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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: June 16, 2026
RE: **Clarendon Hill Phase Two (Lots B1, E1 + E2)**
Zoning Revision Narrative
FROM: Kendra Halliwell and Tim Synan, ICON Architecture

The **Somerville Housing Authority's Clarendon Hill Redevelopment Phase Two** includes Building D (Lot B1), the Townhomes (Lots E1 and E2), and the Central Park. Following the successful completion of Phase 1 (Building E), this second phase advances the creation of a cohesive, mixed-income community with high-quality housing, accessible open space, and improved neighborhood connections.

As the project has progressed into detailed design, a number of specific refinements have been made in response to site constraints, topography, utility coordination, and program needs. Given the compact site, these adjustments are necessary to ensure the development functions effectively. The proposed changes are insubstantial and remain consistent with the approved 2020 Comprehensive Permit in terms of scale, density, and overall intent.

Overview of Revisions:

At **Building D**, site updates enhance safety, accessibility, and coordination with the Head Start program. The woonerf has been refined to function as a pedestrian-priority space, in line with City feedback, incorporating durable materials, clear crossing, and accessible design elements. The Head Start playground and community garden locations have been strategically exchanged to improve security and usability, and the transformer has been relocated to North Street to meet utility requirements. Lighting has been updated to reflect the more fully resolved design. Architectural adjustments to Building D including the additional rear entry, minor façade refinements, and updated color palette support these improvements while maintaining design continuity adjacent to Building E.

Within the **Townhouse Building** lots, revisions respond to grading and site organization while improving the overall layout. Two buildings have been combined into one to better frame the Central Park, maintaining the same unit count. Building placement has been

adjusted to introduce a rear pathway, improving connectivity and creating a more walkable block, while each townhouse retains its own private outdoor space. Additional updates, including setbacks, lighting, and service locations, reflect coordination with City agencies. The number of proposed street trees has been refined from the illustrative plan.

Architectural updates to the Townhouses improve accessibility and long-term performance, including reconfigured entries to address slopes along the sidewalks, integrated grading elements, and a refined material palette that complements the broader development.

Overall, these changes represent a natural and necessary progression of the design as it advances toward implementation. These revisions improve functionality, safety, and the resident experience while maintaining the core commitments of the approved project.

Zoning Revisions include:

G-001 Zoning Summary Chart: Updated Chart includes items described below. Granted Relief is highlighted on the chart in yellow. Dimensional revisions are noted by “REV” – these are listed both on this Zoning Chart and on the Waiver List.

While most of the revisions are merely dimensional, two items are worth further clarification:

- 1. Townhouses in Sequence:** Two townhouse buildings have been combined into a single building, facing the park, due to site dimensional constraints. The new single building will include 11 townhomes in a row. While relief was granted for Section 3.2.11.c.(B) for Minimum Ground Story Elevation, relief is additionally requested for 11 townhomes in a row, as the Ordinance limits up to 10 townhomes in sequence.
- 2. Transformer locations in Frontage Zone:** Relief is requested to allow transformer locations in frontage zones. The transformer on Lot E2, as shown on 2020 plans, and the transformer for Building D, currently proposed near North Street both are in frontage zones.

Site Revisions on Lot B2:

- **Woonerf:** Design of the Woonerf (Shared Street) has evolved through further site coordination with utilities and with City Agencies to include approved finishes, with ramps, crosswalk, bollards, and tactile warning pavers. See page Z-002.
 - Per mobility comments in email from Greg Hanafin to the owner/landscape architect on 11/26/25, the “entire woonerf is meant to function as a pedestrian crossing”. In response to this comment, we have updated the woonerf to follow this direction.
 - The woonerf and ramped portions will consist of vehicle grade concrete with joint lines to mimic a pedestrian sidewalk and transitions will be outlined with flush granite curbing.
 - Tactile warning pavers and bollards will demark the woonerf for pedestrian crossing.



- **Setbacks:** Updated plan shows the approved setbacks and the proposed dimensional adjustments. See page Z-003.
- **Street Trees:** The streets within this development are all new and therefore, there were zero street trees to reduce/ remove. The illustrative plan shown in the approved masterplan showed the intent to have street trees. Due to plan development to make the design fully functional, fewer trees development-wide will be provided than previously approved. See page Z-004.
- **Transformer Location:** The transformer for Building D has been relocated to North Street as requested for direct access by the utility company. See page Z-002. **See also Transformers in Frontage Zone, above.**
- **Play Area Location:** During the programming of the building for the Headstart program on the ground floor, it was requested that their playground and the Community Gardens location would be better located in switched locations to improve security and community access to the Gardens. See page Z-002.
- **Lighting Photometric Plan:** Updated building and site lighting photometric calculations are provided. See page Z-005.

Building D Architectural Building Revisions include:

- **Entrances:** Added a new entry door at the rear of the building to facilitate access to the new Headstart playground location. See page Z-002.
- **Color Palette:** The building has an updated color palette to complement the townhouses and blend with Building E, based on the materials approved and installed on Building E. See page Z-006.
- **Façade updates:** Due to structural configuration through mechanical system development, one stack of residential units was mirrored, resulting in combining two bays into a single larger bay. See page Z-006.

Site Revisions on Lots E1 and E2:

- **Access through the Site:** Steep site topography and access clearances required shifting the townhouse buildings to maintain a pathway behind the townhomes. All townhomes will enjoy private rear patios, and three streets will be connected via internal walkways through the block. See page Z-001.
- **Number of Buildings:** Two townhouse buildings (#4 and #5) have been combined into a single building, directly facing the Park. The total number of units remains the same. The two buildings previously included 5 Dwelling Units and 8 Dwelling Units, and have been combined into a single proposed 11-Dwelling Unit Townhouse. See page Z-002. **See also Townhomes in Sequence, above.**
- **Trash Location:** The trash and recycling enclosure location is proposed as reviewed with city agencies. This shift results in a reduction in parking to 23 parking spaces on Clarendon Hill Drive (New Street 3). The parking count remains within the approved range as permitted in the initial approval. See page Z-002.



- **Bike Storage:** Bike storage on Blocks E1 and E2 has been refined and adjusted as the design developed. The approved concept design located bike racks within the interior of the block. This area has since been reconfigured as a plaza with seating, and bike parking has been relocated primarily to the perimeter furnishing zone. See page Z-002, Site Layout.
- **Setbacks:** Updated plan shows the approved setbacks and the proposed setbacks. These revisions are in response to improving and maintaining access through the site and to the building entrances. See page Z-003.
- **Street Trees:** The streets within this development are all new and therefore, there were zero street trees to reduce/ remove. The illustrative plan shown in the masterplan showed the intent to have street trees. Due to plan development to make the design fully functional, fewer trees development-wide will be provided than previously approved. See page Z-004.
- **Lighting Photometric Plan:** Updated building and site lighting photometric calculations. See page Z-005.

Townhouse Buildings Architectural Building Revisions include:

- **Unit Front Entrances:** The hillside slope required adjustments to stoops to maximize accessibility at front doors, resulting in paired walkways at many entrances. Additionally, inset doorways have been removed to improve air-tight detailing. See pages Z-002/Z-007.
- **Color Palette:** Lastly, the townhouse buildings will include an updated color palette to complement Buildings D and E, and drawing from the more residential scale of cementitious panel and siding palette. See page Z-007.

