

## **ARTICLE 8: DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Section 8.1. Content of Table of Dimensional Requirements.**

The regulations controlling lot area per dwelling unit, floor area ratio, building height, maximum ground coverage, landscaped open space and yard requirements in each district except the University District are specified in the Table of Dimensional Requirements (Section 8.5) and other provisions of this section. The regulations with respect to the University District are set forth in Section 8.7. The regulations with respect to the PUD Overlay Districts are set forth in Section 16.5.

*NOTE: §8.1 was amended by Ordinance 2000-8 on May 25, 2000.*

### **Section 8.2. Compliance with Dimensional Requirements.**

The lot or yard areas required for any new building or use shall not include any part of a lot that is required by any other building or use to comply with the yard, floor area ratio, or parking requirements of this Ordinance; nor may these areas include any property of which the ownership has been transferred subsequent to the effective date of this ordinance if such property was a portion of the area required for compliance with the lot, yard, floor area ratio, parking, or landscape requirements applicable to the lot from which such transfer was made.

### **Section 8.3. Lots in Two Districts.**

Land in a more restrictive zoning district may supply space for a use permitted in a less restricted zoning district if the use of the land in the more restrictive district satisfies space and passive use requirements that are not prohibited in the more restrictive district.

### **Section 8.4. Lots in Two or More Municipalities.**

When a lot in single ownership is situated in part in the City of Somerville and in part in an adjacent city or town, the regulations and restrictions of this Ordinance shall be applied to that portion of such lot as lies in the City of Somerville in the same manner as if the entire lot was situated therein.

### **Section 8.5. Table of Dimensional Requirements (see next page).**

*NOTE: §8.5 was amended by Ordinance 2000-8 on May 25, 2000 and amended by Ordinance 2004-04 on April 22, 2004.*

SOMERVILLE ZONING ORDINANCE (SZO)

Adopted March 23, 1990

As amended through January 26, 2006

**ARTICLE 8: DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**SECTION 8.5: Table of Dimensional Requirements**

For Dimensional Requirements in the ASMD, see Section 6.4.6.

For Dimensional Requirements in the University District, see Section 8.7.

The regulations with respect to PUD Overlay Districts are set forth in Section 16.5.

	DISTRICTS						
	RA	RB	RC	NB	CBD	BA	BB
A. Minimum lot size (s.f.)	10,000 (1)	7,500 (1)	7,500 (1)	NA	NA	NA	NA
B. Minimum lot area/dwelling unit							
1-9 units (s.f.)	2250	1500	875	875	875	875	875
10 or more units (s.f.)	2250	1500	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
C. Maximum ground coverage (%)	50	50	70	80	80	80	80
D. Landscaped area, minimum percent of lot	25	25	25	10	10	10	10
E. Floor area ratio (F.A.R.) (2)	0.75	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
F. Maximum height (3)							
stories/feet	2 1/2 35	3 40	3 40	3 40 (18) (19) (20) (21)	4 50 (20) (21)	4 50 (20) (21)	50 (20)
G. Minimum front yard (ft) (5a)(5b)(5c)(17)	15 (5)	15 (5)	15	NA	NA	NA	15
H. Minimum side yards (ft) (5b)(6)(10)(17)	(7)(8) (9)(11)	(7)(8) (9)(11)	(7)(8) (9)(11)	NA (12)	NA (12)	NA (12)	NA (12)
I. Minimum rear yards (ft) (5b)(13)(14)(15)(17)	20	20	20	NB, CBD, BA, and BB districts: 10 feet, plus 2 feet for each story above the ground floor (also see footnote 12)			
J. Minimum frontage (ft)	50 (16)	50 (16)	50 (16)	NA	NA	NA	NA

(#) = See footnotes in Section 8.6.

NA = Not Applicable

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**SECTION 8.5: TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS (cont'd)**

	DISTRICTS			
	IA -----	IB -----	IP -----	OS -----
A. Minimum lot size (s.f.)	NA	NA	10,000	NA
B. Minimum lot area/dwelling unit				
1-9 units (s.f.)	875	NA	875	NA
10 or more units (s.f.)	1000	NA	1000	NA
C. Maximum ground coverage (%)	80	80	65	30
D. Landscaped area, minimum percent of lot	10	10	10	5
E. Floor area ratio (F.A.R.) (2)	2.0	2.0	1.5	0.3
F. Maximum height (3) stories/ feet	50 (20)	50 (20)	3 (4) 45 (4)(20)	2 1/2 35
G. Minimum front yard (ft) (5a)(5b)(5c)(17)	NA	NA	15	NA
H. Minimum side yards (ft) (5b)(6) (10)(17)	NA (12)	NA (12)	NA (12)	(7)
I. Minimum rear yards (ft) (5b)(13) (14)(15) (17)	NA (12)	NA (12)	15 (12)	15 (12)
J. Minimum frontage (ft)	NA	NA	NA	NA

*Note: Lettering system added to Sec. 8.5. by Ord. 1991-10 on 8/22/91.*

*Sec. 8.5.B. amended by Ord. 1991-10 on 8/22/91.*

*Sec. 8.5.D. amended by Ord. 1991-10 on 8/22/91.*

(#) = See footnotes in Section 8.6.  
 NA = Not Applicable

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**Section 8.6. Footnotes to Section 8.5.**

1. **Minimum Lot Size:** These minimum lot size requirements apply pursuant to the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A, Section 6. No increased nonconformity of lot size shall be permitted as result of further division of the lot.

*NOTE: §8.6.1 was amended by Ordinance 1991-10 on August 22, 1991.*

2. **Floor area ratio:** See definitions in Article 2 for floor area, floor area ratio, and Article 4, §4.4.1., which further limits floor area ratio requirements.

*NOTE: §8.6.2 was amended by Ordinance 2006-07 on January 26, 2006.*

3. **Height:** The provisions of this Ordinance governing height of buildings shall not apply to church spires, belfries, cupolas, domes, monuments, observation towers, sky lights, flag poles, ventilators, and penthouses housing mechanical equipment or other architectural elements normally built above the roof and not devoted to human occupancy. These provisions shall apply to aerials, antennas, and satellite dishes. When height is expressed in both stories and feet, the specified number of stories is allowed up to the maximum number of specified feet.

The maximum height shall apply unless in an overlay district which allows additional height as specified in Article 6 or unless reference is made to provisions of a footnote in this Section 8.6.

*NOTE: §8.6.3 was amended by Ordinance 1997-6 on November 13, 1997 and Ordinance 2002-7on August 8, 2002.*

4. **Height Limitations in IP Districts:** The following height limitations shall apply in all Industrial IP districts:
  - 2 story structures permitted within 50 feet of an RA or RB zone, to a maximum of 25 feet in height.
  - 3 story structures permitted between 50 feet and 100 feet of an RA or RB district, to a maximum of 35 feet in height.
  - 3 story structures permitted beyond 100 feet from an RA or RB district, to a maximum of 45 feet in height.
5. **Front yard:** If the average front yard depth of two (2) or more existing buildings on each side of a lot within one hundred (100) feet and within the district and same block, uninterrupted by an intersection, is less than the required front yard, the average of such existing front yard depths may be the required front yard depth for buildings of three (3) stories or less, but in no case may the front yard depth be less than ten (10) feet.

*NOTE: See Figure 8A.*

- a. **Projections into Front Yards:** First story building elements such as bays, bay windows and oriel windows (provided that said bays, bay windows or oriel windows encumber no more than fifty percent (50%) of the length of the front side of the structure they project from), balconies, chimneys, flues and fire escapes, steps down from the first story, cornices, belt courses, leaders,

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sills, pilasters, lintels, decks, unenclosed porches, or other similar structures and ornamental features may project into a required front yard provided a minimum ten (10) foot distance is maintained from the front lot line.

**NOTE:** §8.6.5.a was amended by Ordinance 1991-1 on January 10, 1991.

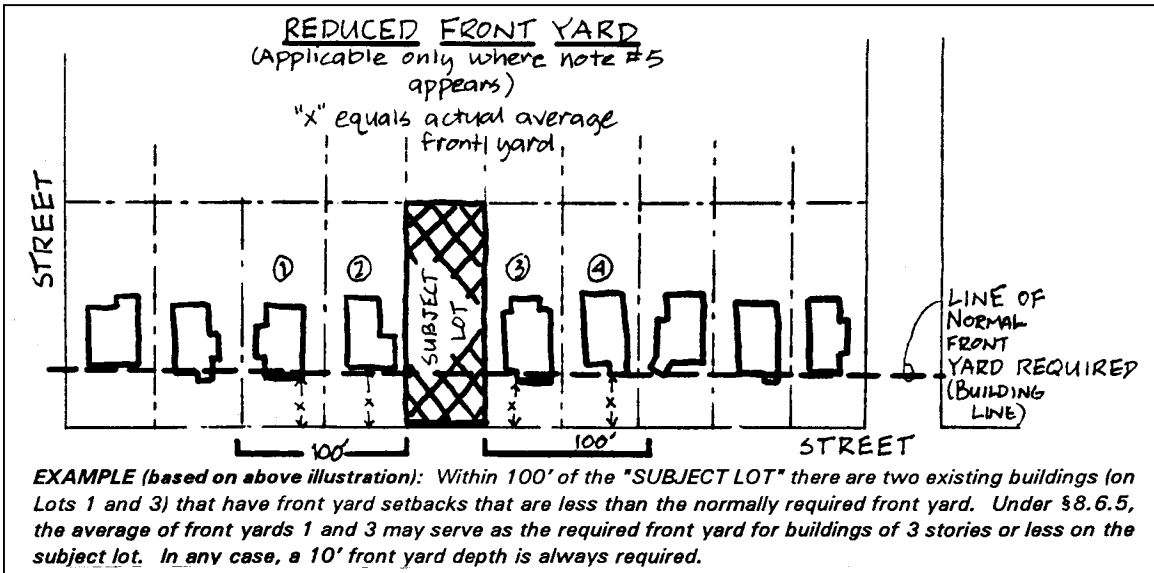


Figure 8A.

b. **Fences, walls, steps, patios:** Dimensional provisions of this Article shall not apply to:

- front yard fences or walls not over four (4) feet high above the average natural grade, and side or rear yard fences/walls not over six (6) feet high above the average natural grade;
- steps of a height no more than three (3) feet above average grade;
- patios.

Please refer to Section 10.7 for fencing standards.

c. **Traffic visibility across corners:** On any lot where front yards are required, all structures, fences or plantings greater than three-and-one-half (3-1/2) feet above sidewalk level and within twenty (20) feet of any corner street line intersection shall be maintained so as not to interfere with traffic visibility across corners.

**NOTE:** See Figure 8B.

6. **Projections into side yards:** Bays, bay windows and oriel windows (provided that said bays, bay windows or oriel windows encumber

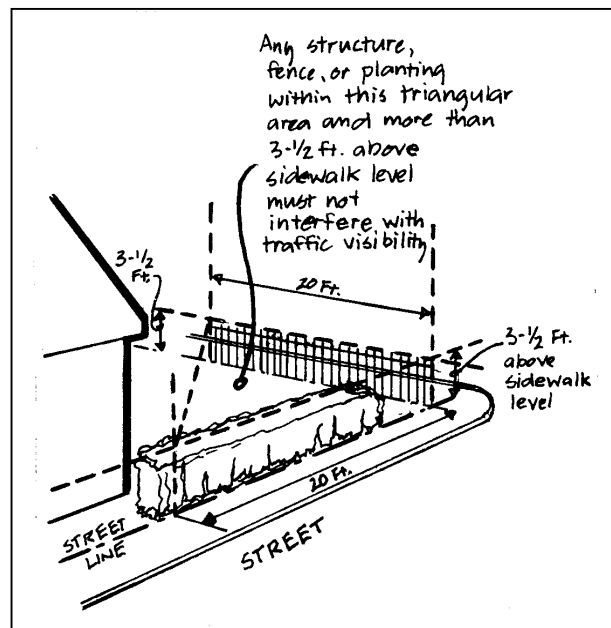


Figure 8B.

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no more than one-third of the length of the side of the structure they project from), balconies, chimneys, flues and fire escapes, steps down from the first story, and cornices, belt courses, leaders, sills, pilasters, lintels, decks, unenclosed porches, or other similar structures and ornamental features may project into a required side yard not more than one-quarter (1/4) of the required setback, nor more than three (3) feet in any case.

**NOTE:** §8.6.6 was amended by Ordinance 1991-1 on January 10, 1991.

**7. Side Yards in RA, RB, RC, and OS Districts:**

No. of stories of building:	Least width of side yard:	Sum width both side yards:
1 or 1-1/2	6 feet	14 feet
2 or 2-1/2	8 feet	17 feet
3	10 feet	20 feet
4 & over	1/3 bldg. height	2/3 bldg. height

**8. Side yards for corner lots:** The owner of a corner lot shall, for the purposes of this Ordinance, have the privilege of designating either corner lot line the side lot line.

**9. Side yards for townhouse buildings:** Whenever a building of two (2) or more townhouse units is built with a common fire wall with another dwelling, the side yards shall be at least fifty (50) percent greater than the minimum widths prescribed above in footnote 7.

**10. Reduction of side yards for narrow lots:** For each foot by which a lot is less than fifty (50) feet wide on the effective date of this Ordinance, one (1) inch may be deducted from the required width of each side yard and two (2) inches from the required width of both side yards, provided that no side yard shall be less than five (5) feet. No building projections, as enumerated in footnote 6 above, shall be allowed in the minimum five (5) foot side yard.

**11. Garages and accessory structures in residential districts:** In any residence district, garages and other permitted accessory buildings shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height, but may extend within any side or rear yard up to but not closer than three (3) feet from any side or rear lot line, unless of fireproof construction.

**NOTE:** See Figure 8C.

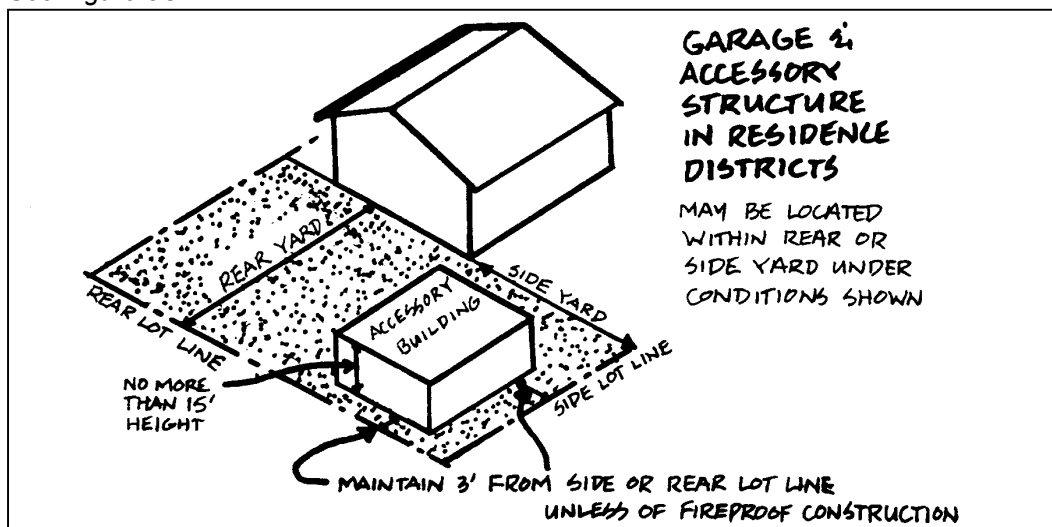


Figure 8C.

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12. **Side and rear yards for sites abutting residential districts:** Where a lot in a business or industrial district abuts a lot or district line in a RA, RB, or RC district, no building in the business or industrial district shall be erected closer to the residential line than one-third (1/3) the height of the said building, but not less than fifteen (15) feet.
13. **Reduction of rear yards for shallow lots:** For each foot by which a lot is less than one hundred (100) feet deep on the effective date of this Ordinance, three (3) inches may be deducted from the required depth of the rear yard, provided that no rear yard shall be less than ten (10) feet.
14. **Projections into rear yards:** Bays, bay windows and oriel windows (provided that said bays, bay windows or oriel windows encumber no more than fifty percent (50%) of the length of the rear side of the structure they project from), as well as such structures and ornamental features as are enumerated in note 6 above may project into a required rear yard up to one-fourth (1/4) of the required setback, but in no case within ten (10) feet of a rear lot line.

**NOTE:** §8.6.14 was amended by Ordinance 1991-1 on January 10, 1991.

15. **Rear yards abutting railroad tracks:** Where a rear yard of a non-residential use abuts an active railroad track, the rear yard may be reduced to ten (10) feet.
16. **Minimum lot frontage:** The minimum lot frontage is required on a public way, a private way in existence prior to May 18, 1988, or a private way not less than thirty (30) feet in width. These minimum lot frontage requirements shall not apply to lots in existence prior to May 18, 1988 which were non-conforming to these requirements.
17. **Swimming Pools:** Swimming pools shall not be located closer than six (6) feet to a side or rear lot line, nor closer than ten (10) feet to a front lot line.
18. **Four-story Height for Residential Use Allowed in NB Districts:** Within the Neighborhood Business District (NB), four (4) stories up to forty-two (42) feet is allowed for buildings where all four (4) stories are residential use or where the first floor is commercial/business use and the top three (3) floors are residential. For buildings which are two (2) or more stories of commercial business use, the maximum height limit shall be three (3) stories and forty (40) feet.
19. **Top Story Setback in NB Districts:** A minimum setback of five (5) feet from the front lot line for the top story is required if the building is above forty (40) feet in height in NB districts.
20. **Height Limit for Structures Abutting Residential Districts:** Where a lot abuts an RA, RB or RC zoning district line, any structure (or portion of a structure) within thirty (30) feet of said district line shall be limited to three (3) stories and forty (40) feet in height.

**NOTE:** §8.6.20 was amended by Ordinance 1991-1 on January 10, 1991. **ALSO:** See Figure 8D.

21. **Setback for Rooftop Installations:** All elevator and stairwell penthouses, roof-mounted mechanical equipment (including enclosure, if any) and other similar rooftop installations shall be set back behind a plane inclined at 45 degrees from the vertical, beginning at the maximum height of the building as defined in Section 8.5, along all street lines and rear lot line.

**NOTE:** See Figure 8E.

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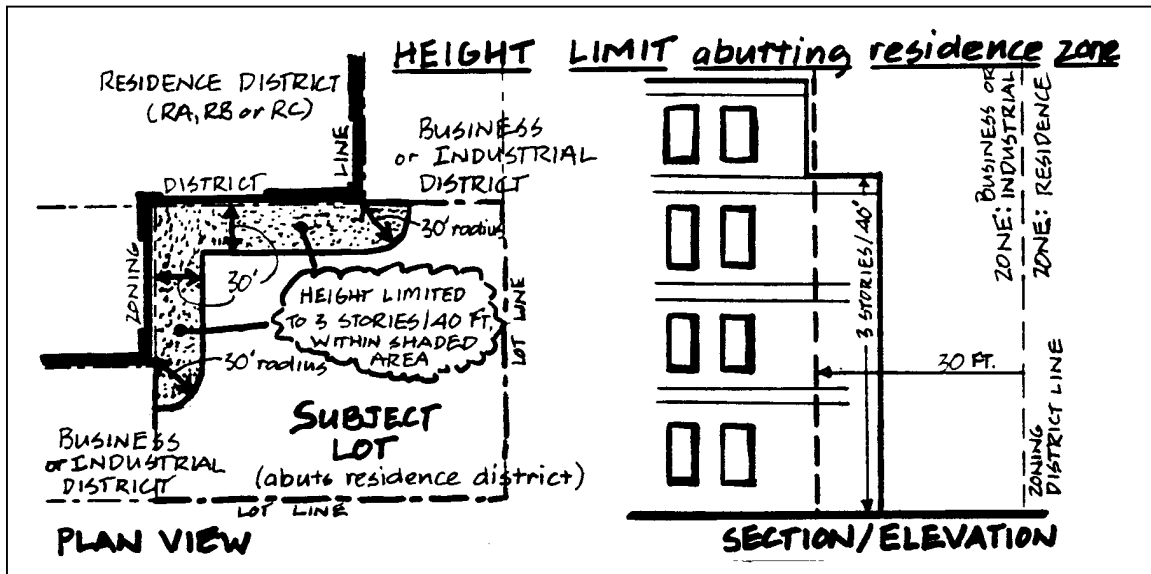


Figure 8D.

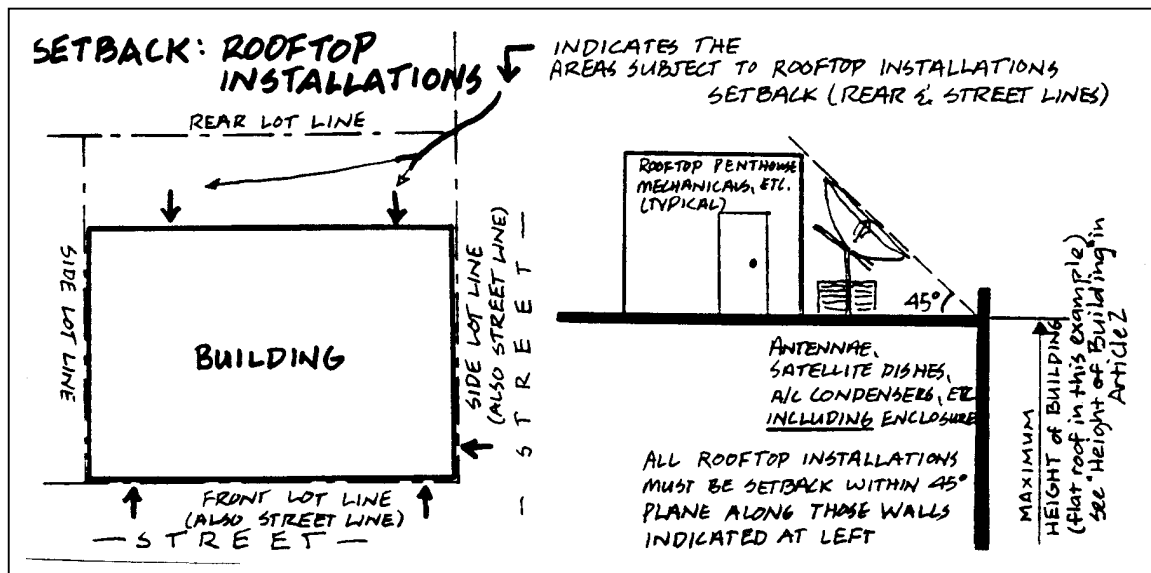


Figure 8E.

**Section 8.7. Dimensional Requirements Applicable to the University District.**

**8.7.1 Special Applicability Provisions.**

- a. All of the land owned by Tufts University situated in the University District and in the portions of the Tufts Campus situated in the City of Medford shall be considered and dealt with as a single tract or parcel of land comprising multiple buildings and facilities.

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The University shall not for the purposes of this Ordinance, except as otherwise expressly provided in this Section 8.7, be required to create, establish, accept or recognize any lot or lot line within the University District. However, nothing herein shall be deemed to abrogate or limit the right of the University to create, establish, accept or recognize any lot within the University District which is otherwise lawful.

- b. With respect to each building or facility of the University, existing or hereafter erected, which lies partly in Somerville and partly in Medford, the provisions hereof shall be applicable to the portion thereof situated in Somerville, but shall not affect any portion thereof situated in Medford.

**8.7.2. Height Regulations.**

Within the University District the maximum height of buildings in stories and feet shall be as follows:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Stories</u>	<u>Feet</u>
Within the Blue Band as herein defined	2-1/2	35
Within the Red Band as herein defined	4	56
Within the Yellow Band as herein defined	6	72
Within the Green Band as herein defined	8	98

The Blue Band comprises the land within the University District which (a) is within 100 feet of (i) the center line of Dearborn Road, (ii) the center line of College Avenue, (iii) the center line of Powder House Boulevard, (iv) the center line of that portion of Packard Avenue between Powder House Boulevard and the southwesterly line of Sawyer Avenue, or (v) the center line of Curtis Street between Sawyer Avenue and the City line, or (b) lies southwesterly of the center line of Sawyer Avenue between Packard Avenue and Curtis Street.

The Red Band comprises the land within the University District which is not included in the Blue Band and (a) is within 200 feet of (i) the center line of Dearborn Road, (ii) the center line of College Avenue, (iii) the center line of Powder House Boulevard, (iv) the center line of that portion of Packard Avenue between Powder House Boulevard and the southwesterly line of Talbot Avenue, or (v) the center line of Curtis Street between Sawyer Avenue and the City line, or (b) is within 100 feet of the center line of Sawyer Avenue, between the Red Band measured from Curtis Street and the Red Band measured from Packard Avenue.

The Yellow Band comprises the land within the University District which is not included in the Blue Band or the Red Band and is (a) within the block bounded by Sawyer Avenue, Curtis Street, Professors Row and Packard Avenue, or (b) within the area bounded by Professors Row, Curtis Street, the City Line and a line parallel to and 350 feet southeasterly from Curtis Street.

The Green Band comprises the land within the University District which is not included in the Blue Band, the Red Band or the Yellow Band.

Notwithstanding the foregoing height limitations, all existing buildings within the University District are permitted, and the floor levels thereof may be used for immediately adjacent structures, and the same shall be deemed to be in compliance with the height requirements of this Ordinance.

**8.7.3. Setback Regulations.**

- a. Minimum front yard setbacks from the street side-line shall be required of (a) 20 feet on (i) College Avenue between Talbot Avenue and Powder House Boulevard, (ii) Powder House Boulevard from College Avenue to Packard Avenue, and (iii) Packard Avenue from Powder

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House Boulevard to Talbot Avenue, and (b) 15 feet on (i) Dearborn Road and (ii) Curtis Street northwesterly of Sawyer Avenue.

- b. Within the portion of the University District which lies on the southwesterly side of Sawyer Avenue between Packard Avenue and Curtis Street, (i) where building length is less than 30 feet, the setback shall be calculated as follows, with a minimum of 15 feet required for front yards and a minimum of 20 feet required for rear yards:

$$\text{setback} = \frac{\text{height} + \text{length}}{4} \text{ (facing front/rear lot line)}$$

and (ii) where building length is more than 30 feet, the setback shall be calculated as follows:

$$\text{setback} = \frac{\text{height} + \text{length}}{3} \text{ (facing front/rear lot line)}$$

and (iii) each building shall be separated from all other buildings by at least 17 feet.

- c. Notwithstanding the foregoing setback regulations, all existing buildings within the University District are permitted and shall be deemed to be in compliance with the setback regulations of this Ordinance.

**8.7.4. Ground Coverage and Floor Area Ratio Regulations.**

- a. For purposes of applicability of the requirements of maximum ground coverage and floor area ratio set forth in this paragraph 8.7.4, the University shall, together with each application for a building permit, specify the applicable Measuring Parcel (the "MP"), as defined in the following paragraph b, in which the proposed building is located, and shall submit to the Inspectional Services Superintendent a written statement specifying (i) the total land area of the MP, (ii) the area of ground coverage within the MP of all buildings therein, including proposed buildings and existing buildings intended to remain, and (iii) the net floor area within the MP of all buildings therein; including proposed buildings and existing buildings intended to remain.

- b. The Measuring Parcels shall be as follows:

1. The land bounded by Professors Row, College Avenue, Powder House Boulevard and Packard Avenue.
2. The land bounded by Curtis Street, Professors Row, Packard Avenue, and the University District line running from Packard Avenue to Curtis Street between Sawyer Avenue and Whitfield Road.
3. The land bounded by Boston Avenue, College Avenue, Professors Row, Curtis Street, Winthrop Street, the northeasterly side line of Capen Street Extension, and the westerly sidelines of University Avenue extended to Capen Street Extension.
4. The land bounded by Boston Avenue, Dearborn Road and College Avenue.

- c. Upon each such application, all buildings within the applicable MP, including proposed buildings and existing buildings intended to remain, shall, with respect to the land area of such MP, have (i) a ground coverage not in excess of 65 percent, and (ii) a floor area ratio not in excess of 2.0.

*SOMERVILLE ZONING ORDINANCE (SZO)*

*Adopted March 23, 1990*

*As amended through January 26, 2006*

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- d. In addition to and not in limitation of the foregoing, no building within the portion of the University District deigned in Section 8.7.3.b. above shall have a ground coverage in excess of 5,000 square feet.

**Section 8.8. Site Plan Approval for Subdivisions.**

The subdivision of any parcel of land shall be subject to Site Plan Approval under the procedure set forth in Section 5.4 herein.