Agenda for Wednesday, September 16th

Somerset Development Committee

Town Hall – 7:00 to 8:30 pm – September 16, 2026

Also on Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85410320871?pwd=0DPaJaMiiQMB6A4J4K08mrRib40mxY.1

1. **Introductions**
   Any newcomers?

2. **Committee order**
   a. Approval of minutes from September 2nd – *See attachment 1, Minutes*
   b. Review of today's agenda
   c. Future meeting dates – continue on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 7pm?

3. **Update on building permit amendments**
   Steve Surko, the town's Permit Administrator, will be present to discuss recent permit activity and amendments that relate to the committee's workplan.
   a. *Recent permit activity* – developer inquiries on Trent
   b. *Selected amendments to the building code* – pending before the Town Council
      i. Stormwater drainage, § 112-14.E(5)(a)
      See attachment 2, alternative draft amendment for new construction and net area
   c. Questions on other amendments?
      See attachment 3, Steve's responses to committee questions (same as last meeting).

4. **Update on recent sales**
   See attachment 4, Somerset recent sales – Sept.2023 through Aug. 2026, which reports:
   a. Market generally – Zillow pages describe the Somerset market as "neutral, 54/100"
   b. Total sales – 46 over 3 years, average 15.3 per year
   c. Original scale <1.67m – 17 over 3 years, average 5.67 per year
   d. Post tear-down, new – 10 over 3 years, average 3.3 per year (rate of 40 per decade)

5. **Developing a committee work plan**
   See attachment 5 for version 4 of the work plan outline. We will follow that outline for this stage of the agenda. The following is an overview of revisions to version 3.
   a. *First quarter, July - September*
      i. Revised text on committee charter and hypotheses
      ii. The review of legal authority is moved to October.
   b. *Second quarter – October - December*
      i. Revised permit research – limit to permits for the past year
      ii. Case studies – outline for a template is included
      iii. Revised trend mapping
         1. Recent sales research is completed.
            See attachment 4, Recent sales, Sept. 2023 – Aug. 2026
         2. Research based on MLS data is completed for 2005 – 2023 for properties south of Dorset (RealEstimate maps on Realtor.com).
         3. Confirm questionable properties from permit archives.
         4. Add selected new houses to the spreadsheet (now available) to compare mass and scale, before and after new construction.
      iv. Environmental impacts of development – develop baseline information for:
         1. Stormwater –
            a. Rainfall, one-year storm events, and any trend data

b. Impervious surfaces, town total area and trends available from GIS data
2. Canopy trees – net increase or decrease based on permits, plans, and planting

v. Earlier comparison of policy options

c. *Third quarter – January – March*
Aim to complete policy comparisons ahead of schedule.
d. *Fourth quarter – April – June*
Aim to complete final reports ahead of schedule.

6. Member reflections

Joe Steller will reflect on the town's need for graphic information on development, environmental resources, and demographic trends by mapping. County, state and federal agencies widely use this tool. For example, this committee's work plan is supported by "person" research with analog displays, but the digital information is available in public databases. This data could be (but is not) aggregated automatically with a graphic interface. Who do we know with experience using or developing such systems? Which local or state agencies are good models for Somerset?

7. Next steps

a. October 7 – Full committee: action on work plan, review of legal authority
b. October 19 – Committee report to Town Council work session
c. October 21 – Research update on policy comparisons

Attachment 1

Minutes of Meeting on September 2, 2026

Somerset Development Committee

Video: https://youtu.be/soooItwTKbo

1. Introductions

a. *Members present* – Robert Stumberg (Committee Chair), Nancy Sussman, Soching Tsai, Phyllis Wiesenfelder, Joe Steller, Erlinda Doherty (Council liaison), and Justin Burgett (Town Staff).

2. Committee order

a. The minutes of August 16, 2026, meeting were approved with one correction: In item 4.a, First Quarter work, restore the task of completing a diagram of the building permit process.

b. The agenda for the meeting was approved.

3. Update on building permit amendments

a. Steve Surko, the Town's Permit Administrator, was unable to attend this meeting, so the building permit issues will be carried forward. Steve's written responses to committee questions will be attached to the agenda for September 16th.

b. The committee discussed current market dynamics starting with Trent Street, where two properties are currently listed.

   i. Who competes for original-scale houses? There are many economic motivations at play, not just one market or one demographic.

      (1) Transitional families see their kids moving back for a time after college, so they may defer downsizing.

      (2) Developers are certainly active buyers, and some residents prefer to sell to a developer for convenience. The broader community does not have access to the sale.

      (3) Young families are the stereotypic buyers of smaller houses, but not the only ones. Some of them can purchase with support from other family members.

      (4) Two-earner families, mid-career, can still afford entry-level houses in Somerset.

      (5) Older couples are often looking to downsize, and they see Somerset as an attractive place to retire in the home-style of their preference.

   ii. Developers are active in Somerset and Chevy Chase, generally because they can purchase for $1.6m and sell for $4.5m, gaining a major return on investment, even after construction costs.

c. There was a conversation about the effort it took and opposition to create the Somerset historic district, industry opposition to the district, and the effort made to create an historic district on Grantham Avenue.

4. Developing a committee work plan

The committee discussed the outline of a workplan, version 2.

a. *Introductory comments*
The Mayor and Council are eager to learn of the Committee's work. Expect the Council to ask the committee to move faster than necessary to complete its work by next June.

b. *Committee charter purposes* – architectural compatibility and diversity are highlighted in the committee's charter.

   i. Given recent price ranges, some members see Somerset residents and those who can afford to buy here as "we're all rich." What does diversity mean in terms of the committee's charter?

   ii. What is diversity? Committee members expressed a variety of views.

      (1) Architectural diversity – preserving ramblers and mid-century styles with an entry level of $1.2 to $1.6.

      (2) Diversity of occupations – people who can buy with government and nonprofit salaries.

(3) Intergenerational money makes it possible for "starter families" to afford a home they could not purchase on their own.
(4) The trend is toward converting lower to higher entry prices so that eventually, those who can afford $1.6 million cannot buy into Somerset. Diversity means retaining a range of price levels. We shouldn't become a community where the only houses you can buy are $4 million houses.
(5) We have a good amount of diversity now. The aim is to preserve that.

iii. The draft work plan, version 3, addresses this conversation with explicit hypotheses for the committee to confirm or disprove with data on two main goals to preserve — (1) compatibility of architectural scales and (2) diversity of homes and potential buyers. The chair presented some preliminary data on these points:
(1) Compatibility
(a) Recent examples of new construction exceed the original scale of homes on the block by 432% (5522 Greystone), 353% (4714 Essex), and 340% (4803 Grantham, 2nd proposal).
(b) The committee discussed the need to compare (before and after new construction) total square feet (the MLS numbers) as well as s.f. above grade.
(2) Affordability and diversity – price range of recent sales
(a) Near original scale: prices from $1.1 to $1.7m, incomes to finance, $280-$300,000
(b) Tear-down / build up – prices from $3.4 to $4.5, incomes to finance above $860,000
(3) Age demographics are driving the trend of increased properties for sale as baby boomers age out and sell their homes.
(a) 25% of residents in the Somerset census tract are older that 65 years. An informal survey of Somerset residents confirms this level.
(b) In Somerset (about 440 houses), that would be 100 households.
(4) Rate of tear-down / build-up
(a) Estimate from 2005 – 2025 is 18 per decade (including recession and Covid years).
(b) Prediction for 2026 – 2035 based on age demographics is 36-54, an increase to at least 200% of the baseline.

iv. The details of committee tasks for will be carried into the next meeting. Members were asked to comment or offer edits to version 3.

5. Next steps

a. The next meeting will focus on developing the work plan.
b. Preview of next meetings
i. September 2 – Full committee
ii. September 16 – Research update

Attachment 2

Alternative amendment to the Somerset Building Code

Pending with the Development Committee

Draft of September 9, 2026

Drafting format:
Regular font shows existing text of the code.
~~Strike-through~~ shows deletion from the code.
Bold font shows amendments as proposed in the draft, "No. 3, 2026-7-2 (Comprehensive)."
~~Bold strike-through~~ shows deletion from the draft amendment.
Underline font shows alternative language offered by the committee.

Alternative amendment on stormwater drainage plans

§ 112-14 Building requirements; stormwater drainage.
E. Other requirements.
(5) Stormwater drainage.

(a) All new building construction must include a stormwater drainage plan. The plan must provide on-site infiltration for all runoff from all ~~rooftop~~ impervious surfaces. On-site infiltration must be provided for a one-year storm event. The plan shall be designed in accordance with subsection E(5)(c) below. For purposes of this subsection, new building construction includes a main or accessory building that is constructed:

[1] on the vacant portion of a lot;

[2] after 50 percent or more of the existing floor area above grade is demolished; or

[2] to add 50 percent or more to the existing floor area above grade.

(b) All other construction—not covered by paragraph E(5)(a) above as a new building—must have a stormwater drainage plan if it creates a net increase in impervious area counting **~~For purposes of this subsection paragraph, all new impervious surfaces constructed within~~ the five-year period prior to the filing of an application shall be included in the calculation of the area.**

[1] For projects creating an increase of less than 150 square feet of impervious surface area, the stormwater drainage plan must specify the design or provisions for the control or conveyance of any increase in runoff. The development and design of the drainage plan must be consistent with the format and requirements specified in the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services Guidelines for Control of Water Runoff on Small Lots, as amended. The Mayor, in his discretion, may waive the requirement for a stormwater drainage plan for minimal increases in impervious surface area.

[2] For projects creating an increase of 150 square feet of impervious surface area or more, the stormwater drainage plan must provide on-site infiltration for the volume of stormwater runoff resulting from the net increase in impervious surfaces for a one-year storm event. The plan shall be designed in accordance with subsection E(5)~~(b)~~(c) below.

~~[3] For new building construction, the stormwater drainage plan must provide on-site infiltration for the volume of stormwater runoff resulting from all impervious surfaces for a one-year storm event. The plan shall be designed in accordance with subsection E(5)(b) below.~~

Rationale for this approach

The rationale for the alternative amendment above is provided in comments submitted to the Mayor and Council on July 31, which were attached to the Development Committee's agenda for August 5th.

Comments on Notice of Hearings and Drainage Plans for New Construction
July 31, 2026
To Mayor Khanna and members of the Town Council –

The packet for the August 3rd meeting includes comments from members of the town's new Development Committee on the proposed building-code amendments. With a few days to reflect, I wanted to highlight two shortcomings with the amendments and urge you to revise the ordinance to:

- Provide 30-day notice of permit hearings to all residents, not just adjoining neighbors, and
- Preserve the requirement of a drainage plan for all new construction.

These two issues rise above the technical details. Thank you for the opportunity to stress their importance, as noted in the comments below.

Sincerely,
Robert Stumberg
Grantham Avenue

Notice of permit hearings to all residents

The proposed amendments provide notice to all residents when a permit is requested, and they increase notice of hearing notice to adjoining and confronting neighbors to 30 days. I was remiss not to comment previously that there is no parallel 30-day notice of a hearing date to all residents. In a recent permit process (4803 Grantham), the developer dismissed opposition from adjoining neighbors, but then told the Council that he took seriously the concerns raised by most other residents of the entire block.

Please see the memo from Kumar Vaswami (in the packet for this Council meeting) that explains this and other shortcomings in the proposed implementation of recommendations from the Public Service Committee for notice of permit process.

Drainage plans for new construction

Current code
The current code section on required drainage plans (§ 112-14.E.5.a) is organized with three distinct subsections:

1. New construction – a plan must provide on-site filtration for all rooftop surfaces. *However, it is unclear whether it must do so for all impervious surfaces.*
2. New or replacement driveways – a plan must provide for permeable materials.
3. All construction with an increase of 150+ sf – a plan must provide on-site filtration for the "new" impervious surfaces.

Proposed amendments and new construction
The proposed amendments have a sub-paragraph for new-construction, which cures the uncertainty about impervious surfaces other than the roof [it applies to "all impervious surfaces"]:

> **[3] For new building construction, the stormwater drainage plan must provide on-site infiltration for the volume of stormwater runoff resulting from all impervious surfaces for a one-year storm event. The plan shall be designed in accordance with subsection E(5)(b) below.**

However, this paragraph is *preceded* by an introductory subjection E(5)(a), under which paragraph [3] above is subordinate. It reads:

(a) All ~~new building~~ construction **creating a net increase in impervious surface**

area must include a stormwater drainage plan. ~~The plan must provide on-site infiltration for all runoff from all rooftop surfaces. On-site infiltration must be provided for a one-year storm event.~~ **For purposes of this subsection, all new impervious surfaces constructed within the five-year period prior to the filing of an application shall be included in the calculation of the area.**

The new introduction appears to control the subsections that follow, and it introduces ambiguity as to exactly how much on-site infiltration is required for new construction. There are two possible readings:

1. Based on the logic of the introduction, the new paragraph [3] only applies to new construction "creating a net increase in impervious surface area." If there is no net increase, then the amendment requires no drainage plan for the new construction. If there is a net increase, then subsection [3] requires that the drainage plan must cover all impervious surfaces.
2. The alternative reading is that subsection [3] requires on-site filtration for all impervious surfaces for new construction—which would be a stronger version of the current code provision on new construction. However, this reading is only possible if you ignore the introductory scoping language of subsection (a), which requires a drainage plan only if there is a net increase in impervious surface area.

I urge the Council to reject the most likely interpretation, #1 above, that a drainage plan is not required for new construction so long as it presents no net increase in impervious surface area. To do so would grandfather lots that generate damaging stormwater runoff based on existing impervious surfaces. It would do so when new construction affords the optimal conditions for curative environmental site design (ESD) and structural devices as necessary.

Rather, the Council should preserve the existing code's clear mandate to require a drainage plan for all new construction in subsection E(5)(a), and then use the language of proposed paragraph [3] to cure the uncertainty over how much infiltration must be required (i.e., all impervious surfaces). * * *

Attachment 3

Somerset Development Committee

Steve Surko's Responses to Committee Questions

Re: Proposed Amendments to the Town Building Code

Stephen Surko <stephen.surko@outlook.com> Wed, Aug 19, 2026

To: Robert Stumberg <stumberg@law.georgetown.edu>
Cc: EJ Hardwick <manager@townofsomersetmd.gov>

With regards to the specific comments:

a. §112-5 Application form.

E. Required information

(1) Legal information.

Delete (d)~~A description and the location of any easements located on the lot upon which the proposed work is to be performed~~,

- What is the rationale for this deletion? Historically, easements have been instruments of discrimination. In the affordable housing debate, easements are being debated as exclusionary obstacles to infill development. Easements are often used to preserve properties that have significant historic value, provide environmental conservation value, or provide for public access (usually associated with existing infrastructure). Dating back to 1899, subdivision plats contain easements in the Town.
  - *I suspect that the rationale was to remove a burden for homeowners proposing additions, but I'm not sure. It's my recollection that the Town maintains a record of all easements. If so, perhaps it could be posted on the Town's web site. If not, then I recommend that Town Staff develop such a record.*

(2) Project description

Delete (5)(b) ~~The cost of the proposed work, as set forth on the Montgomery County building permit for this project~~;

- With this deletion, the town would forego information that a developer submits for the county's process. Cost of a project is relevant to granting variances, and cost data is relevant to the town's ability to assess the impact of development on diversity and affordability of housing stock.
  - *In general, my recommendation is for permit applications to only require information relevant to the application process. I do not understand how cost information "is relevant to granting variances and the town's ability to assess the impact of development on diversity and affordability of housing stock." That said, I can see the value in requiring some information (e.g., front yard non-vegetative coverage) that is not currently regulated but which the Council is interested in better understanding in order to inform future Council deliberations.*
- Our work plan is likely to develop additions to the project description so as to highlight information (e.g., the building height calculation) that is presently located in text boxes and tables in the corners and margins of technical drawings.
  - *Sounds good!*

b. § 112-7 Permit conditions.

E. Compliance with permit, approved plans, and permit conditions.

Insert (2) Requiring compliance with a parking plan which may provide that, among other

things: (a) parking shall be located on the property which is the subject of the Town building permit; (b) if additional parking is needed, parking shall be located on more than one street in the immediate area of the property which is the subject of the Town building permit; and (c) parking more than three vehicles in the same area of a Town street shall not be permitted;

- The E(2) insert requires compliance with a plan that is permissive, but then omits who decides what the plan may provide. It permits parking "on more than one street in the immediate area," but "not more than three vehicles in the same area of a Town street." Would it be clearer to simply require a parking plan that does not exceed three vehicles per block?
- Construction trucks consistently park on the wrong side of a street, blocking traffic, and creating dangerous conditions, seemingly with no consequences. Should there be some mention of the Town's enforcement of the parking requirements?
    - *In general, I concur with the Development Committee's recommendations to make project parking plans more straightforward (and effective). I also recommend that the Council specify the use of flaggers (if so desired). I propose the following language:*

(1) Prohibiting or limiting the locations upon public and private property where contractors or other construction-related vehicles may be parked in accordance with a parking plan which may provide that, among other things: (a) parking shall be located on the property which is the subject of the Town building permit; (b) parking more than three vehicles on the same block of a Town street shall not be permitted; and (c) a special parking permit shall be requested from the Town Manager at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance for temporary or extended parking that does not conform with the approved parking plan and/or interferes with traffic flow;

(2) Requiring flaggers for any construction activity that interferes with traffic flow;

Experience suggests that the most effective enforcement mechanism is t he imposition of a Stop Work Order.

c. § 112-7 Permit conditions.

E. Compliance with permit, approved plans, and permit conditions.
Insert (6) Requiring compliance with a planting plan, as defined in § 112-2; and if so required, the planting plan must not include any invasive species; and

d. § 112-14 Building requirements; stormwater drainage.

Delete B. ~~A planting plan, as defined in § 112-2, must be submitted for new construction. The planting plan must not include any invasive species.~~ (Reserved).

- *I would defer to the Town Arborist to describe what he needs to see in a plan to ensure that tree replacements are appropriate and reasonably located and to verify that invasive species are not planted. A full planting plan (specifying species/sizes/locations for trees and shrubs) may not be necessary.*

e. §112-8 Action on permit.

E. Administrative procedure.
Insert and Delete E. ~~Air conditioning and heat pump a~~Administrative procedure. In addition to the procedures set forth in this section on processing an application for a building permit, the following procedures may be utilized regarding a building permit ~~for an air conditioner or heat pump~~ the project types set forth below; provided, however, that in the case of an application submitted with a building permit application for new construction of a building ~~or an addition~~, or while such a project is in process, the

application shall be reviewed by the Town Council.

- The deletion of “or an addition” appears to carve out Council review of a permit even in the case of a major addition that would qualify as “infill development” under the R-60 standards of the County Code. What is the rationale?
  - *No, the removal of "or an addition" allows for administrative processing of applications of in-kind HVAC unit replacements to reduce the administrative burden on the Council. Any structural addition (or change) to a house requires Council approval - and the HVAC placement is considered accordingly. Accordingly, it may make the most sense to keep "or an addition" in the language.*

Insert (c) The building permit application is for approval of one or more of the following projects, new or replacement: (i) air-conditioning unit or heat pump; (ii) fence or wall (per §112-26); (iii) accessory building comprising 100 square feet or less; (iv) screening or enclosing of an existing porch; (v) impervious surface comprising 150 square feet or less; or (vii) unenclosed porch, balcony, deck, stairway, steps, or window well. Other than the foregoing list of items for which the Mayor may issue a permit administratively, the Town Council will review a building permit application in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter.

- The amendments make clear that curb cuts require a permit, but there are no criteria for approving or denying curb cuts, even when they reduce space for street parking more than necessary.
  - *The objective here was to streamline the process for small projects - which conform to the Code - for homeowners and the Council.*
  - *With regards to (v), the criteria for curb cuts are contained in **§170-2 Driveway apron or curb cut.***

A. There shall be no more than one curb cut per property.

Town Council, as may be adopted from time to time.

C. A driveway apron in the public right-of-way may not exceed ten (10) feet in width; provided, however, there may be an additional five-foot radius on each side of the driveway, for a total entrance at the curbside not to exceed twenty (20) feet in width.

The Town of Somerset Apron Driveway Schematic (attached) applies.

- *B. Curb cuts and driveway aprons must conform to the standards established by resolution of the*

With regards to (vii), a new or replacement unenclosed porch, balcony, deck, stairway, steps, or window well would require County approval. If such a project is approved by the County and conforms to the Town's Code, on what basis could the Council reject it?

E. Other requirements

(5) Stormwater drainage

Delete and insert (a) All ~~new building~~ construction creating a net increase in impervious surface area must include a stormwater drainage plan. ~~The plan must provide on-site infiltration for all runoff from all rooftop surfaces. On-site infiltration must be provided for a one-year storm event.~~ For purposes of this subsection, all new impervious surfaces constructed within the five-year period prior to the filing of an application shall be included in the calculation of the area.

- The amendment deletes requirement of a drainage plan for all new construction, and in its place, requires a plan only for a "net increase in impervious surface." This would grandfather a carveout for impervious surface regardless of adverse impact of a pre-existing surfaces, even when they are demolished and replaced by new construction. What is the rationale?
    - *The intention of this section is to make it clear that all construction projects creating any increase in impervious surface area must provide stormwater management. The stormwater management - and documentation required - vary according to the net increase in impervious surface area, as specified in subparagraphs [1], [2], and [3]. The proposed amendment to the Town's Code (**§112-14 Building requirements**; stormwater drainage. E. (5)(a)) states:*
      [3] For new building construction, the stormwater drainage plan must provide on-site infiltration for the volume of stormwater runoff resulting from all impervious surfaces for a one-year storm event. The plan shall be designed in accordance with subsection E(5)(b) below.
- Does the inserted last sentence carve out from the calculation of net increase any "new" impervious surfaces constructed before the five-year period? If so, what is the rationale?
    - *Construction before the five-year period is not considered. In general, the current application process only considers a two-year window for assessing construction (impervious surface area). This sentence was inserted to prevent "gaming" the system by breaking a project down into small increments that trigger less demanding stormwater management. And I note that a five-year window is consistent with the regulation regarding tree removals.*
    - *From my perspective, if an addition triggers the Montgomery County definition of "infill development" as described in Section 4.4.9. Residential - 60 Zone (R-60) Standard Method Development Standards (attached) it is effectively a "new" house. Because this categorization triggers a significantly more restrictive limit on lot coverage, it has been my experience that developers constrain their additions to avoid the designation.*

Delete ~~(b) All new or replacement driveways must be constructed of permeable materials~~. This change was driven by a recognition that the use of permeable pavers was rarely imposed on residents because burdensome on some residents

- Does deletion of the specific driveway requirement mean that driveways are regulated only to the extent that they contribute to a net increase in impervious surface area?
    - *Yes*
- If a driveway was built more than five years before a permit application, does that mean replacing it requires no permit, and it does not count towards a net increase in impervious surface for other construction on the lot?
    - *No, any new or replacement driveway requires a permit. A driveway more than 5 years old does not count towards the calculation of total new impervious surface area for an addition. All impervious surface area for a new house, including the driveway - whether it is replaced or not - must be addressed by a stormwater management plan.*

Overarching Development Committee comments:

- **Trees and natural infiltration**
  The amendments delete planting as a required plan for a building permit and, instead, make it a discretionary condition. This seems odd in light of the code's

priority for natural infiltration of stormwater. In recent new construction, “screening” of mass and scale with trees and maintaining the tree canopy have been major issues. The criteria for removing a tree under the code’s tree chapter do not include convenience or need in construction. In short, our work plan is likely to include strengthening (or re-enacting) a planting plan for new construction and major additions. Even if a discretionary planting plan is required under this amendment, our concern is that there are no clear standards for approval of a plan for planting.

- *In general, I defer to the Town's Arborist regarding the Planting and Reforestation Plans. Somerset appears to be unique in its protection of trees on public and private property. I would appreciate some guidance on the acceptability of conservation landscaping in stormwater management.*

- **Net area for a drainage plan**

  The amendment deletes the requirement for a drainage plan for all new construction, and in its place, requires a plan only for a “net increase in impervious surface.” It excludes any “new” surfaces that were added five years before the permit application. In addition to creating a net/net formula that is complex, the resulting standard appears to regulate only the net increases, regardless of the drainage impact of impervious surfaces that are replaced by new construction.

  - *No. Any net increase in impervious surface area triggers the requirement for a stormwater management plan - but the stormwater management plan for a new house must address all runoff from all impervious surface area for a 1-year storm event.*

- **Drainage plan methodology**

  Review of a stormwater drainage plan involves state stormwater standards that are technically complex. Our concern is that standards for approval of the methodology in a plan by the town, as well as the county, are highly subjective. Our work plan is likely to include review standards that provide a more specific hierarchy of filtration methods, from most-to-least desirable.

  - *From my perspective, the most "complex" aspect of the Stormwater Design Manual is the calculation of the design rainfall (Pe) for a "natural woodland". Maryland requires management of rainwater "in order to replicate predevelopment hydrologic conditions, typically those of 'woods in good condition.'" This calculation generally defines a Pe of about 1.8". Somerset's Code simplifies - and strengthens - this by requiring that a stormwater management system must handle the rainwater from a 1-year stormwater event (defined as 2.6" in the SDM).*
  - *Somerset's Code already describes a two-tiered (non-structural/structural) approach to stormwater management systems. Further development of a hierarchy of SWM systems sounds fine. Clarification of what difficulties/issues provide sufficient rationale (e.g., soil type) to adopt a less-desirable SWM system would be desirable. In my experience, contractors frequently assert that they don't have sufficient pace to implement certain SWM systems - because the footprint of the house is large. The Development Committee could consider some language to the effect that lack of space with a new house is not sufficient rationale to adopt a less desirable SWM system.*

Attachment 4

Somerset Recent Sales

Sept. 2023 through Aug. 2026

Draft of 9/14/26

Using Zillow, search by entering a street and "Chevy Chase, MD" for a map of "recently sold homes." Sales data is sourced from Bright MLS unless noted otherwise; the report covers the past 36 months.
Bold indicates sale below $1.67m
Bold red indicates post-teardown new construction
SF square feet: MLS sf is total livable space, AG above grade, B finished bsmt (no unfinished bsmt)

Initial observations

1. Market generally – Zillow pages describe the Somerset market as "neutral, 54/100"
2. Total sales – 46 over 3 years, average 15.3 per year
3. Original scale <1.67m – 17 over 3 years, average 5.67 per year
4. Post tear-down, new – 10 over 3 years, average 3.3 per year (rate of 40 per decade)

2026 through Aug: *11 total, 4 original scale <1.65m, 5 post-teardown new construction*

1. 4520 Dorset – Contemporary, 6/1/26 (4/23/26 @ $3.25), $3.1m, 6bd, 6ba, 6,002 sf MLS (4,509 sf AB, 1,493 B), $516/psf, 8,515 lot, substantially rebuilt after teardown in 2009, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4520-Dorset-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174751_zpid/
   4520 Dorset – 12/7/07, $1.075m, $179/psf, and prior sale: 5/22/07, $0.95m, $158/psf, teardown.
2. 4905 Dorset – Rambler, 3/25/26 (3/5/26 @ $2.8m), $2.95m, 5bd, 5ba, 4,199 sf MLS (2,699 sf AG, 1,500 sf B), $703/psf, 19,578 sf lot, built 1964, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4905-Dorset-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174622_zpid/
3. 4722 Cumberland – Colonial, 6/24/26 (6/3/26 @ $1.8), $1.9m, built in 1961, 4bds, 4ba, 3,308 sf MLS (2,546 AG, 762 B), 9,100 sf lot, original scale built 1961, Compass https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4722-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174551_zpid/
4. 4714 Essex – Contemporary, 1/9/26 (11/13/25 @3.95m), $4m, built 2025 after teardown, 6bd, 6ba, 5,936 sf MLS (4,324 AG, 1,612 B), $674/psf, 8,750 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4714-Essex-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174634_zpid/
   4714 Essex – 5/6/24, $1.250m, $211 sf, teardown
5. 4712 Falstone – Colonial, 2/28/26 (10/23/25 $ $3.695m), $3.568m, 6bd, 6ba, 5,740 sf MLS (4,040 sf AG, 1,700 B), $622/psf, 5,740 sf lot, built in 2025 after teardown, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4712-Falstone-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174701_zpid/
   4712 Falstone – 8/9/24, $1.4m, $244/psf, teardown
6. **4911 Falstone** – Rambler, 3/27/26 (11/6/25 @ $1.385m), $1.395m, 2,550 sf MLS (2,550 AG, 0 B), $547/psf, 6,974 sf lot, original scale (1957), https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4911-Falstone-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174508_zpid/
7. 5528 Trent – Colonial, 1/15/26 (2/28/24 @ 3.195m) $3m, 6bd, 6ba, 5,846 sf MLS, $513/psf, 8,104 sf lot, built 2025, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5528-Trent-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174495_zpid/
   5528 Trent – 4/10/23, $1.1m, $188/psf, teardown
8. **5523 Uppingham** – Split level, 6/18/26 (4/8/26 @ $1.76m), $1.65m, 7bd, 4ba, 4,270 sf MLS, $386/psf, ??? lot, built 1955, for rent in Sept. 2026, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5523-Uppingham-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174753_zpid/
9. **5528 Warwick** – Rambler, 5/8/26 (9/11/25 @ $1.279), $1.215m, 4bd, 3ba, 1,864 sf (1,564 sf AB, 300 B), $652/psf, 8,086 sf lot, built 1950, enclosed porch addition, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5528-Warwick-Pl-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174748_zpid/

10. 5608 Warwick – Craftsman, 3/17/26 (3/13/25 @ $3.35), $2.95m, 6bd, 6ba, 6,061 sf MLS (4,258 sf AG, 1,803 sf B), 8,125 sf lot, $487/psf, built in 2003, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5608-Warwick-Pl-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174623_zpid/
    5608 Warwick – 1/1/15, $0.582, $$96/psf, teardown
11. **5611 Warwick** – Rambler, 6/26/26 (6/26/26 @ $1.325) $1.325m, 4bd, 3ba, 1,552 sf MLS (1,552 AG, ? B), $854/psf, 8,750 sf lot, (sold by Marshall and Mary Laskey who moved to Grandview in 2026, vacant in Sept. 2026, reportedly sold to mother-in-law), https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5611-Warwick-Pl-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174669_zpid/

2025: *15 total, 4 original scale <1.66m, 2 post-teardown new construction*

1. Contemporary, 4815 Cumberland – 7/8/25 (9/30/24 @ $4.45), $4.05m, colonial, 6bd, 6ba, 6,000 sf MLS (6,000 sf AG, 1,400 B), $675/psf, 10,374 sf lot, built 2024, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4815-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174435_zpid/
    4815 Cumberland – 11/15/22, $1.2m, teardown, $200/psf, reportedly because of mold in basement.
2. 4915 Cumberland – Craftsman, 10/14/25 (9/24/25 on mkt @ $2.95), $2.95m, 7bd, 5ba, 5,833 sf MLS (4,333 AG, 1,500 B), $506/psf, 12,194sf lot, built in 1917, not in district, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4915-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174597_zpid/
3. 4919 Cumberland – Colonial, 4/3/25 (5/4/24 @ $.695 $3.225m, 6bd, 6ba, 6,085 sf MLS (6,085 AG, 0 B), $530/psf, 20,038 sf lot, built 1910, not in district, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4919-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174452_zpid/
4. 4604 Dorset – Contemporary, 9/25/25 (7/9/25 @ $2.995), $2.8m, 6bds, 5bs, 4,610 sf MLS (3,554 sf AG, 1,056 sf B), $607/psf, 8,515 sf lot, original scale (1953) mid-century modern, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4604-Dorset-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174692_zpid/
5. 4709 Dorset – Victorian, 5/21/25 ($5.395 list), $5.395m, 6bd, 7ba, 6,100 sf MLS (4,200 sf AG, 1,900 B), $884/psf, 19,598 sf lot, addition to 1902 house in historic district, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4709-Dorset-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174580_zpid/
6. **4910 Essex** – Rambler, 3/18/25 (2/28/25 @ $1.339), $1.275m, 3bd, 3ba, 2,292 sf MLS (2,292 AG, ?B), $852/psf, ???? sf lot, for rent September 2026, potential teardown, reportedly an expansion with pop-up, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4910-Essex-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174527_zpid/
7. 4911 Essex – Mid-century, 3/3/25 (2/24/25 @3.5m), $3.35m, 4bds, 5ba, 4,113 sf MLS, teardown to build larger, built in 1949, now demolished / new construction, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4911-Essex-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174606_zpid/
8. **4708 Falstone** – Rambler (list $1.499), $1.499m, 4bd, 3ba, 2,350 sf MLS, $368/psf, 8,054 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4708-Falstone-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174449_zpid/
9. 4803 Grantham – Mid-century, (11/7/25 @ $1.6), $1.6m, 3bd, 2ba, 1,479 sf MLS, $1,082/psf, 11,761 lot, original scale built in 1958 – teardown in progress, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4803-Grantham-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174539_zpid/
    4803 Grantham – 8/24/98, $0.375m ($254/psf), teardown in progress
10. 5508 Greystone – Mid-century (2/14/25 @ $1.649), $1.811m, 5bd, 3ba, 3,165 sf MLS, $572/psf, 8,494 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5508-Greystone-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174744_zpid/
11. 5510 Greystone – Split-level, (8/28/25 @ $1.8), $1.75m, 4bd, 3ba, 2,808 sf MLS, $623/psf, 8,494 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5510-Greystone-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174696_zpid/
12. **5402 Surrey** – Transitional (10/22/25 @ $1.6), $1.66m, 5bd, 4ba, 3,550 sf MLS, $468/psf, 7,405 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5402-Surrey-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174706_zpid/

13. 5400 Trent – Rambler, 6/30/25 (4/16/19 @ $1.896m), $1.2m, 4bd, 3ba, 2,600sf MLS, $462/psf, 11,326 sf lot, built in 1968, now in substantial demolition, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5400-Trent-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174776_zpid/
14. **5710 Warwick** – Tudor, 7/28/25 (list $0.999), $1.16m, 3bd, 3ba, 1,962 sf MLS (1,962 sf AG, 0B), $591/psf, original scale – reportedly bought by investor as a rental (1928), https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5710-Warwick-Pl-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174640_zpid/
15. 5801 Warwick – Contemporary, (5/30/25 @ $1.975), $1.975m, 5bed, 3ba, 3,133 sf MLS (3,133 AG, 0 B), $630/psf, 10,046 sf lot, built 1979, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5801-Warwick-Pl-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174725_zpid/

2024: *14 total, 5 original scale <1.6m, 2 post-teardown new construction*

1. 4805 Cumberland – Victorian, 9/20/24 (6/29/24 @ $2.95), $2.95m, ?bd, 4ba, 2,821 sf MLS (2,821 sf AG, 0 B), $1,046/psf, 10,425 sf lot, built 1922 historic, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4805-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174502_zpid/
2. 4709 Cumberland – Victorian, 12/30/24 (11/30/24 @ $3.1), $2.9m, 4,600 sf MLS (3,900 sf AG, 700 sf B), $630/psf, 10,200 sf lot, built 1905 historic, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4709-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174548_zpid/
3. 4822 Cumberland – Colonial, 7/29/24 (7/12/24 @ $1.985), $2.34m, 3bd, 3ba, 3.100 sf MLS (2,450 AG, 650 sf B), $762/psf, 22,651 sf lot, built 1925, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4822-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174693_zpid/
4. 4921 Cumberland – Sears kit cottage, 8/16/24 (5/16/24 @ $1.8), $1.77, 5bds, 4ba, 2,962 sf MLS (2,962 AG, 0 B), $598/psf, 16,117 sf lot, original scale built 1931, not in district, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4921-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174451_zpid/
5. **4714 Essex – Rambler,** (list $1.4), $1.4, teardown – details no longer listed
6. **4712 Falstone** – **Rambler,** ??? (list $1.4), $$1.4m, teardown, details no longer listed
7. **4901 Falstone** – **Rambler,** 7/18/24 (5/16/25 @ $1.595), $1.515m, 4bd, 3ba, 2,176 sf (1,499 AG, 677 B), $696/psf, 8,610 sf lot, for rent since 7/5/18, potential tear-down: reportedly bought by a builder, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4901-Falstone-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174543_zpid/
8. **4809 Falstone** – Split level, 1/2/24 (1/2/24 @ $1.615), $1,615m, ?bd, 3ba, built 1956, 2,614 sf MLS, $618/psf, 8,750 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4809-Falstone-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174771_zpid/
9. 4806 Grantham – Mid-century, 6/26/24 (6/24/24 @ $2.850), $2.85m, 6bd, 6ba, 5,256 sf MLS (4,970 sf AG, 286 sf B), $542/psf, 7,659 st lot, built 1957, major teardown and addition, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4806-Grantham-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174423_zpid/
   4806 Grantham – 4/22/22, $1.7m, substantial teardown
10. 5603 Surrey – Traditional, 4/30/24 (2/21/24 @ $3.65m), $3.9m, built 2011, 5bd, 6ba, 5049 sf MLS (3,589 sf AG, 1,460 B), $772/psf, 5049 sf lot, built in 2011 in historic district, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5603-Surrey-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174428_zpid/
    5603 Surrey – 2011, assessed value $0.679m, likely teardown
11. 5816 Surrey – Cottage, 9/5/24 (9/6/24 @ $1.895), $2.139m, 4bd, 3ba, 3.406 sf MLS (2,896 sf AG, 510 sf B), $628/psf, 6,825 sf lot, built 1935 historic, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5816-Surrey-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174659_zpid/
12. 5401 Uppingham – Mid-century, 6/14/24 (list $1.599), $1.762m, 4bd, 3ba, 2,412 sf MLS, $731/psf, 11,326 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5401-Uppingham-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174470_zpid/
13. **5508 Trent** – Rambler, 12/11/24 (4/11/24 @ $1.599), $1.6m, 3bd, 3ba, 2,556 sf MLS, $626/psf, 7,678 lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5508-Trent-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174768_zpid/

14. **5523 Trent** – Rambler, 10/8/25 (list $1.4), $1.607m, 4bd, 3ba, 3,100 sf MLS, $518/psf, 9,125 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5523-Trent-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174467_zpid/
15. **5505 Uppingham** – Rambler, 11/25/24 (list $1.4), $1.61m, 3ba, 3ba, 2,544 sf MLS, $633/psf, 7,540 sf lot, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5505-Uppingham-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174478_zpid/
16. 5808 Warwick – Victorian, 9/30/24 (6/13/24 @ $2.495) $2.375m, 5bd, 4ba, 3,603 sf MLS (3,603 sf AG, 0 B), $659/psf, 9,717 sf lot, built 1901 historic, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5808-Warwick-Pl-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174761_zpid/

2023 starting Sept: *4 total, 2 original scale <1.69m, 1 post-teardown new construction*

1. 4725 Cumberland – Victorian, 9/27/23 (9/23/23 @ $2.95m), $2.95m, 6bd, 5ba, 2,488 sf MLS *(2,488 sf AG, 0 B), $1,186/psf, 9,285 sf lot, built 1922 historic, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4725-Cumberland-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174588_zpid/
2. 4806 Essex – Colonial, 11/7/23 (11/7/23 $4.25), $4.05m, built 2013, 7bd, 6ba, 7,500 sf MLS (AG, B), $540/psf, 8.750 sf lot, built in 2013, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/4806-Essex-Ave-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174675_zpid/
   4806 Essex – 1/1/15, $1.315m, teardown
3. **5407 Uppingham** – Mid-century, 11/21/23 (9/13/23 @ $1.699m), $1.56m, 4bd, 3ba, 2,784 sf MLS, $560/psf, 9,335 sf lot, built 1955 mid-century modern, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5407-Uppingham-St-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174666_zpid/
4. **5812 Warwick –** Victorian, 9/25/23 (9/25/23 @ $1.222m), $1.222m, ?bd, 1.5ba, 1,493 sf MLS (sf AG, 0 B), $818/psf, 9,761 sf lot, built 1902 historic, https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/5812-Warwick-Pl-Chevy-Chase-MD-20815/37174747_zpid/

Attachment 5

Somerset Development Committee

Work Plan Outline – Version 4 – September 14, 2026

1. First quarter, July—September 2026

a. *Library* – Organize research and work products into folders in the committee's shared drive:
   (1) Agendas / minutes
   (2) Committee management
   (3) Development topics
   (4) Legal authority
   (5) Municipal codes

b. *Building permits*
   (1) Orient the committee to the existing process for building permits.
   (2) Review and comment on draft amendments to the building code (Council agenda for September)

c. *Committee charge for potential amendments of the Town Code*

   (1) Committee charter, leading concerns include:
      (a) "Replacement houses being incompatible with the existing scale and massing of surrounding homes, adversely affecting privacy and light, and often impacting a block's character. Moreover, the resulting increases in lot coverage have contributed to the loss of mature tree canopy and exacerbated drainage concerns of neighbors."
      (b) "Loss of the diversity of homes that allows a range of income levels to live in our community and enables seniors to age in place: State assessors and market studies say that the tear down/build-up trend decreases 'starter home' inventory and more affordable housing stock, increases market prices, and drives up tax assessments."

   (2) Specific hypotheses to test

      (a) *Increasing mass and scale*
      New construction and infill development are increasing in mass and scale—recently exceeding 300% of both the demolished and adjoining houses.
         (i) The increased mass and scale are permitted under current limits on height, lot coverage, and setbacks.
         (ii) On low-scale blocks, the reaction of nearby neighbors before and after permit decisions has been strongly negative. They see the increased mass/scale as a disruption of neighborhood character in terms of environmental openness, compatibility with established mass/scale, and access to sunlight—which are the property values that drew them to Somerset.
         (iii) Nearby neighbors have cited the 2023 amendments to the building code's purpose sections to support their opposition on grounds noted above. Developers and the town's attorney have taken the position that the purpose clauses are insufficient grounds to deny a permit so long as objective limits on building mass, scale and location are met.
         (iv) The Town Council has authority under the Somerset Charter, the state Land Use Code, and the state Local Government Code to adopt stronger objective limits on

mass, scale, and location in its building code.

(b) *Impact on affordability and diversity*
  (i) After a tear-down and build-up, the increase in market value more than doubles, as does the income needed for financing.
    (A) Original-scale homes (3-5 bedrooms) currently sell in the range of $1.1 to $1.6 million. While above metro-area averages, it is affordable for two-earner families in the $280-$300,000 range who work in public service (e.g., professionals in Maryland and U.S. agencies, university professors, nonprofit organizations, etc.) and retirees on fixed incomes.[1] The Somerset median household income is $250,000; the average income is $463,876.[2]
    (B) New infill development homes sell in the range of $3.4 to $4.5 depending on square feet and amenities. Family income to support a $4 million home purchase is typically upwards of $860,000.[3]
    (C) The process of "filtering up" is a national trend in which new home purchasers are increasingly wealthier than the previous owners. Close-in markets like Chevy Chase have the highest price inflation and rates of filtering-up.[4] The result is a domino effect. Buyers who cannot purchase a multi-million-dollar house in Somerset displace downstream buyers who, in turn, displace buyers and renters further down the value chain. Conversely, policies that hold down price increases in a community allow filtering to preserve the stock of downstream affordable housing.[5]

(c) *Upward trend of sales, tear-downs, and build-ups*
  (i) The baseline of tear-downs / build-ups is approximately 36 between 2005 and 2025—18 per decade over that 20-year period.
  (ii) Tear-downs / build-ups tend to increase in clusters.
  (iii) The trend will increase as baby-boomers age out, with a surge in the range of 200 percent of the baseline between 2026 and 2036. The Somerset census tract is 10 years older than Montgomery County as a whole.[6] This trend is already apparent in recent sales. In the past 36 months, there were 10 tear-downs & build-ups, a rate of 40 per decade.[7]
  (iv) Absent changes to the town code's limits on mass and scale, market forces will:
    (A) increase the mass and scale of Somerset's housing stock;
    (B) increase the purchaser incomes that can afford that stock;
    (C) decrease the economic diversity of Somerset residents; and
    (D) change the environmental character of Somerset blocks south of Dorset.

d. *Potential preservation objectives*

If the committee's research confirms the hypotheses listed above, appropriate objectives include:

(1) *Compatibility* – Preserve compatibility of new construction with established mass and scale of nearby homes and character of the block as a whole.
  (a) As shown by other jurisdictions, this can be accomplished by developing a combination of objective development limits as outlined in part 3 below (third-quarter policy alternatives).
  (b) Among other limits, these jurisdictions set FAR limits that range from 0.25 to 0.5 (total square feet to lot s.f.). For example, for a 10,000 s.f. lot, a FAR limit of 0.35 would permit a building with 3,500 s.f. of enclosed space, which is more than a 100 percent increase in square feet of original one-story houses in Somerset.
  (c) In other words, the other jurisdictions that set limits on mass and scale aim to preserve neighborhood character while allowing a 100% (or more) expansion of mass and scale.

(d) At least one of these jurisdictions allows greater mass and scale when developers incorporate objective design criteria such as set-backs for upper floors and articulation of walls.

(2) *Diversity* – Deter tear-downs to preserve housing stock that is affordable to "starter home" families, public service occupations, and retired residents on a fixed income. In the current market, the prices for updated, original-scale houses in Somerset are in the range of $1.6 million.

2. Second quarter, October—December 2026

a. *Report on the scope of policy options*
How much of the third-quarter work can be presented by November? Work substantially completed includes:
(1) *Permit process* – Diagram or table to illustrate the process for later reference or amendments.
(2) *Scoping table to illustrate potential policy options and jurisdictions studied to date*
Prepare a table that provides a working list of policy alternatives and source jurisdictions to help the committee track its work and set priorities for the time remaining.
(3) *Policy options gathered to date* – Compare selected policies in Chevy Chase, Garrett Park, Los Angeles CA, Boulder CO, Lake Forrest IL, and Portland OR.

b. *Gather data depending on availability of someone to do the work.*

(1) *Comments and questions from Somerset residents*
(a) Monthly invitation for resident comments in the Town Journal
(b) Outreach by members of the committee

(2) *Case studies of Somerset permits*

(a) *First studies* – 5522 Greystone, 4803 Grantham, and a variance request, t.b.d.

(b) *Initial information* needs from town staff
(i) Completed – Establish the timeline (a simple list of events/dates from town staff).
(ii) Gain access to review full permit files.
(A) Application
(B) Letters and data from town residents and the developer
(C) Recordings and minutes of council meetings
(D) Documents filed for judicial review
(iii) Share accessible county data – Somerset vs. county files

(c) *Template for the case study*
(i) Overview including neighbor concerns
(ii) Key questions – drawing from table below, permit files, and interviews
(A) Compatibility
1. Have neighbors raised regarding the development's mass and scale?
2. How does the development relate to adjacent homes? (include pictures)
3. Were neighbor concerns limited to adjoining and confronting neighbors?
4. How did the developer respond to neighbors' concerns?
(B) Diversity – How did this development contribute to preservation vs. loss of original-scale housing? How does it serve as a precedent?
(C) Environmental impact – stormwater, canopy trees, other
1. What concerns did neighbors raise?

2. How did the developer respond?

(D) Compliance

1. What is this development – Is it new construction? An addition? Infill development? Is compliance with then-applicable town and county limits clear on the record?
2. Would this development comply with current town limits?
3. How does this development compare to limits in other jurisdictions that the committee is studying (select five or fewer)?

(E) Town permit process

1. Did the town staff and Council address neighbor concerns in the approval process?
2. Are developers' responses to neighbor concerns persuasive?
3. Does this development provide "lessons learned" that can be applied to potential code revisions for standards or process?

(d) *Table of development metrics*

(i) Compliance comparison
- (A) Town limits, then and now
- (B) County limits, then and now, if different?
- (C) Building as applied, on plans, presented to Council, as approved
- (D) Before and after new construction

(ii) Development metrics
- (A) Square feet and FAR, above grade and total livable space (MLS)
- (B) Height, average front and lowest-to-highest point
- (C) Lot coverage
- (D) Total non-permeable area

(iii) Variances requested / granted

(iv) Adjacent houses
- (A) Total s.f. above grade
- (B) Height, average front (estimate)

(3) *Tear-down / build-up trends*

(a) Completed – Track the following data for recent sales—in the past 36 months: Price, measures of square foot (above grade and total) before and after new construction, lot size, building date, and previous tear-down.

(b) Completed – Map tear-downs / build-ups from all data sources since 2005 based on the RealEstimate map, updated with the recent MLS data (above).

(c) New work – Build a spreadsheet of permit data for at least one year, going back in time.

(i) Lot coverage
- (A) Building square feet and ratio
- (B) Total non-permeable area

(ii) Floor-area – square feet and ratio to lot (FAR)
- (A) Above grade SDAT, pre- and post-construction
- (B) Total "livable" s.f. as listed in MLS data

(iii) Drainage plans and tree preservation

(4) *Environmental impacts of development* – develop baseline information for:

(a) Stormwater –

(i) Rainfall, one-year storm events, and any trend data

(ii) Impervious surfaces, town total area and trends available from GIS data

(b) Canopy trees – net increase or decrease based on permits, plans, and planting

(5) *Height study in 2023 – survey of 144 homes*
(a) See Council minutes of 11/6/23 – survey of 91 homes on Cumberland, Dorset, Falstone (57 of 91 would comply with 33' max, 34 would not)
(b) See Council minutes of 12/4/23 – survey of 144 homes (95 of 144 would comply with 33/ max, 49 would not)
(c) Who compiled this study? Where is the data now?

c. *Property tax impact*
Review assessment manuals and interview assessors on this question:
What is the impact of high-end sales on neighboring property taxes—annually and compounded over time?

d. *Demographic questions*
Review local records, literature, and census data to identify demographic trends that are related to housing costs and residential trends.
(1) Is age an impetus for increased sales and turnover? (curve of the baby boomers)
(2) What is the price-based evidence of "filtering up" in the local housing stock?
(3) Are there other demographic changes? For example:
(a) "Startup families" – elementary-age children
(b) Elementary-school registration – Somerset and nearby schools

e. *Legal authority* [moved from first quarter] – Outline the tiers of delegation that empower and constrain the Town Council's authority to amend the building code.
(1) Maryland Constitution
(2) State land use and home rule codes
(3) Montgomery County code and regulations
(4) Somerset Charter
(5) Somerset Town Code of Ordinances

3. Third quarter, January—March 2027

Compare policy alternatives for amendments of the Town Code showing neighboring and leading jurisdictions.

a. *Permit process*
(1) Notice to residents – in progress
(2) Transparency of development mass and scale
(3) Wait-period for tear-down applications
(4) Variance criteria above a certain FAR (fixed or established)

b. *Mass & scale*
(1) Total floor-area
(2) Lot coverage – buildings, hardscaping, total impervious
(3) Floor-area ratio (FAR)
(4) Height limits – lower or established (within 300 feet in a block)
(5) Setbacks

c. *Use and enjoyment - beyond nuisance*
(1) Visual impact above established FAR
(2) Solar access and view

(3) Privacy

d. *Environmental impacts - development plan criteria*
(1) Stormwater – a refined hierarchy of methods
(2) Trees – seeking net gains with infiltration benefits

e. *Variance criteria*
(1) Clarification of existing criteria (Current code criterion: "unusual practical difficulties to the owner of the lot on which the proposed construction is to be located due to exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape, topographical conditions or other extraordinary situations or conditions peculiar to a specific parcel of property")
(2) Objective design standards above a certain mass and scale (fixed or established FAR)

4. Fourth quarter, April—June 2027

Prepare and present final work products:

a. *Town building code – potential amendments*
(1) Evaluation matrix for 5+ alternatives
(2) Pros and cons for attaining committee objectives
(3) Assessment of administrative burden, financial burden, and legal authority
(4) Recommendations and comments from committee members

b. *Other ideas*
(1) County-level alternatives
(a) Historic district expansion
(b) Transferable development rights
(2) Support services for elderly residents

c. *Online library*
(1) Municipal code sources
(2) Legal authority sources
(3) Literature on development topics
(4) All committee work products

Endnotes

[1] *See, e.g.,* Rocket Mortgage, What salary do I need to afford a $1 million home? ("To afford a $1 million home, most buyers should plan on earning about $277,000 per year with 20% down, a 30-year fixed mortgage, moderate taxes and insurance, and minimal other debt."), https://www.rocketmortgage.com/learn/salary-to-afford-1-million-home (viewed August 30, 2026). A family of two GS 13 wage earners can make in the range of $240.000 to $316,000 per year in the Washington, DC area; individual GS 13 salaries range from $121,785 to $158,322. Salary Table 2026-GS, https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2026/DCB.pdf (viewed August 30, 2026).

[2] Income by Zipcode, *20815 Income Statistics*, https://www.incomebyzipcode.com/maryland/20815 (viewed September 14, 2026).

[3] Dollar Times, *Income to afford a $4 million house* ("To afford a house that costs $4,000,000 with a down payment of $800,000, you'd need to earn $866,836 per year before tax. The mortgage payment would be $20,226 / month."), https://www.dollartimes.com/income-needed-for-house/4000000 (viewed August 30, 2026).

[4] Liyi Liu, Doug McManus, and Elias Yannopoulos, *Geographic and Temporal Variation in Housing Filtering Rates*, Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, 21 (November 2021), available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3527800 (viewed August 30, 2026).

[5] Id.

[6] See Laura Blakeslee et al, *Age and Sex Composition: 2020*, Figure 2 – Age-Sex Pyramids for the United States: 2010 and 2020, U.S. Census Bureau, C2020BR-06 (May 2023); Maryland Department of Planning, State Data and Analysis Center, December 2022, *Census Tract 7055.02, Montgomery County Maryland, 2017 – 2021,* Sex and Age, 65+ (Dec. 2022, Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates); *compare* Neilsberg Research, *Montgomery County, MD Population by Age* (updated Feb. 22, 2025).

[7] Committee table, Somerset recent sales, September 2023 – August 2026, based on Bright MLS as reported on Zillow map of recent sales in the Town of Somerset (9/14/26).