development projects and city priorities.

Policy: City information should be disseminated in a format that is easy to access and provides a convenient feedback process, by having information is available on-line and through more traditional means within an impacted neighborhood.

Action: Update and improve the City's website to reflect Somerville as a community and ensure that it provides relevant information about city events, development projects, public works, policies and opportunities, with providing a more integrated and interactive on-line experience.

Action: Provide information on neighborhood and citizen organization events as well as city meetings on the city calendar.

Action: Create an extensive Somerville welcome package with information about city government, including contact information for Aldermen.

Action: Ensure that each neighborhood has a quality meeting space for neighborhood gatherings.

Policy: The City's should continue to improve its response to neighborhood issues that impact quality of life.

Action: The City should publicize the 311 service to a greater degree.

Action: The city should establish a program similar to Boston's see/click/fix program.

Policy: Somerville will continue to celebrate the many cultural activities of the city.

Action: Manage a calendar of cultural events on the city website

Action: Provide coordination for events planning and permitting.

Neighborhood Centers

Goal: Strengthen and support neighborhood commercial centers that integrate residential uses, offer lively destinations and contribute to Somerville's unique identity.

Policy: Somerville will support the improvement of transit-centered neighborhood squares

Action: Undertake station area planning activities around proposed green line stations to identify future growth and adequate zoning to implement that growth

Action: Support development that meets new vision and zoning in Union Square and the Broadway corridor

Action: In designated areas, such as near T stops, review regulations and processes to ensure that appropriate business are easily permitted.

Action: Review parking standards to ensure that pedestrian oriented businesses are not discouraged by parking requirements

Action: Encourage construction of mixed-use buildings with upper story office or residential uses..

Neighborhood Business

Goal: Protect and promote a diverse and interesting mix of small-scale businesses integrated into the neighborhood fabric.

Policy: Policies, regulations and fees that impact those who are starting and operating a small neighborhood business in Somerville should be fair, clear, and designed to encourage entrepreneurship.

Action: Upgrade the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to allow small retail in locations where retail buildings are currently located in residential zones.

Action: Simplify zoning review process for changing between small retail uses that meet neighborhood needs.

Action: Investigate implementing a streamlined citywide design review for business signs.

Action: Encourage retail that provides fresh food, social connections, funky original independent retailers, small micro-enterprises, and/or unique products.

Action: Provide opportunities for representation by small sole proprietors in civic activities and meetings.

Neighborhood Character

Goal: 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.

Policy: The City should protect and preserve the character of neighborhoods of single-family, two-family and three-family homes on tree-lined streets.

Action: Ensure that changes in neighborhoods continue to preserve trees, front yards, useable porches, contextual materials, and green space.

Action: Develop policies to limit impacts of utility equipment on private lots including air conditioner units and satellite dishes in visible front yards.

Action: Enforce regulations against parking in front yards.

Action: Develop and enforce minimum maintenance standards for storage of trash and upkeep of yards.

Action: Develop a more comprehensive policy for curbcuts to minimize the impacts of new driveways on neighborhood character and on-street parking.

Policy: The City should ensure that neighborhood homes can adapt and change to meet the needs of residents while respecting the needs of the neighborhood.

Action: Establish a more efficient process for residential design review to address improvements to homes that currently require special permits, including windows, small additions and dormers that will reduce review time but continue to ensure that neighbors are protected from impacts of these improvements.

Action: Establish standards with illustrations and clear language that explains the impacts and review process for dormers, new windows and small additions.

Action: Establish guidelines and suggestions with illustrations and clear language for residents seeking to change fences, add landscaping, install replacement windows and change siding materials.

Policy: The City should continue to protect and preserve its architectural history.

Action: Continue to pursue historic district designation for specific properties worthy of extensive protection from impacts.

Action: Support state and federal historic preservation tax credit programs, and encourage the establishment of more tax credit options for small historic properties, while designating appropriate structures to the National Register to make them eligible for federal credits

Action: Ensure that designated properties have access to grants, loans, and opportunities through zoning that will allow for contextual rehabilitation and upgrades without extensive financial impact to owners.

Action: Establish Neighborhood Preservation Districts where appropriate, to limit the demolition of contextual residential properties without requiring full compliance with the standards of a local historic district.

Action: Support revision to building codes that provide flexibility for renovation of historic structures and encourage economically viable re-use options.

Neighborhood Infill

Goal: Facilitate transit-oriented, neighborhood infill development when it enhances the lively, human-scaled and walkable character of Somerville blocks and neighborhoods.

Policy: Zoning regulations in Somerville should provide clear and consistent direction including design guidelines and/or standards for contextual infill development.

Action: Develop a comprehensive update of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance regulations that specify the scale, shape, setback, street presence, neighborhood character, landscaping, and parking for infill development that is contextual within its neighborhood while encouraging new and innovative green technologies, including green roofs and pervious pavements.

Action: Encourage redevelopment of surface parking lots that are located in and around neighborhood squares.

Action: Review parking regulations to ensure that infill parking requirements do not require excessive parking spaces and paved areas at the expense of on-site landscaping.

Action: Require infill development to provide contextual setbacks, landscaping and parking.

Action: Require infill development to provide adequate sidewalks, trees, landscaping, lighting, and safety features.

Action: Require that the design of private infill development that is visible from and interacting with public ways provide engaging design, including elements such as bays, porches, front landscaping and inviting front doors.

Policy: Infill development should provide benefit to the city's housing stock, income and ethnic diversity, and opportunity.

Action: Engage in station area planning efforts to review specific plans for development around neighborhood Green Line stations, prioritizing infill development within close proximity to transit.

Action: Ensure that residential infill development meets or exceeds affordable housing requirements.

Action: Ensure and provide incentives for residential infill development to provide a mix of unit sizes and types, including multiple-bedroom units with adequate size for families.

Policy: Infill development should provide financial benefits to the city.

Action: Encourage mixed-use infill development on primary streets and near transit.

Action: Establish a scalable impact fee program to establish a system for infill development to address neighborhood impacts, if allowed by state law.

Action: Establish a program to require financial support for local parks and open spaces from new projects that do not provide on-site recreational opportunities.

Environment

Goal: Improve our shared neighborhood environmental quality.

Policy: The City should provide information and support to help residents make sound environmental choices.

Action: Provide resources – written and on-line – to help residents understand the impacts of environmental choices.

Action: Consolidate access to resources, including energy grants, in one place where residents can understand eligibility.

Action: Develop guides to landscaping that would be appropriate for Somerville's climate and development character.

Action: Provide more access for residents to buy rain barrels and composting bins.

Policy: The City should ensure that residents are aware of the environmental impacts of activities on individual lots.

Action: Increase public awareness of impacts of waste management and recycling.

Action: Provide information to residents on impacts of paving surfaces and reduction of tree cover.

Policy: The City should protect neighbors from the environmental impacts of decisions made by individual property owners.

Action: Pursue a program to reduce impervious pavement, including but not limited to developing a maximum impervious lot coverage requirement and incentives for more plantings.

Action: Develop a permitting process for paving of private lots to ensure that development is consistent with zoning and stormwater policies.

Action: Review and implement setback regulations for impervious driveways, requiring a pervious buffer to eliminate runoff into neighboring lots.

Action: Investigate shifting of a portion of the sewer fee towards a stormwater fee that reflects off-site runoff from lots.

Safety & Accessibility

Goal: Ensure that Somerville's streets and public spaces are safe and accessible.

Policy: The City should ensure that Somerville's neighborhood amenities are well maintained and in useable condition.

Action: Establish a formal program to ensure that street lights are in good repair.

Action: Ensure that a system of rapid response addresses emergency service amenities within the City.

Action: other?

Policy: The City should ensure that code enforcement issues that impact quality of life are addressed.

Action: Establish a priority system for upgrading curb ramps to meet accessibility standards.

Action: Enforce leash/dog laws within the City.

Action: Enforce trash storage regulations and ensure that adequate rodent control programs remain in effect to limit the impacts of rodents on neighborhood quality of life.

Policy: The City should continue to commit to a collaborative community-based emergency service program that works with neighborhood leadership.

Action: Support the continued services offered by having a 24-hour emergency medical service building within the City of Somerville.

Action: Encourage development and sustainment of good neighbor organizations, block organizations and/or neighborhood watch programs.

Action: other?

PARKING LOT ITEMS

Chain Stores vs. Neighborhood character

Private lot tree policy

Action: Enforce ordinance banning indoor furniture outside at private residences.

Action: Address role of Tufts University as it impacts neighborhoods.

Resources Sub-Committee - Policies & Actions

Creative Community

Goal: Increase the recognition of Somerville as a center of arts and creativity.

Creative Community Big Idea: creative economy, high profile arts city/art networks, public benefit

Policy: The City should foster a creative economy.

Action: Maintain the steady growth of creative businesses in the City of Somerville by marketing Somerville as a compact, transit-oriented community that welcomes and takes pride in a strong arts presence and professional network.

Action: Analyze trends in existing and emerging creative business sectors with respect to City transportation infrastructure improvement plans, to encourage new clusters of creative activity/economy beyond Davis and Union Squares.

Policy: The City and its community arts partners should sustain and expand Somerville's prominence in the arts.

Action: Promote policies that invite and retain Somerville artists and spur cultural economic development.

Action: Partner with the Somerville Arts Council to develop an online arts directory and creative marketplace, and promote collaboration between arts-based Somerville organizations.

Action: Cultivate traditional media relationships while identifying new media technologies to aggressively market arts focused events and opportunities.

Policy: The City and its community arts partners should promote a culturally relevant creative community.

Action: Ensure arts diversity by promoting culturally-specific arts events, publishing promotional materials in multiple languages, and utilizing community organization distribution networks.

Action: Encourage cross-cultural and cross-generational creative programs and art spaces that foster mentoring relationships and entrepreneurial networking.

Creative Spaces

Goal: *Ensure that Somerville has a mix of spaces for creative production, performance and exhibition and that arts are incorporated into the built environment.*

Creative Spaces Big Idea: art zones and live/work space, performance/exhibit space, public art

Policy: The City should use zoning and public policy to foster space for a creative economy, to promote live/work spaces, and to retain affordable work spaces.

Action: Support existing arts district zoning and consider additional arts districts that retain inexpensive work and office space.

Action: Make zoning conducive to flexible use of space for live/work and design/production.

Action: Review parking regulations to consider bicycles and alternate modes of transportation.

Action: Tax according to use. Have assessment reflect use restrictions.

Action: Explore incentives for private owners to convert/sell/lease property to artists and self-employed creative businesses.

Action: Consider more live/work space in new affordable housing projects.

Policy: The City should integrate arts awareness into all major development and planning efforts.

Action: Consider instituting a "percent-for-arts" City ordinance for construction of public works that creates a pooled municipal public arts fund.

Action: Explore mitigation funding to create public art across the city.

Action: Ensure that a multi-purpose performance space is developed at Assembly Square.
Action: Encourage developers to build non-profit performance/exhibit spaces into their projects.
Action: Promote outdoor public performance spaces.
Action: Plan for low-cost indoor and outdoor spaces for artists to have opportunities to sell/display their products.

Policy: The City should incorporate arts and creativity into public infrastructure; recognize links between arts and environmental awareness.

Action: Explore opportunities for arts-based organizations and creative businesses to utilize the public landscape for art installations and contribute to maintenance of these open spaces.

Action: Certify the Green Line as a “green destination”. (Have it recognized by a green organization and promote environmental education along the stops.)

Action: Advocate for community-based public art in the new Green Line extension transit stations.

Action: Seek creative solutions to improve pedestrian connections with existing elevated highways, underpasses, and other inhospitable barriers.

Cultural Institutions

Goal: Help local arts and cultural institutions, such as theatres, museums and libraries succeed, network and grow.

Cultural Institutions Big Idea: assistance, networking/synergy, identification/promotion

Policy: The City and its community arts partners should strengthen existing arts, performance and cultural institutions.

Action: Define and assess existing Somerville cultural institutions for physical, financial and programmatic health.

Action: Assist the Somerville Public Library in publicizing capital campaigns for major upgrade to the Central Library and the stability and continuation of the East and West branch libraries.

Action: Cultivate a population of City individual and business patrons to support the Somerville Museum and other privately funded cultural and performance venues.

Action: Consider designing a sliding tax scale to appropriately tax for-profit cultural venues that provide public benefit.

Action: Increase the recognition and use of public performance and exhibition venues, such as school auditoriums, parks, and other City-owned facilities.

Action: Review parking regulations for cultural institutions without on-site parking.

Policy: The City should assist improving coordination between cultural institutions.

Action: Encourage Somerville Historical Society and Somerville Public Library to join efforts in curating and improving public availability of historical resources.

Action: Draw on the expertise and networks of the successful existing Somerville Garden Tour and Somerville Open Studios to promote other cultural institutions, programming and events.

Action: Provide online resources for nonprofit organizations to share information on grant opportunities, “wish lists” and common resources.

Policy: The City should study the creation of one or more Cultural Districts, under Cultural District Statutory Regulations adopted at the state level in 2010.

Action: Work with the Somerville Arts Council, local cultural and business groups, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council to identify and map potential cultural districts, study their ability to benefit the City, and put forward qualifying districts for official adoption.

Action: If districts are created, integrate them into City policy and planning, including programs to promote the city and its businesses, to target transportation and parking policy, and to increase utilization of cultural assets.

Education

Goal: Strengthen existing education programs, and university and professional partnerships within Somerville schools.

Education Big Idea: community partnerships, life-long learning, public schools

Policy: The City, the Somerville Public Schools, and their community educational partners, should encourage innovative programs, mentoring and scholarships to promote success for diverse populations.

Action: Increase awareness of community partnerships and programs available through Tufts University and other Greater Boston higher educational institutions.

Action: Build a partnership between the Somerville High School vocational program and higher education institutions that focuses on careers and fields that are in high growth and demand at the present time.

Action: Establish a structured partnership between local higher education institutions, the City of Somerville, and local employers that utilizes the research skills and facilities of university faculty and graduate students to assist with projects that benefit the City's continued development and promote the entrepreneurial economy.

Action: Define a community service policy based on needs/opportunities set by the Somerville Public Schools, to guide local non-profit institutions.

Policy: The City, in partnership with the Somerville Public Schools and other local educational institutions, should offer life-long public learning opportunities so all community members may realize their fullest potential at home, in the workplace, and in the community.

Action: Build on strong early education programs to ensure that our pre-school population is prepared for elementary school, and educate parents and guardians on the benefits of a Somerville education and the programs and choices available to their children.

Action: Ensure that outreach is multilingual and inclusive through partnerships with community organizations in Environmental Justice neighborhoods.

Action: Create and promote existing experiential learning opportunities in the schools and public open spaces.

Action: Increase awareness of existing programs open to Somerville residents, such as SCALE (adult literacy).

Action: Create living classrooms using parks as environmental teaching grounds

Policy: Somerville's public schools should aim to achieve success for all Somerville students, paying particular attention to non-native English speakers.

Action: Work towards availability of affordable early childhood programs for all Somerville children.

Action: Partner with Somerville High School, the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, and the Somerville Chamber of Commerce to identify regional employment trends through 2050. Use this data to plan best practices for a flexible, modern vocational education curriculum that responds to industry demands and aims to prepare graduates with the career skills for long-term local employment.

Action: Support the existing Youth Council and cultivate youth representation in City policy and program planning.

Action: Continue to strengthen college prep programs at Somerville High School and formalize the existing partnership with Tufts University.

Action: Create a green jobs career track at Somerville High School.

Action: Consider open space, along with other development options, in the event of a Somerville Public School closure.

Waterfront

Goal: Approach our waterfronts as a regional ecological resource, balancing community access and ecological health.

Waterfront Big Idea: public access, ecological health, regional network

Policy: The City, in partnership with DCR, should improve the water quality and expand the recreational use of the Mystic River and the Alewife Brook corridors.

Action: Partner with Groundwork Somerville, the Mystic River Watershed Association and other community organizations working on water quality improvements, such as invasive plant control.

Action: Support efforts to monitor and record wildlife and plant populations along the riverfront, and use this data in planning future waterfront development.

Action: Consider the creation of a living wall to address air quality issues and block Route 93 from the Mystic view.

Action: Create infrastructure to support public water-based recreational opportunities and programs.

Action: Link existing neighborhoods, open space and recreational areas to the waterfront via public transit and safe pedestrian and bicyclist access.

Policy: The City, in partnership with the State, other waterfront municipalities and local organizations, should develop a regional/long range master plan for the connection of the Charles River to the Alewife Brook to the Mystic River to Boston Harbor, providing for ecological health, community access, and recreation.

Action: Work with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to partner with other waterfront municipalities on improved signage and pedestrian and public transport access to riverfronts.

Action: Collaborate with upstream and downstream communities, the State and local organizations to make the Mystic River and Alewife Brook boatable, swimmable, and fishable by 2025.

Action: Promote outdoor activities/festivals/events to use recreational waterfront and increase public awareness and stewardship of this regional common resource.

Public Spaces

Goal: Design and maintain a healthy and attractive public realm that fosters community connection.

Policy: The City should plan public realm renovations with attention to energy efficiency, environmental design, visual clarity and ease of maintenance.

Action: Gradually increase the number of streets that bury electric utilities.

Action: Consider City Ordinances to keep satellite dishes out of public view, enforce wire takedown when a communications service is discontinued, and limit the size and quantity of infrastructure placed on public poles by private companies.

Action: All street renovation projects will have minimum 4'x6' tree pits and/or create continuous tree trenches, to encourage tree health and longevity. Tree selection shall be based on recommendations from the City's 2009 Urban Forest Management Plan.

Action: Mandate soil quality requirements for all park and street projects.

Action: Where Chapter 90 funds are used on a street renovation, ensure that all ramps meet ADA code.

Action: Design public school grounds to ensure quality recreational space, native wildlife habitat/outdoor classrooms, plant biodiversity, reduced stormwater runoff, and energy efficiency.

Policy: The City should provide public growing spaces for enhancement of urban agriculture.

Action: Create safe soil program.

Action: Create public greenhouses for year-round growing opportunities and/or partner with groups doing such work.

Parks and Recreation

Goal: Create and program a network of vibrant public open spaces and shared use paths throughout the city that are multi-purpose, promote healthy living, and reflect changing recreational interests and cultural opportunities.

Parks & Recreation Big Idea: resident volunteers, sustainability, Community Path

Policy: The City should partner with local neighborhood organizations on the design, programming, and increased volunteer participation in public parks and open spaces.

Action: Partner with neighborhood community organizations, the Somerville Police Department, local businesses and interested residents to establish “Friends of _____ Park” groups. Friends groups would help with maintenance, neighborhood security, and parks programming.

Action: Notify all self-identified interested community groups of public meetings for park and recreation design and renovation.

Action: Analyze existing parks & recreation spaces for cultural relevancy, local population age trends, and site-specific ecological, social and recreational opportunities.

Action: Increase multilingual announcements and publicity of public events in parks and recreational areas.

Policy: The City should design new and renovated public open spaces using green technologies and methods that increase permeability, reduce energy costs and conserve public resources.

Action: Assess open spaces to identify opportunities to improve sustainability.

Action: Favor plant species on public projects that are perennial and drought-tolerant.

Policy: The City should promote the Community Path and its regional connections.

Action: Prioritize land acquisitions along the Community Path and its future extension.

Action: Increase North-South connections to the Community Path through wider sidewalks, new parks, and bumpouts.

Emergency Services & Preparedness

Goal: Ensure that the Somerville municipal government and residential and business communities are well prepared and equipped to address emergency situations.

Emergency Services Big Idea: plans, training, resources

Policy: Somerville public safety officials should ensure emergency systems operate regionally.

Action: Coordinate locally and regionally to implement plans to effectively respond to all hazards, disasters and threats.

Action: Work with regional partners to implement and test systems.

Action: Train emergency personnel to protect the public.

Policy: The City should expand informational resources to all residents.

Action: Provide information to community members and assistance to prepare and respond to emergencies.

Action: Develop neighborhood partnerships to promote a safe and healthy community.

Action: Utilize existing neighborhood and cultural organizations' communication networks and outreach methods to provide recommended actions in an emergency situation.

DRAFT

Comprehensive Plan Policies & Actions - Steering Committee

10.12.10

BLUE: OTHER NOTES FROM OUR SUBCOMMITTEE, MAY NOT BE REFLECTED IN ANY POLICY OR ACTION YET

GREEN: CONCERNS – I.E. DO WE WANT TO INCLUDE THIS IN THIS DOCUMENT?

YELLOW: NEW IDEAS FROM THE SUSTAINABILITY DOCUMENT THAT WERE ADDED

Transportation & Infrastructure Sub-Committee

Mass Transit

Goal: Create a mass transit network accessible to all parts of the city and to all users, with innovative physical and informational improvements that allow for easy use and seamless intermodal connections.

Policy: All development plans should keep regional transit project options plausible, in order to connect with the regional transit network.

Action: Protect the right of way needed for the Urban Ring circular transit project through zoning that requires new development be compatible with the alignment memorialized in the 2008 DEIR or reasonable alternatives.

Action: Preserve the right of way between the Union Square Green Line Station and a future extension to Porter Square along the Fitchburg Commuter Rail – or a similar mass transit use - through station design and zoning which do not allow build-out onto the needed area for the expansion.

Action: Preserve the right of way between the College Avenue Green Line Station and the future extension to Route 16/Mystic Valley Parkway and the West Medford commuter rail station along the Lowell Commuter Rail through station design and a zoning which do not allow build-out onto the needed area for the expansion.

Action: Advocate and plan for viable options for connections to MBTA Commuter Rail service as the Green Line Extension project progresses.

Action: Advocate and plan for potential new stations at the Twin City Plaza and Inner Belt areas of Somerville.

Policy: Station designs for the Green Line Extension should reconnect the city by prioritizing multi-modal connections and creating superb bus, bike and pedestrian access points.

Action: Construct stations with layouts that provide safe and easy bus transfer points, including pull-ins wherever possible.

Action: Provide sufficient bike parking at each station, taking into account both quantity and quality.

Action: Provide 360 degrees of access at each station, through safe, bright and accessible connections.

Action: Take advantage of multi-modal connection potential by promoting transit oriented development at identified opportunity areas near new Green Line stations.

Policy: The City shall advocate for improved frequency, expanded hours, and enhanced user amenities of the MBTA bus and rail networks.

Action: Evaluate connections to and possible redundancies with the Green Line Extension and major development sites; advocate for modifications to the network as needed including north-south connections.

Action: Increase wayfinding, amenities, and signage elements near and at bus stops, giving people real-time data on bus arrivals while improving the comfort, access, safety and efficiency of the system.

Action: Promote the best available technologies to improve bus efficiencies, including bus priority signalization to ensure bus service meets the MBTA bus reliability standards.

Action: Provide for bus pull-ins and/or bus lanes where appropriate on city streets.

Action: Increase parking enforcement at bus stops; paint bus boxes on streets to call-out the area of no parking.

Action: Lobby for more frequent service (greater than 15 minutes) on the Green Line.

Action: Lobby for expanded commuter rail service and interchanges with the Green Line Extension.

Action: Lobby for cleaner buses, light rail (electric vehicles), and commuter rail.

Other notes:

- wayfinding signage. Qs: Language, pictures vs. words, static vs. dynamic, Somerville Arts Council, maps
- electronic systems, e.g. mobile devices, real time, advertising to support? MBTA and private?
- Connectivity of transit to future land use development opportunities, to residential, & parking

Alternative Transportation - Transportation & Lifestyle

Goal: Increase active and alternative transportation options, reduce congestion and promote workplace-based policies and incentives for mode choice, work hours, and employment location.

Policy: The City and businesses should implement transportation programs that reduce auto use.

Action: Support walk-ride day by having the City sponsor/promote the event and encouraging local elected officials to participate.

Action: Encourage the establishment of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) for business areas underserved by transit and in new development areas.

Action: Explore the potential to expand the Tufts transportation system for public use.

Action: Study and devise plans to have the City lead the way forward on parking and commuting policies at municipal offices and schools.

Action: Promote alternative transportation “commuter challenges” for private entities as well as participate as a municipality.

Action: Assist in elder transportation options.

Action: Explore policies and regulations that support ride share programs, as both commercial enterprises and other successful models of ride share programs.

Policy: The city should support vehicle sharing programs.

Action: Support regional efforts to bring a bike share program to the Boston area; implement the project in Somerville as soon as possible.

Action: Support car sharing programs by through zoning regulations which facilitate their presence in the city.

Other notes:

- Employer involvement & incentives. e.g. Charlie cards & parking
- Target delivery services to reduce need for driving
- Create a culture that supports diverse mode choice

Bikes & Pedestrians

Goal: Expand bike and pedestrian culture by transforming existing infrastructure to add accommodations for all bicyclists and pedestrians, resulting in safe, accessible and well-connected networks.

Policy: The City shall prioritize pedestrians in every transportation project.

Action: Evaluate the potential to create a pedestrian committee.

Action: Ensure all streets in the city have sidewalks that are well-maintained, safe, and accessible.

Action: Evaluate the most dangerous pedestrian areas and prioritize improvements to these areas.

Policy: The City shall preserve right of ways for **auto-free**, multi-use paths.

Action: Ensure a multi-use path can be built along the Lowell commuter rail line from the terminus of the Green Line Extension to the West Medford commuter rail stop, providing some level of connection to the commuter rail system from the Green Line.

Action: Preserve and plan for a multi-use path to be built along the Fitchburg commuter rail line from the terminus of the Green Line Extension to the Porter Square T and commuter rail stop, providing some level of connection to the Red Line and commuter rail system from the Green Line.

Action: Preserve and plan for a multi-use trail from Assembly Square to the Inner Belt along the Orange Line right of way, connecting with the Community Path.

Action: Ensure construction of the Community Path Extension from Lowell Street to the Inner Belt area by 2014.

Action: Ensure design and construction of a multi-use bridge from Inner Belt to North Point.

Action: Complete the Alewife Brook and Mystic River network of paths, in coordination with DCR's Master Plan by: completing a boardwalk under Route 28; building a public path over or parallel to the Amelia Earhart Dam to connect Assembly Square with Everett/Boston; and advocating to extend the path that currently ends at Draw 7 Park to Everett and Charlestown.

Policy: The City and local businesses shall increase bike parking.

Action: Include bike racks approximately every ___ feet on all major road reconstruction projects.

Action: Retrofit existing roads and sidewalks to include bike racks; study existing bike rack locations and focus on areas with least supply and greatest demand.

Action: Evaluate and revise zoning bike ordinance relative to bike parking; ensure zoning requirement is not tied to the number of car parking spaces required.

Action: Establish and promote a bike rack request program on the City website.

Policy: The City shall improve on-street bike infrastructure, prioritizing bike lanes over sharrows.

Action: Regularly review parking demand to identify excess space and allow for bike accommodations.

Action: Increase safety of bikers via signage and public awareness campaigns.

Action: Evaluate latest advances in bike infrastructure (such as contra-flow bike lanes and cycleways) to determine applicability to Somerville streets.

Action: Continue to support the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee, through meetings with relevant city departments, annual report, publicity campaigns

Other notes:

- Bike plan for city?
- All parks in the city should be easily reached by foot & bicycle

Roads/Transportation Network

Goal: Use technology and infrastructure improvements to balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, private vehicles, and mass transit, reduce congestion and pollution, decrease road space dedicated to private

automobiles, and unlock economic development potential, while having a fiscally sound road maintenance program.

Policy: The City should efficiently manage traffic flow, **excess pollution** and congestion by using the best available technologies.

Action: Provide ability for a 'green wave' (allowing for consistent vehicular movement and through-put at desired speed) while providing convenient pedestrian crossings.

Action: Evaluate existing traffic, and focus on area of reduction based on minor or incremental improvements to stop lights, pedestrian crosswalks, signage, and enforcement.

Action: **Planning for the infrastructure to accommodate the latest car technologies, such as plug-in electric hybrid vehicles.**

Action: **Expand the enforcement of the anti-idling laws throughout Somerville; have the City lead by example.**

Policy: The City shall increase the public safety of all users of its roadways.

Action: Create and promote an educational safety campaign for drivers (auto, truck and bus), bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Action: Advocate for the passage of a 25 mph speed limit as the *de facto* speed limit on all city streets, lowering it from its current 30 mph.

Action: Promote traffic calming measures to help slow vehicular traffic as roads are being reconstructed.

Action: Ensure snow is plowed adequately on all streets and multi-use paths.

Action: Contain road salt used for de-icing in an environmentally secure way; ensure sensitive environmental areas are not being treated with road salt or other de-icing materials.

Action: Ensure vehicle enforcement of traffic violations are upheld in order to promote safety on the streets.

Action: Utilize speed cameras and cameras at intersections to enforce traffic and speed violations.

Other notes:

- **Improve connectivity, e.g. Boynton Yards, Brickbottom**
- **Reduce barriers of I-93, McGrath, Rt. 16**
- **Include Somerville in any regional computerized traffic signals**

Parking

Goal: Manage parking supply and demand in a flexible, rational and innovative manner, to balance transportation, economic development and residential goals.

Policy: The City shall preserve or create adequate parking to accommodate the needs of the city while efficiently using limited public roadways and spaces to balance all modes of transportation.

Action: Prioritize handicap parking areas.

Action: Provide high-density parking structures and eliminate surface parking wherever appropriate and possible.

Action: Evaluate and inventory parking and centralize data to work toward greater understanding of parking supply in Somerville.

Action: Experiment with innovative uses for parking spaces, such as bike parking, sidewalk expansions, or green spaces.

Action: Prioritize parking to benefit the most users with the smallest amount of space, such as for shared vehicle programs, carpooling spaces, on street bike parking and bike share program.

Action: Use zoning as a tool to reach desired parking goals; particularly near new transit stations, ensure zoning enhances public transportation use and minimizes auto use.

Action: Encourage the use of car sharing vehicles, hybrid vehicles, or plug-in electric vehicles by prioritizing parking spaces for these vehicles.

Policy: The City shall pursue the best available technologies when redoing parking in commercial zones.

Action: Ensure parking kiosk signs can safely double as bike parking racks so as to not lessen bike parking as parking meter technologies change.

Action: Regularly review best practices of parking policies, pricing structure, and new technologies.

Policy: The City shall continue to re-evaluate parking policy to reflect the needs of residents, visitors and businesses.

Action: Amend the extended vacation permit into the City's parking permit options.

Action: Study demand-pricing measures, including pricing structure of citywide parking permits.

Action: Revise the parking policy that requires vehicles be moved every 48-hours, thus avoiding unnecessary pollution and energy consumption from having to unnecessarily move a vehicle.

Other notes:

- Policies should be flexible
- Examine enforcement: more or less? Need clear signage
- Parking reductions should not impede economic development
- Customer service, e.g. parking cards & kiosks. Should be "easy"

Highways, Bridges, Rail Right-of-Ways

Goal: Connect the city: retrofit, redesign, and build, as necessary, roads, bridges, paths and rights-of-way to improve transportation networks and link neighborhoods and commercial centers within Somerville and beyond.

Policy: *The City should improve transportation infrastructure in highest priority development areas.*

Action: Design and construct an alternative to the 'tubes' in the Inner Belt which connect the area with Washington Street, allowing for greater vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access into the district.

Action: Increase access to the Brickbottom area by connecting through the rail lines to the Inner Belt, and connecting through Route 28 to the west.

Action: Plan and develop a transportation network in the Boynton Yards area that allows for greater connectivity with surrounding districts and within Boynton Yards.

Policy: The City should initiate infrastructure projects which mitigate the impact of highway infrastructure in the City – in particular to provide greater access and connectivity to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Action: Convert Route 28 into a tree-lined urban boulevard without fences or other barriers, crossable by pedestrians at every intersection, with accommodations provided for bicyclists.

Action: Improve existing crossings under I-93 (Kensington Underpass, Lombardi Street, Route 28, Wheatland Street) to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and enhance the attractiveness of the area.

Action: Identify a long-term strategy for the design of the I-93/Route 28 interchange, and ensure any approved development does not block the vision.

Action: Create an additional access point at I-93, to better connect East Somerville with Assembly Square.

Action: Install sidewalks along Mystic Avenue near the Route 28/I-93 intersection; ensure crosswalks reflect how pedestrians use the area.

Action: Ensure bicyclists have a safe and clearly marked way through the Route 28/I-93 intersection.

Action: Urge the City of Boston and MassDOT to improve the conditions between Broadway in East Somerville and Sullivan Square, providing adequate lighting and safety standards for the Somerville residents using the T Station at Sullivan Square.

Action: Explore the possibility of a connection from the T Station at Sullivan Square to the residential neighborhood in East Somerville, near Perkins Street.

Action: Investigate taking control of the Somerville portions of Routes 28 and 16, and Mystic Avenue.

Action: Urge MassDOT and USDOT to fully mitigate the impact of I-93, including air and noise pollution.

Policy: The City should unlock its current rail-bound land areas by creating or improving connections through, under or over existing barriers.

Action: Connect Inner Belt Road to North Point with a bridge designed to accommodate vehicles, the Urban Ring, and the Community Path.

Action: Connect the Inner Belt to Brickbottom by road in at least one place south of Washington Street and north of the Fitchburg Commuter Rail right of way.

Action: Ensure that pedestrian connections under Fitchburg Rail are safe and well maintained.

Policy: The City should advocate for regular bridge safety inspections to the state and federal governments.

Action: Require an annual (?) update on the condition of bridges in Somerville.

Other notes:

- make streets inviting
- Mass Highway design manual – adopt for local roads, have more control over private developers?

Water

Goal: Provide a safe, high quality, potable water system that is well maintained and financially solvent and accommodates the future growth needs of the city.

Policy: The City should maintain an updated, strategic, and pragmatic water master plan.

Action: Provide incentives to customers to use water judiciously. *Action:* Meter and monitor all public buildings.

Action: Advocate to MWRA to conduct a leak detection program in the city.

Action: Examine and document all pipes in the city for the presence of lead.

Other notes:

- conservation, encourage judicial use

Sewer / Stormwater

Goal: Improve stormwater and wastewater management systems to increasingly separate storm water and sewerage and provide for desired levels of future growth.

Policy: The City should provide a stormwater and sewer system that is able to accommodate extreme events without flooding or resorting to combined sewer overflows (CSOs).

Action: Separate sewer and stormwater drains by working with MWRA and EPA to develop strategies and secure funding.

Action: Design stormwater systems for the ___ year flood.

Policy: The City should create incentives or regulations to limit stormwater runoff from entering the wastewater system.

Action: Ensure that residents need permits to pave over lawn.

Action: Ensure that any new City projects include provisions for water and drainage runoff.

Action: Make rain barrels available at more frequent intervals and advertise broadly.

Action: Design street reconstruction and renovation projects to capture and release stormwater runoff slowly.

Action: Design and landscape medians, where possible, to increase pervious surface and capture runoff (at McGrath and Mystic Avenue in particular).

Action: Incorporate active landscaping (i.e. stormwater catchment areas) into designs for the Green Line Stations and other major projects.

Policy: The City should investigate the use of grey-water systems and encourage them in new developments.

Action: Consider designing and implementing systems to harvest rainwater and collect stormwater for irrigation use in new parks and other public projects.

Action: Conduct information sessions for residents and business owners on grey-water best practices.

Other notes:

- Green areas
- Energy

Green Infrastructure

Goal: Maximize environmental sustainability in design and implementation of all infrastructure systems and public facilities.

Policy: The City shall meet energy reduction goals by undertaking or requiring efficiency and renewal projects.

Action: Ensure zoning enforces energy reduction goals, incentivizing energy reduction measures for businesses and residential uses.

Action: Explore installing solar panels on street light poles as the technology makes it affordable.

Action: Continue to use LED lighting fixtures on new street fixtures as roadways are being reconstructed.

Policy: The City should improve the water quality of the Mystic River and the Alewife Brook.

Action: Prioritize erosion control on construction projects that can handle major storm events; ensure proper protection of the city's waterways.

Policy: The City and property owners should assist in the reduction of the urban heat island effect through the use of efficient roofing, reflection and shading choices.

Action: Establish a judicious tree planting plan for the entire city.

Action: Each street that is being redesigned should have at least one street tree per ___ length of sidewalk.

Action: Utilize light colored pavement wherever feasible on all public projects.

Action: Increase permeable surfaces (green roofs, gardens, etc) on public projects.

Action: Create an Urban Forestry Division.

Action: Increase public tree biodiversity to strengthen health of urban forest.

Action: Map priority tree planting areas through aerial analysis.

Action: Increase the amount of privately maintained greenery in the public realm.

Action: Start a private property tree adoption program to provide street tree benefits on residential land.

Policy: The City shall maintain an updated, strategic, and pragmatic sustainability plan.

Action: Implement codes and policies that reflect and promote the best available technologies for new development and redevelopment projects.

Other notes:

- No net loss on green space
- Lead by example
- Energy star ratings and policies
- Stretch code for building efficiencies

Other Utilities

Goal: Ensure the infrastructure for all utilities is sufficient in capacity and quality, of the best available technologies, has redundancy, and supports the desired level of future growth.

Policy: The City shall reserve funding to upgrade utilities in key economic development areas.

Action: Plan for the utility infrastructure that can support the density allowed under the current zoning.

Action: Create District Increment Financing programs to provide dedicated revenue streams.

Policy: Utility companies shall provide services in a way that improves the urban environment and aesthetics.

Action: Reduce the double-poles prevalent throughout Somerville.

Action: Put wires underground during major street reconstruction projects.

Policy: The City shall be prepared for desired level of business and residential development, in terms of power and connectivity capabilities.

Action: Ensure best available technologies are available to residents.

Action: Monitor and anticipate business trends and match them with potential development areas.

Action: Create an aggressive and affordable program for implementing residential energy efficiencies.

Other notes:

- City should support high-tech industry
- Residential internet
- Fiber optics

We may be the group to include something like a waste section:

Policy: The City shall reduce the per capita amount and environmental impact of solid waste produced within its boundaries.

Action: Create a curbside composting program for municipal, residential, and commercial waste customers.

Action: Reduce the amount of solid waste that is disposed of by shifting the costs of disposal based on volume-based fees.