

An aerial photograph of a large, multi-lane bridge spanning a wide river. The bridge has several concrete piers and a curved approach ramp. Below the bridge, a multi-lane highway with a roundabout interchange is visible. The surrounding area includes residential neighborhoods with houses and apartment buildings, green spaces, and some industrial or commercial buildings. The sky is clear, and the water is calm.

Town of Somerset
Economic Development Self-Assessment Workshop
DRAFT PRESENTATION (7/13/2020)



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INTRODUCTIONS

Scope of Work:

1. Review Somerset's Existing Regulations and Identify Topics of Critical Concern
2. Assist with Economic Development Self-Assessment Workshop
3. Engage the Public in an Interactive Dialogue on Key Decision Points
4. Prepare a Development Guide



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AGENDA

1. Key Session Outcomes
2. Somerset's Development Review Process
3. Somerset's Approach to Promoting Development
4. Conclusions and Next Steps





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KEY SESSION OUTCOMES

1. Identify ways to improve Somerset's development review process
2. Identify ways to improve Somerset's approach to promoting development opportunities
3. Discuss how these goals may be achieved within the context of the on-going revisions to Somerset's zoning bylaws and zoning map



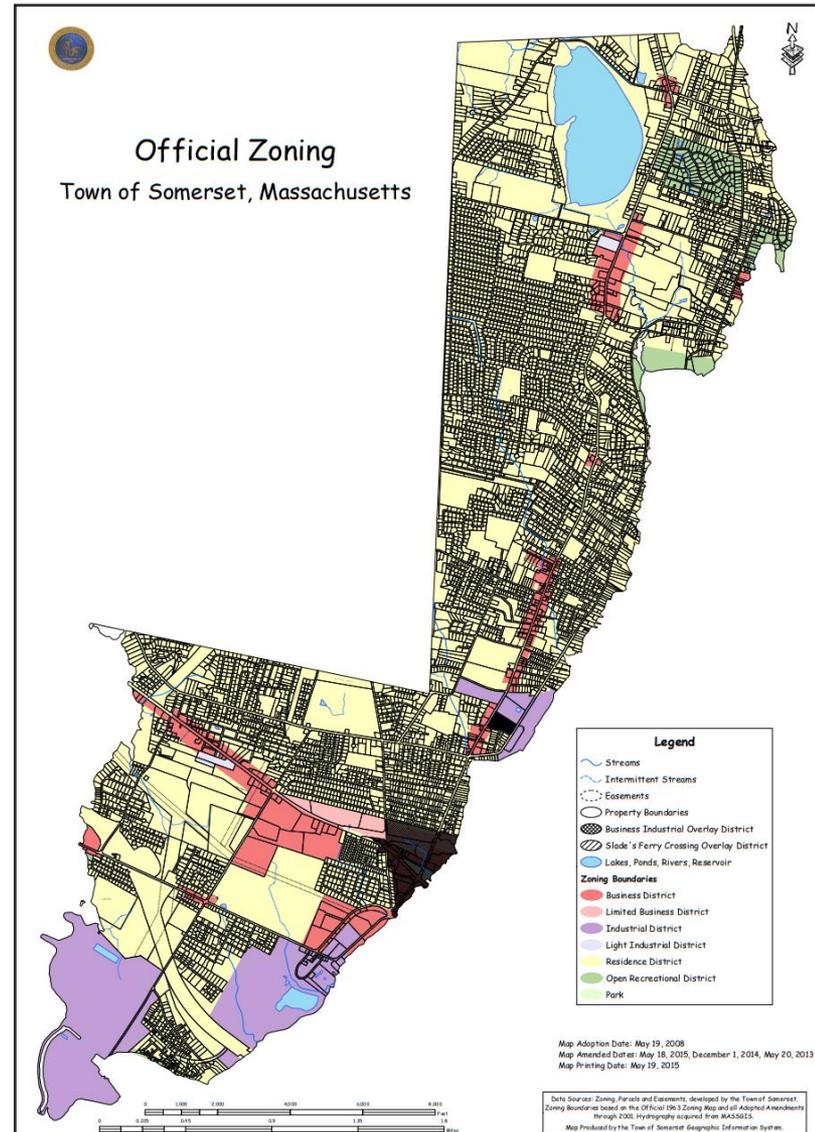
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SOMERSET'S DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Insert flowchart of current process on this slide





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SOMERSET'S DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Key Questions for Discussion

1. Is the current process effective?
2. Is there a need to simplify or streamline the process?
3. Are there tasks currently undertaken by the Town which can be pushed out to the applicants?
4. How can the overall timeline of development review be improved?



SOMERSET'S APPROACH TO PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

Opportunity Sites

1. Route 6 Commercial Corridor
2. Wilbur Ave Property
3. Waterfront Industrial Area
4. Slades Ferry
5. Montaup Site
6. Route 138 Corridor South (Town Center)
7. Route 138 Corridor North
8. Historic Somerset





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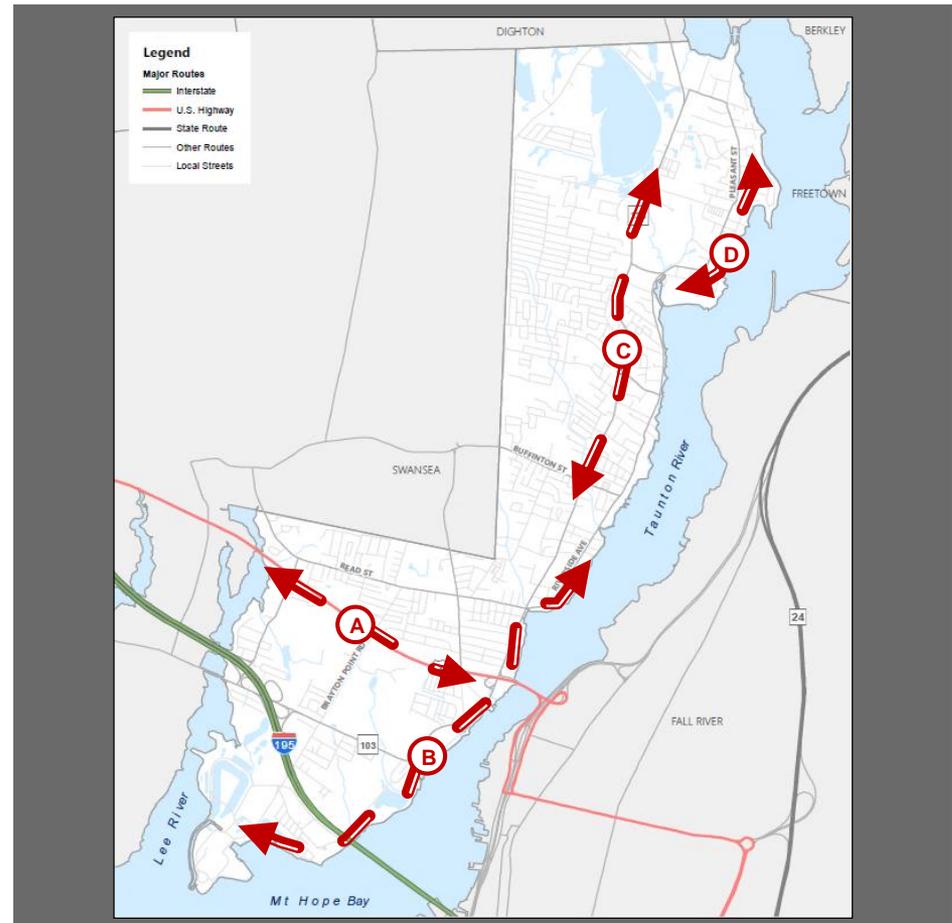


SOMERSET'S APPROACH TO PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

Branding Somerset

One piece of a larger strategy

1. Regional Economic Connector
2. Working Waterfront
3. Local Business Corridor
4. Historic and Cultural Hub





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SOMERSET'S APPROACH TO PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

Key Questions for Discussion

1. Is the economic development vision for Somerset widely understood?
2. What is the town currently doing to engage the development community and educate them about specific opportunities?
3. How are these responsibilities distributed within the town's various agencies and boards?
4. Can the town become more proactive?



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CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Next Steps

1. Update zoning to support shared goals coming out of the MP and ED exercises.
2. Prepare a document outlining the preferred development review process.
3. Develop consensus and shared understanding of the new protocols.
4. Prepare marketing materials to promote opportunity sites.

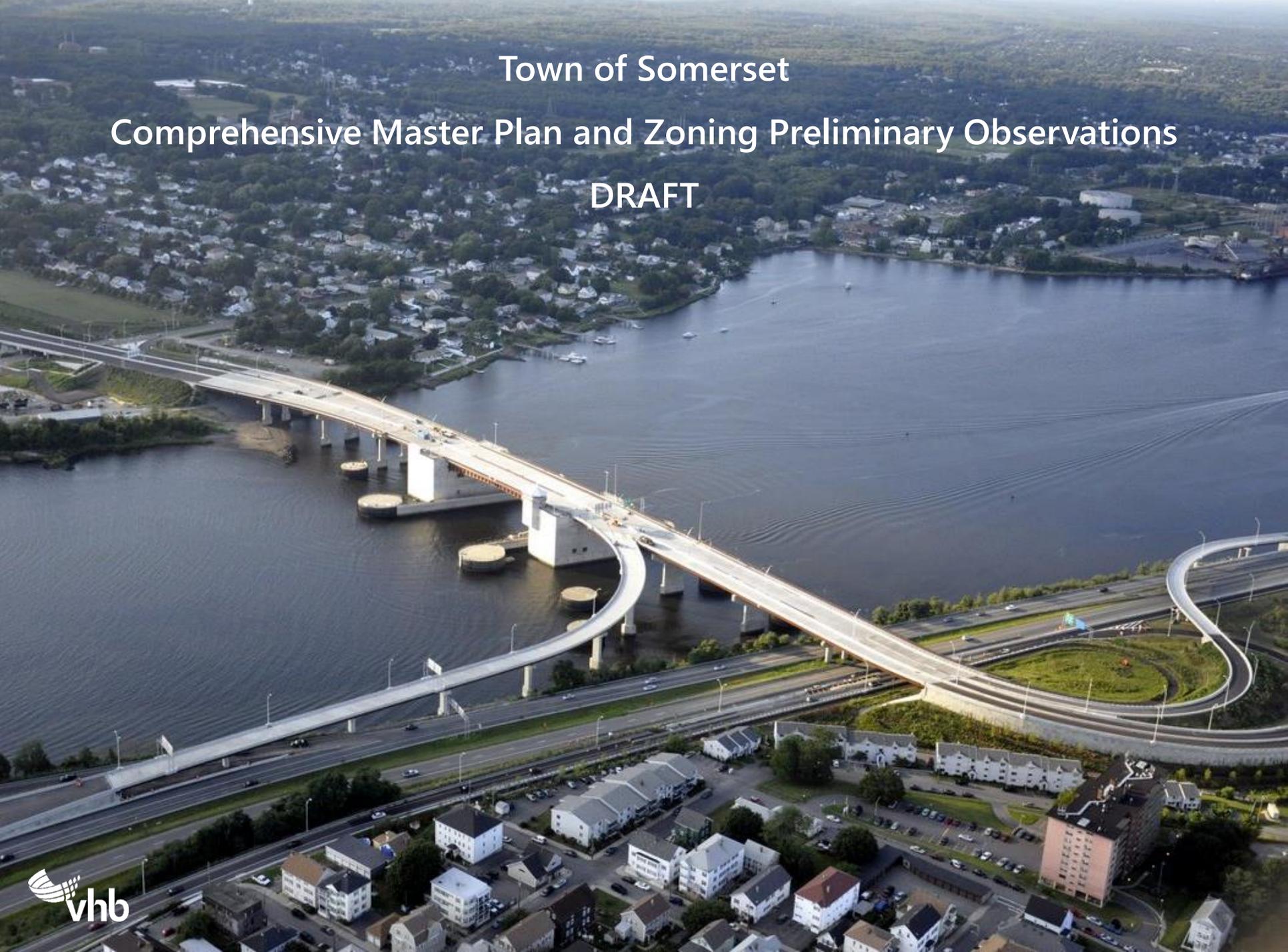
Thank You



Town of Somerset

Comprehensive Master Plan and Zoning Preliminary Observations

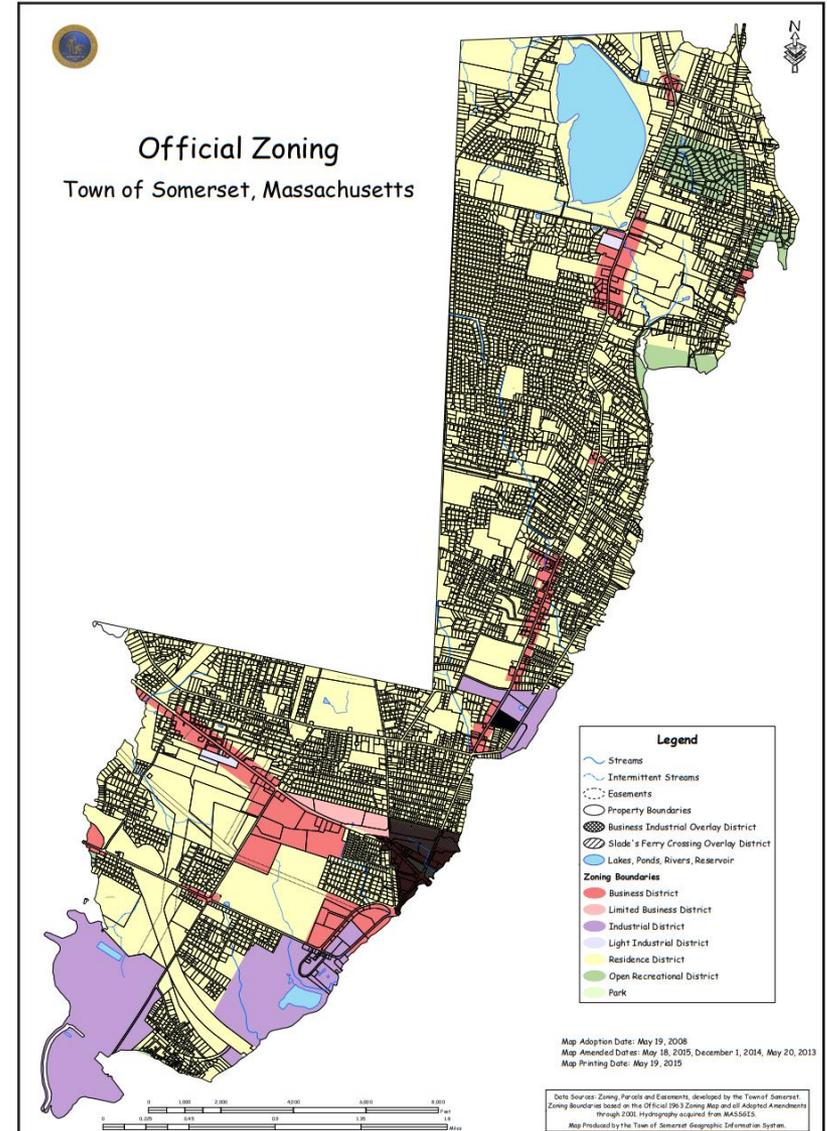
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Zoning Observations

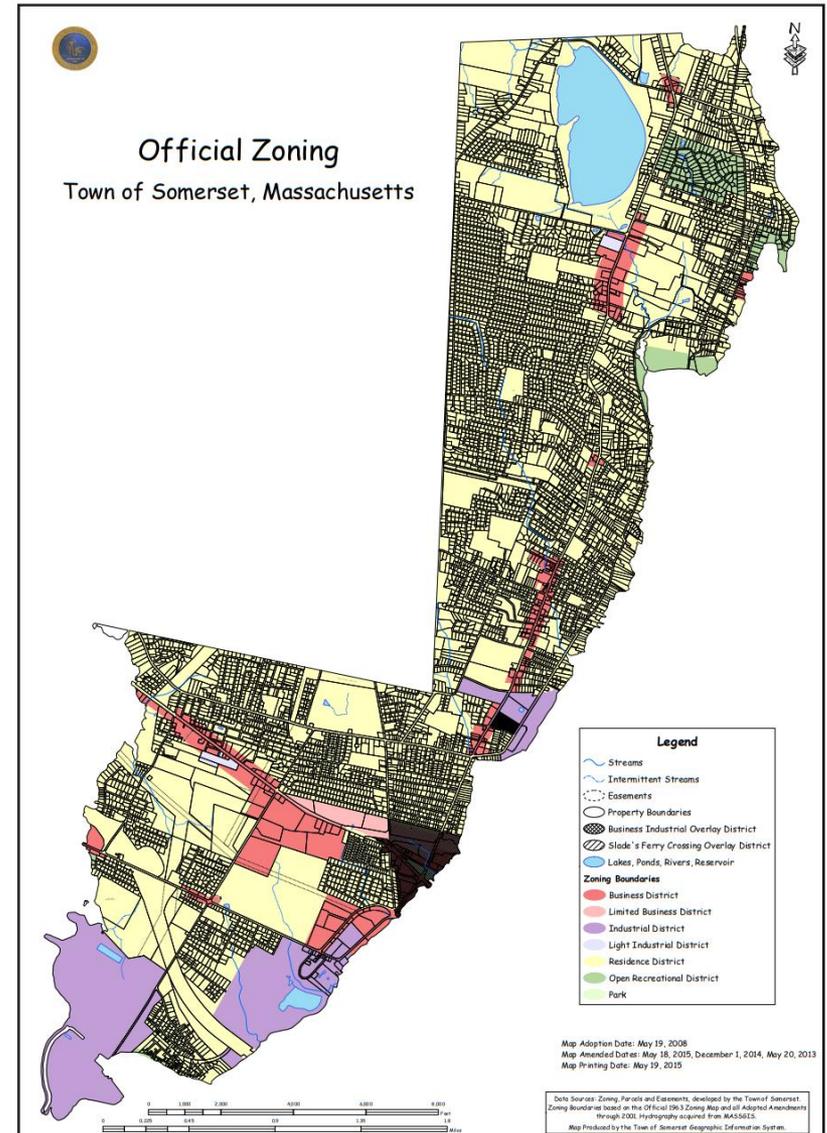
- Business Districts
- Industrial Zones
- Special Districts
- Design Standards
- Dimensional Requirements
- Land Use Tables
- Definitions
- Corridors & Overlay Districts
- Parking





Zoning Observations

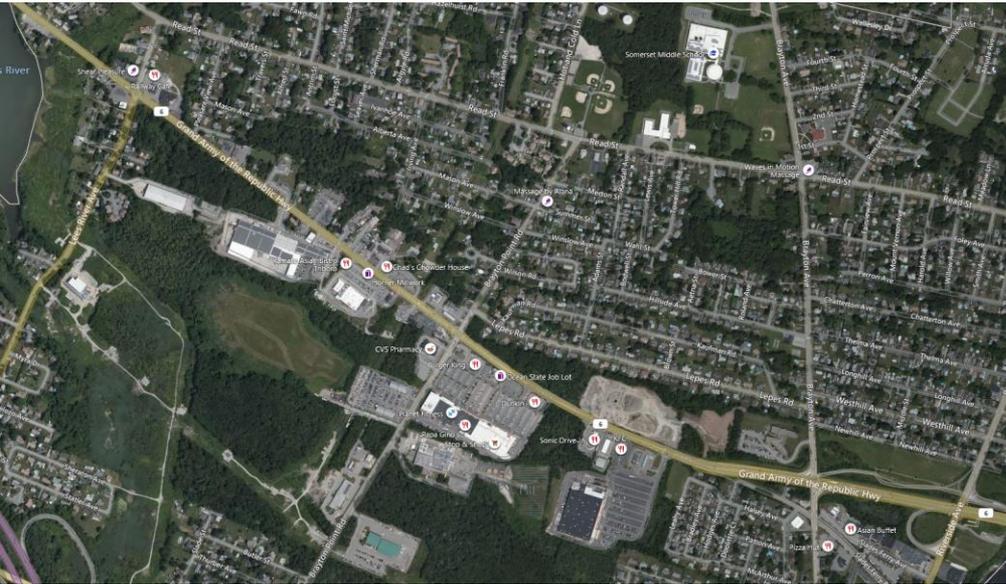
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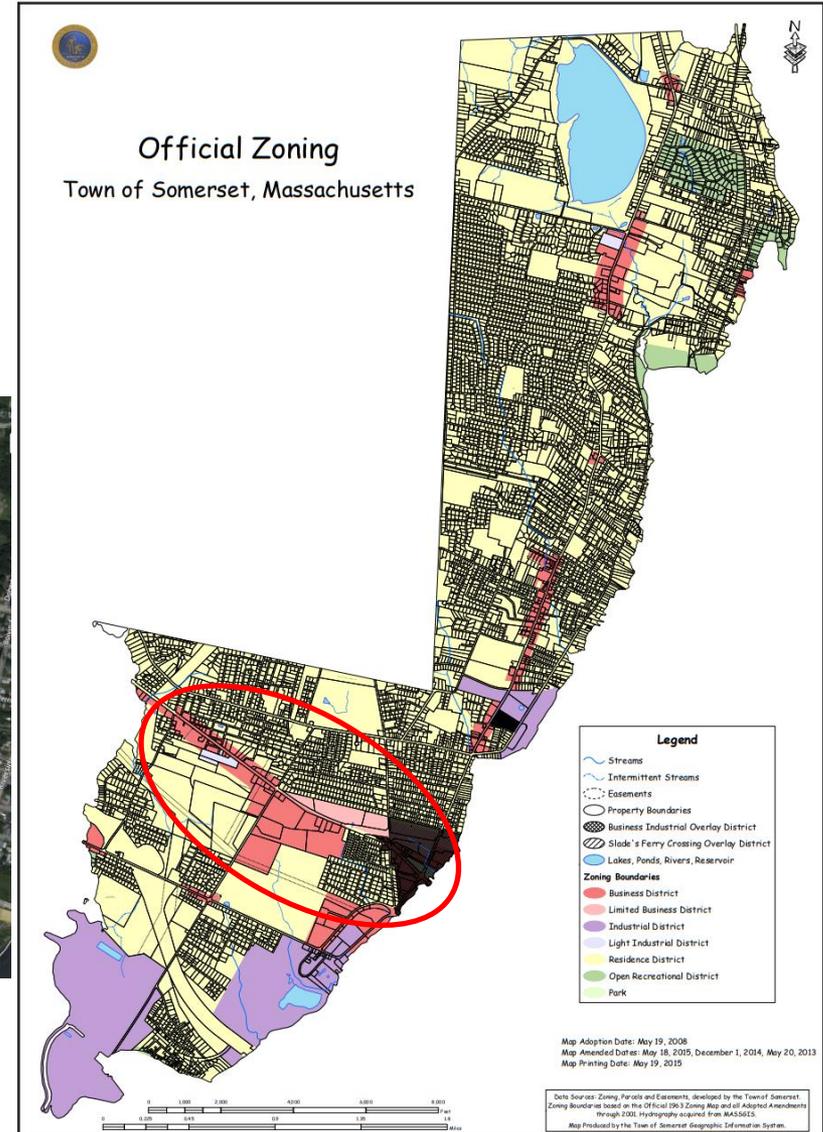


Zoning Observations

-  Business Districts
-  Limited Business Districts



Route 6



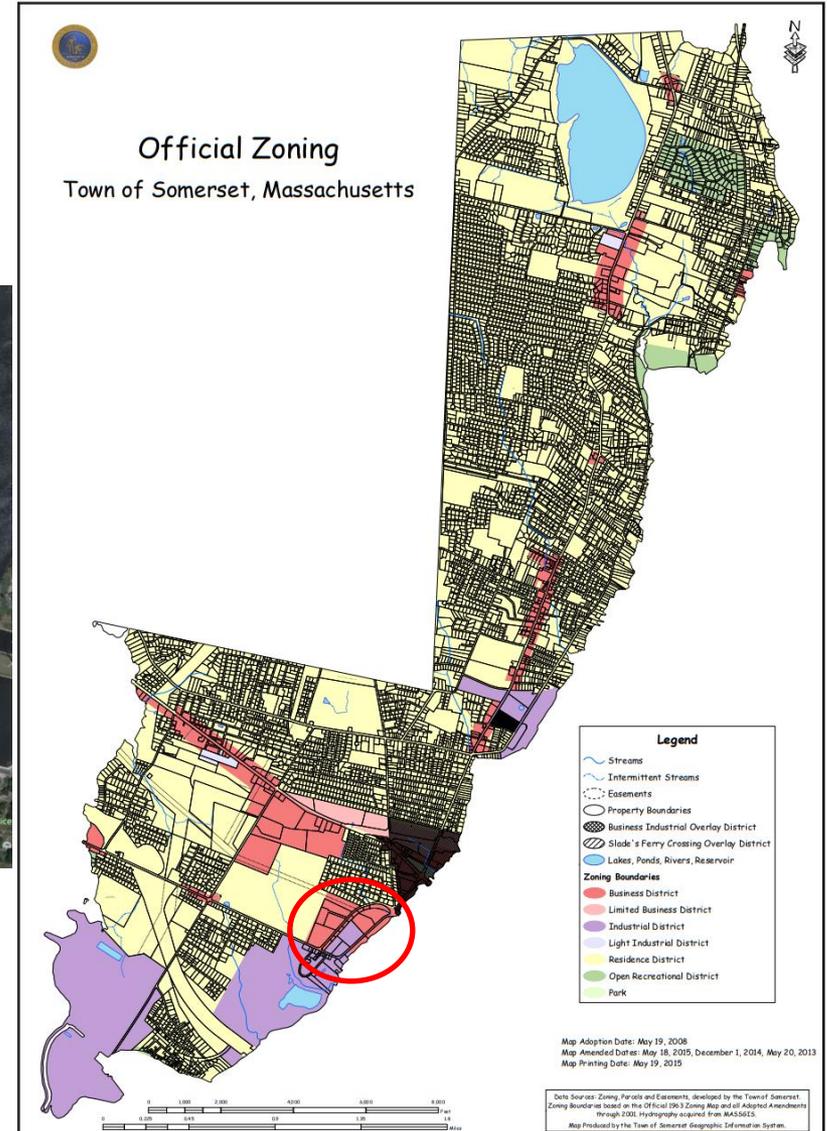


Zoning Observations

 Business Districts



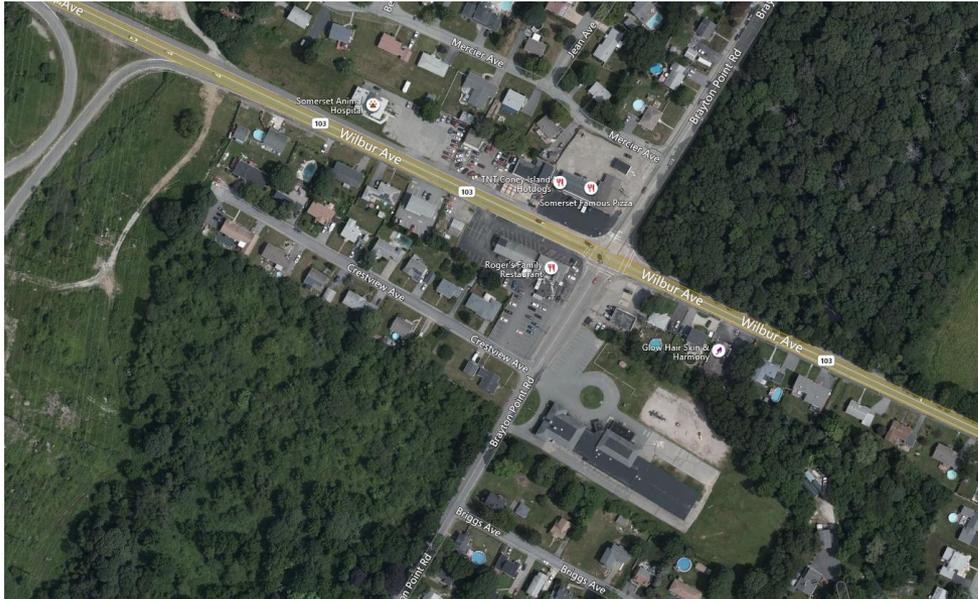
Wilbur Ave / Waterfront



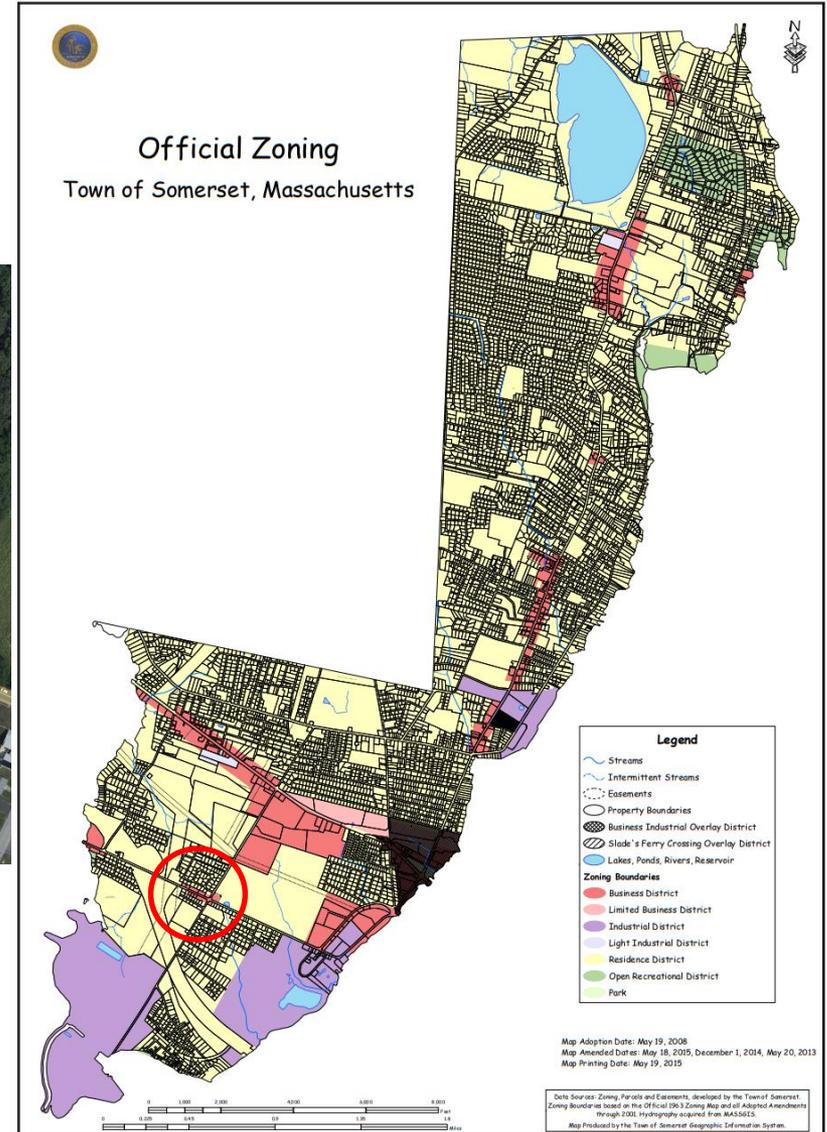


Zoning Observations

 Business Districts



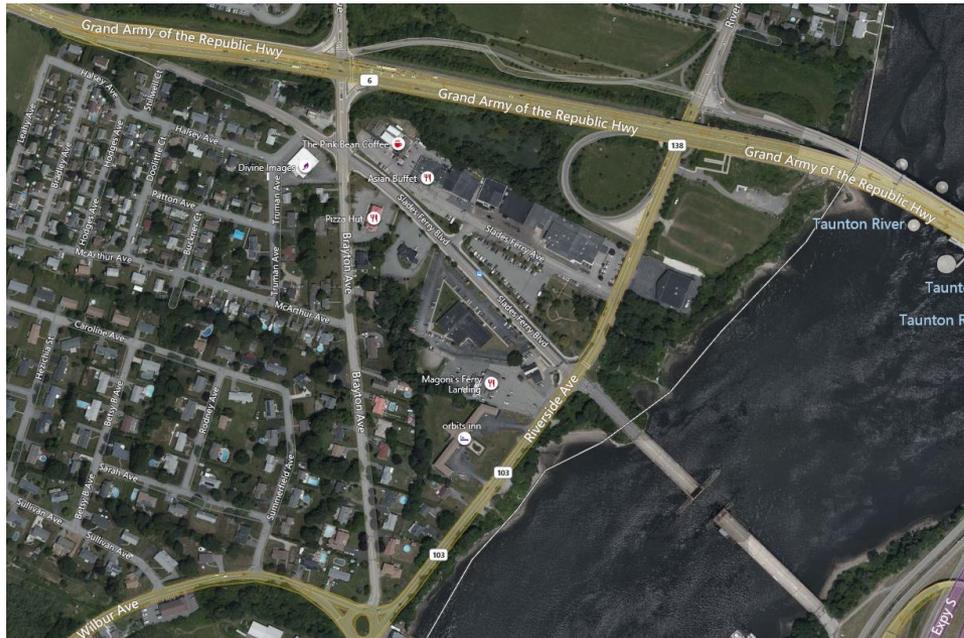
Wilbur Ave / Brayton Point Rd



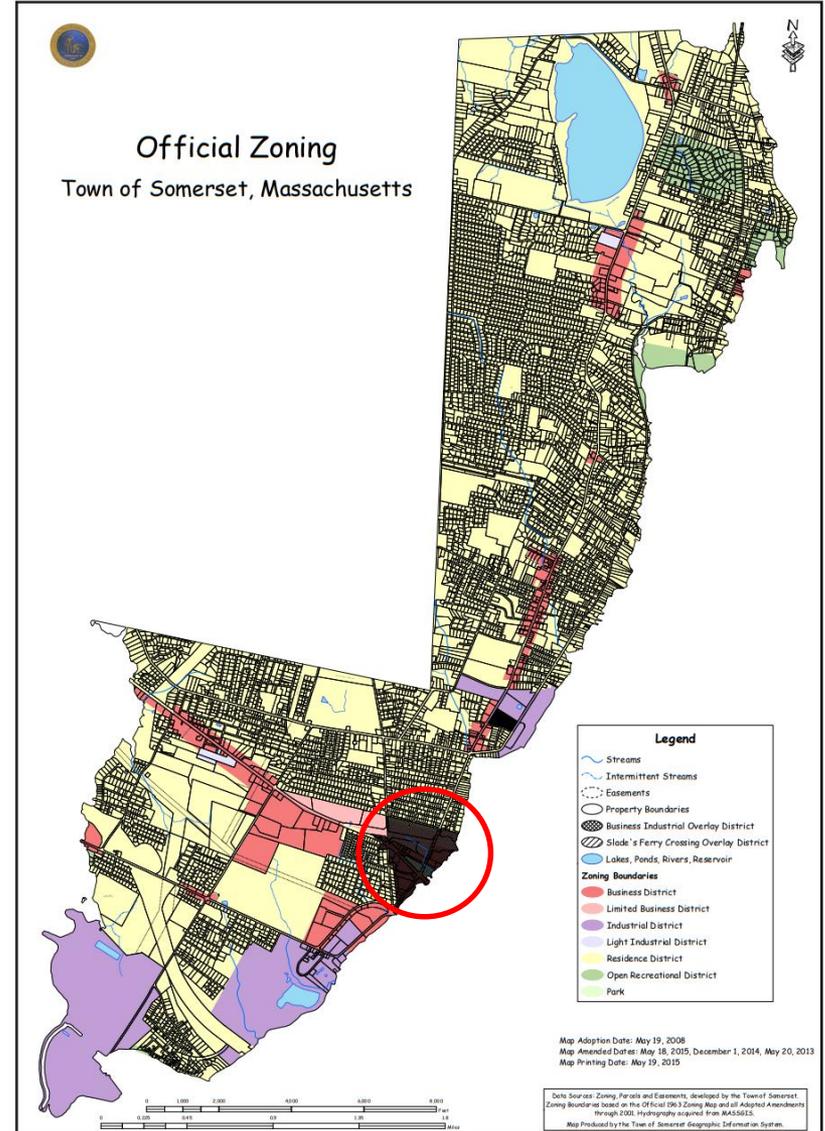


Zoning Observations

 Business Districts



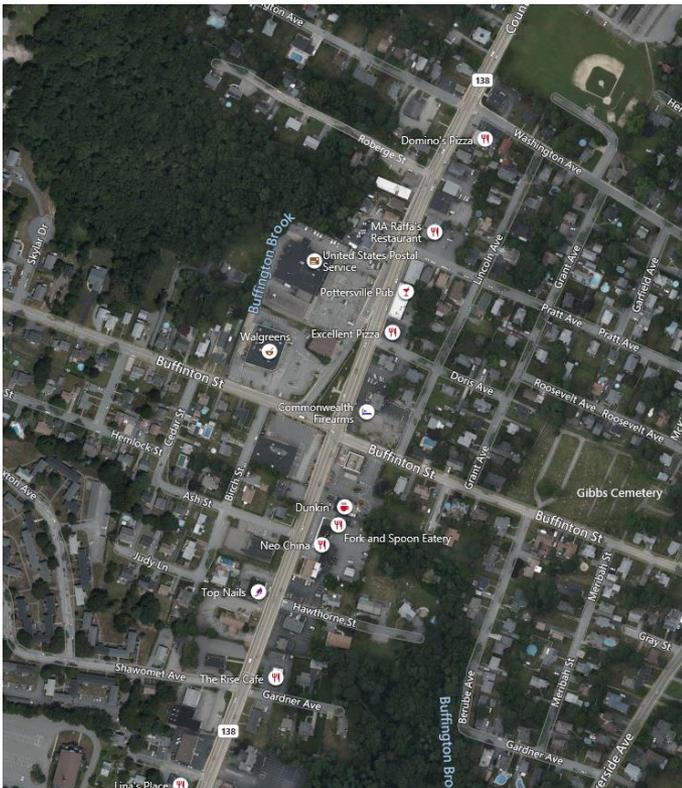
Slades Ferry



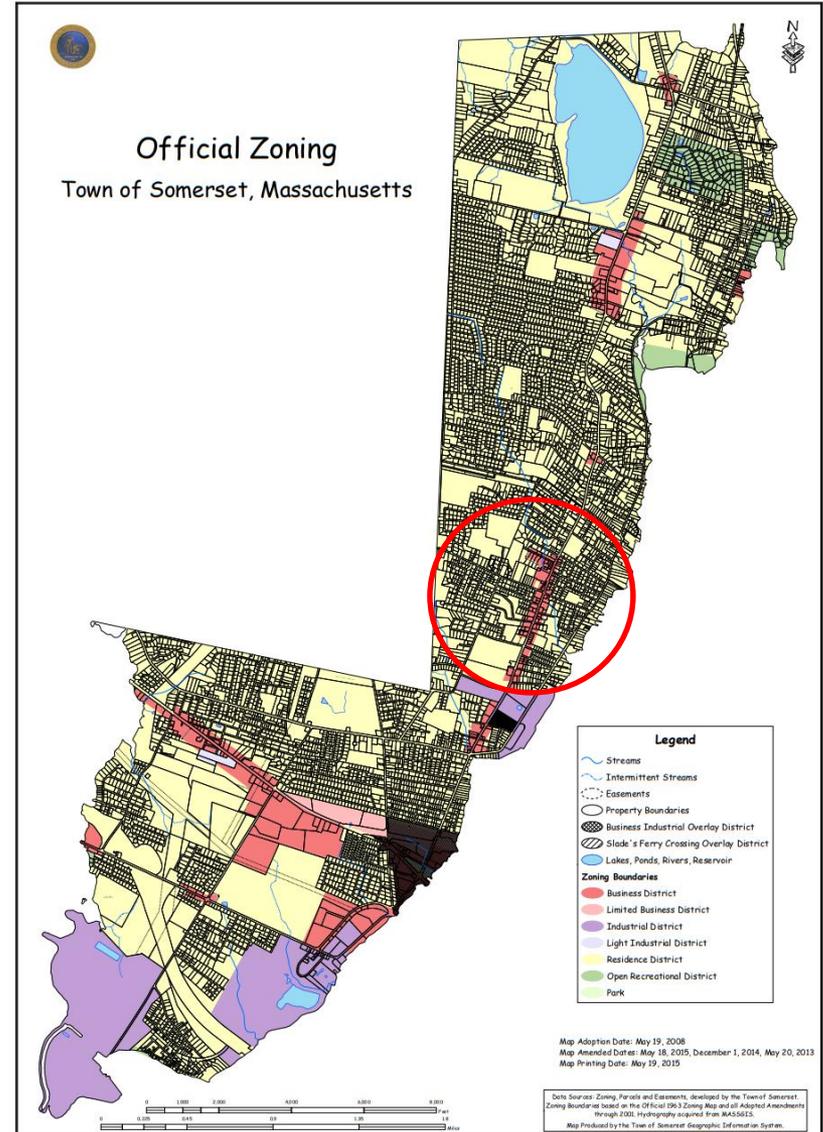


Zoning Observations

 Business Districts



Rt 138 Downtown



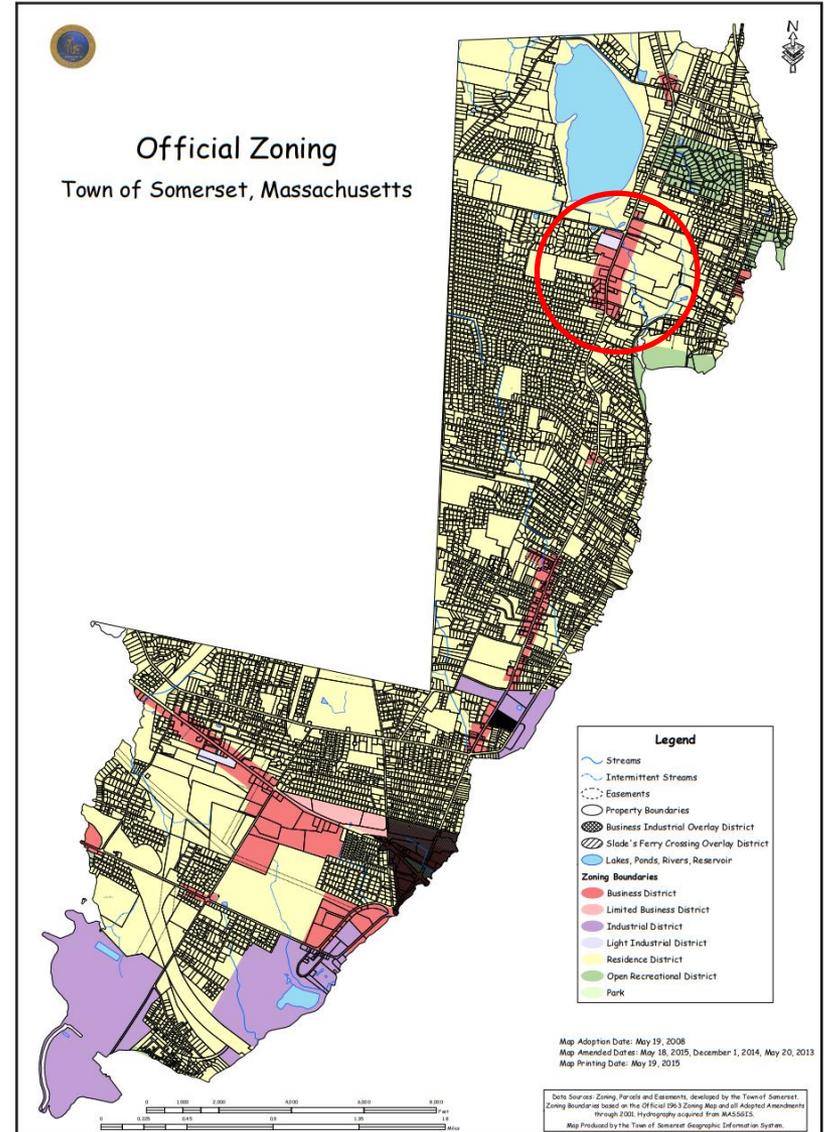


Zoning Observations

 Business Districts



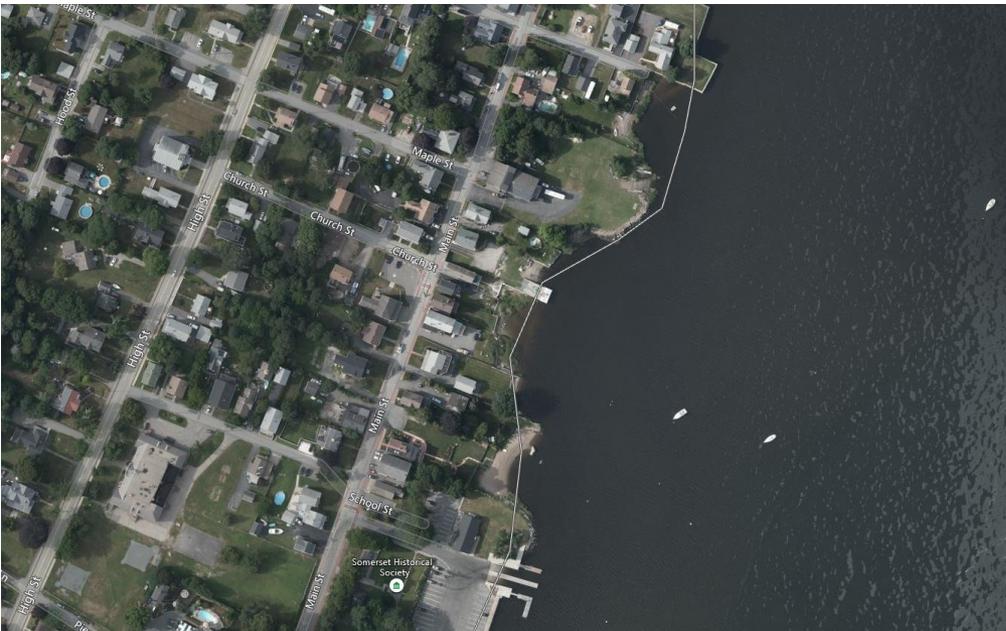
Rt 138 North



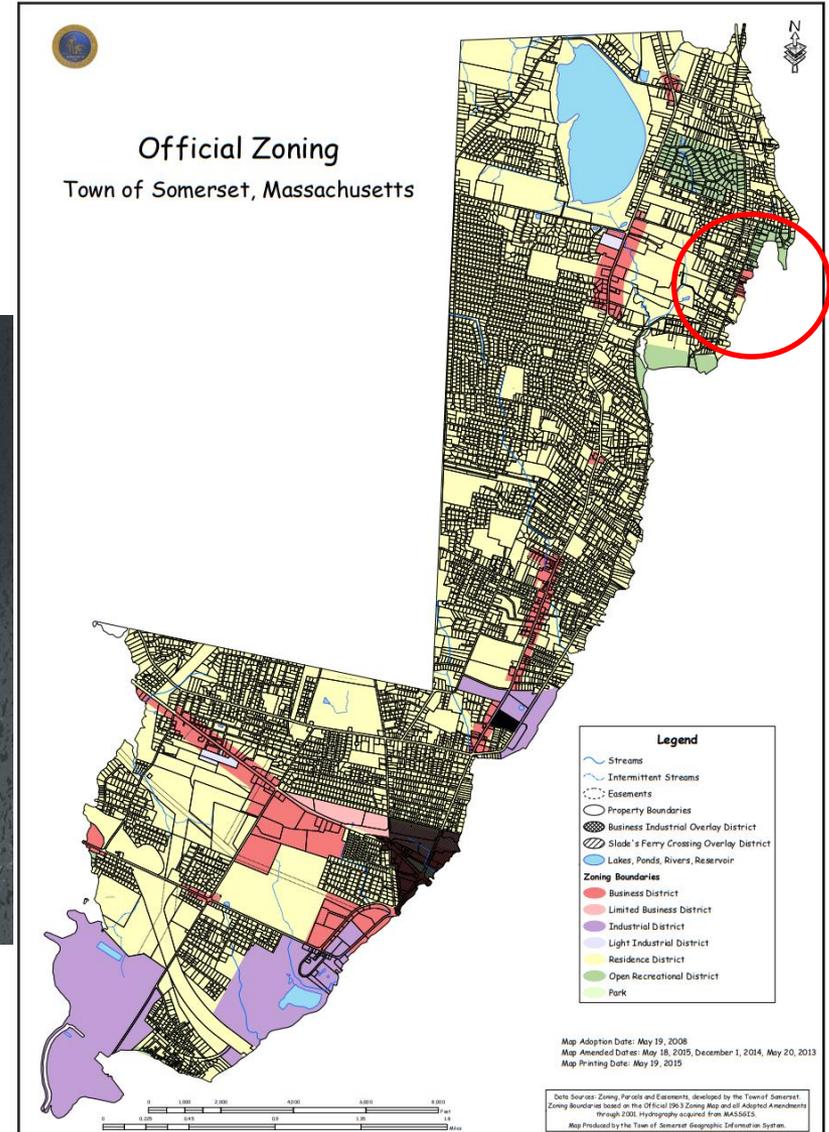


Zoning Observations

 Business Districts



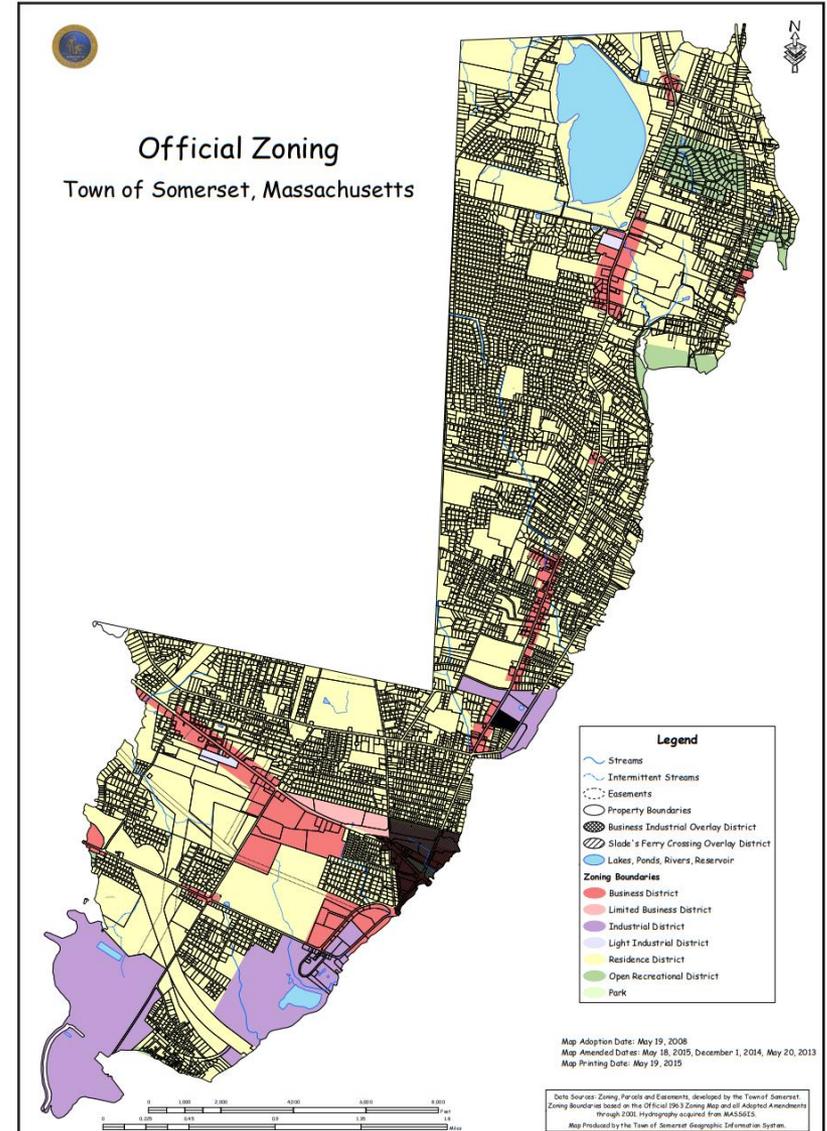
Main Street





Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
- **Industrial Zones**
- Special Districts
- Design Standards
- Dimensional Requirements
- Land Use Tables
- Definitions
- Corridors & Overlay Districts
- Parking



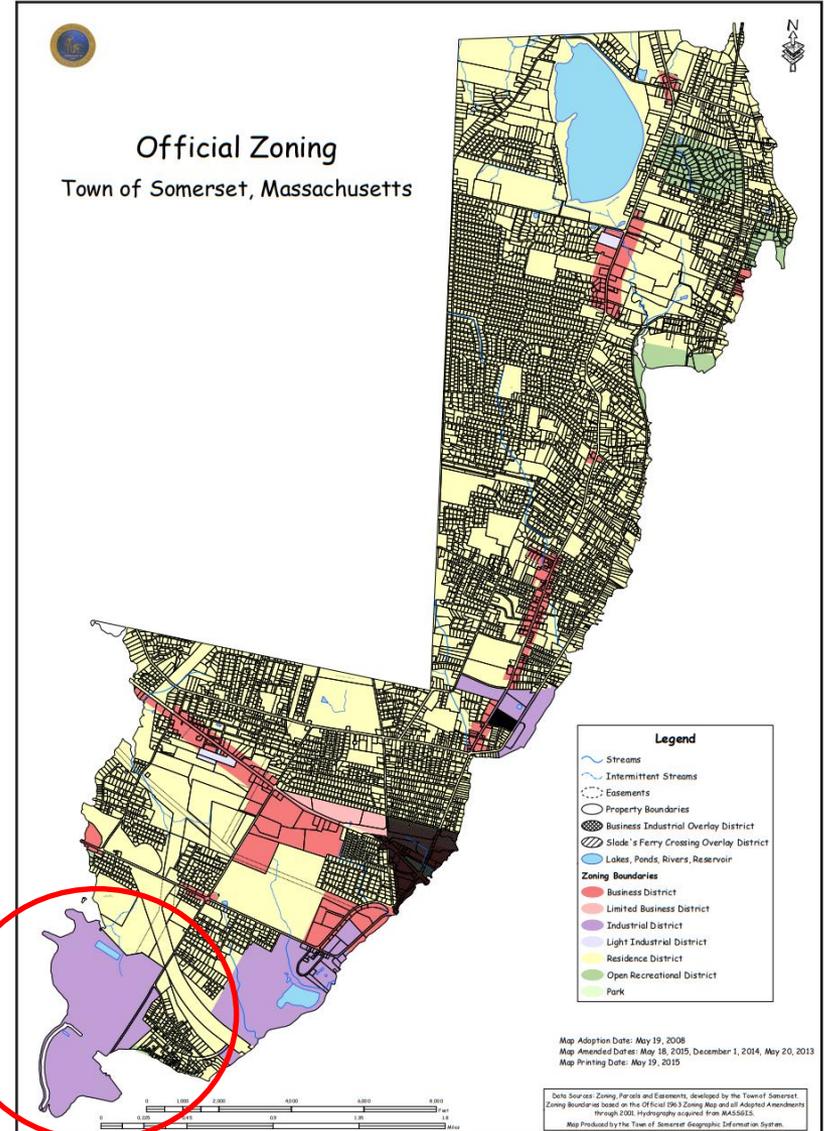


Zoning Observations

 Industrial



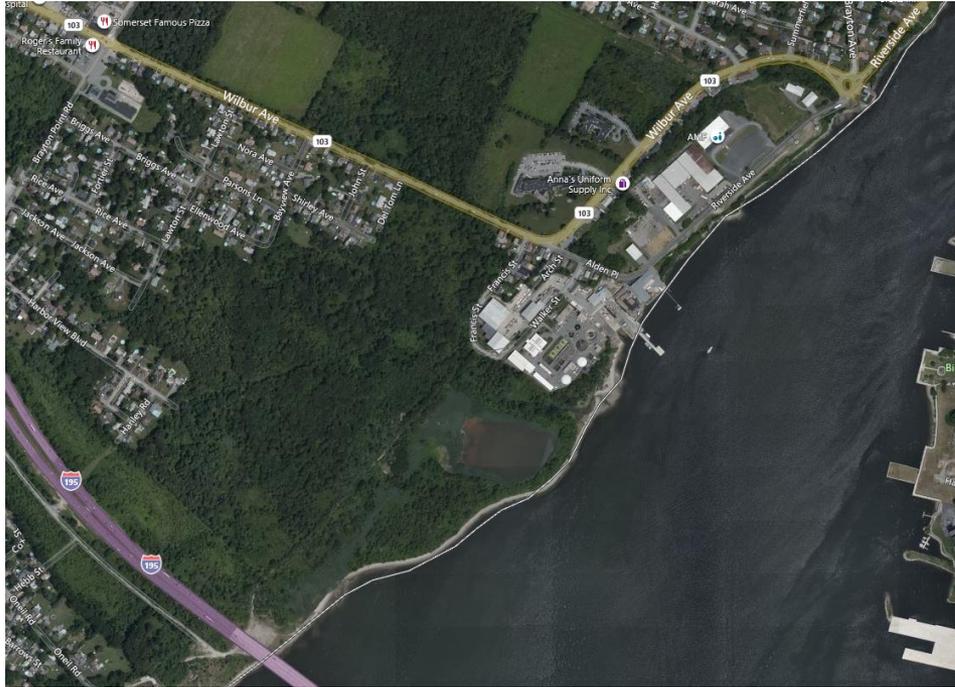
Brayton Point



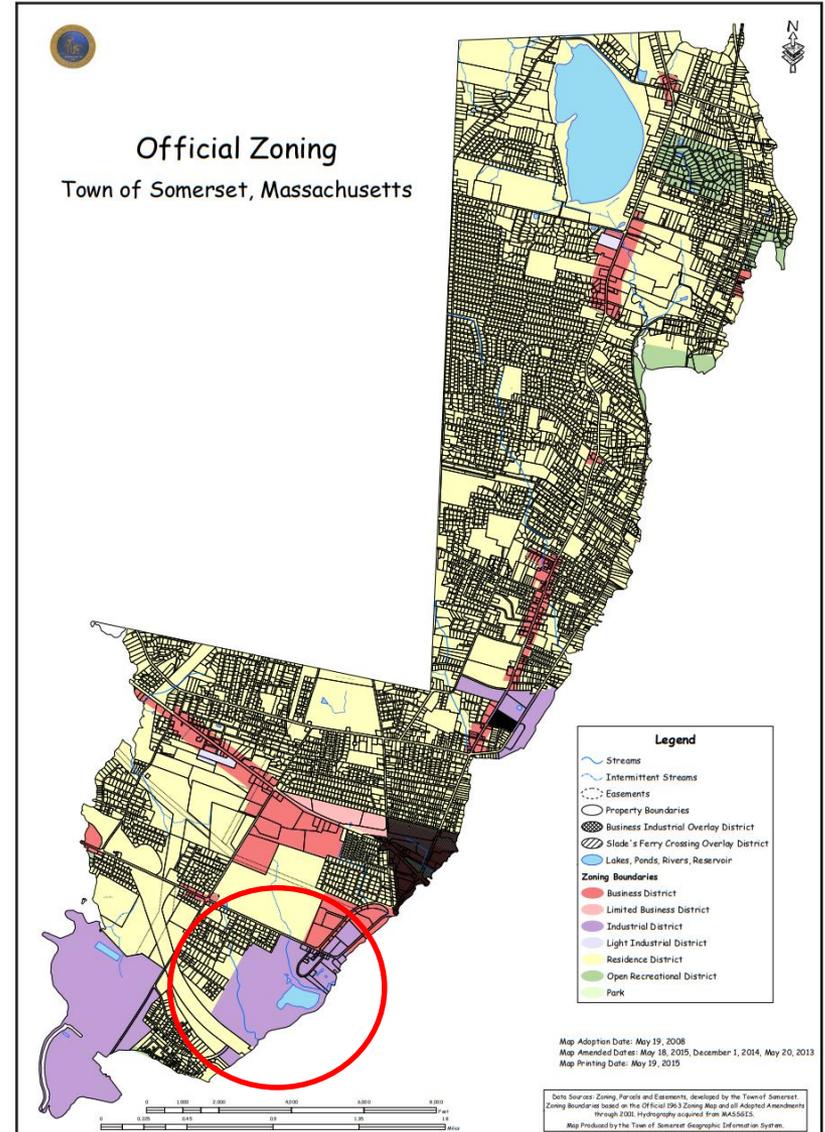


Zoning Observations

 Industrial



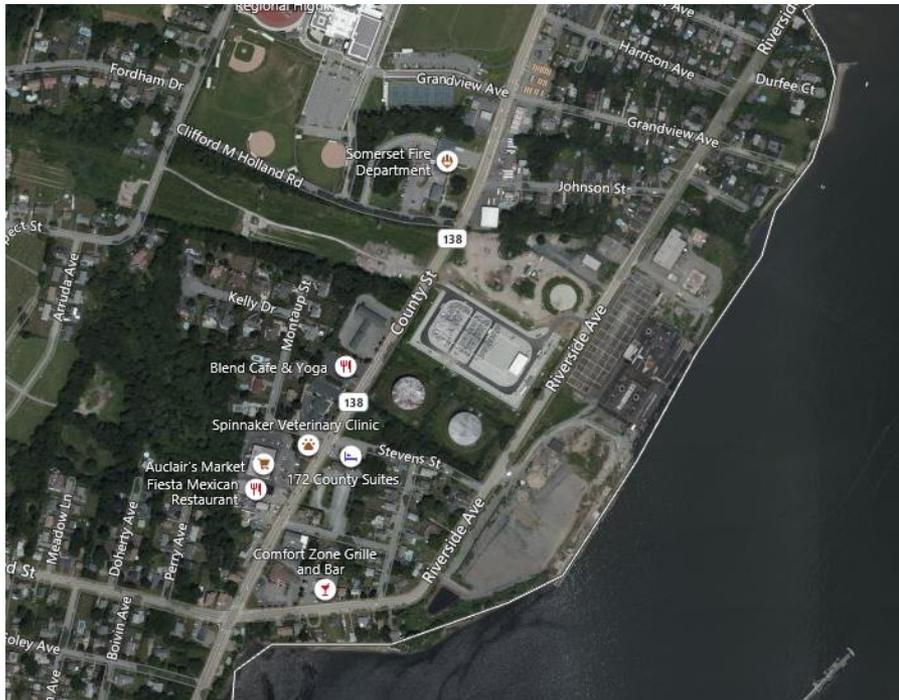
Wilbur Ave



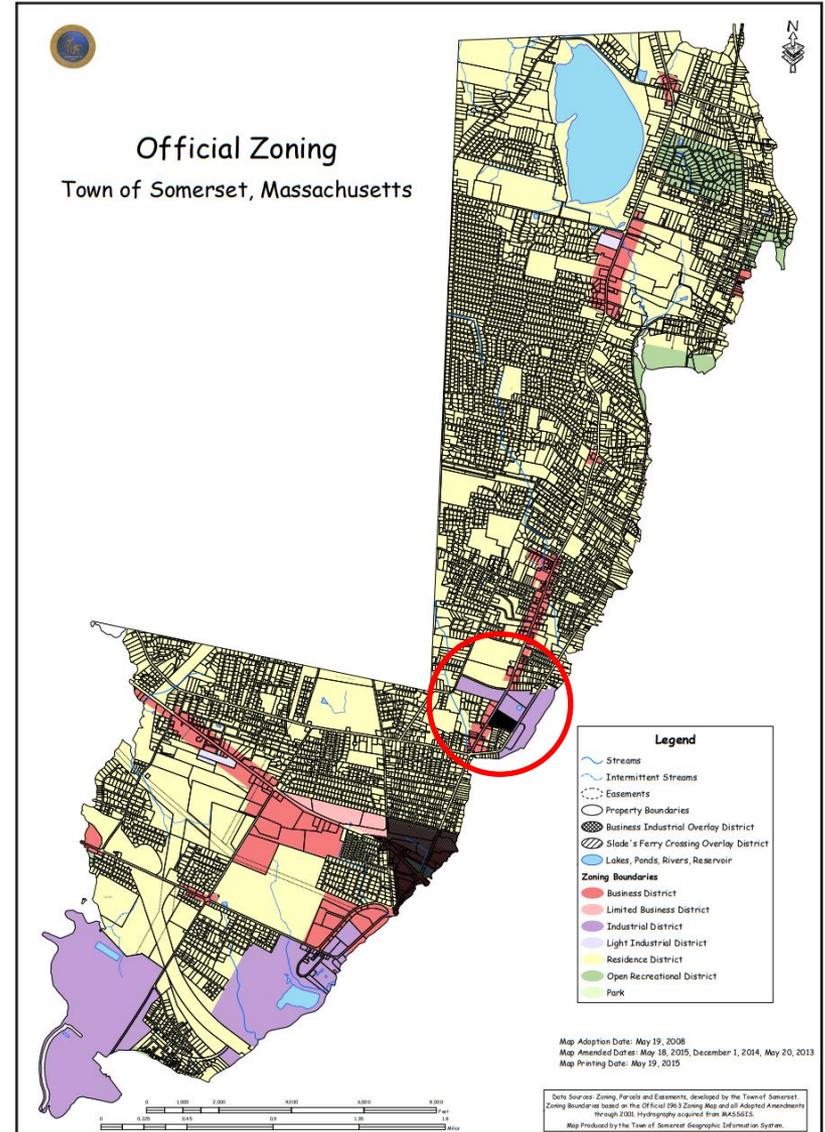


Zoning Observations

 Industrial



Montaup



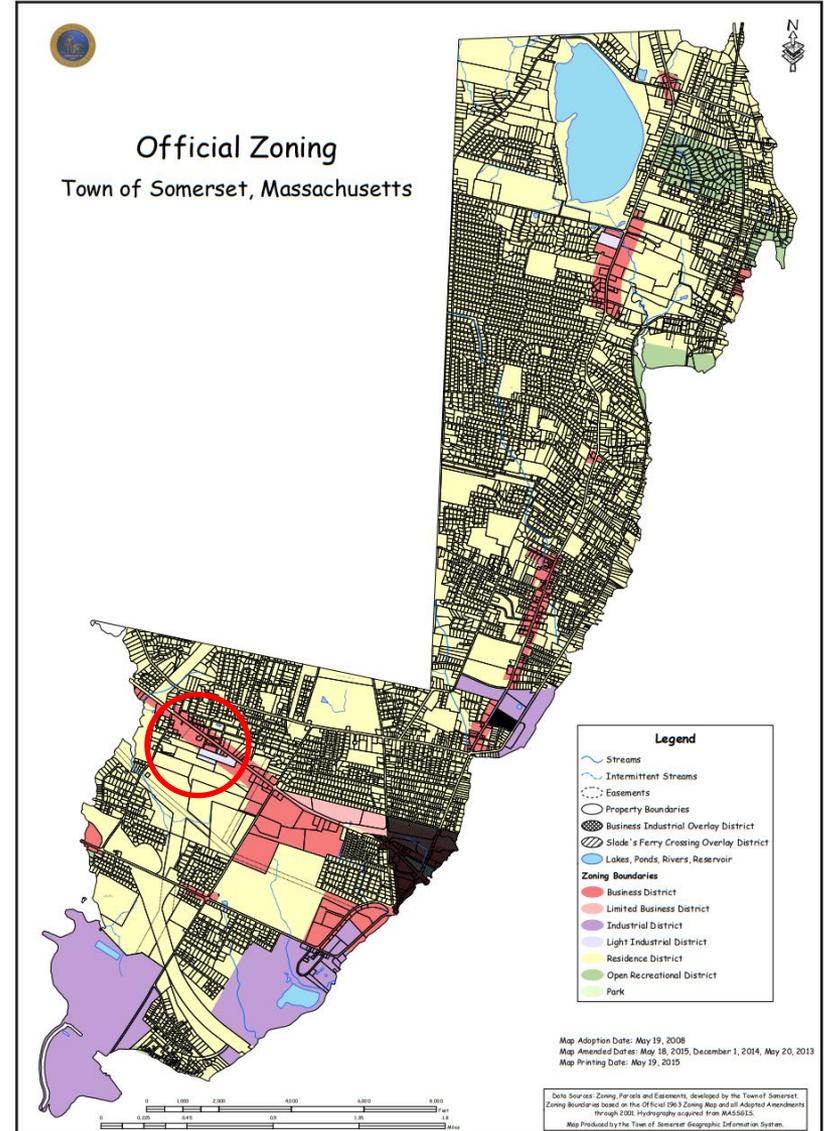


Zoning Observations

Light Industrial



Route 6





Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
- Industrial Zones
- **Special Districts**
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- Parking

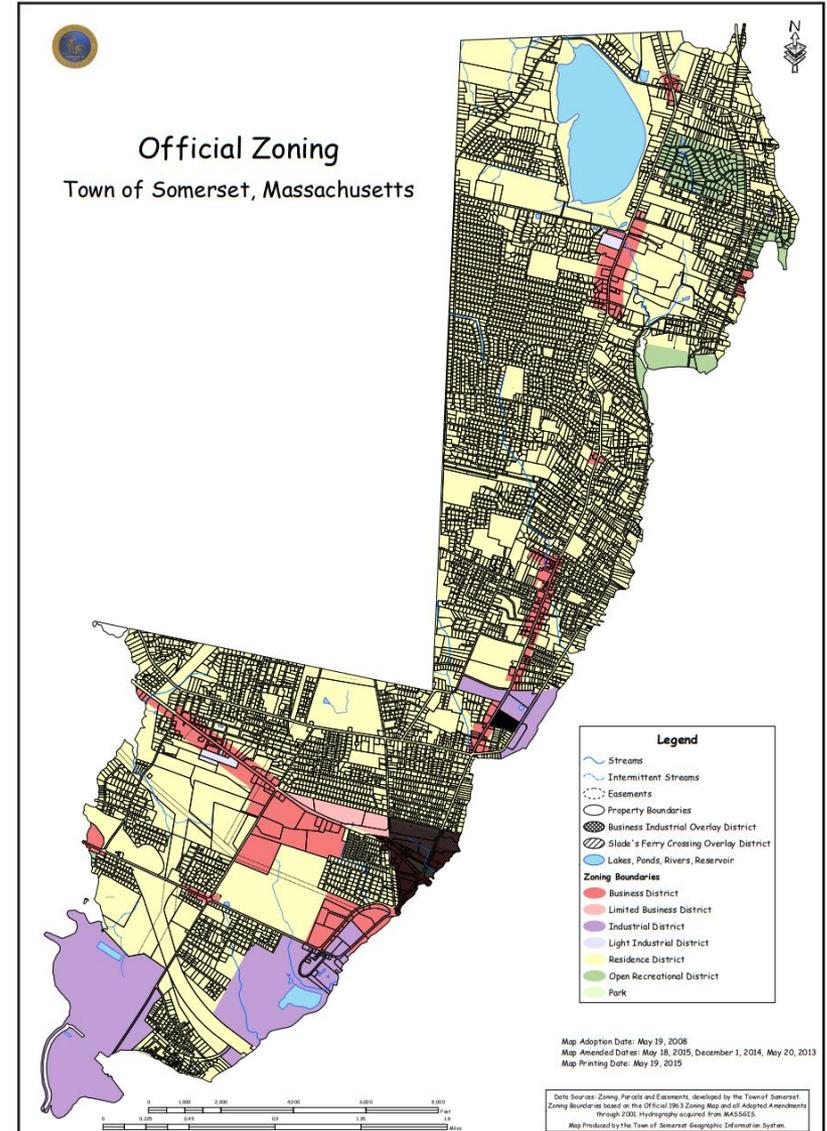
SECTION 9.0 – SPECIAL DISTRICTS

- 9.1 Watershed Protection District
- 9.2 Water Resources Protection District
- 9.3 Floodplain District
- 9.4 Mixed Use Overlay District
- 9.5 Slades Ferry Crossing District
- 9.6 Business Industrial Overlay District



Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
- Industrial Zones
- Special Districts
- **Design Standards**
- Dimensional Requirements
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Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
 - Industrial Zones
 - Special Districts
 - Design Standards
 - **Dimensional Requirements**
 - Land Use Tables
 - Definitions
 - Corridors & Overlay Districts
 - Parking
- No buildings higher than 35' are allowed anywhere.
 - Lot coverage is 35% at most, usually less (possibly excluding hardscape)
 - This is a great opportunity for incentive zoning – e.g. if a proposed development fulfills XYZ goals, the building can be 45'?
 - Variations in Business Areas
 - Integrated Dimensional Table
 - Setbacks and buffers



Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
 - Industrial Zones
 - Special Districts
 - Design Standards
 - Dimensional Requirements
 - **Land Use / Tables**
 - Definitions
 - Corridors & Overlay Districts
 - Parking
- Suggest restructuring the use table – hard to follow
 - Are uses in missing that are envisioned for the future?
 - Conversion of a single family dwelling into a 2-fam dwelling is by special permit only (page 11). To encourage greater density, could this be converted from a “SP” to a “Yes”?
 - Shared housing for the elderly is by special permit only (page 12). To encourage greater density, and greater access to housing for seniors, could this be converted from a “SP” to a “Yes”?



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Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
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 - **Land Use / Tables**
 - Definitions
 - Corridors & Overlay Districts
 - Parking
- Same for Customary Home Occupations, Professional Offices in a Dwelling, and Accessory Units. Can all of these be switched to yes?
 - Agricultural uses are fully allowed in all zones. Shouldn't this be restricted to SP only? (p 12)
 - Vertical mixed use, commercial on ground floor and residential or office above, is not allowed in residential zones, limited business, or open rec districts, and only in certain business districts. To encourage greater mix of uses, could this be converted from "No" to "SP"?



Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
 - Industrial Zones
 - Special Districts
 - Design Standards
 - Dimensional Requirements
 - **Land Use / Tables**
 - Definitions
 - Corridors & Overlay Districts
 - Parking
- Electric generating plant (page 16) is prohibited in all but industrial zones. What about solar or any other form of distributed energy production? Can the zoning be adjusted to show greater support for this type of activity?
 - Research and development labs and facilities (page 16) are prohibited in all but industrial zones. Seems overly restrictive. Can this be allowed in business districts – especially since many office and retail establishments will be closing given current trends?
 - Same comment for Genetic Engineering Laboratories.



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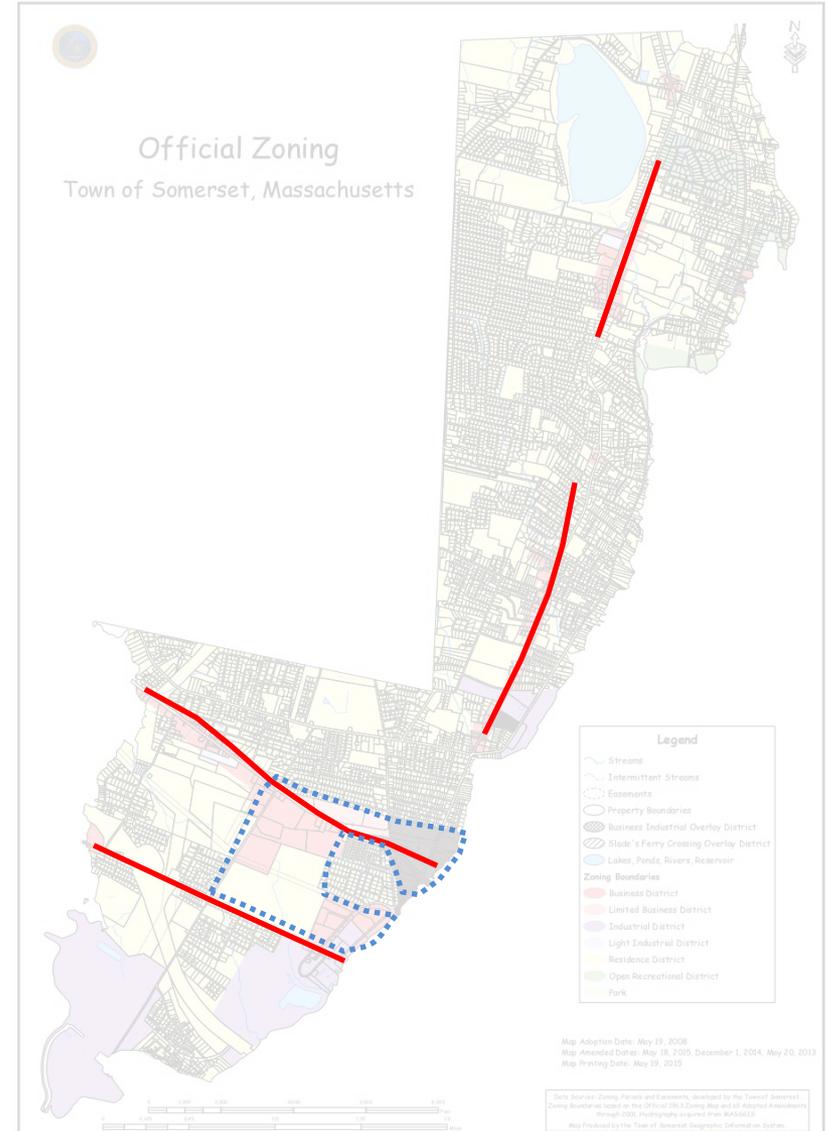
Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
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- Land Use / Tables
- **Definitions**
- Corridors & Overlay Districts
- Parking
- Lot Coverage
- Mixed Use
- Bonus Incentives
- Green Infrastructure /LID
- Smart Growth
- Shared Parking
- Building Envelop
- Terms from Standards Sections
- Terms related to Climate Change and Resiliency?
- Terms related to building standards
 - Façade, Storefronts, etc



Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
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- **Corridors & Overlay Districts**
- Parking





Zoning Observations

- Business Districts
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 - Definitions
 - Corridors & Overlay Districts
 - **Parking**
- Parking Table?
 - Shared parking
 - Reduced Parking
 - Inter-parcel Access
 - Reduced Curb Cuts
 - Suggest looking at other municipalities for best practices
 - Standards within parking lots – LID and Landscape



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Zoning Observations – General (DRAFT)

- General Provisions
 - 6.2.1 Lots on Subdivision Plans. Revision for clarity.
 - 6.4.2. accessory units can't be greater than 25% of the gross floor area. Seems restrictive?
 - 6.5.10. Strike the language ""because of location off an expressway... or obstruction by other signs or structures" – this language seems arbitrary.
 - 6.7.1 Parking. Most of the quantities required seem reasonable. Mixed-use developments require 2 spaces per dwelling unit. Could this be reduced to 1.25 or 1.5?
 - 6.7.1. Parking. Do not see anything about shared parking. It states that all off street parking must be accommodated on the same lot as the building (except by special permit from Board of Appeals). If shared parking is a goal, then the zoning code should state that explicitly.
 - 6.7.1 It is stated that parking spaces must be 20' long, and that separate bays of parking must be 22' apart. Could the bays be shrunk to 20' long to tighten things up?
 - 6.10 Planned Developments. This section requires extensive discussion/revisions for clarity.
- Open Space Community
 - This section is somewhat confusing. The purpose of having this type of area is not clear.
 - The phrase "Open Space Community" is hard to distinguish from the zone category called "Open Recreation District" (which is also referred to as "Open Residential District" more than once).
 - Is this a floating zone or a fixed zone? The map would suggest it's fixed.



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Zoning Observations – General (DRAFT)

- Special Districts
 - Could more Special Districts be created with this current round of re-zoning? Perhaps at the other Opportunity Sites recently identified?
 - 9.4 Mixed Use Development Overlay District. The purpose of this district is to encourage a mix of commercial and residential uses in Business Districts as shown on the Official Zoning Map. Is it a floating zone based on applicant mixing of uses on their site? If so that should be stated explicitly.
 - Allows residential, office, retail, institutional, entertainment
 - It is stated that residences require 2 spaces per unit (9.4.5). Could this be reduced? The Slade's Ferry Crossing district requires 1.25-1.5.
 - 9.4.6 residential density in a mixed use development is limited to 3 per acre. Why? Slades Ferry Crossing District allows up to 8 per acre.
 - 9.5 Slade's Ferry Crossing District
 - This allows for mix of uses, and higher density, and less parking requirements, than anywhere else.
 - Lot Coverage seems to be restrictive
 - 9.6 Business Industrial Overlay. Not sure why this is so small? It appears to only the size of one parcel, as it appears on the map. Can it be enlarged to cover the whole industrial area? Or other industrial areas?



Zoning Observations – General (DRAFT)

- General
 - Anything that we can do to encourage these uses would be a plus – if desired:
 - Work from home
 - Shared office / co-working spaces
 - Mixed use
 - Density
 - Incentive Zoning
 - Can we integrate some form of incentive zoning into this document?
 - Density bonuses?
 - Green building bonuses?
 - Equity / Affordable housing
 - There is little to no language on affordable housing in the zoning by-laws. Can this somehow be addressed?
 - Enforcement
 - How can this be addressed?



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Zoning Observations – General (DRAFT)

- General (con't)
 - Development Review Process
 - It is stated that the Board of Appeals must review and approve site plans for the following types of projects:
 - Planned Developments (6.10)
 - Projects in Limited Business Zones (6.11)
 - Projects in Light Industrial Zones (6.11)
 - And the Planning Board grants special permits – including anything within an overlay district
 - It is stated at 7.3 that the Building Inspector has 30 days to either permit or deny an application for a building permit. Further, it is stated at 7.5.1 that the Board of Appeals has 35 days to provide comments on a submitted Site Plan. Question for reflection: Is this how it actually takes place, typically?



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Zoning Observations – General (DRAFT)

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