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**JUST A START AND SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST PARTNER TO  
SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRE 297 MEDFORD STREET PROPERTY**  
*Advancing Plans for 50 Affordable Rental Homes Following City Council Approval*

**SOMERVILLE, MA — September 18, 2025** — Just A Start and Somerville Community Land Trust (SCLT) announced the successful acquisition of 297 Medford Street in Somerville, marking a significant milestone in their partnership to create a 100% affordable residential building with approximately 50 homes at the former A+ Autobody site.

The acquisition was made possible with critical support from the City of Somerville, the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and the greater community. The property, which has been vacant since 2021, will be transformed under the community land trust model to ensure long-term affordability and community control.

"The closing represents the power of true partnership in addressing Somerville's housing crisis," said **Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director of Just A Start**. "With the support of the City, the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and our collaboration with SCLT, we're turning a vacant site into homes that will serve the Somerville community for generations to come.

Following the Somerville City Council's approval of a zoning map amendment to allow additional homes on the site, Just A Start and SCLT are positioned to advance designs for a residential building that will bring much-needed affordable housing to a prime location near public transit, schools, and community amenities.

"This acquisition is a powerful step toward helping Somerville stay a place where everyone can afford to live," said **Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne**. "By working hand in hand with Just A Start, the Somerville Community Land Trust, and our residents, we're turning a long-vacant site into 50 permanently affordable homes. This is what our values in action look like; community, collaboration, and a commitment to housing stability for all."

**City Councilor Matt McLaughlin** also underscored the importance of redeveloping the site. "297 Medford Street has been a blighted and abandoned site for years, despite being close to public transit. Having 100 percent affordable housing on the site is well beyond my greatest hopes. If we could fill every abandoned site in this city with affordable housing, I would judge my time in this city well spent."

Since 1989, the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund has played a central role in creating and preserving affordable housing in the city. "The trustees of Somerville's Affordable Housing Trust Fund are proud to invest in the creation of new affordable homes that strengthen our community and provide stability for residents," said **Andrea Shapiro, Managing Trustee, Somerville Affordable Housing Trust**



**Fund.** "This funding reflects our commitment to ensuring that Somerville remains a place where people of all incomes can live and thrive."

For SCLT, the acquisition opens the door to the next phase of community-led development. "This closing marks the beginning of an exciting phase where we can focus on community engagement and to work through the site's unique challenges," said **Ben Baldwin, Executive Director of Somerville Community Land Trust**. "The zoning approval and successful acquisition give us the foundation to create housing that truly reflects the needs and priorities of Somerville residents."

Just A Start and SCLT are two mission-aligned organizations which bring unique and complimentary elements to their partnership. The organizations are committed to preserving affordability and preventing displacement in Somerville's changing neighborhoods.

Both organizations will continue community engagement throughout the design development process, building on the input received during the public process that led to the zoning amendment approval.

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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.