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**Just A Start and Somerville Community Land Trust Partner  
to Develop Affordable Housing at 297 Medford Street, Somerville**  
*Transforming a Vacant Site into Approximately 50 Affordable Rental Homes*

**CAMBRIDGE, MA — March 10, 2025** — Just A Start and Somerville Community Land Trust (SCLT) announce plans to transform 297 Medford Street in Somerville into 100% affordable housing. The proposed new construction will help address the city’s housing crisis by creating approximately 50 affordable rental homes in a prime location near public transit, schools, and community amenities.

The property, formerly home to A+ Autobody, has been vacant since a partial collapse in 2021. The longtime owners sought a community-oriented buyer, leading to a partnership between Just A Start and SCLT. With support from the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund and additional financing sources, SCLT and Just A Start are on track to acquire the property by September 2025.

“Our organizations share a deep commitment to neighborhood stability and long-term affordability,” said **Ben Baldwin, Executive Director of Somerville Community Land Trust**. “We look forward to working with the City and its residents to ensure this project reflects the needs and priorities of the community.”

Just A Start and SCLT are pursuing a zoning amendment, which would allow for a seven-story building. Community engagement will be a key part of the design development process as acquisition plans move forward.

With a portfolio of 650 affordable apartments about 350 more apartments in its pipeline, Just A Start is excited to bring new affordable housing to Somerville. “This project is a natural extension of Just A Start’s mission to create and preserve affordable housing,” said **Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director of Just A Start**. “With our experience developing affordable housing development and providing related services, we are well-positioned to bring this vision to life in collaboration with the Somerville Community Land Trust and the community.”

The public is invited to learn more and show support at a joint public hearing hosted by the Somerville City Council’s Land Use Committee and the Somerville Planning Board on **Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 6:30PM**. The meeting will take place both in person at City Hall and virtually via Zoom. For more details, visit [www.somervillema.gov/events/2025/03/20/land-use-committee-joint-session-planning-board](http://www.somervillema.gov/events/2025/03/20/land-use-committee-joint-session-planning-board).

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### **About Just A Start:**

Just A Start believes that access to stable housing and sustainable careers are the essential building blocks of equitable communities. For more than 50 years, we have focused on meeting the fundamental needs of individuals and families who have been systematically denied opportunities to realize their full potential. Our programs include affordable housing, education and job training, and comprehensive support services, spanning Cambridge and beyond. We have developed and currently maintain over 600 affordable apartments. To keep community members housed, we also offer financial and technical assistance to prevent evictions, and support low- and moderate-income homeowners. Finally, we prepare individuals of all ages and circumstances with the skills and knowledge they need to secure fulfilling careers, leveraging their talents to achieve economic mobility and strengthen the region's workforce.

### **About Somerville Community Land Trust:**

Somerville Community Land Trust (SCLT) has a vision to decommodify Somerville's housing stock by removing land and property from a speculative real estate market and bringing it under community control in the form of permanently affordable housing. Our housing serves diverse low- and moderate-income families who form the city's social and cultural fabric. In this way, we work to build community power and promote neighborhood stability. In response to an ongoing housing crisis, SCLT was established in 2019. We practice a democratic and participatory approach to neighborhood development and decision-making to ensure self-identified community interests are at the forefront of our work. In two years (2022-2024) we have doubled the number of properties and affordable housing units under SCLT stewardship and we look forward to increasing our footprint and deepening our impact in the community.