

Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace

By

Evan Spetrini

BA in Political Science and Economics  
Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts (2014)

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in City Planning

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 2018

© 2018 Evan Spetrini. All Rights Reserved

The author hereby grants to MIT the permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part in any medium now known or hereafter created.

**Signature redacted**

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
May 22, 2018

**Signature redacted**

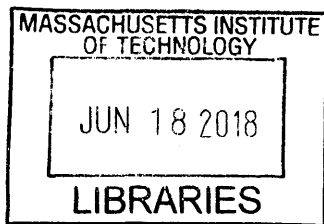
Certified by \_\_\_\_\_

Lecturer of Urban Design, Mary Anne Ocampo  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
Thesis Advisor

**Signature redacted**

Accepted by \_\_\_\_\_

Professor of the Practice, Cesar McDowell  
Chair, MCP Committee  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning



ARCHIVES



# Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace

by

Evan Spetrini

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
on May 22, 2018 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master in City Planning

## ABSTRACT

Artists are often viewed as the precursor to gentrification, and it is true that artists tend to move into neglected parts of the city where rents are cheap and regulations are lax, typically in industrially zoned districts. When this happens, real estate values typically rise over time, pushing out the previous residents, and often the artists themselves. Planners have used land use regulatory tools to encourage artists to locate in certain areas for the purpose of urban revitalization but little has been said on what to do when the cycle completes itself and artists are priced out of the areas they had helped to revitalize.

Somerville, Massachusetts is one of a few municipalities that has attempted to use zoning as a tool to protect and promote the development of artist workspaces in a high value real estate market. This thesis explores four major zoning techniques that the City has used to support artist spaces: relaxing use regulations, providing incentives through density bonuses, mandating a percentage of artist space in new developments, and separating uses to limit real estate competition. Through case study analysis, this thesis shows that even though artist workspaces have often existed in fringe areas of the city, the trend of physical isolation is unsustainable in growing, land-constrained cities. Moving forward, artist workspaces must adapt to serve a variety of users and fulfill both the consumption and production aspects of artist spaces. Using these findings as a baseline, this research seeks to evaluate and improve Somerville's zoning code by utilizing these four techniques in order to protect existing studios and promote the development of forward-looking artist workspaces.

Thesis Advisor: Mary Anne Ocampo  
Title: Lecturer of Urban Design

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to briefly thank the countless people who have helped me to write this thesis.

To Dan Bartman, Robert Goss, Greg Jenkins, Ellie Jones, George Proakis, Andrew Ringler, Brenda Star, and George Summers: Thank you for taking the time to share your experience and wisdom with me. Speaking with all of you defined the content of this research, and your encouragement motivated me to dig even deeper into this topic.

To my advisor, Mary Anne Ocampo: Thank you for your insights and guidance throughout the last two years. Working with you has made me a more creative and thoughtful planner. I have left every conversation with you more intrigued and excited and overwhelmed than before, in the best way possible.

To my mother, Meryl Spetrini, and my father, Gerard Spetrini: Thank you both for shaping and molding me into the man I am today. Through ups and downs, you've never stopped supporting, guiding, and believing in me. I'm proud to be your son, and all that I've accomplished is credited to your love.

Finally, to my incredible partner, Becky Donner: Without you, I never could have survived the agonies of grad school. You've taken care of me, fed me, and put up with emotional outbursts. You give me ambition and inspire me to be curious. I love you with all of my heart, and I owe you my deepest gratitude.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Chapter I: Introduction</b>                   | <b>7</b>  |
| Research Question and Methods                    | 9         |
| <b>Chapter II: Literature Review</b>             | <b>11</b> |
| Economic and Cultural Value of Artists           | 11        |
| Conceptual and Spatial Theories of Artist Spaces | 12        |
| Artist Displacement Cycle                        | 13        |
| Zoning Against Displacement                      | 14        |
| <b>Chapter III: Artist Space Analysis</b>        | <b>17</b> |
| Overview   | 17        |
| Case Study 1: Vernon Street Studios              | 24        |
| Case Study 2: Brickbottom Artists Building       | 31        |
| Case Study 3: Artisan’s Asylum                   | 39        |
| <b>Chapter IV: Cultural Planning</b>             | <b>48</b> |
| SomerVision                                      | 48        |
| Neighborhood Plans                               | 52        |
| <b>Chapter V: Artist Zoning</b>                  | <b>56</b> |
| 2009 Rezoning: Use Regulations                   | 58        |
| 2009 Rezoning: Arts Overlay District             | 61        |
| 2009 Rezoning: 5% Arts-Related Use Mandate       | 65        |
| 2018 Zoning Overhaul: Use Regulations            | 70        |
| 2018 Zoning Overhaul: 5% Mandate Expansion       | 73        |
| 2018 Zoning Overhaul: Fabrication District       | 77        |
| <b>Chapter VI: Recommendations</b>               | <b>80</b> |
| Recommendations                                  | 81        |
| Lessons for Other Cities                         | 88        |
| <b>Appendices</b>                                | <b>90</b> |
| Works Cited                                      | 90        |
| Zoning Text                                      | 94        |



**KEEPING SOMERVILLE WEIRD BY  
ZONING FOR ARTIST WORKSPACE**

by  
Evan Spetrini

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

There is a familiar cycle of neighborhood change in cities: artists move to neglected areas where real estate is cheap, contribute to its revitalization, are displaced when property values rise, and then move to other neglected areas and begin the cycle again. But what happens when there are no more neglected areas for artists to inhabit? What happens to cities that have no artists? Is there a way to break this cycle of migration in order to create more stable artist communities?

Many public officials rightfully understand the positive impact of local arts and culture on the economy and livability of the city, but few appreciate the artists' need for affordable space in order to experiment and hone their craft. Economically, there seems to be a market failure in which artists cannot afford the amount of real estate required to grow and develop their practice in large cities while the societal value of artists in these local city economies is well above what individual artists are often willing and able to pay. On top of that, issues of noise, vibrations, and air quality generated by artist studios have often pushed artist workspaces into industrial areas of the city. However, as urban industry has declined, many of these urban areas are now considered underutilized by planners and government officials and are beginning to be rezoned for higher value uses, inadvertently threatening the existence of artist workspaces.

Somerville, Massachusetts is experiencing this phenomenon now. There is a severe housing shortage throughout the Greater Boston area, which has caused rents and home prices to skyrocket. Municipalities are primarily addressing this issue by encouraging more residential development in underutilized areas, including former industrial zones. Somerville is also preparing for the Green Line Extension, which will bring light-rail rapid transit to most of the city, exacerbating the rising real estate values. In response to these challenges, the City has identified potential growth areas related to the future expansion of the MBTA, specifically in current and former industrial areas surrounding the Union Square, Brickbottom, and Inner Belt neighborhoods in the southern part of the city. These growth areas are intended to ease housing pressures as well as expand commercial development in order to take some of the tax burden off of homeowners.

Simultaneously, Somerville is concerned with supporting and retaining its active and prosperous artist communities that have contributed immensely to the culture of the city through festivals, shops, and entertainment. There are over 350 artists that participate in the city's biannual Open Studios event, a day that celebrates artists in Somerville by opening their workspaces to the public. Somerville is home to 16 different workspaces, serving over 600 artists, on top of the multitude of artists that work out of their homes. Artists are threatened by the changing demographics of the city, the Greater Boston housing crisis, increased real estate values associated with the Green Line Extension, and the dwindling availability of industrial land. Due to these pressures, Somerville is in danger of losing its soul.

Balancing the planning goals of transit-oriented development, increased housing supply, expanding the commercial tax base, and retaining Somerville's identity as a center of arts and culture create the fundamental challenge for the City. Since land use is the way that these changes happen, many of the efforts to address these challenges have revolved around zoning amendments.

This thesis explores four major zoning techniques that the City has utilized, or is proposing to use, in order to protect existing artist workspaces and promote the development of new spaces:

- 1. Relaxing use regulations to allow for greater availability of spaces*
- 2. Providing incentives through density bonuses to encourage the development of new spaces*
- 3. Creating mandates to ensure that a certain percentage of new development is allocated for arts uses*
- 4. Restricting uses in certain zoning districts to prevent competition between creative spaces and higher-value uses*

These techniques appear in a variety of efforts implemented or proposed by the City. Two major changes were passed regarding arts use zoning in the last ten years, both as a part of the 2009 rezoning of Union Square. The first was the Arts Overlay District zoning, which utilized the relaxing use regulations and incentives techniques. This change more clearly defined arts-related uses and provided density bonuses for developments that include arts uses within the Union Square area. The second piece of the 2009 rezoning used the mandate strategy by introducing a 5% arts-related use requirement in the new Transit-Oriented Development districts that surround the future Green Line station.

Building upon those efforts, Somerville is currently contemplating a zoning overhaul for the entire city that would eliminate the Arts Overlay District in favor of a new use district called the Fabrication District, which will encourage the preservation and development of spatially appropriate arts spaces by restricting housing and general commercial office uses in order to limit real estate competition. The mandate strategy of the 5% arts-use requirement would also be expanded to most commercial districts in the new zoning ordinance.

The purpose of this research is not to prove that zoning is the only way to support the development and preservation of artist workspace, or even the best way. However, the lessons learned from this research show that zoning can be used as a tool to support artists and ought to be leveraged in land-constrained, growing cities that are experiencing the same pressures as Somerville.

### *Research Question and Methods*

This thesis tries to answer the following overall questions: have these zoning policies had the desired effect of preserving and encouraging the development of artist workspaces; are the proposed changes a step in the right direction or will they still fail to address the issue; and if they do not successfully address the issue, how should the City improve or supplement those policies in order to achieve their desired outcomes?

This research begins with a literature review to understand the theoretical landscape regarding artists and their importance to cities. The first section explores the economic and cultural benefits of artists to cities. The second looks at the conceptual and spatial theories of artist spaces and how they exist within the city. The third section reviews the issues surrounding the displacement of artists. The final portion examines the

zoning as a land use regulatory tool and its ability to preserve existing uses and prevent their displacement.

This thesis then analyzes the existing artist spaces to understand the populations they serve and their spatial distribution within the city. To get an even deeper understanding, this research then explores three different artist workspace case studies in order to comprehend how they have developed, the nature of their business models, what kinds of artists use the space, and how these spaces function within their urban contexts.

Studying these existing spaces reveals the challenges they face, their benefit to artists, and how zoning can work to preserve these spaces and encourage the development of new spaces. Once there is a baseline understanding of the needs of existing artist spaces, this research looks at the City's planning goals with regard to supporting artists in order to understand the intent of the zoning changes. Finally, this research analyzes the aforementioned zoning changes in order to evaluate their ability to preserve existing spaces and encourage the development of new artist workspaces.

The analyses of existing spaces, planning goals, and zoning measures are supplemented by conversations with artists, artist space administrators, planners, and arts organization officials to further reveal the intent behind these actions and their perception among the community. Ultimately this research culminates with a list of recommendations to replace or supplement these policies in order to create a land use strategy that helps to preserve the existing artist community while looking towards the future of artist workspace.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Economic and Cultural Value of Artists*

What role do artists play in the success of cities? Why should we treat this segment of the population differently? Research shows that there are both economic and cultural benefits to artists to cities. The most recent Arts & Economic Prosperity report, produced by Americans for the Arts, shows that the nonprofit arts and culture sector produced over \$1.35 billion in economic activity in the city of Boston alone in 2016 (2017).

Many scholars and practitioners agree that artists play an important role in place-based economic development strategies, often times at the neighborhood scale, by moving into neglected areas of the city, physically improving them, adding amenities, and eventually attracting further investment (Cole, 1987). However, the economic argument for supporting the arts has morphed into the same argument for supporting the creative economy more broadly since Richard Florida's seminal work on the "creative class" (2002). This mindset treats artists as a means to an end, allowing technology entrepreneurs to take the place of artists in economic development strategies, ultimately making support for artists less important to public policy. Although some scholars argue that a mix of creatives, including artists, is necessary to maximize the economic development potential (Montgomery, 2007), others are skeptical of their economic benefit altogether (Brooks & Kushner 2001; Wolf-Powers et al., 2017).

Aside from this, some scholars argue that there is more than just an economic benefit to artists and because of this, they should be treated differently from the rest of the creative economy (Markusen, 2006). Art has social and political value that cannot be quantified economically, as artists often tackle controversial issues in their work. There is also a spiritual or religious value to art, celebrating shared histories that bind communities together. This argument follows the traditional view of art in public policy, while the economic argument has become more dominant in recent years (Strom, 2010).

The purely economic argument for supporting artists opens the door for other professions to take its place (i.e. technology jobs). If the sole goal of the policy is to increase jobs or wages, then this is certainly the case and other faster-growing, higher-



value professions are more worthy of investment. However, art, in its many forms, has a value of its own that cannot be replicated by other sectors of the economy or measured purely through traditional economic measures. It is because of this innate cultural value that researchers and policy-makers seek to understand artist populations separate from other professions, including their unique physical and spatial relationships with the city.

### *Conceptual and Spatial Theories of Artist Spaces*

How do artist spaces exist within the city? Are they developed organically or through public efforts? Much of the literature explains that a mix of entrepreneurial efforts of artists with public enhancements are necessary to create successful spaces. Artist spaces can be conceptualized as either: 1) spaces of production; or 2) spaces of consumption. Arts production spaces include fine arts studios, rehearsal spaces, and woodworking studios, and similar spaces where art is “produced”, while consumption spaces would include galleries, performance venues, and shops, where art is “consumed” on a broader scale. Though the distinction between these two types of spaces lends itself to separate analyses of the urban form that supports each, often times these functions are located in the same spaces. Many scholars argue that both typologies are necessary for successful districts (Montgomery, 2003; Hutton, 2006).

Generally speaking, Michael Porter’s work on the cluster theory of economic competitiveness can partially explain the tendency of artists to co-locate (1998), but a further examination reveals that artists in particular are especially resourceful when it comes to reusing underutilized spaces, typically old factories and warehouses (Cole, 1987). This is the typical organic model of artist space development – artists find underutilized parts of the city where land is cheap and use it develop studios, galleries, and often other amenities. Economically, these spaces are usually cheaper and subject to fewer regulations, which also helps to facilitate the experimental nature of an artist’s creative process.

Public efforts to support artists have included designating cultural districts to encourage the agglomeration of artist activities, as well as providing subsidies for artist housing with the explicit goal of neighborhood revitalization (Strom, 2010). Cultural districts are certainly one of the most popular techniques used by cities to retain and attract artists, and the strategies behind them reveal a couple of opposing goals. In



many cities, cultural districts are a primarily outward facing initiative, designed to attract visitors and generate economic activity, but therefore pay less attention to the locally serving cultural spaces like arts education facilities (Durmaz, 2012). These cultural districts are often full of arts consumption spaces, which makes sense given the goals of attracting visitors, but often place less emphasis on the production spaces needed to support a robust ecosystem. Additionally, Markusen & Gadwa argue that the establishment of cultural districts can have an adverse effect by implying that other parts of the city are less culturally interesting. Since dispersion of cultural activity may in fact be preferable from an equity standpoint and outside of large cities, these strategies may not be very effective to begin with (2010).

To avoid these issues, the literature agrees that top-down efforts to promote place-based artist activity should rely on organically developed clusters and design interventions that support the spaces that already exist (Evans, 2009; Ryberg et al., 2012). Districts should incorporate both arts production and consumption spaces, working together, to enhance the area's cultural activity. To do this successfully, there must be effective public and private leadership with a collaborative attitude and clear objectives (Brooks & Kushner, 2001).

### *Artist Displacement Cycle*

With some degree of irony, it is likely that without strategic government intervention, artists can sow the seeds of their own displacement. Aaron Shkuda traces the history of artists in SoHo in New York City from their illegal occupation of former industrial buildings, to the advocacy that legalized loft residences, to the area's economic revitalization that priced the artists out of the neighborhood. He argues that the legality of the residences ensured its viability as a residential district, which subsequently became popular among non-artists, encouraging artists who owned their spaces to benefit by selling their property. Those who were renters were displaced with the rising costs (2005). The threat of displacement is, of course, not only a concern for the "pioneering" artists, but for the typically low-income communities that surround these areas as well.

However, there are nuances in the types of artist spaces that impact the likelihood of displacement. Arts consumption spaces like galleries are more likely to be the culprits behind neighborhood change – encouraging more foot traffic and economic activity (Cole, 1987). Other scholars have argued that certain artistic disciplines are more

likely than others to be associated with gentrification than others. Fine arts disciplines such as painting and sculpture have been found to be less likely to contribute to gentrification than commercial arts disciplines like design and music. Fine arts are associated with slow growth while commercial arts are related to rapidly changing areas (Grodach et al., 2014).

Fostering artist activity is a proven strategy for revitalizing neglected areas, especially in the post-industrial urban context. However, these strategies ultimately fail to protect existing residents when they are not the focus of the revitalization and can place too much emphasis on outside private investment (Gdaneic, 2000). Without additional public subsidies for affordable housing (Grodach et al., 2014) as well as affordable workspace, the increased property values resulting from the agglomeration of artists are likely to cannibalize themselves, making the area unaffordable to both the previous residents and the newly established creative community (Hutton, 2006).

### *Zoning Against Displacement*

As this thesis looks directly at zoning as a tool for developing and preserving artist spaces in Somerville, it is important to understand the debate around the effectiveness of this strategy at preventing displacement. Inclusionary zoning is a broad term that describes a number of techniques used in land use regulations to either require or incentivize real estate developers to provide some specific space or feature that serves a public purpose. Typically, inclusionary zoning is used to require housing developers to provide below-market-rate housing in new construction, with the goal of promoting mixed-income communities and preventing the displacement of long-time residents. However, these techniques have also been used to provide affordable commercial space and other public amenities like plazas.

The constitutionality and economic impact of inclusionary zoning has been a question among scholars since it was first introduced in the 1960s and 70s. Since there has been no constitutional challenge to inclusionary zoning policies specifically, the general consensus among scholars is that the laws will be upheld if the requirements do not strip the property of all economic value (Kautz, 2001), which is to say, the requirements are not so onerous that the property owner cannot reasonably develop the land. To be safe, it may be best to design voluntary public benefits that are rewarded through further benefits for the developer. This subset of inclusionary zoning, where incentives

like density bonuses are granted to the developer if they provide some defined public purpose, can be thought of as incentive zoning.

However, the effectiveness of these policies, no matter if they are written as requirements or incentives, is still very much debated. With regard to housing, economist Robert Ellickson argues that inclusionary zoning is not an effective way to redistribute wealth as it mostly benefits the middle-third of the income distribution. Furthermore, the promotion of mixed-income buildings is not a proven strategy for economic mobility, and inclusionary zoning has a minimal effect in that regard. Inclusionary zoning works more like a price control as it has a greater effect of limiting the housing market and addition of supply (1980). However, more recent examinations explore the nuances of different inclusionary zoning ordinances to understand which pieces of the laws make them more or less effective. Jenny Scheutz et al. tested 31 variations of inclusionary zoning in the San Francisco Bay Area and Suburban Boston to understand the level of success at providing affordable housing. This study found that minimum project size, density bonuses, and years the policy has been in place were the most significant factors to the success of these policies in San Francisco but only the age of the program was significant in suburban Boston. This study ultimately shows that the specificities of inclusionary zoning policies can determine their success or failure, so a careful economic analysis of their impacts must be taken to design effective policies (2009). Still, many economists argue that a more effective way to create affordable housing is to remove zoning barriers to development and allow the market to increase the supply of housing (Powell, 2005).

The literature is much lighter on the effectiveness of inclusionary and incentive zoning policies to create other types of public benefits like affordable artist spaces. We can imagine that the economics regarding price controls may have a similar effect of limiting the growth of the supply of these spaces, but the desire to cluster their uses may create an argument to use these policies, even if it means limiting the overall growth of the supply. In other words, the economies of scale from agglomeration may generate more activity than if the market were to create supply on its own. In this case, the policies would have to be designed to affect a specific district as opposed to a city-wide requirement. Scholars do, however, warn that using inclusionary and especially incentive zoning strategies for other public benefits may have the effect of competing with other incentives, like affordable housing, which may result in fewer developments of both goals (Costonis, 1972).

## *Takeaways*

Taken together, the literature shows that art is not only an economic benefit, but a cultural force that shapes the very identity of cities. It is also clear that artists are vulnerable communities in high-value land markets, and their importance to the identity of cities warrants government intervention. Therefore, it is appropriate that we study the urban form and economic conditions that allow artists to thrive in the city and create policy that furthers those goals. It is important to build upon existing artist communities and ensure that there is a mix of consumption and production spaces in arts districts. Zoning, when used correctly, can be an effective tool for shaping the urban form and intervening in the market to enhance the built environment and economic conditions that will support the development of and prevent the displacement of artist workspaces.

# CHAPTER III: ARTIST SPACE ANALYSIS

## OVERVIEW

Though the lines are often blurred, artist spaces must be dedicated either for the production or consumption of art. To maintain a vibrant artist community, there must be a healthy mix of these two conceptual types of spaces, though for each artistic discipline, these spaces may be radically different. Parsing out these typologies and understanding the disciplines they serve is imperative to creating policy that will fill in the gaps and bolster the artist ecosystem. The arts consumption and production spaces in Somerville are cataloged here to try to understand these synergies and posit the types of artists that these spaces would suggest live and work in Somerville.

Consumption spaces can be broken out into five major categories: galleries; performance venues; artisan retailers; education spaces; and other arts event venues. Some of these spaces serve multiple purposes, for example, the Center for Arts at The Armory is a multipurpose event venue that regularly holds performances as well





as craft fairs and educational workshops. Within each category, spaces may skew towards a specific genre or medium, for example the Deborah Mason Performing Arts Center is primarily a dance school (“Deborah Mason School,” 2016), while ONCE Ballroom typically holds rock concerts (“ONCE Ballroom,” n.d.).

| Somerville Arts Consumption Spaces   |                           |             |         |                |           |                   |                 |                          |                                   |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------|----------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Name                                 | Address                   | Performance | Gallery | Artisan Retail | Education | Other Arts Events | Zoning District | Proposed Zoning District | Zoning Use                        | Proposed Zoning Use                |
| Center for Arts at The Armory        | 191 Highland Avenue       | Yes         | Yes     | No             | Yes       | Yes               | RC              | FAB                      | Other                             | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education |
| Washington Street Art Center         | 321 Washington Street     | Yes         | Yes     | No             | Yes       | No                | RC              | FAB                      | Museum/gallery                    | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education |
| Nave Gallery                         | 155 Powderhouse Boulevard | Yes         | Yes     | No             | No        | No                | RA              | NR                       | Museum/gallery                    | Arts Exhibition                    |
| The Brickbottom Gallery              | 1 Fitchburg Street        | No          | Yes     | No             | No        | No                | IA              | FAB                      | Museum/gallery                    | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Museum of Bad Art                    | 55 Davis Square           | No          | Yes     | No             | No        | No                | CBD             | MR4                      | Museum/gallery                    | Arts Exhibition                    |
| The Prince Gallery                   | 361 Highland Avenue       | No          | Yes     | Yes            | No        | No                | NB              | MR3                      | Crafts-related retail store       | Arts Sales & Services              |
| Blue Cloud Gallery                   | 713 Broadway              | No          | Yes     | Yes            | No        | No                | NB              | MR3                      | Crafts-related retail store       | Arts Sales & Services              |
| Muskat Studios                       | 193 Cedar Street          | No          | Yes     | Yes            | Yes       | No                | RB              | NR                       | Museum/gallery                    | Arts Exhibition                    |
| ONCE Ballroom                        | 156 Highland Avenue       | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | Yes               | NB              | MR4                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Aeronaut Brewing Company             | 14 Tyler Street           | Yes         | No      | Yes            | No        | Yes               | IA              | FAB                      | Crafts-related retail store       | Arts Sales & Services              |
| Thunder Road                         | 379 Somerville Avenue     | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | No                | CCD55           | MRS                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| The Rockwell                         | 255 Elm Street            | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | No                | CBD             | MR4                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Third Life Studio                    | 33 Union Square           | Yes         | No      | No             | Yes       | Yes               | CCD55           | MR4                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Warehouse XI                         | 11 Sanbom Court           | No          | No      | No             | No        | Yes               | CCD55           | CC5                      | Other                             | Arts Exhibition                    |
| The Space Studio                     | 438 Somerville Avenue     | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | Yes               | IA              | FAB                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Artfarm                              | 10 Poplar Street          | No          | No      | No             | No        | Yes               | OS              | CI                       | Other                             | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Somerville Media Center              | 90 Union Square           | No          | Yes     | No             | Yes       | Yes               | CCD55           | CC5                      | Arts-related educational facility | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education |
| The Burren                           | 247 Elm Street            | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | No                | CBD             | MR4                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Bull McCabe's                        | 366 Somerville Avenue     | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | No                | CCD55           | MRS                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Sally O'Brien's                      | 335 Somerville Avenue     | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | No                | CCD55           | MRS                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| P.A.'s Lounge                        | 345 Somerville Avenue     | Yes         | No      | No             | No        | No                | CCD55           | MRS                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Deborah Mason Performing Arts Center | 624 Somerville Avenue     | Yes         | No      | No             | Yes       | No                | IA              | MR4                      | Theater or performance space      | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Somerville Museum                    | 1 Westwood Road           | Yes         | Yes     | No             | Yes       | Yes               | RA              | NR                       | Museum/gallery                    | Arts Exhibition                    |
| Artisan's Asylum                     | 10 Tyler Street           | No          | Yes     | Yes            | Yes       | Yes               | IA              | FAB                      | Arts-related educational facility | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education |

Production spaces can be divided into three major typologies: work-only studios; live/work studios; and shared studios or hourly rentals. Work-only studios often function much like a typical office lease, where the user has a defined space and pays rent monthly to work in that space. Live/work spaces are can be more economical for artists, combining their homes and workspaces, though this model may not be ideal for certain types of artists, such as performing artists, who may need larger or different kinds of spaces. In Somerville, live/work spaces can be rental apartments like Millbrook Lofts (“Millbrook Lofts,” n.d.), condominiums like the Brickbottom Artist Building (“Brickbottom Artists Association,” 2017), or cooperative residences like Mix-It Studios (“Mixit Print Studio,” 2014. Live/work and work-only spaces are the classic types of artist workspaces, though there has been a shift towards shared spaces, much like the broader creative economy. Spaces like Artisan’s Asylum function through a membership model that allows users access to shared workspaces and equipment (“Artisan’s Asylum,” n.d.), while other studios like Jamspot rent their studios on an hourly basis (“Jamspot,” n.d.). Shared spaces provide an opportunity for hobbyists to access these spaces at a reasonable price while still appealing to full-time artists. Most production spaces in Somerville are work-only with only four being live/work studios.

## Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace

Somerville Arts Production Spaces

| Name                          | Address               | Live/work | Work only | Shared/<br>Hourly | Zoning District | Proposed Zoning<br>District | Zoning Use             | Proposed Zoning Use                | # of Artists |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 11 Miller Street              | 11 Miller Street      | No        | Yes       |                   | RC              | NR                          | Artist Studio Space    | Artisan Production                 | 54           |
| 226 Pearl Street              | 226 Pearl Street      | Yes       | No        |                   | BA              | MR4                         | Artist Live/Work Space | Work/Live Creative Studio          | 13           |
| 438 Somerville Ave            | 438 Somerville Avenue | No        | Yes       |                   | IA              | FAB                         | Artist Studio Space    | Artisan Production                 | -            |
| Artisan's Asylum              | 10 Tyler Street       | No        | Yes       | Yes               | IA              | FAB                         | Artist Studio Space    | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education | 300+         |
| Brickbottom Artists Building  | 1 Fitchburg Street    | Yes       | Yes       |                   | IA              | FAB                         | Artist Live/Work Space | Work/Live Creative Studio          | 94           |
| Central Street Studios        | 57 Central Street     | No        | Yes       |                   | RA              | NR                          | Artist Studio Space    | Artisan Production                 | 20           |
| Jamspot                       | 111 South Street      | No        | Yes       | Yes               | TOD135          | CI                          | Artist Studio Space    | Arts Exhibition                    | -            |
| Joy Street Studios            | 86 Joy Street         | No        | Yes       |                   | IA              | FAB                         | Artist Studio Space    | Artisan Production                 | 62           |
| Mad Oyster Studios            | 2 Bradley Street      | No        | Yes       |                   | BA              | FAB                         | Artist Studio Space    | Artisan Production                 | 25           |
| Millbrook Lofts               | 9 Medford Street      | Yes       | No        |                   | TOD100          | HR                          | Artist Live/Work Space | Work/Live Creative Studio          | 5            |
| Mixit Studios Cooperative     | 32 Clifton Street     | Yes       | Yes       |                   | RC              | UR                          | Artist Live/Work Space | Work/Live Creative Studio          | 10           |
| Mudflat Studio                | 81 Broadway           | No        | Yes       | Yes               | CCD45           | MR4                         | Artist Studio Space    | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education | 35           |
| Somerville Studios            | 343 Medford Street    | No        | Yes       | Yes               | BA              | FAB                         | Artist Studio Space    | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education | -            |
| The Green Room                | 62 Bow Street         | No        | Yes       | Yes               | CCD55           | MR5                         | Artist Studio Space    | Artisan Production                 | -            |
| Vernon Street Studios         | 20 Vernon Street      | No        | Yes       |                   | IP              | FAB                         | Artist Studio Space    | Artisan Production                 | 75           |
| Washington Street Arts Center | 321 Washington Street | No        | Yes       | Yes               | RC              | FAB                         | Artist Studio Space    | Shared Workspaces & Arts Education | 20           |

Calculating the number of artists that these spaces serve is difficult, but categorizing the spaces gives us a good idea of what kinds of artists would be using these spaces. Most of the consumption spaces serve a performance function, suggesting a wealth of musicians and performance artists. However, the types of production spaces suggest that there aren't many places for performing artists to work since most seem to cater towards the visual arts. Conversely, there are a number of gallery spaces distributed throughout the city, though perhaps not as many as could be supported by the number of visual artists that work in Somerville. Most importantly, many of the artist spaces in Somerville serve multiple functions, both within the consumption and production categories and between them. For example, Artisan's Asylum is a work-only studio with a shared space model that also has a gallery and holds classes on a regular basis ("Artisan's Asylum," n.d.).



Consumption spaces are distributed throughout the city, though they are mostly concentrated around Union Square and Davis Square. They also appear within a variety of different zoning districts, from residential to industrial.

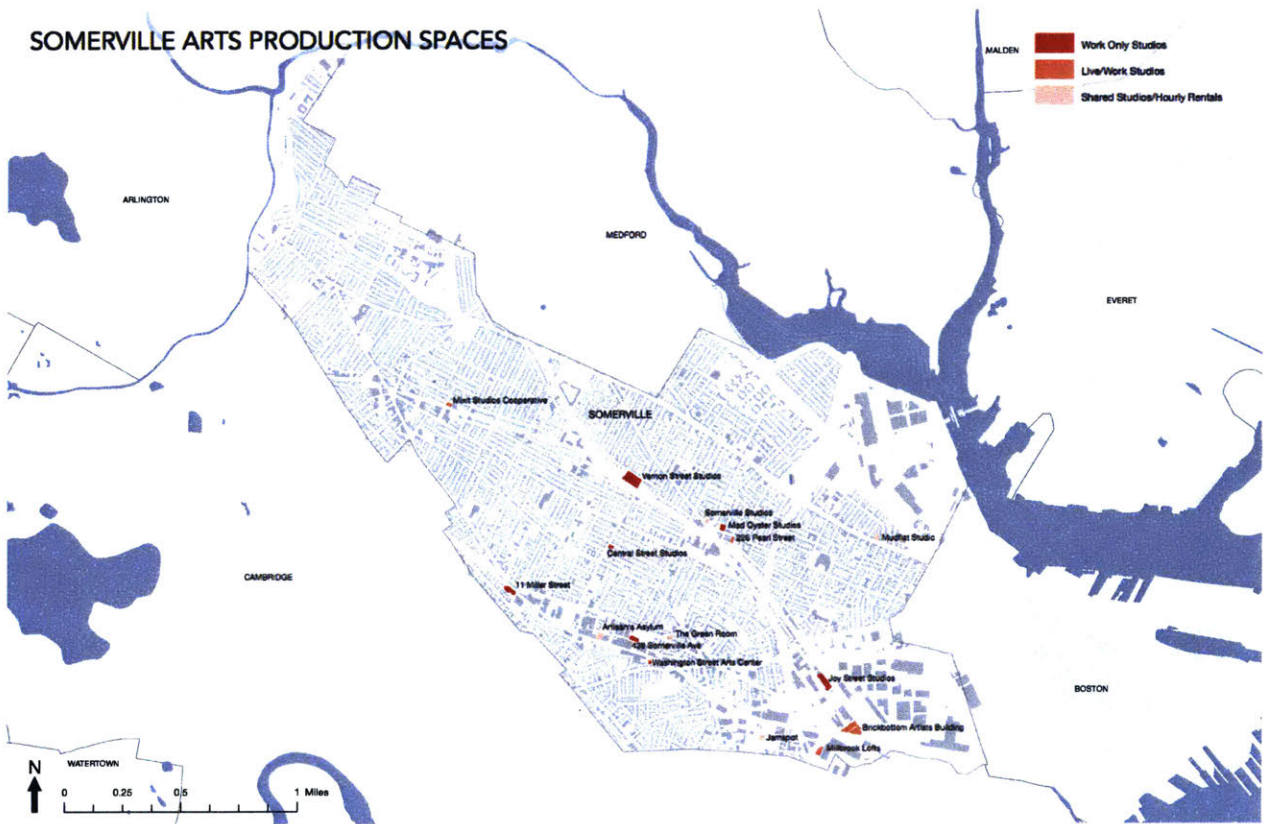
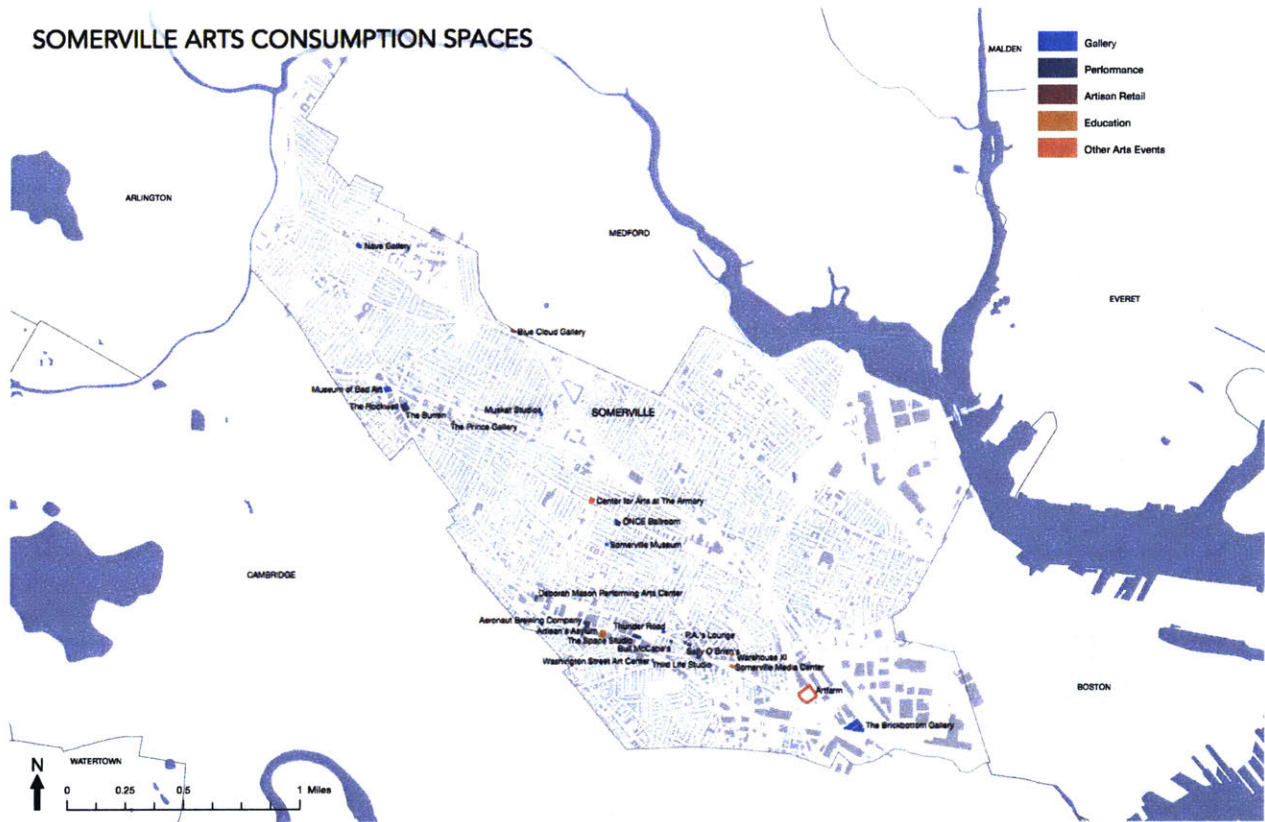
Production spaces are also distributed throughout the city, with a particular concentration in the Union Square, Gilman Square, and Brickbottom neighborhoods. These spaces exist within a variety of zoning districts as well, though they skew towards industrial areas. As expected, the larger production spaces are especially concentrated in industrially zoned districts. The Somerville Open Studios map suggests another layer of analysis of arts production spaces, showing the importance of artists' ability to work out of their homes in residential districts ("Somerville Open Studios," 2017).

As of now, the Davis Square cluster of spaces is the only area that is connected to the rapid transit system of the MBTA, but the upcoming Green Line Extension will eventually link Gilman Square, Union Square, and Brickbottom to the regional rail network.



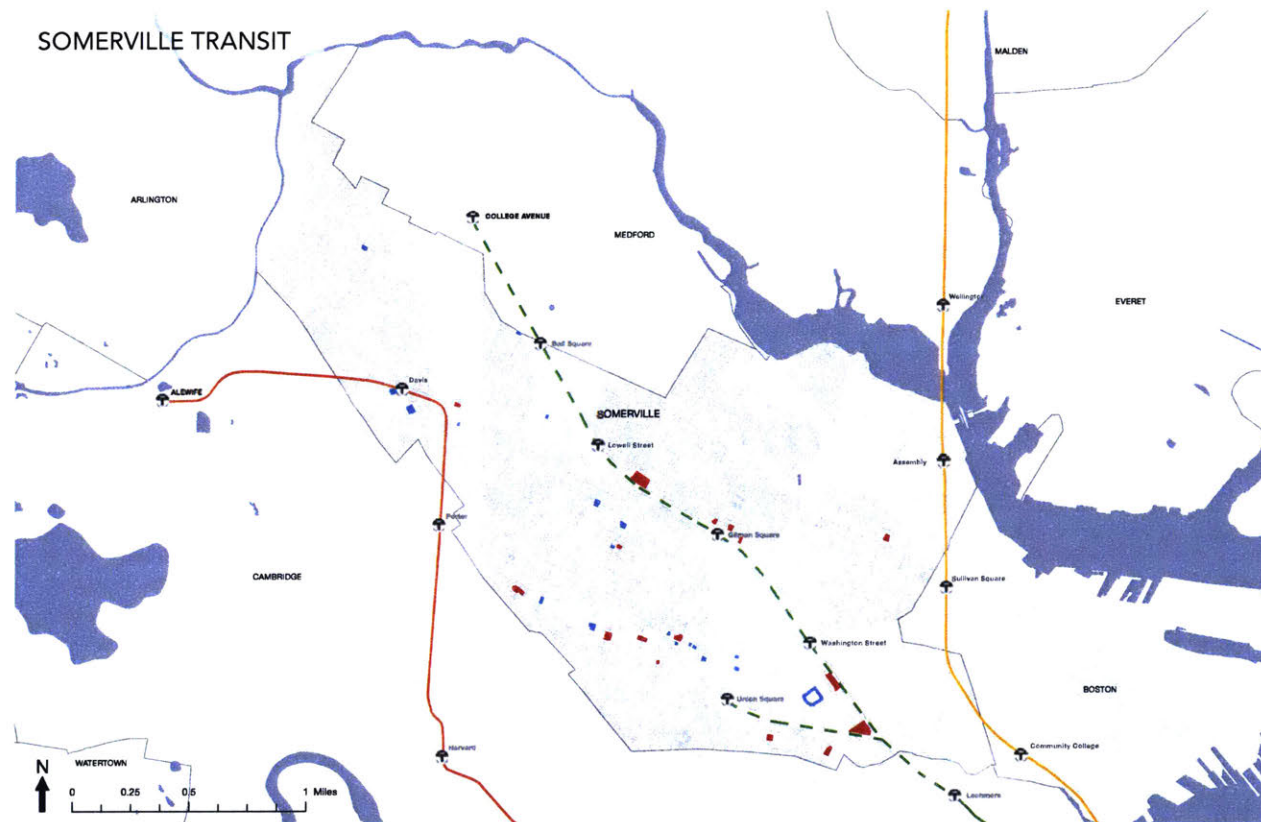


Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace





Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace





## ARTIST WORKSPACE CASE STUDIES

### Case Study 1: Vernon Street Studios

#### *History*

The Rogers Foam Company was founded in 1947 in a 19th century factory building once occupied by the Derby Desk Company, a manufacturer of roll-top desks (“Rogers Foam,” 2018). Rogers Foam has been a major manufacturing presence in Somerville since that time and was the first company to manufacture Nerf balls (Thompson, 2018). The entirety of the buildings at 6 and 20 Vernon Street were once occupied by Rogers Foam, but by 1974, many of the production functions had been dispersed to facilities around the country (E. Jones, personal communication, February 23, 2018). There is still a manufacturing presence in the building, as well as the company’s corporate headquarters, but that year also marked the beginning of the Vernon Street Studios. The Rogers family, being patrons of the arts, opened up their extra space on the fourth, fifth, and sixth floors of 20 Vernon Street to artists in the neighborhood. Vernon Street was the first space to hold open studios in 1975, which has grown to become a city-wide affair that occurs twice a year (“Vernon Street Studios,” 2012; Cassel, 2014). The Rogers Foam Company has since converted space in the adjacent building at 6 Vernon Street into additional studios with the entire complex housing more than 100 artists today (E. Jones, personal communication, February 23, 2018).

#### *Business Model and Operations*

Vernon Street is a work-only studio and functions as a straightforward leasing model. Rogers Foam owns the building and is directly in charge of leasing the studios to artists. Ellie Jones, an employee of Rogers Foam and the leasing manager for Vernon Street Studios, explains that at the beginning, the space was unregulated. When the artists first moved in, they were allowed to do whatever they wanted with the space. They built walls all over the studio and paid for whatever square footage they occupied. Since then, Rogers Foam has had to be a little more hands-on, making sure the space is up to code and working with the Fire Department twice a year to check for safety hazards. Some changes were made that bothered the artists at first, such as floor to ceiling walls being reduced to allow the sprinkler system to cover the whole space, but the artists have since adjusted and this has not been a concern since (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

The studios run from 50 to 2000 square feet and the rent is currently \$10.75 per square foot per year, making the space fairly affordable to artists, though they do raise the rent three or four percent each year. There is an immense interest in the space, with a waiting list of over 500 individuals, many of whom have been on the list for years. The leases run for a year starting on October 1st. Typically, the turnover is extremely low, with only a few artists moving out each year (and some years, none at all). Existing tenants are given first priority when new space becomes available. Often, artists will take a suboptimal studio just for the chance to move up when space becomes available. The newer studios in 6 Vernon Street all have windows, which Jones pushed for, having worked with the artists for a number of years, but many of the older studios do not. In her experience, Jones says, artists just want a place to work. The studios may not all be ideal, but they are always full and can't meet the existing demand. On the demand for artist workspace, Jones says, "If I were very wealthy, I'd put a building up just for artists, because everyone just wants to be in an artists' building" (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

The coexistence of Rogers Foam and Vernon Street is integral to the studio's sustainability and the two maintain a beneficial and collaborative relationship. Rogers Foam owns the building and remains a very successful organization, allowing them to provide artists with low cost space (E. Jones, personal communication, February 23, 2018). The colocation of arts and industrial production works well, as both can be noisy and messy. The artists spaces would not be suitable for office uses due to the noise of manufacturing below. In an interview with Scout Somerville, Heather Baluchnas says, "it's a very industrial space that's not going to be well suited for an office building. So having that existing space is perfect for artists, who get messy. Having that kind of marriage works out really well" (as cited in Thompson, 2018). Additionally, this is firmly a work-only studio, as restricted by the industrial zoning, which perhaps further allows for this coexistence. Some artists have tried to live in their studios and have had to be evicted, but overall this is not a problem (E. Jones, personal communication, February 23, 2018). Allowing live/work studios on top of an active manufacturing plant may not yield the same synergies, increasing the likelihood of conflict with residents and workers.

Developers have shown interest in purchasing the property, which is a fear that is mirrored among many of the artists within the studio. According to Heather Baluchnas, there was a real worry that the Rogers family would sell the building in the 1990s,

though now that seems to be unlikely (as cited in Thompson, 2018). Ellie Jones confirms this, saying that the Rogers family has no interest in selling the property (as cited in Thompson, 2018). This is the world headquarters of their company and they are committed to Somerville and committed to the artist studios (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

### *Users and Community*

The tenants of Vernon Street Studios vary in discipline but most are visual artists with a handful of musicians and media artists (“Vernon Street Studios,” 2012). They used to have ceramic artists as well but had to prohibit the use of kilns out of safety concerns. The artists come from all over the Boston area, but mostly from Somerville and Cambridge, according to Ellie Jones. Jones posits that the artists are attracted to the space because of the community, both within the building and Somerville as a whole, and the proximity to the Somerville Museum, which is just up Central Street (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

Brenda Star is a sculptor and has been a tenant of Vernon Street Studios since 1980. She has one of the largest studios in the building and it used to be even bigger early on in her tenure. Before moving into her current space, she had a small studio in her house in Cambridge but needed more space and separation from her home life to continue growing her practice as an artist. According to her, the amount of space that she has is the best thing about working at Vernon Street, which is crucial to her work as a sculptor. Additionally, she greatly values the isolation of the studio, which allows her to work without distractions. Star is connected with her colleagues within the building, though she is more active outside of the city, attending events at MIT and other institutions. She recently retired from teaching but has held positions at Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. She participates in Open Studios every year but has seen a drop in visitors to her studio, perhaps due to her location within the building on the sixth floor (B. Star, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

Star is concerned about the neighborhood changes in Somerville and not only what they will mean for affordable artist spaces in the neighborhood, but also the changing nature of art production and consumption. She’s seen galleries closing throughout the Boston area and worries that the Rogers Foam building might eventually be turned into luxury apartments. Star sees changing technology making her work more and more obsolete, with 3D printing replacing her sculpture, though ultimately, she is accepting

of the change and sees it as a positive evolution of art. Worried about real estate values pricing out artists, she says, “there’s so much happening in this neighborhood and all around Boston that I’m glad to see Somerville trying to protect other things so that it’s not going to be a big fancy suburb” (personal communication, March 7, 2018).

### *Physical Environment*

The Rogers Foam building sits on the corner of Vernon Street and Central Street, an island of industry in an overwhelmingly residential neighborhood, which largely sprouted around the existing factory in the early twentieth century. The building itself, built in 1890 (“Somerville Assessing Department,” 2016), is a maze of manufacturing spaces coupled with the corporate offices of Rogers Foam, and the artist studios on the floors above. The grade change within the site is so great that the entrances on Vernon Street are actually on the third floor of the building with the first two floors buried into the hill and only accessible through the rear of the building. Behind the building is a large parking lot, used by the Rogers Foam employees, that runs between the building and the rail line, which will soon be the route of the Green Line Extension. The parcel itself is a curious shape, covering the building and the parking lot and stretching along the train tracks behind a number of two and three family houses further down Vernon Street.





There are two entrances, one at 6 Vernon Street and one at 20 Vernon Street, both of which are small, nondescript doors. Vernon Street itself is a quiet, mostly residential street with little foot traffic, though this may change with the new Lowell Street Green Line Station at the other end of the street. There are murals on the building, painted by artists in the studio, along Central Street, which is the primary pedestrian route that passes the building. Though the murals do indicate the nature of the building, it is harder to understand how to access the space to those walking down Central Street.

Open Studios becomes the primary way that the artists interact with the community, creating a temporal nature to the consumption use of the building. Some artists have expressed a desire for a permanent gallery space within the building, but Rogers Foam has no intention of creating that space as of now. There are concerns about who would run the gallery that preclude Rogers Foam from entertaining the idea. Structurally, it would be an enormous challenge as well. The floors at grade are actually a split level, which would make creating a ground floor gallery space especially difficult and would require a major investment in the property. Furthermore, Rogers Foam would have to give up some manufacturing space to accommodate a gallery, which the company has no intention of doing (E. Jones, personal communication, February 23, 2018).

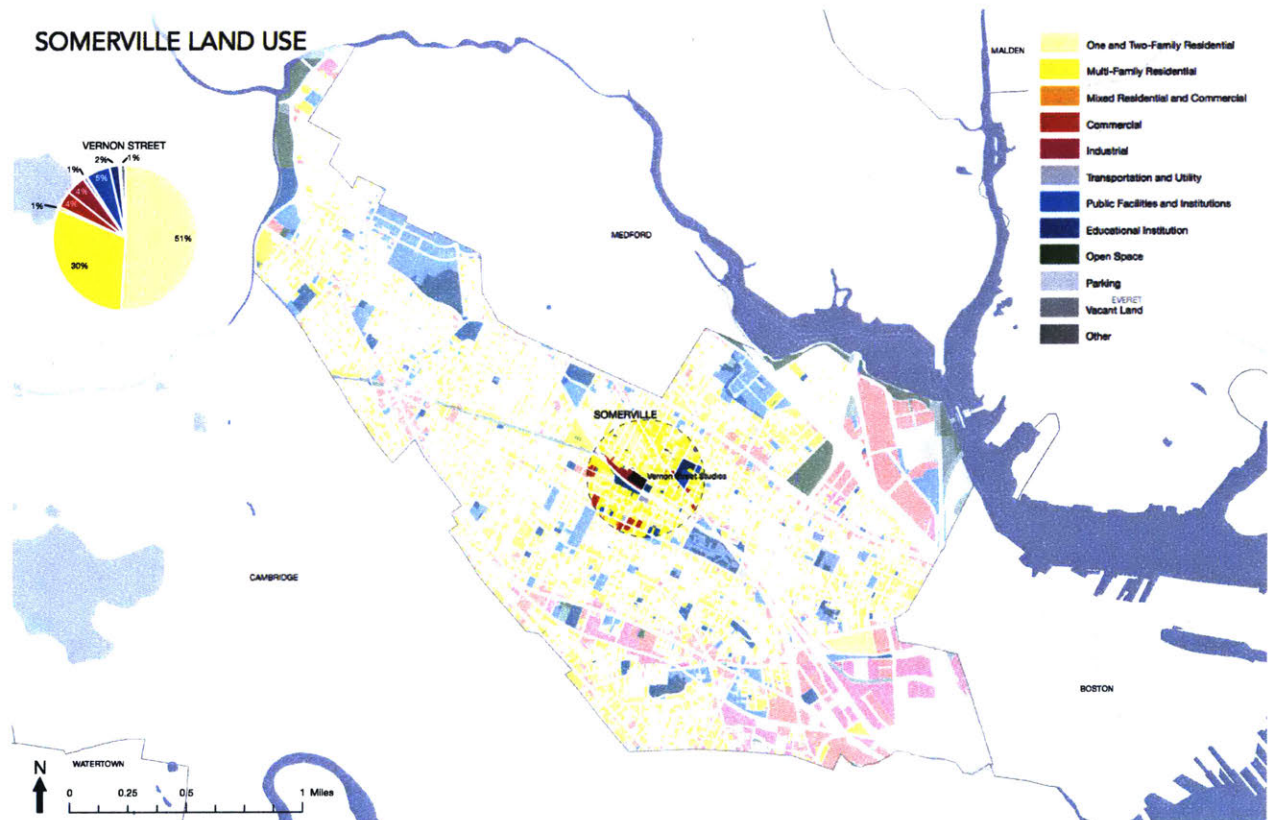




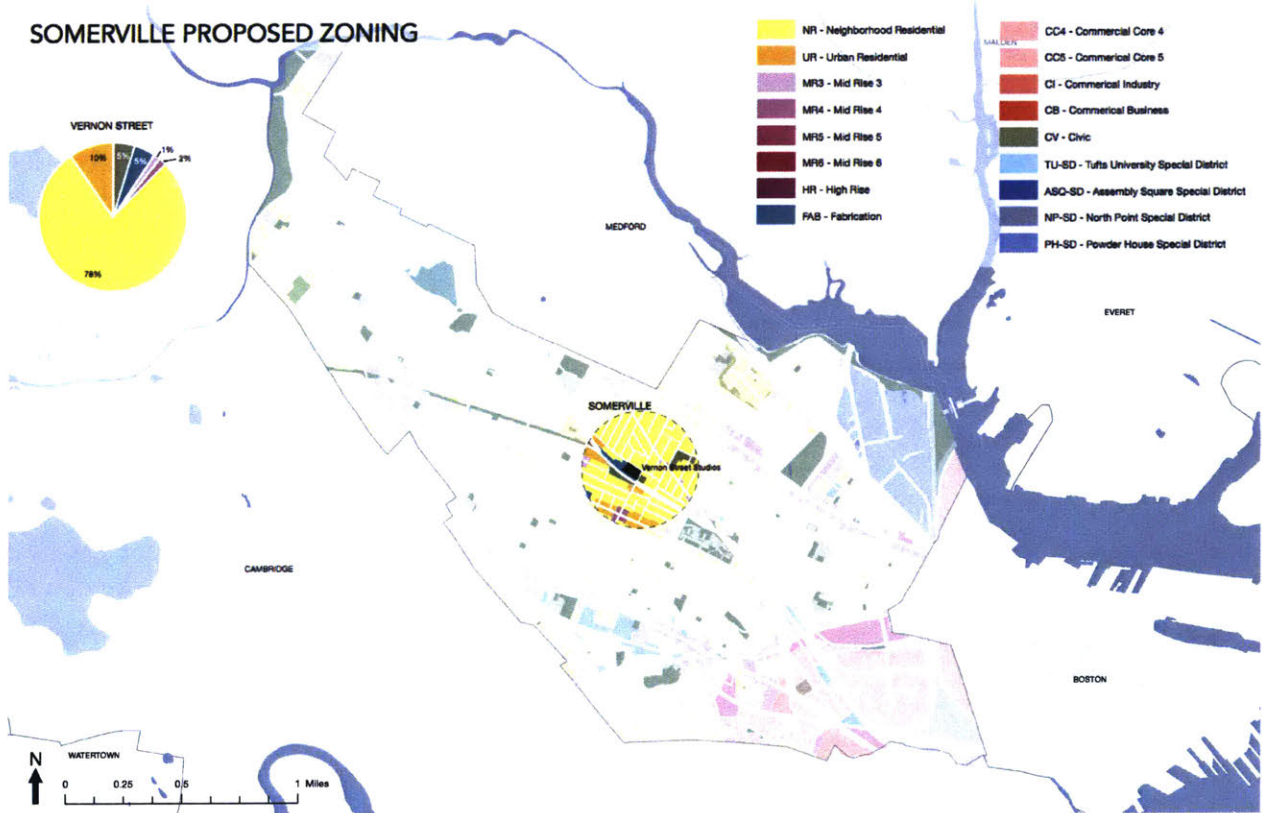
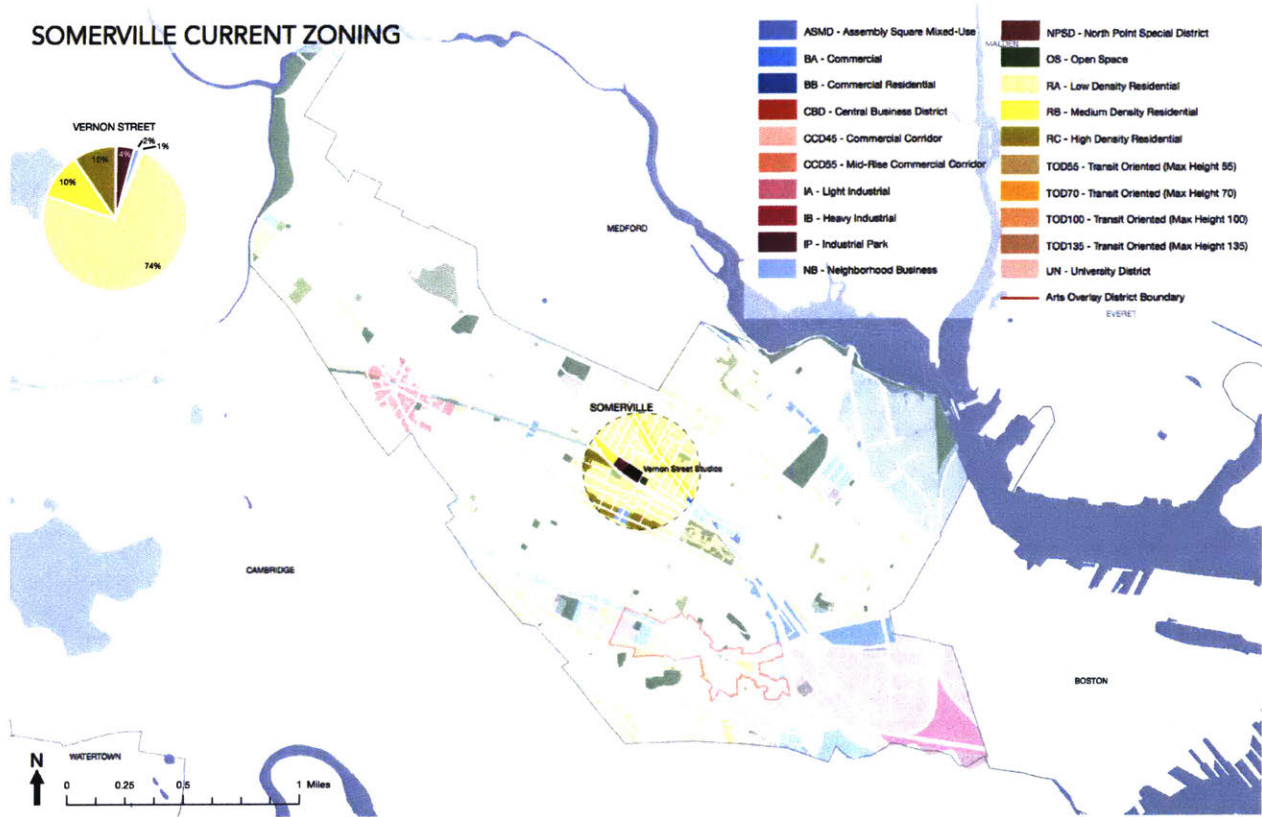
*Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace*

Vernon Street is a bit isolated from the other artist workspaces in Somerville, though the Central Street Studios is just a quick walk up the hill and there is a cluster of studios down Medford Street in Gilman Square. It maintains a close relationship with the Somerville Museum, which is just up Central Street as well, and serves as major consumption space for the artists at Vernon Street (E. Jones, personal communication, February 23, 2018).

The Green Line Extension is a looming question that should create some greater opportunities for connectivity to the space. The Lowell Street station will be a new gateway to the neighborhood and the extended community path will run alongside the rail line abutting Vernon Street (OSPCD, 2014a). There is still a question of if and how the community path will connect to Central Street above but this could provide another opportunity for people to access the studios. This increased connectivity may provide new ways for artists to access the space on a day-to-day basis, though it is more likely to benefit the artists during Open Studios by creating a quicker way for the public to get there.



# Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace



## Case Study 2: Brickbottom Artists Building

### *History*

The Brickbottom Artist Building was formed as an offshoot of the Fort Point Arts Community in Boston. FPAC had already developed one building, 249 A Street, which remains an artist co-op to this day, and were looking to find a new building in the Fort Point area. In 1986, a building on Damrell Street in South Boston was put on the market and FPAC put out a call for interested artists. Unfortunately, under further scrutiny, the building was not structurally sound and the project fell through, but the group of artists stayed together in case another opportunity arose (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018). Led by Robert Goss, who had been elected President of the Board of this newly formed group, they met every week discussing next steps and plotting their future artist live/work space. Eventually, they came across a building for sale on Fitchburg Street in Somerville, which was previously used as a cold storage warehouse for the A&P grocery store chain (personal communication, March 30, 2018).

The initial group was made up of around 30 artists, but to fill the 250,000 square foot warehouse they had found, they would need a lot more investors. There was second call for artists and over 100 people showed up at the next meeting (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018). According to George Summers, another founding Brickbottom resident, they were each asked to put up \$1,000 and submit slides of their work to show their commitment to the project (personal communication, March 7, 2018). Eventually they moved away from FPAC entirely and moved ahead with the project on their own.

The City of Somerville, led by Mayor Eugene Brune, was incredibly supportive of the project. At the time, Somerville was in an economic downturn, but the newly expanded Red Line had already begun to transform Davis Square and the City was eager to replicate that success throughout the city. To accommodate the project, Somerville needed to create a new “Artist Housing” use in the zoning code that would be allowed by special permit in industrial districts, which they did without any controversy (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018).

The sale of the building cost about \$7 million and another \$7 million was put into renovating the building. At the time, this was the largest live/work artist studio building

to have been constructed in the United States and subsequently became a model for many that came after it. The project was set to be completed in December of 1987, but due to some construction setbacks, they were not able to move in until April 1, 1988 (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018).

### *Business Model and Operations*

Brickbottom was founded as a live/work limited equity co-op, dedicated to serving visual artists, much like the 249 A Street building that had preceded it. The limited equity co-op model was an important tool used to maintain the affordability of the space. The co-op took on one mortgage and each member paid a portion of that mortgage proportional to the size of their unit. The limited equity aspect of the model uses a fixed formula to determine how much one would receive if they decided to sell their space, instead of receiving market value. In practice, this would essentially guarantee a return of whatever the tenant put into the space, plus a minimal amount of appreciation. This would allow the space to remain affordable even if there was turnover (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018).

To finance the initial buildout, the building was split between the 100 unit co-op and 50 additional units that would be sold as market-rate condos. They wanted to leverage the booming housing market by using the sales of the market-rate condos to subsidize the co-op. However, the housing market took an unexpected downturn and sales of the condos were not as high as they had planned for (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018). Furthermore, the construction delays had driven up the costs and some of the artists began dropping out of the project. Summers recalls that the initial estimates were around \$6 per square foot but when the project was complete, the costs had risen to \$13. Faced with financial insolvency, the co-op voted to convert to condos in 1989, which reduced their interest rates from 13% to 6 or 7% and allowed the project to move forward (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018; G. Summers, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

Not everyone was happy with this change. Summers tells me, “I remember the night that we voted to go condo and one of the artists literally stood on one of the tables and said, ‘this is the death of this community! This is the death! We are no longer an artist community’. And to a certain degree he was right. Once we went condo, anybody could sell” (personal communication, March 7, 2018). Legally, the co-op bylaws had to be rewritten so they did not require residents to be artists, opening the door for

anyone to move in. Summers still has mixed feelings about the change: “Yes, we gave up a very clearly defined artist community. But at the same time, had we not gone condo, there’s no way that I could have stayed in that area” (personal communication, March 7, 2018). About 50% of the original 100 co-op units are still occupied by artists, solidifying that community (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018).

After the change, a condo board was formed to deal with the day to day operations of the building and the Brickbottom Artists Association was founded to organize the artist community’s events and run the on-site gallery (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018). Today, the Brickbottom Artists Association is open to non-residents as well as residents and has over 100 members (“Brickbottom Artists Association,” 2017).

### *Users and Community*

Despite the lack of restrictions, Brickbottom remains a vibrant artist community. The original by-laws stated that you had to be a visual artist to be a part of the co-op, but the relaxation of those limits allowed artists of other disciplines to move in. At first, Summers recalls, anyone would move in, but many of them would eventually leave when they found the noise and chaos of a working artist building to be undesirable. Now, new residents know what they’re getting into, and many of them are artists of some kind, including architects and designers. People want to live at Brickbottom to be a part of the artist community (personal communication, March 7, 2018).

George Summers is a batik artist and a part of the original group of founding artists. Finding live/work space was important to him at the time, mostly for financial reasons. When he was starting his art career, he couldn’t afford rent for two spaces so this became a necessity, which is a situation shared by many young artists. At 800 square feet, he has one of the smallest units in Brickbottom. Even with the small size, the space would be too expensive had he not bought his studio thirty years ago. Summers sees live/work space as an integral part of supporting young artists though not necessarily ideal for working. Personally, he prefers to separate his work from his home-life in order to be more intentional about working without distractions. Now his space is primarily used as housing and he does most of his work at the Brookline Arts Center, where he teaches classes at night. Summers also runs the gallery of the Society of Arts and Crafts in the Seaport District of Boston. All of the artists he knows have other jobs to supplement their income, further underscoring the need for



affordable workspace (personal communication, March 7, 2018).

Robert Goss, on the other hand, uses his studio as a work-only space and lives in Central Square in Cambridge. He shares his studio with his wife, a printmaker, whom he met during the development of Brickbottom. He is an artist that defies medium, but mostly works with found objects and photographs to create interactive pieces that tell the story of his life. The studio is a large open cavern with pieces of circuit boards and clocks piled all around (personal communication, March 30, 2018).

Both Goss and Summers cherish the artist community of Brickbottom. Goss attributes the close-knit feel of the community to the live/work model of artist space, creating an active working environment as well as a neighborly cooperation between residents. It's seclusion from the rest of residential Somerville further fortifies the internal community. Open Studios is especially important, not only as a way to share their work with the rest of the city, but it is a time that the residents can all see what each other are up to, reconnect, and get inspired. The Brickbottom Artists Association holds numerous events each year, including gallery shows and flea markets (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018; G. Summers, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

From the beginning, Brickbottom has had a close relationship with the city of Somerville, though not as much coordination with the other workspaces around the city. There are residents involved in almost every aspect of city government, from the zoning overhaul to the Green Line Extension to affordable housing. Though the original members are aging and are not as active in the events around the city, a new generation is pushing for more involvement in city-wide events like Artbeat and the Fluff Festival that are run by the Somerville Arts Council (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018).

Both Goss and Summers are concerned with the gentrification and displacement in Somerville, both of artists and other low-income residents. Summers sees the lack of affordable housing in the Boston area one of the biggest challenges for artists. Exemplifying the need for both production and consumption spaces, Summers posits that Boston is a great place to sell art because of the concentration of high income earners that are more likely to buy art, but it's almost impossible to find an affordable place to live. Cities like Providence and Lowell have been siphoning off artists from

Boston and have created incredibly vibrant working communities, but they all need to go elsewhere to actually sell their work (G. Summers, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Goss is encouraged by the City’s talk about supporting the artist community in Somerville but is wary of their ability to do so: “I’m worried about Union Square and the gentrification, we’ve already seen it in Davis. There’s a lot of talk of arts districts and the arts community. I think the City feels supportive of that. How much they can afford to do it, how much is realistic, that I don’t know” (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018).

### *Physical Environment*

The Brickbottom Artists building was originally constructed in 1890 as a cold storage warehouse and cannery for the A&P grocery chain (“Brickbottom Artists Association,” 2017). The building is located in the Brickbottom neighborhood of Somerville, a small sliver of land, sandwiched between the McGrath Highway and the Lowell Rail Line. It is a primarily industrial district that gets its name from the clay pits and brickmaking factories that used to populate the area (“Union Square Neighbors,” 2015). The building itself sits where the Fitchburg and Lowell rail lines converge on their way to Boston. This fork will also be the intersection of the two branches of the Green Line Extension, with a community path running alongside the Lowell Line. These infrastructure pieces create a district that feels largely separated from the rest of Somerville, even though Union Square is only a ten-minute walk away.





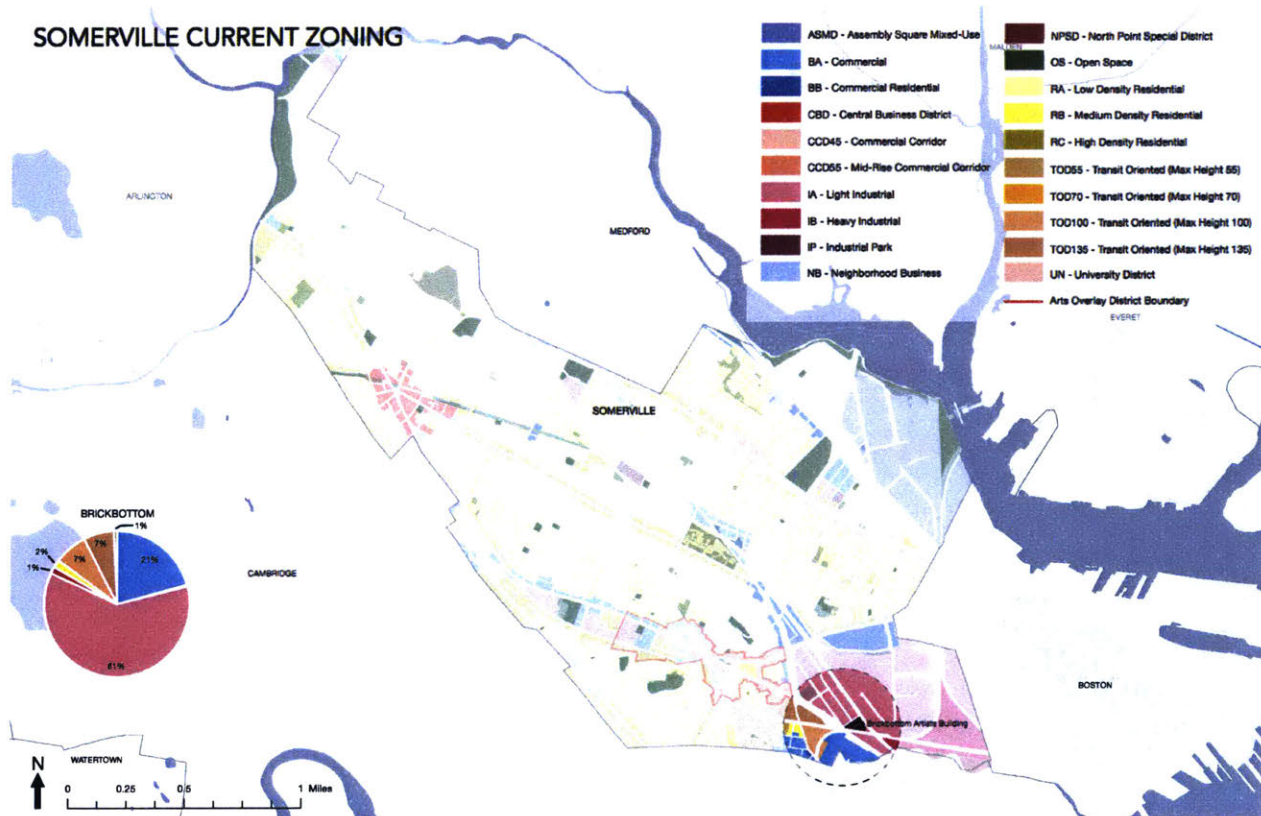
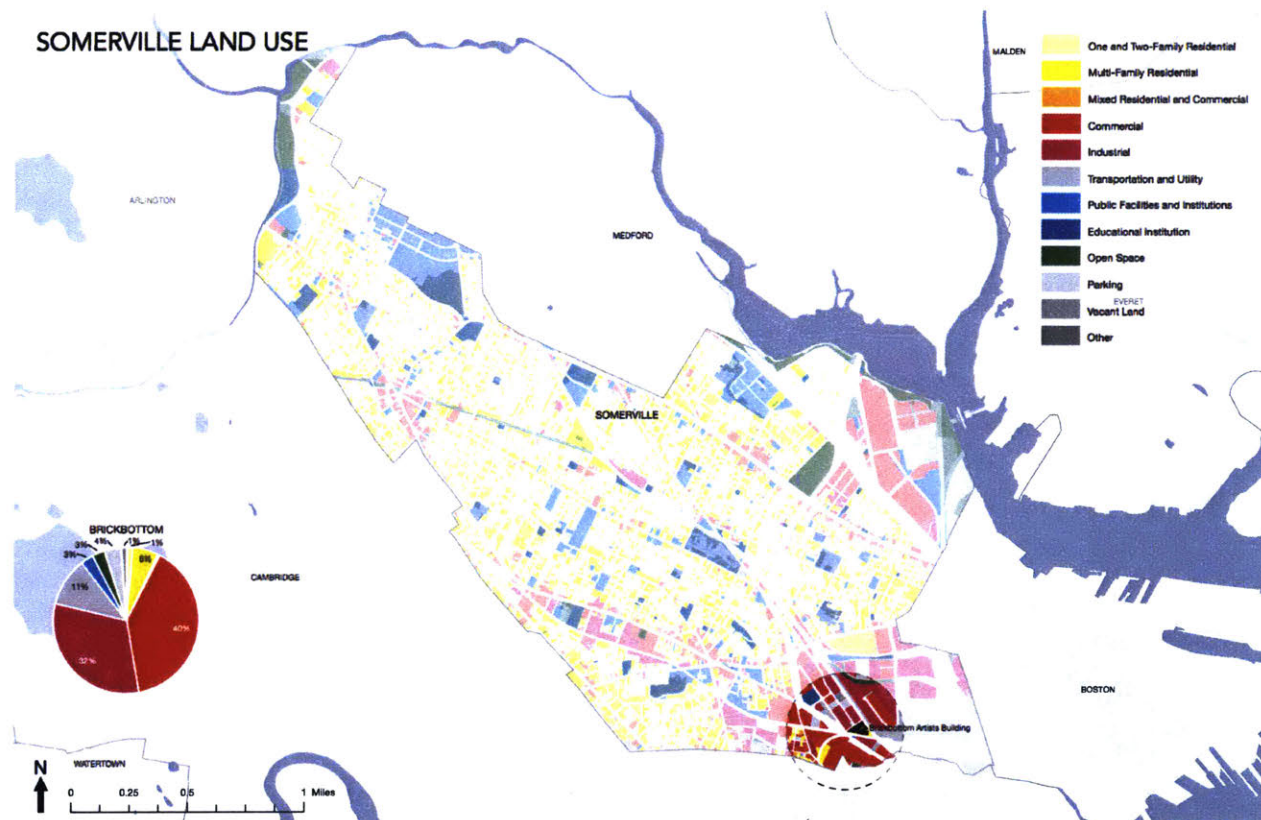
*Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace*

Joy Street Studios, a work-only artist building, is located at the other end of the district, creating a significant concentration of artists. The other businesses in the area are all industrial in nature, including an electric utility company and a slew of auto repair shops. Besides the Open Studios event, there is some informal coordination between the two spaces. Often residents display flyers for events and other initiatives in both buildings. Some residents of Brickbottom even have additional studio space at Joy Street (R. Goss, personal communication, March 30, 2018). The City is also turning a decommissioned waste transfer station into an arts oriented open space called ArtFarm, right around the corner from Brickbottom on Poplar Street (“ArtFarm,” 2016; G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018). Robert Goss thinks there could be even more coordination between the spaces: “It would be great if it were all artist buildings here... If Joy Street became live/work, that would be fantastic... I think we might connect more. If we had a potluck here or they had something, it would be the Fitchburg-Joy Street event” (personal communication, March 30, 2018).

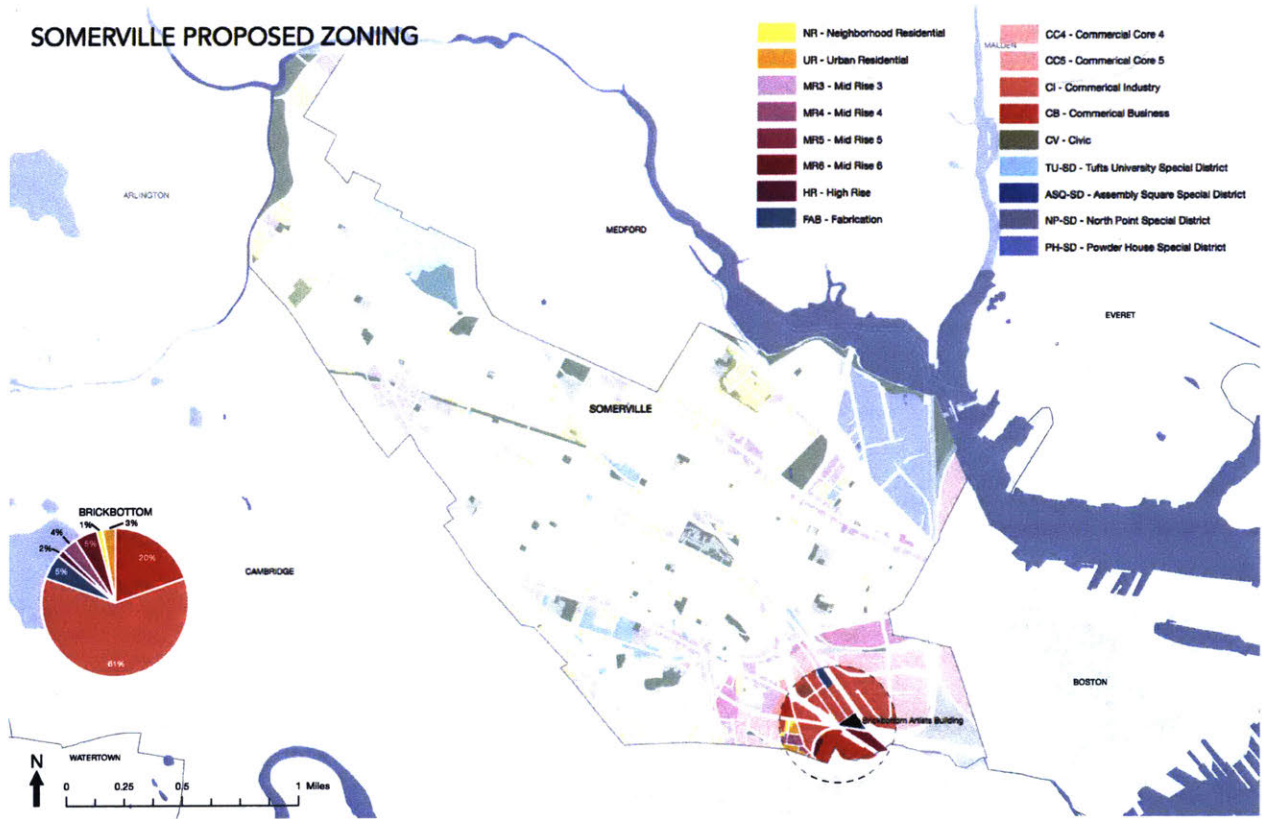




Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace



Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace



## Case Study 3: Artisan's Asylum

### *History*

Artisan's Asylum is a non-profit maker space in Somerville's Union Square. Founded in 2010 by Gui Cavalcanti, a robotics engineer, and Jenn Martinez, a costume designer. Artisan's Asylum began in a small 1,000 square foot space at 560 Windsor Street in Boynton Yards. Interest in the space grew rapidly and soon after they had begun operations, they moved to a 9,000 square foot space at 13 Joy Street in Brickbottom, within the Joy Street Studios building (Cavalcanti, n.d.; "Artisan's Asylum," n.d.). Around the same time, the Ames Safety Envelope Company, a major manufacturing employer in Somerville, had sold off its operations to TAB Products and shuttered its Union Square facility. In 2011, the complex was rebranded as the Ames Business Park and began leasing space to a slew of creative companies ("Ames Business Park," 2018). Artisan's Asylum became an early pioneer of "Innovation Row" with a 25,000 square foot space, which has since been expanded twice to its current 40,000 square foot facility (Cavalcanti, n.d.).

### *Business Model and Operations*

Unlike Brickbottom and Vernon Street, Artisan's Asylum would be considered a maker space, a conglomerate of shared workshops to which over 300 members have access. In addition to the shared spaces are 142 private studios, creating a diverse mix of hobbyists and full-time artists and creators. Cavalcanti attributes their ability to grow early on to this mixture, supplementing revenue from the private studios to bolster the shared spaces (Cavalcanti, n.d.). The private studio spaces rent on a monthly basis with no commitment, while the general membership model is tiered based on the times allowed. The unlimited membership is \$190 per month, nights and weekends membership is \$125, the weekday membership is \$125, and the weekend membership is \$90 per month. Artisan's Asylum also offers day passes for people who want to work on a specific project but do not need regular access to the space. A five-day pass costs \$115 and a ten-day pass goes for \$190. These day passes do not need to be used consecutively, allowing for even greater flexibility. Members are also able to rent storage space for their projects, accommodating both the shared space members and the private studio renters. The flexibility of this system as well as the overall shared space model allow for a range of affordable options for artists ("Artisan's Asylum," n.d.).

Additionally, there are a slew of classes taught at the space, some of which are limited

multi-session classes that span weeks while others are regular sessions like Figure Drawing Tuesdays. The instructors are both members and nonmembers and the classes are open to anyone, regardless of membership status. Instructors earn a high percentage of the class revenue, which has attracted many teachers, with the rest of the revenue put towards general operations of the space. In total, Artisan's Asylum has held over 450 classes, serving more than 5,000 unique students ("Artisan's Asylum," n.d.).

The physical workshops at Artisan's Asylum include a CNC shop, bike repair and construction shop, digital fabrication lab, electronics and robotics shop, jewelry and metalsmithing studio, metal casting shop, screen printing studio, welding shop, and a woodworking shop. The resources here suggest a mixture of users beyond what would traditionally be seen as artists, reflecting a larger trend of blending arts, industry, and technology. The classes span the breadth of the workshop resources, some of which are required training courses for individuals to use certain equipment ("Artisan's Asylum," n.d.).

Artisan's Asylum was founded as a volunteer-run organization and has largely remained that way up to today. In 2011 they hired their first full-time staff members, a group of three people including co-founder Gui Cavalcanti (Cavalcanti, n.d.). The staff has grown modestly since then but volunteers oversee many of the operations of the space including giving tours, manning the front desk, and maintaining the various workshops throughout the space. The volunteer model has created a tight-knit community of artists and makers, who have directly driven the expansion and evolution of the space and its programming (A. Ringler, personal communication, March 14, 2018). This model has not been without challenges and they are currently considering a structure change that would move away from the volunteer model and towards bolstering the full-time staff. It is unclear what this would do to the affordability of the space, but it certainly has the potential to increase costs (Thompson, 2018).

They are concerned about next steps as real estate prices rise in Somerville. Though they are confident in the continuance of Artisan's Asylum, they are not sure whether they will be able to stay in their current space or not. In an article in Scout Somerville, Artisan's Asylum President, Ted Siriota, stated, "Artisan's Asylum will continue to exist no matter what, whether we are in this building or down the street in five years. The biggest strength, the biggest thing that is unique, that is difficult to replicate, is the

community of artists and makers that we have” (as cited in Thompson, 2018). They are focusing now on raising more money to either stay in their current space, buy a building, or build a new building. In the long run, Siriota sees the cheapest option as buying a space or building a new one, ideally within the city of Somerville (Thompson, 2018).

### *Users and Community*

The users of Artisan’s Asylum are not necessarily artists in the traditional sense. Though there are some painters and sculptors, many of the members belong to the broader creative economy as technologists and innovators. Andrew Ringler, a public interactive artist, represents the confluence of art and technology on which Artisan’s Asylum was built. Ringler has been a member and a private studio renter since 2016. His work revolves around creating interactive visual, auditory, and tactile pieces that allow users to customize and manipulate the work to create a unique experience. He has a background in computer science, the field in which he worked for over 10 years before returning to school at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, where he earned his Master of Fine Arts degree (A. Ringler, personal communication, March 14, 2018).

Ringler was first attracted to Artisan’s Asylum because of the diversity of workshops available and the community of people to learn from. He had been researching spaces, both live/work and work-only spaces, after graduating but ultimately decided on Artisan’s Asylum after choosing to live in Somerville. Ringler decided against a live/work space in an effort to delineate his work from his home life. This separation allows him to be intentional about his work, without distractions. He has a small, 50 square foot private studio space, where he stores his on-going projects and utilizes the shared workshops extensively. On top of the software development, Ringler’s work requires him to construct with wood and electronics, making the workshops at Artisan’s Asylum immensely valuable (A. Ringler, personal communication, March 14, 2018).

The proximity of other artists and makers has been one of the greatest benefits of working in Artisan’s Asylum. Ringler was working on a piece to be displayed in Central Square in Cambridge that would project an image onto a screen. While testing different materials, other members would stop by his workshop to ask questions and offer advice. One member left him a piece of plexiglass that worked perfectly and another member had a surplus of the material that he used to complete the project.



Ringler routinely calls upon the expertise of the other members when working with new materials. “It’s sort of like being in a company and having access to all of these intellectual resources” (personal communication, March 14, 2018).

Andrew Ringler is also active around the arts community in Somerville, having participated in a number of festivals run by the Somerville Arts Council. He created two pieces for the Agricultural Festival at Somerville’s ArtFarm, including a series of plexiglass fruits and vegetables that still decorate the site’s outer edges and a piece called Fruit Beets that allowed users to compose visuals and music using fruits and vegetables. Ringler’s work revolves around citizenship and a desire to connect people within a community so it is very important to him to be active in Somerville. He also attends events around the city like the Union Square Farmer’s Market and programs at the Armory and Warehouse XI (A. Ringler, personal communication, March 14, 2018).

### *Physical Environment*

Artisan’s Asylum is located at 11 Tyler Street, a curious little street set back from Somerville Ave, the main drag through the southern edge of the city. The facility is within the old Ames Envelope Factory complex that has since been turned into a bustling hive of creative businesses, including Aeronaut Brewing and Greentown Labs, the world’s largest clean-tech accelerator, among other smaller users. The particular building that houses Artisan’s Asylum was built in 1983 in a collection of buildings that the Ames Safety Envelope Company erected between 1938 and 1987 (“Ames





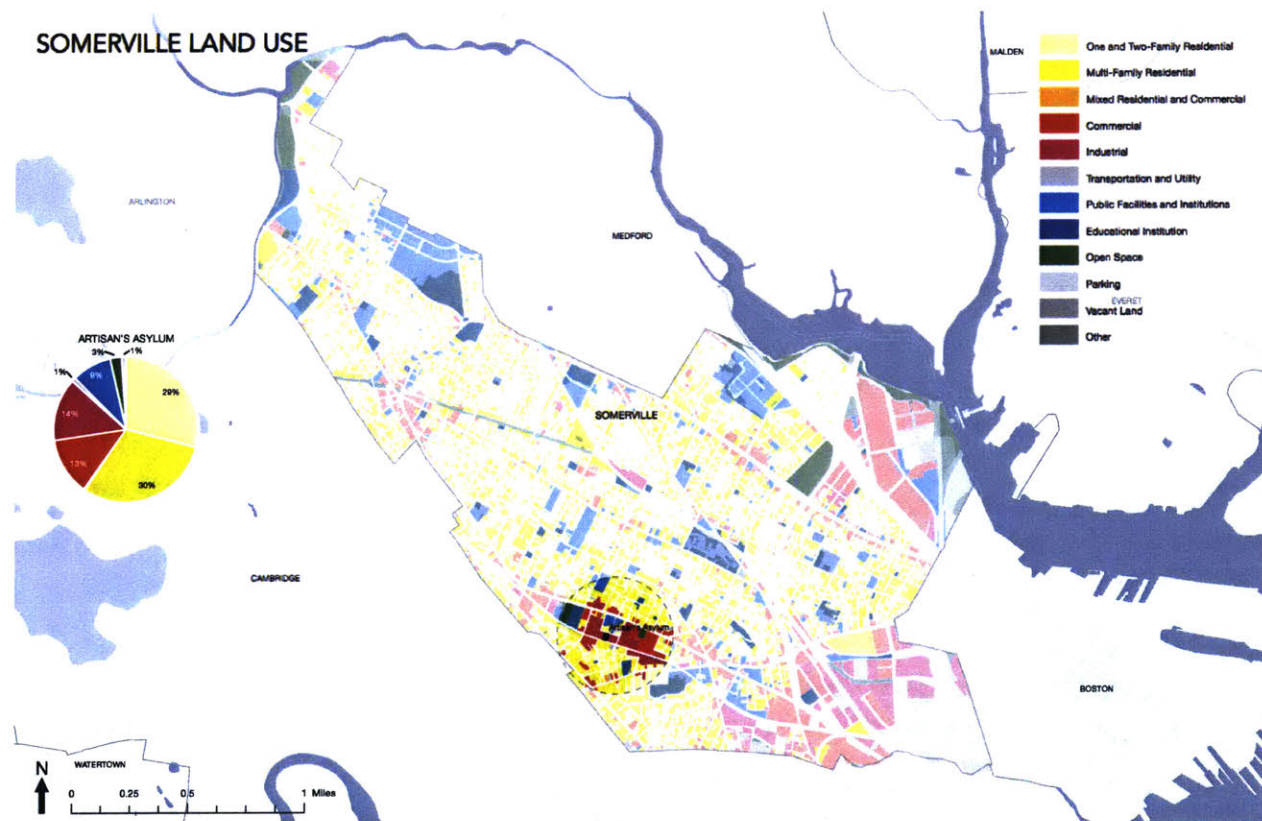
Business Park,” 2018). It is a nondescript warehouse building with just a small set of double doors marking the entrance to the space. However, the internal structure of the space is composed of a winding labyrinth of workshops and private studios, buzzing with activity, with a welcoming front desk and small gallery space in the entrance, all completely invisible from the street outside.

Abutting the Fitchburg Rail Line in the rear, Artisan’s Asylum would appear to be very much disconnected from the established pedestrian route of Somerville Ave. However, the cluster of entertainment and recreation venues in the complex, like Aeronaut and Brooklyn Boulders make this tiny street unexpectedly active. The residential developments of the inner ring of the street further solidify this eclectic mix of uses that simultaneously appear both private and communal. The tension between the production and consumption uses of this space are evident in the built environment. The production space benefits from its isolation, creating a safe space for the noise and mess of fabrication, while the gallery and education aspects suggest a desire for more exposure to attract visitors and potential users.

On a larger scale, Artisan’s Asylum is located on the fringe of the Union Square neighborhood, the densest concentration of artist spaces in Somerville. The organization almost always has a presence during the events and festivals that take place in Union Square like the Fluff Festival and other events run by ArtsUnion and the Somerville Arts Council. Individual artists from Artisan’s Asylum often participate in

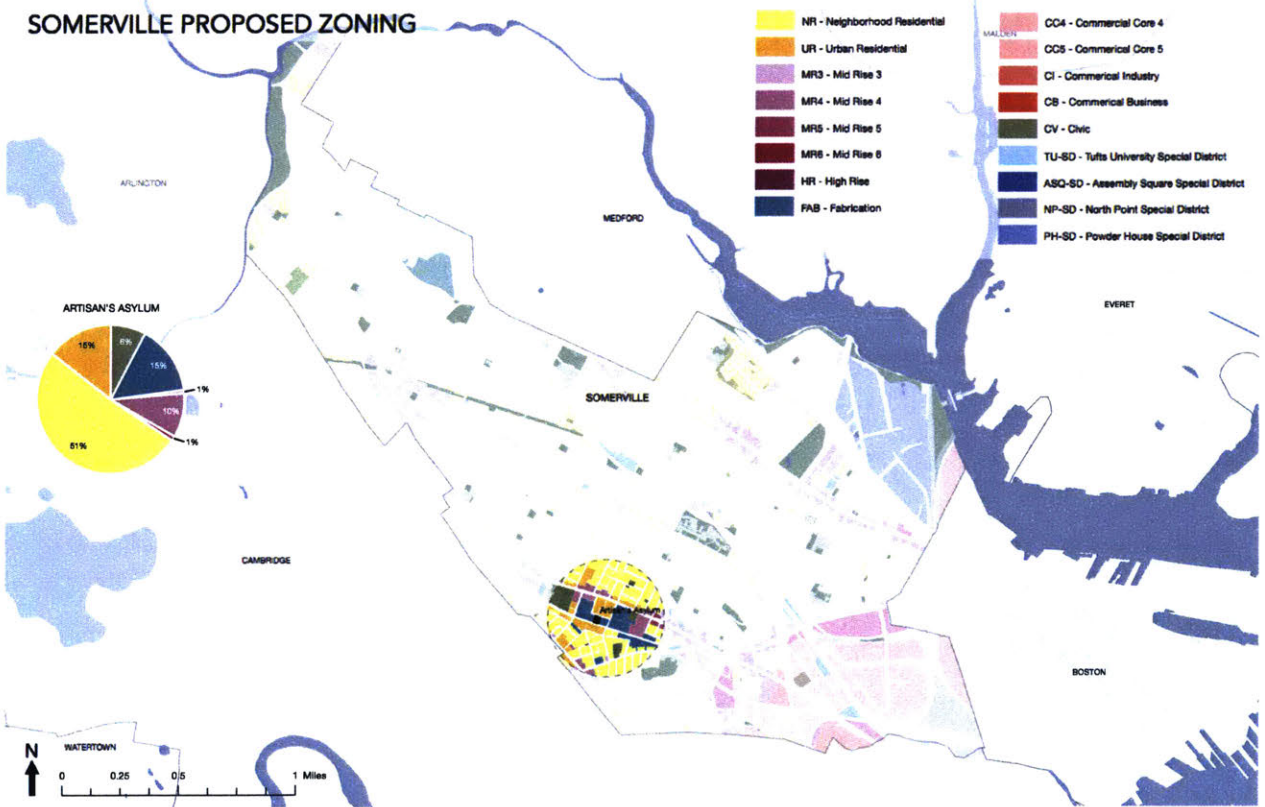
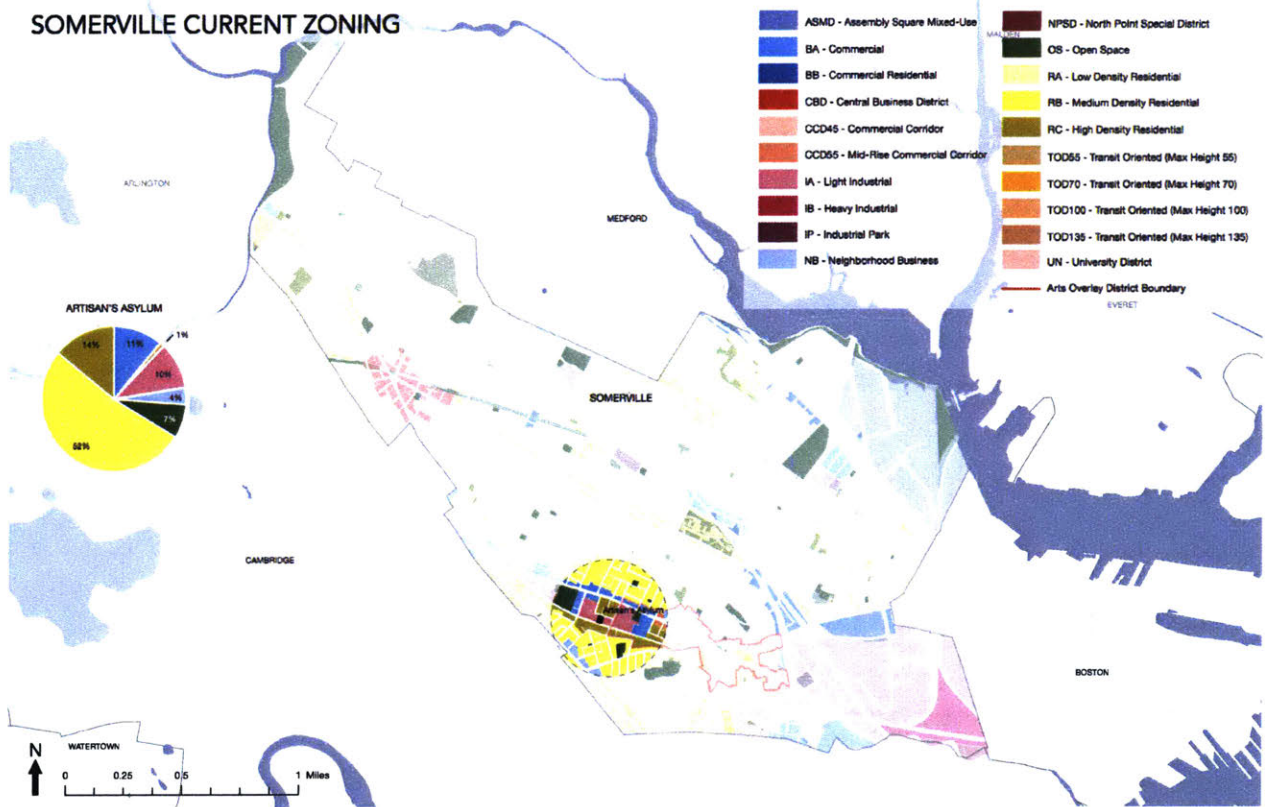


these events as well. Andrew Ringler for example, had a piece called Ignite Beats (an evolution of Fruit Beets) at the Ignite Festival in August of 2017 (A. Ringler, personal communication, March 14, 2018). The proximity to Union Square creates a mutual benefit between the artists at Artisan’s Asylum and the festivals of SAC and other event venues in the neighborhood, as well as being a part of the larger Somerville Open Studios events.





Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace



## TAKEAWAYS

These examples and stories reveal important insights into the inner-workings of artist workspaces in Somerville and how they exist within the larger urban context. Artist spaces have always needed to be creative financially to stay afloat. The idea of creating a mix of users such that one higher paying user can subsidize the more affordable artist space appears in a variety of ways. Vernon Street Studios is paired with the Rogers Foam Company, which gladly leases below market-rate space to artists simply because the owners care about supporting the arts. However, this is not an easy model to replicate and will still be a precarious situation when the building eventually changes hands. Brickbottom tried to create that mix by selling 50 of the original 150 units as market-rate condos to subsidize the artist co-op. When the housing market crashed and costs exceeded expectations, they were forced to alter that mix and allow for more non-artists to move in. Since converting to condos, Brickbottom has become largely unaffordable to young artists looking for live/work space. Presumably this will make maintaining the artist community more and more difficult as time goes on. Artisan's Asylum combines a variety of uses into one space to maintain financially viable. The sheer number of people using the shared workspace makes the organization more economically space-efficient and the education aspect provides an additional revenue stream to help out operations of the work space.

The tension between isolation and connectivity is apparent in all three case studies. Each one abuts a rail line, reflecting the historical importance of the rail to industry, but at the same time, creating a buffer for artists to work separate from the rest of the city. This isolation is important for the production of art, which can be noisy and messy, typically incompatible with residential uses. However, this isolation may be unsustainable as real estate values rise and housing pressures take precedence. The seclusion of artist workspaces also represents a starker separation of the production and consumption functions of artist spaces. New spaces will have to contend with a more connected urban environment and some of the old ones, like Brickbottom, will need to adapt.

On the other hand, a more connected urban environment could be a great asset for artist spaces, providing an opportunity to capitalize on the consumption aspect of the business model. Brickbottom has a gallery within the space, but in order to visit you would have to know it's there beforehand. A dense, walkable neighborhood

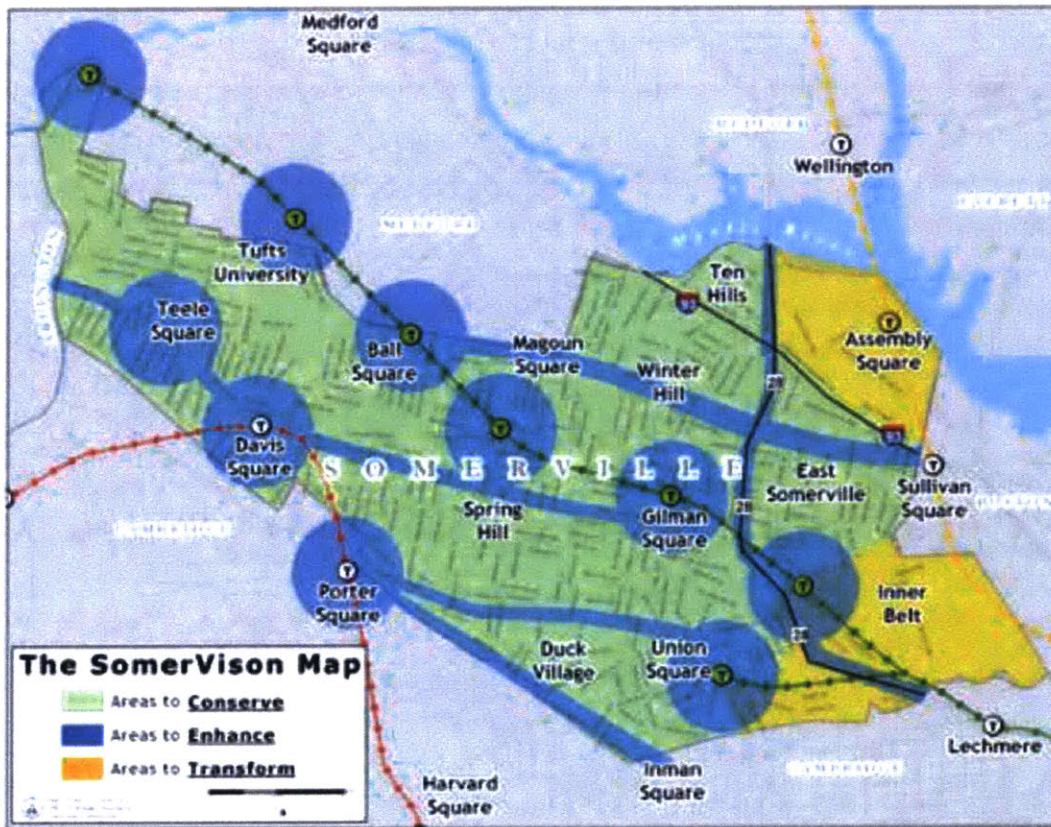
could attract more visitors to the gallery and reconnect the area to the rest of the city. Likewise, Artisan's Asylum could leverage a better street presence to attract more people interested in taking classes or becoming a member. The current isolation of these spaces does seem to create very tight-knit communities within the studios, but there is little coordination between them.

These findings reveal a few implications for zoning policies that support artist workspace. First of all, use regulations should easily allow for the combination of the production and consumption functions of artist spaces. This is especially important as fringe areas of the city are replaced with mixed use development in order to create vibrant and active artist spaces. Secondly, live/work space should be encouraged throughout the city to maintain affordability for young artists that cannot afford the cost of a separate workspace. Incentives and mandates need to respect the need for an overall mix of uses that help to subsidize the artist spaces in order to keep them affordable while maintaining financial security. Finally, the restriction of uses in industrial areas has prevented these spaces from being displaced by higher-value uses and helps to keep them affordable. Zoning should be used to limit competition while allowing for the appropriate mix of uses that will create vibrant, well-connected artist communities.

# CHAPTER IV: CULTURAL PLANNING

Comprehensive cultural planning is an infrequently used but powerful tool that cities can utilize to document and analyze the values and needs of the artist community as a whole. In the absence of a cultural plan, as is the case with the city of Somerville, we must look to the pieces of broader planning efforts that identify the goals and strategies regarding the artist community. This summary starts with SomerVision, which is the city's first comprehensive plan completed in 2012 and then further analyzes three subsequent neighborhood plans. The pieces of these plans in summation reflect the current planning objectives with regard to the arts and culture of Somerville.

## SOMERVISION





Broadly speaking, SomerVision calls for 30,000 new jobs, 125 acres of new open space, 6,000 new housing units (1,200 of which to be permanently affordable), 50% of new trips to be taken via transit, bike, or walking, and 85% of new development to be in the designated areas to transform (OSPCD, 2012). The SomerVision goals are segregated into five different categories: Neighborhoods; Commercial Corridors, Squares, and Growth Districts; Resources; Transportation & Infrastructure; and Housing.

The specific arts and culture goals are most explicitly stated under the broader “Resources” category, with three major items: Increase the recognition of Somerville as a center of arts and creativity; ensure that Somerville has a mix of spaces for creative production, performance and exhibition, and that art is incorporated into the built environment; and help local arts and cultural institutions, such as theatres, film and art festivals, museums and libraries to succeed, network and grow (OSPCD, 2012). Implicit in these goals is a recognition of the social and economic value of artists and cultural organizations. Supporting artists in Somerville by promoting the development and protection of spaces for production and consumption of art enhances the economic opportunities for artists and solidifies the identity of Somerville as a “haven for creative thinkers” (OSPCD, 2012).

The specifics regarding the policies and actions presented for the first goal further reveal the interconnectedness of Somerville’s cultural and economic development strategies. According to the SomerVision Plan, the City of Somerville will foster a creative economy and expand Somerville’s reputation as a center for the arts, while maintaining and leveraging the cultural diversity of its residents. Some of the actions suggest an ongoing effort while others have clear outcomes or deliverables by which we can measure progress. Those actions that propose specific products are highlighted in the table below. The Somerville Arts Council has created a searchable, crowdsourced database of artists and creators in Somerville as well as a thorough list of resources including live/work space, studio space, grants, exhibition spaces, and educational facilities (OSPCD, 2012). It is unclear as to whether or not a more extensive analysis of the creative economy was completed. There was no expansion of the Arts Overlay District though pieces of it have been incorporated into a few zoning changes since 2012, which will be discussed at length in a later chapter.

**Goal 1: Increase the recognition of Somerville as a center of arts and creativity.**

| Policy  | Action   |
|---|--|
| A. The City should foster a creative economy.   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Market Somerville as a community that welcomes and takes pride in a strong arts presence.</li> <li>2. Prepare and analyze trends in existing and emerging creative business sectors to identify ways to encourage new clusters of creative activity/economy, and build upon the success of Davis and Union Squares.</li> <li>3. Promote and attract innovative businesses to Somerville, including companies focused on design, music, film, or multi-media.</li> </ol>              |
| B. The City and its community arts partners should sustain and expand Somerville's prominence in the arts.                      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider expansion of the City's Arts Overlay District to invite and retain Somerville artists and spur cultural economic development.</li> <li>2. Partner with the Somerville Arts Council to develop an online arts directory and creative marketplace, and promote collaboration between arts-based Somerville organizations.</li> <li>3. Promote and attract innovative businesses to Somerville, including companies focused on design, music, film, or multi-media.</li> </ol> |
| C. The City and its community arts partners should help cultivate and maintain a creative community that is culturally diverse. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure arts diversity by promoting culturally-specific arts events, publishing promotional materials in multiple languages, and utilizing community organization distribution networks.</li> <li>2. Encourage cross-cultural and cross-generational creative programs and art spaces that foster mentoring relationships and entrepreneurial networking.</li> </ol>  |

The second goal refers specifically to the support of artist spaces and their integration into the built environment. The City recognizes here that supporting artists largely relies on the creation of spaces for the production and consumption of art and that zoning has often restricted the ability to provide those spaces. The first action under Policy A calls for an expansion of the Arts Overlay District, the specifics of which will be discussed in the following chapter. Presumably this is in reference to the incentive zoning strategy used to encourage the development of new artist spaces. The second action of Policy A calls for a relaxation of use regulations in order to allow for greater ease in developing artist live/work and work-only spaces. In addition, there are a few action items that refer to incentivizing or encouraging the development of specific types of spaces under Policy B, however, the exact strategies for ensuring the spaces listed are left vague (OSPCD, 2012).

*Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace*

**Goal 2: Ensure that Somerville has a mix of spaces for creative production, performance and exhibition, and that art is incorporated into the built environment.**

| Policy  | Action   |
|---|--|
| A. The City should use zoning and public policy to foster space for a creative economy, promote live/work spaces, and retain affordable artist work spaces. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support existing Arts Overlay District zoning and consider additional arts districts to help meet the need for inexpensive work and office space.</li> <li>2. Make zoning conducive to flexible use of space for live/work and design/production.</li> <li>3. Explore incentives for private owners to convert/sell/lease property to artists and self-employed creative businesses.</li> </ol>  |
| B. The City should integrate arts awareness into its development and planning efforts.  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider creating a municipal fund for public arts, with potential funding streams including a "percent-for-arts" requirement in Transit Oriented Districts.</li> <li>2. Explore mitigation funding to create public art across the city.</li> <li>3. Ensure that a multi-purpose performance space is developed within Somerville.</li> <li>4. Encourage developers to build non-profit performance/exhibit spaces into their projects.</li> <li>5. Provide at least one outdoor municipal public space that is designed as dual use for live performance.</li> <li>6. Promote the provision of low-cost indoor and outdoor spaces for artists to have opportunities to sell/display their products.</li> </ol> |
| C. The City should incorporate arts and creativity into public infrastructure recognizing the links between the arts and environmental awareness.           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore opportunities for arts-based organizations and creative businesses to utilize the public landscape for art installations and contribute to the maintenance of these open spaces.</li> <li>2. Advocate for community-based public art at the new Green Line extension transit stations.</li> </ol>  |

The third goal centers around supporting and connecting cultural institutions in Somerville. Reflecting the intent of the Arts Overlay District that surrounds Union Square, this goal again suggests an expansion of the Arts Overlay zoning to other districts in order to increase the supply of artist workspaces. It calls for a study on the creation of Cultural Districts throughout Somerville, as defined by the State of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council (OSPCD, 2012). The benefits of designating a Cultural District are primarily through financial and technical assistance, with little actual funding from the State ("Mass Cultural Council," 2018). As of now, there has not been a Cultural District designation in Somerville and it is unclear whether that study ever took place.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

To continue planning for the Green Line Extension into Somerville, SomerVision calls for subsequent station area plans and neighborhood plans to determine the future growth of these areas. Three have since been completed: the Lowell Street Station Area Plan in 2014, the Gilman Square Station Area Plan in 2014, and the Union Square Neighborhood Plan in 2016. Each of these neighborhood plans include goals to support the artist community that largely reflect the tenets of the SomerVision goals.

### *Lowell Street Station Area Plan*

The Lowell Street Station will exist within a primarily residential neighborhood, dotted with large former and current industrial buildings, largely along the rail line. The Rogers Foam Building and Vernon Street Studios are included in this mix, located just a short walk down Vernon Street. The City expects Vernon Street to be a major walking route to and from the Lowell Street Station, creating an opportunity to more thoroughly incorporate Vernon Street Studios into the neighborhood fabric, but also increasing the value of the Rogers Foam Building and threatening displacement (OSPCD, 2014a). Acknowledging this, the plan calls for a number of goals to support and preserve the creative community:

- Prepare zoning regulations for a “Fabrication District” that supports light manufacturing and arts-related uses, and prohibits residential uses.
- Map the new Fabrication district over the Rogers Foam / Vernon Street Studios property.
- Evaluate zoning regulations for home-based arts uses, and establish clear performance standards for appropriately-scaled uses that should be permitted in basements, garages, and carriage houses.
- Work with the City’s Assessing Department to understand current tax policy related to privately-owned studio and fabrication buildings.
- Partner with the MBTA and MassDOT to plan, design, and install Somerville-sourced art installations at the Green Line Station.
- Explore whether a “1% for the Arts” campaign in Somerville is viable.
- Partner with the New England Science Fiction Association to explore upgrades to their headquarters at 502-504 Medford Street.



Zoning and land use planning is integral to the implementation of these goals, as made clear by the introduction of the Fabrication District that would lay over the Rogers Foam Building and the evaluation of zoning regulations for home-based arts uses. The Fabrication District would utilize the use restriction zoning strategy to create zones where artist spaces do not have to compete with higher value uses like housing and commercial office space. On the other side of the spectrum, the third goal refers to the relaxation of use restrictions in residential areas to better allow for artists to work in their homes as an ancillary use (OSPCD, 2014a).

### *Gilman Square Station Area Plan*

Gilman Square is located in the eastern part of the Winter Hill neighborhood, where Medford, Pearl, and School Streets meet. It is primarily a residential neighborhood with a strong retail corridor down Medford Street. Gilman Square is home to a number of existing artist studios, including Mad Oyster Studios, 226 Pearl Street, and Somerville Studios. It is also home to the Reid & Murdock Building, also known as the Homan's Building, which is an old brick loft that is currently owned by the City that abuts the Lowell Rail Line. The building has been vacant for a number of years but would be perfectly suitable for artist studios and other creative uses. According to the Gilman Square Plan, the building is slated for demolition to accommodate the Green Line Extension right-of-way, but its future is unclear now that the construction and design of the Green Line Extension has been reworked and the bid has been transferred to a new design-build entity. Regardless, the proposed development for that site as indicated in the plan would incorporate space for the creative economy, including four live/work studios and 18,000 square feet of craft manufacturing space (OSPCD, 2014b).

The Plan reiterates the goal of preserving and expanding the creative economy, recognizing that space availability is low and there is an incredibly high demand. It suggests that the City should collect and analyze data on leasing rates and availability of studio and production space and use zoning to protect these spaces from the competition of other uses (OSPCD, 2014b).

## *Union Square Neighborhood Plan*

The Union Square Neighborhood Plan is the City's most ambitious plan, seeking to transform Union Square into a commercial center, anchored by the new Green Line Station. Union Square sits on the border of one of the "Areas to Transform" as identified in SomerVision, making it uniquely suitable for intense development (OSPDCD, 2012). It is also the densest concentration of artist spaces in the city, including workspaces like Artisan's Asylum, 438 Somerville Avenue, and the Washington Street Arts Center. Again, this plan acknowledges the need for inexpensive space to support artists and creators, adopting a "Space = Work" mantra that was originally proposed by a group of artists advocating for affordable workspace (OSPDCD, 2016). There are four major recommendations related to the protection and promotion of new artist workspaces:

- Establish a "Fabrication District" in the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to protect buildings well suited for Arts & Creative Enterprise uses.
- Permit uses from the Arts & Creative Economy uses by-right within the Union Square plan area.
- Require 5% of commercial floor space to be set aside in new development for Arts & Creative Enterprise uses.
- Consider allowing required floor space for Arts & Creative Economy Uses to be consolidated and relocated from individual 'sending sites' to one or more 'receiving sites'.

Each of these recommendations use changes to the zoning ordinance to meet the goal of providing more space for artists. Forgoing the incentive zoning strategy of the Arts Overlay District, the Union Square Neighborhood Plan emphasizes relaxing use regulations, preventing competition through use restrictions in the Fabrication District, and mandating the development of artist space through the 5% requirement (OSPDCD, 2016).

## TAKEAWAYS

The SomerVision goals with regard to artists and the creative community reflect the essential understanding that ensuring space for artists to produce and share their work is integral to their success. However, the specific actions to meet these goals suggest a need for more planning and a deeper understanding of the spatial needs of artists. Many of these actions provide vague guidance like exploring incentives for private developers to lease or sell property to artists, but there are few details as to how these incentives would work in the comprehensive plan. The subsequent Neighborhood and Station Area Plans delve further into the specifics as to how these goals may manifest themselves in different areas of the city. Over time, there seems to be a shift in focus with regard to the zoning strategies the City seeks to employ. The relaxation of use regulations is apparent throughout these plans, aiming to allow more artist uses by right. The incentive strategy of density bonuses found in the Arts Overlay District is left out of the Neighborhood Plans in favor of the use restriction strategy of the Fabrication District and the mandate strategy of the 5% arts use requirement.

SomerVision is a starting point with regard to understanding how to support artists in Somerville and rightfully calls for more studies and policy proposals. The Neighborhood Plans begin to hone in on these strategies, however, there is still a question of how to measure the space needs of the artist community. How many studios are needed? What is the right mix of arts consumption and production spaces? Where should these be concentrated if at all? To take it to the next level, a comprehensive cultural plan would turn these vague goals into actionable steps and set measures for success.

## **CHAPTER V: ARTIST ZONING**

Zoning is one of the most important tools in the implementation of land use planning, however, it cannot dictate specifically the use that will develop on each parcel. As Greg Jenkins, Executive Director of the Somerville Arts Council, says, “zoning can either do two things, it can incentivize or disincentivize. It can’t make something happen” (personal communication, February 21, 2018). As such, zoning is not a panacea of artist space development policy, but it is the foundation of land use planning that can help guide the development of the built environment. Sometimes the most impactful zoning strategy is to relax use regulations, removing barriers for artist workspaces to develop in more areas of the city. Zoning also has the power to create mandates and incentives in order to encourage the development of certain uses. Most commonly seen are mandates for affordable housing, known as inclusionary development policies, and density bonuses given to developments that provide a specified public benefit, using market mechanisms to encourage the development of those uses. Zoning can work to stratify the land markets as well, for example, creating districts where industrial uses do not compete in the same market as housing or commercial development.

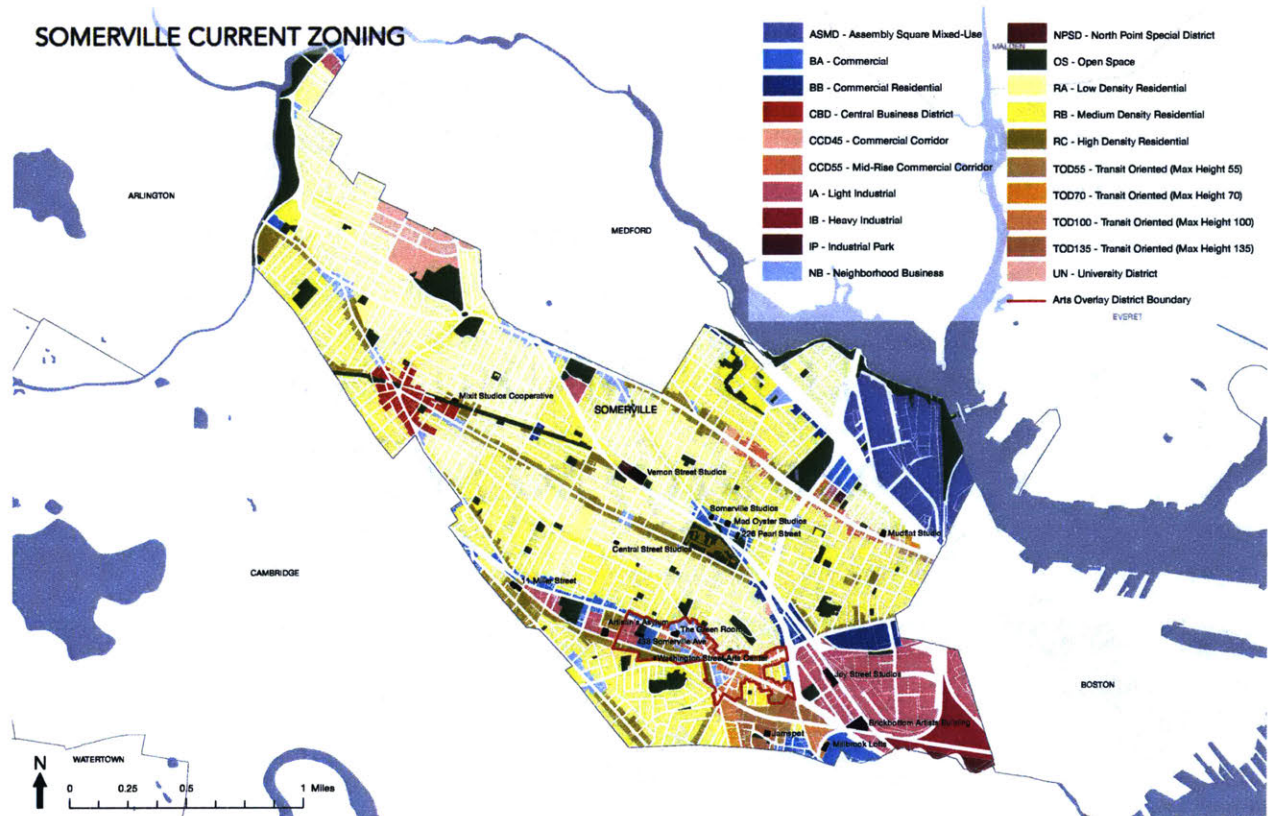
Many cities have used the relaxed use regulations to allow for artist workspace to develop in more areas of the city, most commonly in industrial areas and underutilized downtowns (Strom, 2010). However, this strategy is often inadequate in high value real estate markets that favor housing or commercial office development. New York City passed the Special 125th Street District zoning in 2008, which provided density bonuses and mandates to include visual or performing arts uses in new developments. The options for the mandated arts space include a mix of consumption and production spaces from galleries to bookstores to studios. On the other hand, the density bonuses are only given to projects with arts consumption spaces such as museums and performance venues (DCP, 2018). In December of 2017, the City approved a 20-story mixed use building that would include housing, retail, and a new performance space for the National Black Theater (Hoffman, 2017). The City of Seattle has also shown interest in using density bonuses to incentivize the development of artist spaces, even using Somerville’s Arts Overlay District zoning as a precedent, but this policy was never implemented (City of Seattle, 2017).

Somerville has used, or is proposing to use, each of these four strategies in order to



protect and promote the development of artist workspaces. Besides the relaxation of use restrictions, there are very few precedents from which to learn. These are pioneering strategies with regard to supporting artist spaces, making them crucial topics for further investigation. This chapter will dive deeper into the specifics of these zoning changes and their contexts to understand their implications for the future development and preservation of artist workspace.

There are two major zoning changes, the 2009 rezoning of Union Square, which created the Arts Overlay District and the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Districts, each of which include these strategies, and the proposed zoning overhaul that the City is currently working on implementing through the Board of Aldermen. Again, these tools should not be seen as comprehensive plans to save the arts community, but as foundations on which additional policies can build.



## 2009 UNION SQUARE REZONING

In anticipation of the Green Line Extension to Union Square, the City of Somerville prepared a complete rezoning of Union Square in 2009 to allow for transit-oriented development, while maintaining its character as a multi-ethnic and economically diverse mixed-use district (SAC, 2009). Working with the Somerville Arts Council, the rezoning effort included a few things to specifically support the arts community in Union Square. First of all, the new zoning provided clarity on what was considered an “arts-related use”. The second piece was the creation of the “Arts Overlay District”, that would cover the core of the square as well as spill out into the surrounding residential neighborhood. The third part of the new zoning was a provision in the new “TOD Districts” that would require 5% of gross square footage in all new developments to be set aside for “arts-related uses” (SAC, 2009). The pieces of these three changes have had a varying degree of impact on development in Union Square, which will be discussed further in the following sections.

### *Use Regulations*

Before the zoning change, the only explicit mention of artist spaces was in the “Artist Housing” use, which was created primarily for the Brickbottom development in 1987 (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018). This use was allowed by right, up to three units in the Multi-Family Residential (RC), Commercial (BA), and Commercial Residential (BB) districts. A special permit was required for developments including more than three units in these districts, and for any units in the Central Business District (CBD) and Neighborhood Business (NB) districts. Artist housing uses were also allowed in Industrial (IA) and Industrial Park (IP) districts by special permit, which was the key provision that allowed for the Brickbottom development (SAC, 2009). There was no mention of artist work-only spaces, which may have fallen under a few different commercial categories, like office, crafts-related store, or light manufacturing. According to the City, the definition of “artist housing” was too vague, creating confusion over what was allowed in each zoning district. Particularly, there was no mention of restricting the artist housing use for artists, therefore developers could build artist-style housing without any intention of providing that space for artists (SAC, 2009).

Before the zoning change, the only explicit mention of artist spaces was in the “Artist Housing” use, which was created primarily for the Brickbottom development in 1987 (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018). This use was allowed by right, up to three units in the Multi-Family Residential (RC), Commercial (BA), and Commercial Residential (BB) districts. A special permit was required for developments including more than three units in these districts, and for any units in the Central Business District (CBD) and Neighborhood Business (NB) districts. Artist housing uses were also allowed in Industrial (IA) and Industrial Park (IP) districts by special permit, which was the key provision that allowed for the Brickbottom development (SAC, 2009). There was no mention of artist work-only spaces, which may have fallen under a few different commercial categories, like office, crafts-related store, or light manufacturing. According to the City, the definition of “artist housing” was too vague, creating confusion over what was allowed in each zoning district. Particularly, there was no mention of restricting the artist housing use for artists, therefore developers could build artist-style housing without any intention of providing that space for artists (SAC, 2009).

The zoning change in 2009 created a suite of “arts-related uses” including:

1. Artist Live/Work Space
2. Artist Studio Space
3. Arts-related educational facility
4. Crafts-related retail store
5. Museum/Gallery
6. Retail sales of art and arts supplies
7. Office of creative design professional
8. Theater or performance space
9. Other bona-fide arts-related uses, subject to SPGA (Special Permit Granting Authority) approval

It further defined Artist Live/Work Space as:

*A building or any portion thereof containing units of at least seven hundred fifty (750) square feet in size that is used by the occupant(s) therein for both residential use and Artist Studio Space. Such households must include at least one (1) artist certified by the City of Somerville. Inclusionary Units in Artist Live/Work Space projects will be made available to households in which at least one (1) member is an artist certified by the City of Somerville subject to inclusionary housing income eligibility requirements. Retail sales of art produced on-site that does not take place more than twelve (12) hours per week will be an allowable accessory use.*

Artist Studio Space is defined as:

*Space used for the creation, production, rehearsal or teaching of any visual art or craft, including but not limited to painting, drawing, graphic design, photography, video, film, sculpture, and pottery; of written works of fiction or nonfiction; or of any performing art, whether for live or recorded performance, including music, dance, and theater, and accessory sales of such art. Activities must conform to the following requirements:*

- 1. The use, including storage of materials or products, shall be carried on strictly within an enclosed building.*
- 2. The production of offensive noise, vibration, smoke, dust or other particulate matter, heat, humidity, glare, or other objectionable effect shall be prohibited.*
- 3. Retail sales of art produced on-site that does not take place more than twelve (12) hours per week will be an allowable accessory use.*

The change also includes a clarification to artist studio space as a home occupation accessory use:

*A home occupation shall include, but is not limited to: the studio of a visual artist, craftsperson, musician or other performing artist, photographer, or writer; and the office of an architect, landscape architect*

The home occupation change allowed these uses within accessory buildings on residential lots, including garages and carriage houses, which were not permitted before (SAC, 2009; City of Somerville 2018a).

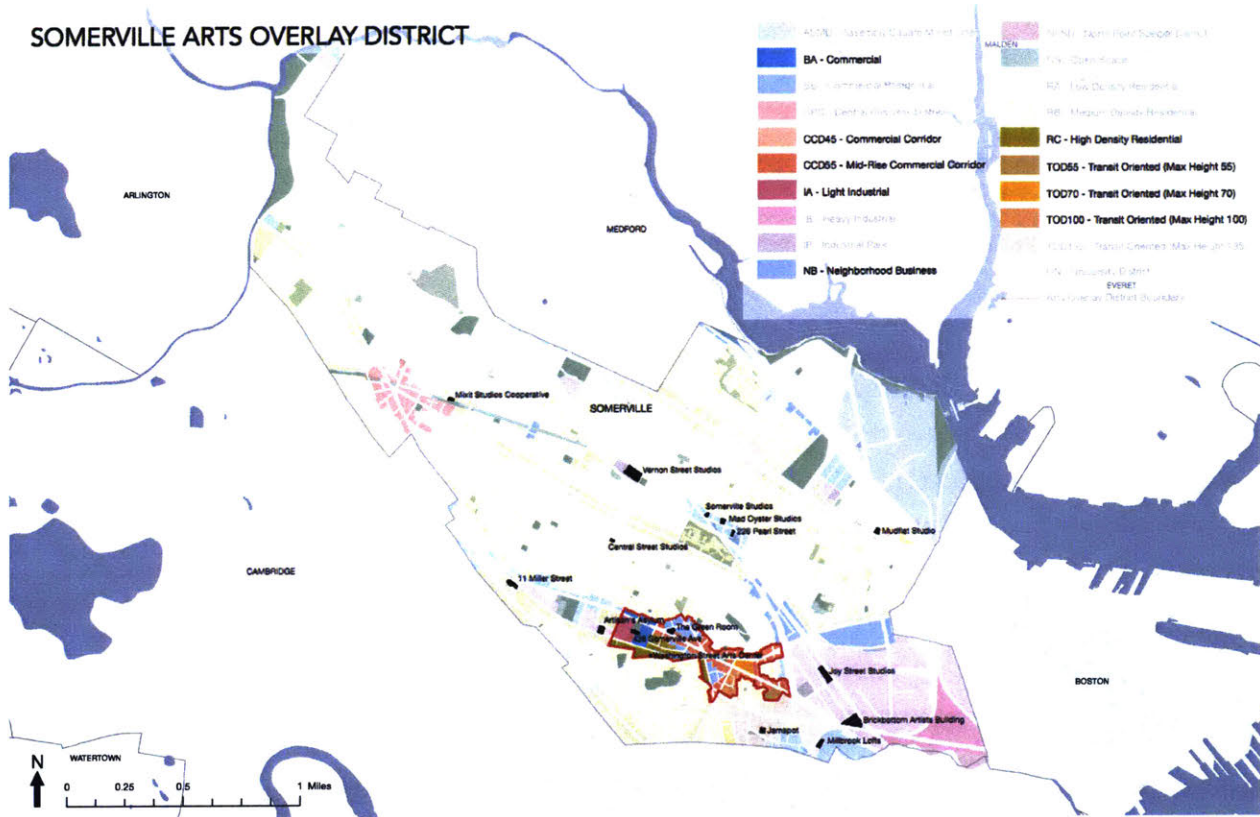
The use changes that were a part of the 2009 rezoning were not confined to Union Square or the Arts Overlay District, but city-wide adoptions, making the development of artist spaces more predictable and permissive across the city. Though it is not entirely clear how effective these changes were to encourage the development of these uses across the city, the home occupation expansion was largely a codification of what was already going on in Somerville, as evidenced by the amount of Open Studios destinations in residential areas. The other key change was in the definition of Artist Live/Work Space that introduced the artist certification process in Somerville. Any development of this use would need to be restricted to certified artists, as defined by the City and instituted through the Somerville Arts Council. In addition, these units would be deed-restricted affordable housing units to ensure that the spaces would be reserved for low-income, working artists in perpetuity (SAC, 2009; G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018).

### *Arts Overlay District*

The Arts Overlay District encompasses Union Square and the surrounding parcels, primarily following the existing pattern of commercial and mixed-use zones. A number of artist spaces exist within this boundary, including 438 Somerville Ave., the Washington Street Arts Center, and the Green Room, as well as a number of performance, educational, and event spaces. Artisan's Asylum lies just outside of this boundary. The intent of this overlay district was to create policies that would preserve and enhance the square as a center for arts-related activity as real estate values rise with the completion of the Green Line Extension (SAC, 2009). According to George Proakis, Director of Planning for the City of Somerville, Union Square was not chosen for the Arts Overlay District because of its particular concentration of artists, who are spread throughout the city, but because it was the area that was being rezoned at the time, largely in response to the Green Line Extension (personal communication, March 14, 2018).

The Arts Overlay District made three important changes: it made the permissions and standards for arts-related uses consistent throughout the overlay district; replaced the CBD district with a new Commercial Corridor (CCD) district, which relaxed parking requirements for existing structures; and introduced density bonuses for developments that included arts-related uses (SAC, 2009).





There are eight different zones within the Arts Overlay District, each with their own use regulations: RC, NB, BA, CCD, IA, TOD55, TOD70, and TOD100. The overlay designation supersedes the use regulations of the underlying zoning to more consistently allow for arts-related uses. Artist Studio Space is permitted by right when less than 5,000 square feet and by special permit when greater than 5,000 square feet. Artist Live/Work Space is permitted by right when six units or less and requires a special permit when the development exceeds six units. The remaining list of arts-related uses are permitted according to the underlying zoning. Artist Live/Work Spaces and Artist Studios Spaces are permitted in the underlying zoning of the Arts Overlay District but they typically require a special permit, whereas they are allowed by-right in the Arts Overlay District, removing a layer of regulation (SAC, 2009; City of Somerville 2018a).

The CCD district replaced the previous CBD zoning within the Arts Overlay District. This new district is largely governed by Use Clusters instead of the typical use-by-use structure (SAC, 2009; City of Somerville 2018a). This system allows for more flexibility in changing uses to avoid an unnecessary layer of discretion. More importantly, the CCD district eliminated the parking requirements for existing non-residential uses.

Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace

Before these changes, commercial space in the district would remain empty because it was too much of a burden to meet the parking requirements needed to change the use of the space. With this relaxation, new tenants could occupy vacant spaces in the district without making major investments in parking (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018).

Use Provisions in the Arts Overlay District

|   |                   | RC   | NB   | BA   | CCD | IA   | TOD55 | TOD75 | TOD100 | AOD |
|---|-------------------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|-------|--------|-----|
| <b>Artist Live/Work Space</b>                 | 1-6 units         | SP   | SP   | SP   | Y   | SP   | Y     | Y     | Y      | Y   |
|   | 7+ units          | SPSR | SPSR | SPSR | SP  | SPSR | SP    | SP    | SP     | SP  |
| <b>Artist Studio Space</b>                    | less 5,000 sf     | SP   | Y    | Y    | Y   | SP   | Y     | Y     | Y      | Y   |
|   | over 5,000 sf     | SPSR | SP   | SP   | SP  | SPSR | SP    | SP    | SP     | SP  |
| <b>Arts-related educational facility</b>      | less 5,000 sf     | SP   | Y    | Y    | Y   | Y    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | 5,000 - 10,000 sf | -    | SPD  | Y    | SP  | Y    | SP    | SP    | SP     | +   |
|   | over 10,000 sf    | -    | -    | SPSR | SP  | SPSR | SP    | SP    | SP     | +   |
| <b>Crafts-related retail store</b>            | less 5,000 sf     | Y    | Y    | Y    | Y   | Y    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | 5,000 - 10,000 sf | -    | SPD  | SPD  | Y   | Y    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | over 10,000 sf    | -    | SPSR | SPSR | SP  | SPSR | -     | -     | -      | +   |
| <b>Museum/gallery</b>                         | less 10,000 sf    | Y    | Y    | Y    | Y   | SP   | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | over 10,000 sf    | SPSR | SPSR | SPSR | SP  | SPSR | SP    | SP    | SP     | +   |
| <b>Retail sales of art and arts supplies</b>  | less 5,000 sf     | Y    | Y    | Y    | Y   | Y    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | 5,000 - 10,000 sf | -    | SPD  | Y    | Y   | Y    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | over 10,000 sf    | -    | SPSR | SPSR | SP  | SPSR | -     | -     | -      | +   |
| <b>Office of creative design professional</b> | less 5,000 sf     | Y    | Y    | Y    | Y   | Y    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | 5,000 - 10,000 sf | Y    | SPD  | Y    | Y   | Y    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | over 10,000 sf    | -    | SPSR | SPSR | Y   | SPSR | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
| <b>Theater or performance space</b>           | less 10,000 sf    | SP   | SP   | Y    | Y   | -    | Y     | Y     | Y      | +   |
|   | over 10,000 sf    | SPSR | SPSR | SPSR | SP  | -    | SP    | SP    | SP     | +   |

Y = Permitted by right  
 - = Not permitted  
 SP = Permitted by Special Permit  
 SPSR = Permitted by Special Permit and Site Plan Review  
 SPD = Permitted by Special Permit and Design Review  
 + = AOD use governed by underlying zoning

The final piece of the Arts Overlay District was the most ambitious in its attempt to encourage the creation of new artist spaces. The City introduced density bonuses to developments that included a specific percentage of arts-related uses, which varied between the different zones within the Arts Overlay District. In the residential RC zones, a 25% increase in FAR would be given to developments consisting of 100% deed-restricted Artist Live/Work Space and the minimum lot area per dwelling unit would be reduced to 750 square feet from 875 square feet for projects up to nine units and from 1,000 square feet for projects greater than nine units. In the commercial districts, the Arts Overlay District provided two separate opportunities for density bonuses. For projects consisting solely of deed-restricted, arts-related uses above the ground floor, a 25% density bonus would be granted. For projects consisting solely of deed-restricted, arts-related uses in its entirety, a 50% increase in FAR would be granted. Again, these bonuses would also reduce the minimum lot area per dwelling unit to 750 square feet (SAC, 2009; City of Somerville 2018a).

*Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace*

**Density Bonuses in the Arts Overlay District**

|               | Base minimum lot area per dwelling unit | Base FAR | Density Bonus   | Minimum lot area per dwelling unit with Bonus | FAR Bonus | Max FAR |
|---------------|---|----------|---|---|-----------|---------|
| <b>RC</b>     | 875                                     | 2        | Solely deed-restricted Artist Live/Work Space               | 750   | 25%       | 2.5     |
| <b>NB</b>     | 875                                     | 2        | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses above ground floor | 750   | 25%       | 2.5     |
|               |   |          | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses                    | 750   | 50%       | 3       |
| <b>BA</b>     | 875                                     | 2        | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses above ground floor | 750   | 25%       | 2.5     |
|               |   |          | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses                    | 750   | 50%       | 3       |
| <b>CCD55</b>  | 600                                     | 3        | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses above ground floor | 750   | 25%       | 3.75    |
|               |   |          | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses                    | 750   | 50%       | 4.5     |
| <b>IA</b>     | 875                                     | 2        | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses above ground floor | 750   | 25%       | 2.5     |
|               |   |          | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses                    | 750   | 50%       | 3       |
| <b>TOD55</b>  | 600                                     | 3        | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses above ground floor | 750   | 25%       | 3.75    |
|               |   |          | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses                    | 750   | 50%       | 4.5     |
| <b>TOD70</b>  | 450                                     | 4        | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses above ground floor | 750   | 25%       | 5       |
|               |   |          | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses                    | 750   | 50%       | 6       |
| <b>TOD100</b> | 450                                     | 4        | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses above ground floor | 750   | 25%       | 5       |
|               |   |          | Solely deed-restricted arts-related uses                    | 750   | 50%       | 6       |

No developments were able to successfully utilize the density bonuses offered within the Arts Overlay District, but there were a few spaces that were able to move into existing commercial space due to the relaxed parking requirements, including The Green Room and Third Life Studios, according to Greg Jenkins (personal communication, February 21, 2018). Development in Union Square has been slower than anticipated over the last ten years, partly to do with delays in the Green Line Extension, so there were few developments that even proposed projects using the density bonuses (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018; D. Bartman, personal communication, March 2, 2018; G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018).

One such proposal was for the redevelopment of a MAACO auto-repair shop at 444 Somerville Avenue in 2013. The property owner wanted to build housing on the site, and since it was zoned industrial, the only option would be to develop artist live/

work space (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018; G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018). According to George Proakis, Director of Planning for the City, the developer showed interest in building the live/work space, but ultimately could not get the financing for the amount of deed-restricted artist units that the zoning would require (personal communication, March 14, 2018). He then lobbied to rezone the site, as well as the surrounding Market Basket and 438 Somerville Ave parcels, to CCD in order to allow for mixed-use development, but was met with fervent opposition from the artist community. Artists from the Space Equals Work campaign opposed the project, contending that the rezoning would displace existing artists in 438 Somerville Ave and the new developments would not have the artist restrictions promised in the Arts Overlay District (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018; G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018). Ironically, the MAACO site itself had no artists working in the building, but the fact that the proposed rezoning would include the adjacent artists building prompted an outcry from artists that would eventually kill the project. The site was ultimately renovated for the expansion of Greentown Labs, a clean-tech accelerator housed within the neighboring Ames Business Park. Proakis called this a win-win for the City and the developer, making the developer happy and furthering the City's economic development goals of supporting the creative economy (personal communication, March 14, 2018).

### *5% Arts-Related Use Mandate*

The final piece of the 2009 Union Square rezoning was to create four different transit-oriented development districts around the future Green Line station, TOD55, TOD70, TOD100, and TOD135. The numbers in these districts refer to the maximum height allowed. Within the TOD70, TOD100, and TOD135 zones, 5% of gross square footage was required to be occupied by arts-related uses. Again, this broad category includes not only artist live/work and studio space, but educational facilities, crafts-related retail stores, retail sales of art and arts supplies, offices of creative design professionals, and theaters or performance spaces. Like the CCD districts, the uses in these districts would be governed by Use Clusters, creating flexibility for the developer in programming the building. For example, theaters, galleries, and artist studios are found within Use Cluster G: Educational/Recreational/Institutional Services, meaning each of these could be substituted for another without going through the approvals process again. Though each use cluster includes other uses not considered arts-related uses, the 5% requirement would still apply even if the developer sought to change the use originally proposed (SAC, 2009; City of Somerville 2018a).







or if they will have to fill those spaces with new artists that are able to purchase the condos. The owner is reportedly in talks with the Somerville Community Corporation, a local community development corporation, to purchase the 15 affordable units and manage them as rentals, which would allow for the current tenants to stay (Conti, 2018).

### *Takeaways*

The 2009 rezoning of Union Square prompted a number of necessary changes in the zoning code to allow for artist workspaces to develop. First of all, the clarification on the use definitions for Artist Live/Work Space and Artist Studio Space were an important first step in allowing these spaces to grow, creating predictability in the zoning. Requiring an Artist Certification to occupy a live/work space is a good way of ensuring the spaces are actually used by artists, a model that was based on what the City of Boston has had since 2002. The barrier to becoming a certified artist is not high, it just requires a simple form and a work sample. The Somerville Arts Council, which runs the certification program, is not concerned with the quality of the art, just that the applicant is actively creating art (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018). This requirement would avoid what has happened at Brickbottom, which removed its artist restriction when it was converted to condos. The expansion of the Home Occupation definition to include artist studio space was also an important step forward. Though there were many home studios already, the explicit permission of this use would eliminate any discouragement that may have existed.

The Artist's Studio Space use is thorough in its description as a space used for the creation, production, rehearsal, or teaching of visual and performing arts. However, it ignores the dual functions that many of these spaces serve, both for the production and consumption of art. It explicitly limits the accessory sales of art produced on site to twelve hours a week, but it is unclear if that includes performances by musicians or other performing artists as an allowed use. More and more of these spaces are blending the consumption and production of art, while zoning often makes a clear distinction between the two, creating ambiguity in the purpose of these spaces.

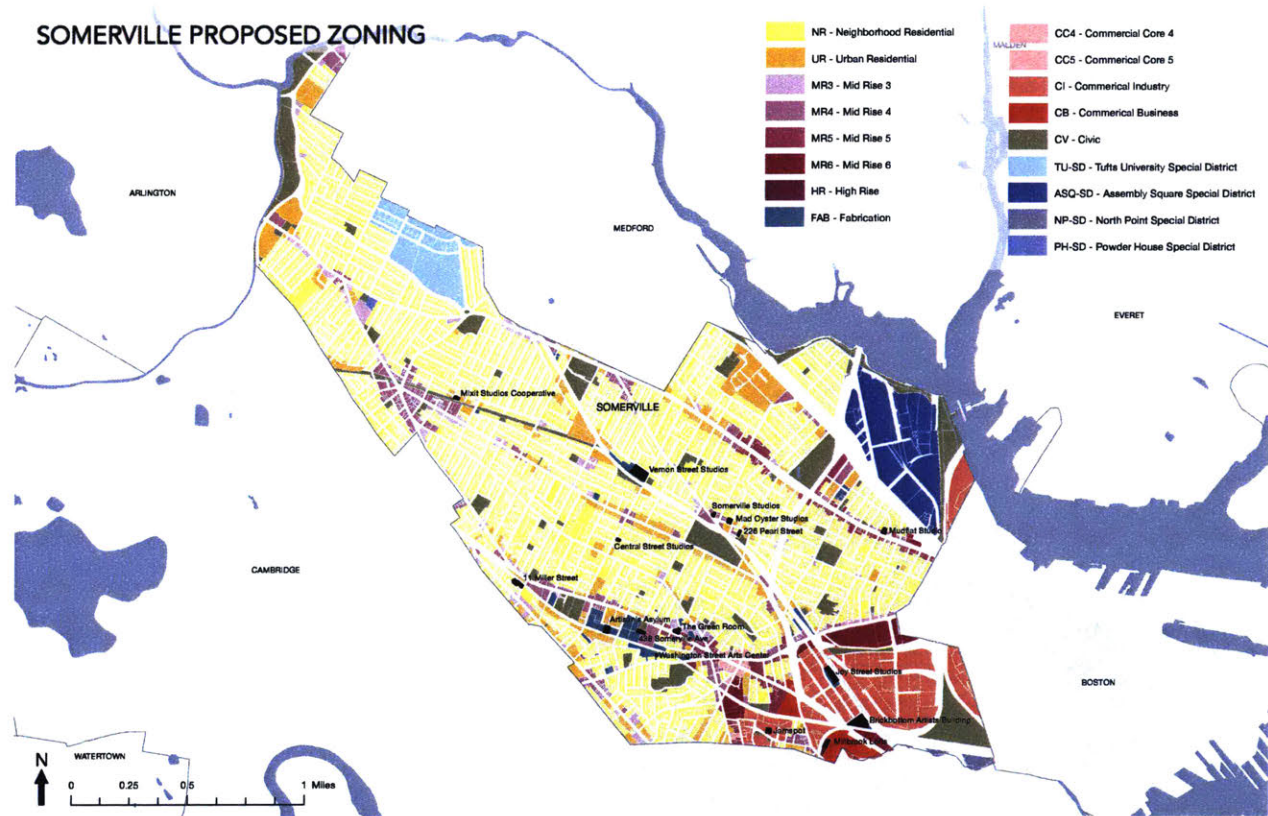
Removing the parking requirements for existing non-commercial spaces within the Arts Overlay District was integral to the new studios that moved in. Greg Jenkins and George Proakis both agree that this was probably the most effective change in encouraging new artist spaces in Union Square, just by making existing space more

readily available for new uses (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018; G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018). In the densely built, historic downtown of Somerville, it made no sense to maintain unused space because of a lack of room for new parking.

Though typically a good strategy for incentivizing a particular use, the density bonuses offered within the Arts Overlay District were unsuccessful at building new artist spaces for a few reasons. First of all, likely due to delays in the Green Line Extension, the real estate market did not heat up as much as the City thought it would and only a few buildings were delivered in that time around Union Square. The second issue was a matter of financing the projects. The MAACO building case suggests that the percentage of arts-related spaces required for the density bonus was so high that the return would not be great enough for banks to fund the development. These requirements did not allow for the mix of uses that help subsidize the artist spaces as is seen in the relationship between Vernon Street Studios and Rogers Foam. Given the fact that a purpose-built artist workspace is much more expensive to develop than an adaptive reuse project, this mix would have been even more important to making a project financially viable.

The 5% arts requirement in the TOD districts has yielded some success. The Millbrook Lofts project created five affordable artist live/work spaces that are guaranteed for artists in perpetuity. This is the only development that has been subject to the requirement, again, likely due to delays in the Green Line Extension not pushing development forward earlier. Mandating the inclusion of these spaces is effective when the market is strong enough to support the development and the project remains profitable even with the required affordable spaces. As the market picks up, this requirement still has the potential to provide a significant amount of new space.

## 2018 CITY-WIDE ZONING OVERHAUL



SomerVision, Somerville’s first comprehensive plan was completed in 2012, after the Union Square rezoning had been in place for a few years. At this point, many of the goals regarding artist spaces had referred to the Arts Overlay District and the potential to expand its policies to other parts of the city (OSPCD, 2012). According to Dan Bartman, Senior Planner for the City of Somerville, about one third of the 583 SomerVision goals require substantial zoning changes, and since 2014, the City has been pushing for an overhaul of the entire zoning ordinance (personal communication, March 2, 2018). Its most recent iteration is currently being debated in the Board of Aldermen. The new zoning moves towards a form-based system, focusing more on building typologies and creating a simpler approvals process for the uses within those buildings (D. Bartman, personal communication, March 2, 2018; G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018). There are a few key elements that are important to the protection and development of artist workspaces. First of all, the new zoning would remove the Arts Overlay District in its entirety, eliminating its density bonuses. The new zoning creates a new use category called “Arts & Creative Enterprise”, expands the 5% arts requirement throughout the city, and creates a new zone called the “Fabrication



District” that is designed to preserve spaces suitable for the creative economy (City of Somerville, 2018b).

## Use Regulations

Building upon the loosely defined arts-related use group from the Arts Overlay District, the new zoning would further define a number of uses that support the creative economy under the “Arts & Creative Enterprise” group: Artisan Production, Arts Exhibition, Arts Sales & Services, Co-Working, Design Services, Shared Workspaces & Arts Education, and Work/Live Creative Studio.

- a. Artisan Production
- Individuals and firms involved in the on-site production of hand-fabricated or hand-manufactured parts and/or custom or craft consumer goods through the use of hand tools or small-scale, light mechanical equipment.
- The artisan production category includes apparel manufacturing, breweries, cabinetry, chocolatiers, confectionery, furniture making, glass working, jewelry making, metal working, pottery, sculpture, wood working, and their substantial equivalents. Showrooms and the ancillary sales of goods produced on-site are permitted. The following standards apply:
- i. The production of offensive noise, vibration, smoke, dust or other particulate matter, heat, humidity, glare, or other objectionable effect is prohibited, except in the Fabrication and Commercial Industry districts.
  - ii. In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing an artisan production use, the review board shall consider the following:
    - a). The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
    - b). Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
    - c). Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
    - d). The limitation of visitors and ancillary retail sales to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.

- b. Arts Exhibition
- The production, rehearsal, or live performance of cultural entertainment or artistic expression such as singing, dancing, comedy, literary readings, performance art, musical theater, live plays, and concerts. The arts exhibition category includes venues such as assembly halls, auditoriums, cinemas, concert halls, dinner theaters, gallery space, performance halls, rehearsal & preproduction studios, live theaters, and their substantial equivalents along with the administrative offices, booking agencies, and ticket sales of performing arts organizations.

- c. Arts Sales & Services
- The display and retail sale, lease, or rental of finished artwork, art supplies, musical instruments, multi-media, or publications and activities that provide various arts related services to individuals, groups, or businesses including galleries, supply stores, printing shops, set design studios, and their substantial equivalents. The following standards apply:
- i. Outdoor display of products and merchandise is permitted according to the following:
    - a). Outdoor display is permitted in any storefront frontage or on a public sidewalk subject to all City Ordinances as an ancillary activity.
    - b). Outdoor display must be removed and placed inside a fully-enclosed building at the end of each business day.
    - c). Display areas extending more than eight feet from the facade are prohibited.
    - d). A minimum four (4) foot wide clear path of access must be maintained to the principal entrance.
    - e). Display areas are permitted to occupy no more than 30% of the frontage area.
    - f). Display areas must comply with the sidewalk standards of Article 8: Public Realm.
  - ii. In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing an arts sales & service use, the review board shall consider the following:
    - a). The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
    - b). Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
    - c). Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
    - d). The limitation of visitors and ancillary retail sales to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.

- d. Co-Working
- A commercial or non-profit organization providing multiple individuals and small firms access to workplace facilities, including but not limited to, creative studios, office suites, for-rent ‘hot-desks’, dedicated workstations, conference rooms, meeting rooms, event space, resource libraries, and business or administrative support services.

## Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace

### e. Design Services

Individuals and firms that provide design services to individuals, groups, or businesses including architectural design, fashion design, graphic design, interior design, industrial design, landscape architecture, product development, software development, urban design, and their substantial equivalents. The following standards apply:

- i. In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing a design services use, the review board shall consider the following:
  - a). The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
  - b). Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
  - c). Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
  - d). The limitation of visitors to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.

### f. Shared Workspaces & Arts Education

The transfer of knowledge or skills related to the creative enterprises through teaching, training, or research; organizations providing collaborative workplace facilities and business planning, finance, mentoring, and other business or administrative support services to creative enterprises; and multi-purpose facilities dedicated to providing space for multiple creative enterprises. The shared workspace & arts education category includes arts centers, creative incubators, culinary incubators, design & fabrication centers, fabrication laboratories, and their substantial equivalents. The following standards apply:

- i. In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing a shared workspace & arts education use, the review board shall consider the following:
  - a). The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
  - b). Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
  - c). Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
  - d). The limitation of visitors to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.

### g. Work/Live Creative Studio

Creative studio space consisting of not more than one (1) room, including an area for accessory living, where the work needs of creative industry activities within the same building take precedence over any "quiet expectations" of the residents and neighbors residing in work/live creative studios within the same building. The following standards apply:

- i. Kitchen, dining, and bathroom facilities, excluding work sinks, must be shared between the tenants of each floor.
- ii. Floor area for accessory living space is limited to 200 sq. ft. or 30% of the total floor space of a Work/Live Studio, whichever is less.
- iii. The occupant(s) of the Work/Live Creative Studio must be a certified Artist with the Somerville Arts Council.
- iv. In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing a work/live creative studio use, the review board shall consider the following:
  - a). The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
  - b). Width of doorways and hallways to accommodate the moving of large objects.
  - c). Weight capacity of elevators to accommodate heavy equipment.
  - d). Access to natural light within each studio with a preference towards northern exposure.
  - e). Sound transmission co-efficients to prevent the transmission of sounds from equipment or repetitive tasks.
  - f). Ventilation and air handling techniques to ensure the safety and health of residents, visitors, and neighbors.
  - g). Ceiling heights that allow for the creation of large works and equipment, including machinery and lighting.
  - h). Weight-bearing capacity of the floor.
  - i). Ability to install flooring for specific users such as dancers or performers.



Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace

| Use Category<br>Specific Use          | NR | UR | MR3 | MR4 | MR5 | MR6 | HR | FAB | CC | CI | CB | CIV | Use Specific<br>Standards |
|---------------------------------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|---------------------------|
| <b>Arts &amp; Creative Enterprise</b> |    |    |     |     |     |     |    |     |    |    |    |     |                           |
| Artisan Production                    | SP | SP | P   | P   | P   | P   | P  | P   | P  | P  | P  | N   | §9.2.2.a                  |
| Arts Exhibition                       | N  | N  | P   | P   | P   | P   | P  | P   | P  | P  | P  | N   | §9.2.2.b                  |
| Arts Sales & Services                 | SP | SP | P   | P   | P   | P   | P  | P   | P  | P  | P  | N   | §9.2.2.c                  |
| Co-Working                            | N  | N  | P   | P   | P   | P   | P  | P   | P  | P  | P  | N   | §9.2.2.d                  |
| Design Services                       | SP | SP | P   | P   | P   | P   | P  | P   | P  | P  | P  | N   | §9.2.2.e                  |
| Shared Workspaces & Arts<br>Education | SP | SP | P   | P   | P   | P   | P  | P   | P  | P  | P  | N   | §9.2.2.f                  |
| Work/Live Creative Studio             | N  | N  | N   | N   | N   | N   | N  | SP  | N  | N  | N  | N   | §9.2.2.g                  |

Artisan Production, Arts Exhibition, Arts Sales & Services, Shared Workspaces & Arts Education, and Work/Live Creative Studios can be considered core arts uses while Co-Working and Design Services reflect the inclusion of the broader creative economy (City of Somerville, 2018b).

Dan Bartman, Senior Planner for the City of Somerville, says the major innovation of the new zoning is providing a clear differentiation between artisan production uses and other typical retail uses. Specifically, the new zoning puts bakeries like Union Square Donuts, a local craft donut shop, in a different category than larger chain cafes like Dunkin’ Donuts, which are essentially the same thing from a functional perspective. This differentiation allows the additional 5% requirement to apply to craft production retail and not to others that may be functionally similar (D. Bartman, personal communication, March 2, 2018). Curiously, there is a limit of visitors and ancillary sales of these uses to between 7:00am and 9:00pm, which may not be an issue for Union Square Donuts but would definitely impact the business models of breweries like Aeronaut that serve beer made on site and hold events after these hours.

It is also unclear what category traditional artist studios would fall under. Presumably, space for visual artists may fall under Artisan Production, but rehearsal space for performing artists would fall under Arts Exhibition. Spaces like Artisan’s Asylum would clearly fall under Shared Workspaces & Arts Education, but Vernon Street Studios could belong to a number of these categories, serving visual artists and musicians. This may not seem like a problem, since most of these uses are permitted in the same areas, but the time limits on visitors creates some confusion. For example, the Arts Exhibition use has no time limits, which makes sense because performance venues are typically open late, but limiting the times of Artisan Production spaces and

Shared Workspaces limits the ability of these spaces to serve both the production and consumption functions of art.

The Work/Live Creative Studio use is reversal of its previous definition to emphasize that these spaces primarily workspaces with an accessory living space. The use maintains the Artist Certification requirement to ensure that these spaces will be used by artists. Contradictory to the SomerVision goal of encouraging more live/work space, this use is allowed only in the new Fabrication District, reflecting a decrease in the districts in which this use can appear (City of Somerville, 2018b).

The broad mix of uses in this category reflects the City's economic development goals of supporting the creative economy. Bartman says the inspiration for this marriage came from observations of what was already happening in the city. The owners of the Ames Business Park, where Artisan's Asylum is, came into the Planning Department and showed them the businesses in their complex and the City largely wrote the definitions based on what they were seeing there. The City was also concerned that making the requirements too narrow would stop development entirely, prompting the inclusion of some higher value uses (D. Bartman, personal communication, March 2, 2018; G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018). According to Greg Jenkins, combining artist uses and software developers presents concerns that the artist community will be subordinated to higher value uses (personal communication, February 21, 2018). This will become even more apparent when looking at the expanded 5% arts requirement.

### *5% Mandate Expansion*

In the proposed zoning, the 5% requirement is expanded in uses from the arts-related group to the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category. It is also expanded geographically from the TOD districts to seven new zones, Mid-Rise 5 (MR5), Mid-Rise 6 (MR6), High-Rise (HR), Fabrication (FAB), Commercial Core (CC), Commercial Industry (CI), and Commercial Business (CB) (City of Somerville, 2018b). Spatially, this represents an immense increase from the Union Square focused area to parcels throughout the entire city, focusing primarily on the Areas to Transform from the SomerVision comprehensive plan.

The text of the requirement appears in three different ways, depending on the mixed-use or commercial-only nature of the base zoning. In the commercial-only districts of CC, CI, and CB the zoning reads:

*A minimum of five percent (5%) of the gross floor area of any Commercial Building or Lab Building must be provided as leasable floor area for uses from the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category.*

In the FAB district:

*A minimum of five percent (5%) of the gross floor area of any Fabrication Building must be provided as leasable floor area for uses from the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category.*

And in the mixed-use districts of MR5, MR6, and HR:

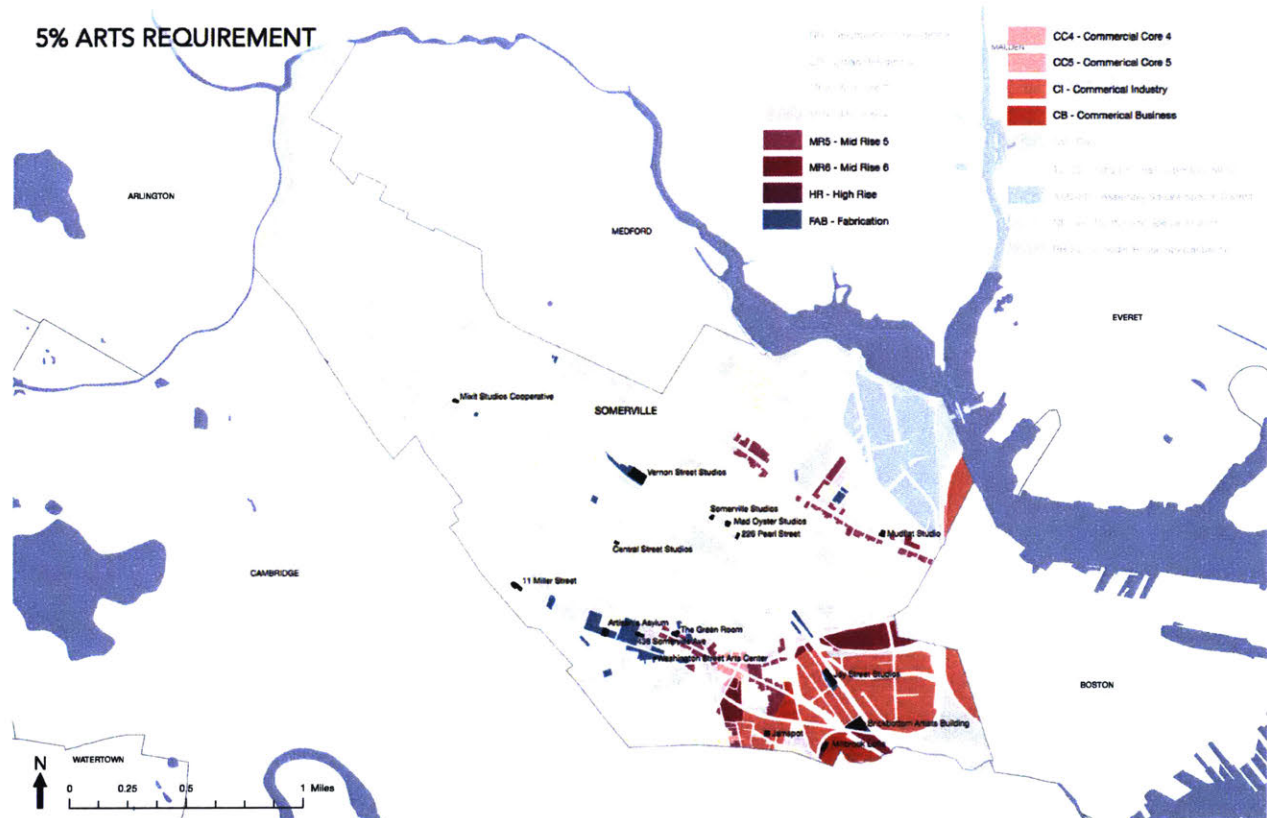
*A minimum of five percent (5%) of the gross floor area of any gross leasable commercial floor space in any building must be provided as leasable floor area for uses from the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category.*

Commercial Buildings and Lab Buildings are the only allowed building types in the CC, CI, and CB districts, effectively guaranteeing 5% of development in these zones to be reserved for Arts & Creative Enterprise uses. The same goes for the FAB district, where Fabrication building types are required. In the mixed-use districts, the 5% requirement is only on commercial floor space reducing the effective percentage of space reserved for arts uses (City of Somerville, 2018b). This clarification is a departure from the original 5% requirement placed on the TOD districts, which did not distinguish between commercial and residential uses. Millbrook Lofts, the only development subject to the previous 5% requirement, would not be required to provide arts space under the new regulation, since it is a residential-only building (SAC, 2009; City of Somerville 2018a).

The geographic expansion presents a greater opportunity for the development of artist workspaces, but the expanded list of uses that would fill this requirement creates new challenges. As discussed before, the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category includes artist workspaces but also software development offices. Technically, the software development aspects of large technology companies like Amazon would fulfill this requirement, pitting high value commercial uses against artist studio



Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace



space (D. Bartman, personal communication, March 2, 2018; G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018). Bartman expects that this will be mitigated in the design review process. The special permit approval process is “the opportunity that you have to use discretion to say no, this doesn’t meet the intent for what we’re trying to achieve here as a goal” (personal communication, March 2, 2018)

Union Square Station Associates is the development firm that was chosen by the City to carry out a redevelopment plan of Union Square. A Union Square Overlay District zoning was passed in June of 2017 that would govern the parcels that they are set to redevelop (City of Somerville, 2018a). Though the full zoning overhaul has not been passed, this overlay includes many of the features of the proposed zoning, including the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category and the expanded 5% arts requirement. It also introduced the ability to consolidate the 5% requirement into a single building for projects that include multiple developments, which has since been added to the entire zoning overhaul (US2, 2017; City of Somerville, 2018b). In the 18-building master plan, there is a total projected square footage of 2,397,000 with 1,464,000 (61%) designated for commercial uses. 74,000 square feet will be reserved for Arts & Creative Enterprise uses, 5% of total commercial floor space and 3% of total space overall. The specific



Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace

spaces that will occupy the 74,000 square feet reserved for arts uses have not been determined, but the plan does call for the consolidation of some of this space into one building, creating a couple of opportunities for the development of larger workspaces. However, the current proposed program suggests the largest space will be 20,000 square feet, about half the size of Artisan’s Asylum, and will be located within an historic Post Office building, which is probably not suitable for artist workspace. A marketplace, entertainment venue, and co-working space are currently proposed for that site (US2, 2017).

TABLE 9: BUILD OUT PROGRAM ESTIMATES

| PARCEL / BLOCK     | TOTAL AREA (SF)  | COMMERCIAL USE DISTRIBUTION |            |                |           |               |           |             |           |                 |           | RESIDENTIAL USE DISTRIBUTION |            |                   |            |            |              |                  |            |    |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|------------|----|
|                    |                  | OFFICE / LAB                |            | RETAIL         |           | HOTEL AREA    |           | HOTEL ROOMS |           | ARTS & CREATIVE |           | COMMERCIAL TOTAL             |            | RESIDENTIAL TOTAL |            | UNITS*     |              | AFFORDABLE UNITS |            |    |
|                    |                  | SF                          | % TOTAL    | SF             | % TOTAL   | SF            | % TOTAL   | Rooms       | % TOTAL   | SF              | % TOTAL   | SF                           | % TOTAL    | SF                | % TOTAL    | MIN        | MAX          | MIN              | MAX        |    |
| <b>D1</b>          | 354,000          | 231,000                     | 20%        | 22,000         | 16%       | 93,000        | 100%      | 175         | 100%      | 6,000           | 8%        | 354,000                      | 24%        | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D1.1               | 105,000          | -                           | -          | 11,000         | 8%        | 93,000        | 100%      | 175         | 100%      | -               | -         | 105,000                      | 7%         | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D1.2               | 249,000          | 231,000                     | 20%        | 11,000         | 8%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | 6,000           | 8%        | 249,000                      | 17%        | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| <b>D2</b>          | 619,000          | 166,000                     | 14%        | 29,000         | 21%       | -             | -         | -           | -         | 25,000          | 34%       | 220,000                      | 15%        | 399,000           | 43%        | 389        | 456          | 78               | 91         |    |
| D2.1               | 178,000          | 166,000                     | 14%        | 12,000         | 9%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 178,000                      | 12%        | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D2.2-3             | 429,000          | -                           | 0%         | 17,000         | 12%       | -             | -         | -           | -         | 13,000          | 18%       | 30,000                       | 2%         | 399,000           | 43%        | 389        | 456          | 78               | 91         |    |
| D2.4               | 12,000           | -                           | 0%         | -              | 0%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | 12,000          | 16%       | 12,000                       | 1%         | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| <b>D3</b>          | 888,000          | 522,000                     | 45%        | 18,000         | 13%       | -             | -         | -           | -         | 15,000          | 20%       | 555,000                      | 38%        | 333,000           | 36%        | 325        | 381          | 65               | 76         |    |
| D3.1               | 280,000          | 271,000                     | 23%        | 9,000          | 6%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 280,000                      | 19%        | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D3.2               | 351,000          | -                           | -          | 9,000          | 6%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | 9,000           | 12%       | 18,000                       | 1%         | 333,000           | 36%        | 325        | 381          | 65               | 76         |    |
| D3.3               | 257,000          | 251,000                     | 22%        | -              | 0%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | 6,000           | 0         | 257,000                      | 18%        | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| <b>D4</b>          | 90,000           | 25,000                      | 2%         | 12,000         | 9%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 36,000                       | 2%         | 54,000            | 6%         | 53         | 62           | 11               | 12         |    |
| D4.1               | 29,000           | 25,000                      | 2%         | 5,000          | 4%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 29,000                       | 2%         | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D4.2               | -                | -                           | 0%         | 7,000          | 5%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | -                            | -          | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D4.3               | 61,000           | -                           | 0%         | 7,000          | 5%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 7,000                        | 0%         | 54,000            | 6%         | 53         | 62           | 11               | 12         |    |
| <b>D5</b>          | 95,000           | 21,000                      | 2%         | 24,000         | 17%       | -             | -         | -           | -         | 20,000          | 27%       | 65,000                       | 4%         | 30,000            | 3%         | 29         | 34           | 6                | 7          |    |
| D5.1               | 37,000           | -                           | 0%         | 17,000         | 12%       | -             | -         | -           | -         | 20,000          | 27%       | 37,000                       | 3%         | -                 | 0%         | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D5.2               | 25,000           | 21,000                      | 2%         | 4,000          | 3%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 25,000                       | 2%         | -                 | 0%         | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D5.3               | 33,000           | -                           | 0%         | 3,000          | 2%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 3,000                        | 0%         | 30,000            | 3%         | 29         | 34           | 6                | 7          |    |
| <b>D6</b>          | 225,000          | 193,000                     | 17%        | 26,000         | 19%       | -             | -         | -           | -         | 8,000           | 11%       | 225,000                      | 15%        | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D6.1               | 111,000          | 96,000                      | 8%         | 12,000         | 9%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | 4,000           | 5%        | 111,000                      | 8%         | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| D6.2               | 114,000          | 97,000                      | 8%         | 14,000         | 10%       | -             | -         | -           | -         | 4,000           | 5%        | 114,000                      | 8%         | -                 | -          | -          | -            | -                | -          |    |
| <b>D7</b>          | 126,000          | -                           | 0%         | 9,000          | 6%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 9,000                        | 1%         | 117,000           | 13%        | 114        | 134          | 23               | 27         |    |
| D7.1               | 45,000           | -                           | 0%         | 5,000          | 4%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 5,000                        | 0%         | -                 | 40,000     | 4%         | 39           | 46               | 8          | 9  |
| D7.2               | 81,000           | -                           | 0%         | 4,000          | 3%        | -             | -         | -           | -         | -               | -         | 4,000                        | 0%         | -                 | 77,000     | 8%         | 75           | 88               | 15         | 18 |
| <b>TOTALS</b>      | <b>3,397,000</b> | <b>1,155,000</b>            | <b>48%</b> | <b>146,000</b> | <b>6%</b> | <b>93,000</b> | <b>4%</b> | <b>175</b>  | <b>3%</b> | <b>74,000</b>   | <b>3%</b> | <b>1,464,000</b>             | <b>61%</b> | <b>933,000</b>    | <b>39%</b> | <b>910</b> | <b>1,067</b> | <b>183</b>       | <b>213</b> |    |
| AS % OF COMMERCIAL |                  | 79%                         |            | 10%            |           | 6%            |           |             |           | 5%              |           |                              |            |                   |            |            |              |                  |            |    |

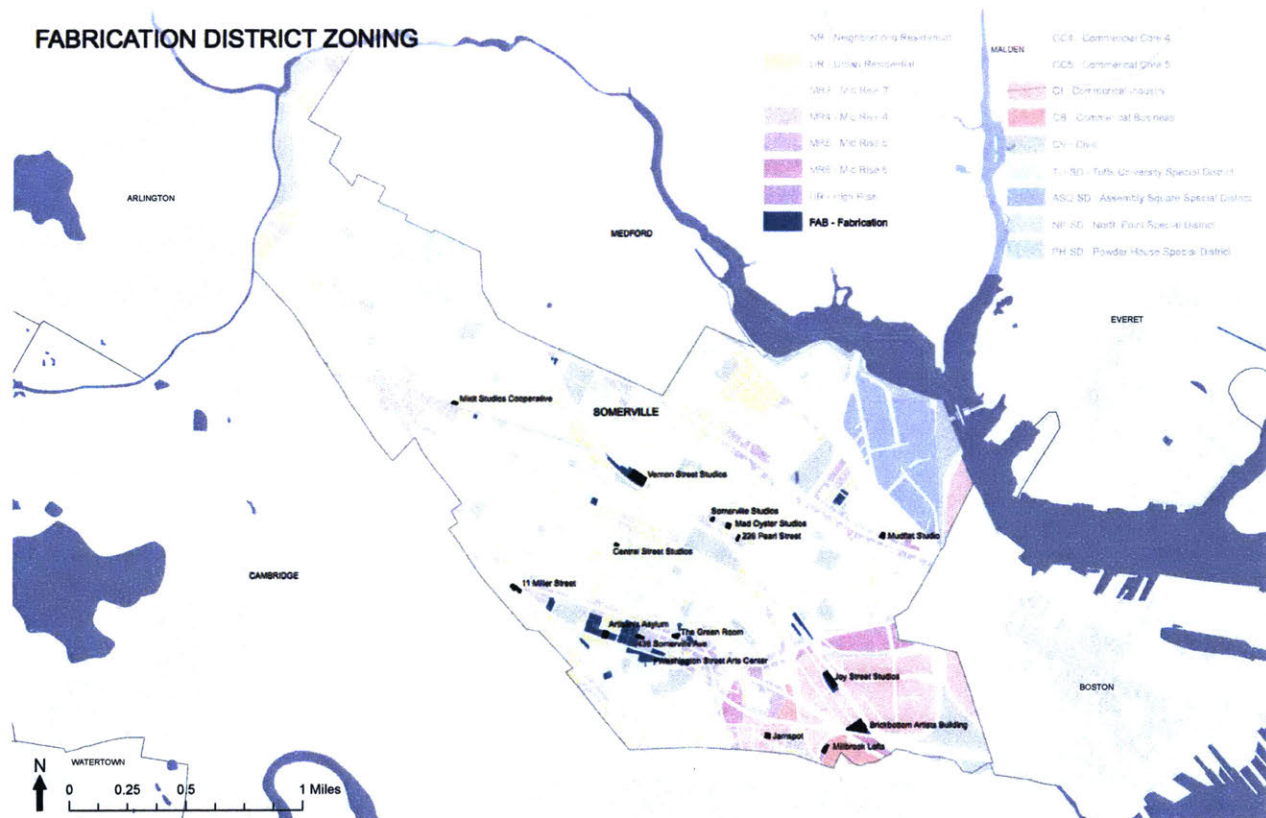


TABLE 19: ARTS & CREATIVE ENTERPRISE SPACE DISTRIBUTION

| M/B/L           | GENERATING (SF) | ACE REQUIRED (SF) | RECEIVING (SF) | ACE PROVIDED (SF) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>BLOCK D1</b> |                 | 17,700            |                | 6,000             |
| D1.1            | ✓               | 5,250             |                | -                 |
| D1.2            | ✓               | 12,450            | ✓              | 6,000             |
| <b>BLOCK D2</b> |                 | 11,000            |                | 25,000            |
| D2.1            | ✓               | 8,900             |                | -                 |
| D2.2-3          | ✓               | 1,500             | ✓              | 13,000            |
| D2.4            | ✓               | 600               | ✓              | 12,000            |
| <b>BLOCK D3</b> |                 | 27,750            |                | 15,000            |
| D3.1            | ✓               | 14,000            |                | -                 |
| D3.2            | ✓               | 900               | ✓              | 9,000             |
| D3.3            | ✓               | 12,850            | ✓              | 6,000             |
| <b>BLOCK D4</b> |                 | 1,800             |                | -                 |
| D4.1            | ✓               | 1,450             |                | -                 |
| D4.2            |                 | -                 |                | -                 |
| D4.3            | ✓               | 350               |                | -                 |
| <b>BLOCK D5</b> |                 | 3,250             |                | 20,000            |
| D5.1            | ✓               | 1,850             |                | 20,000            |
| D5.2            | ✓               | 1,250             |                | -                 |
| D5.3            | ✓               | 150               |                | -                 |
| <b>BLOCK D6</b> |                 | 11,250            |                | 8,000             |
| D6.1            | ✓               | 5,550             | ✓              | 4,000             |
| D6.2            | ✓               | 5,700             | ✓              | 4,000             |
| <b>BLOCK D7</b> |                 | 450               |                | -                 |
| D7.1            | ✓               | 250               |                | -                 |
| D7.2            | ✓               | 200               |                | -                 |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   |                 | <b>73,200</b>     |                | <b>74,000</b>     |

## Fabrication District

The final piece of the zoning overhaul that seeks to protect and promote the development of artist workspaces is the creation of the “Fabrication District”. Geographically, this new zone is designed to encompass existing arts & creative enterprise uses, including many of the artist workspaces found throughout the city. According to Dan Bartman, the intent behind the new district was to protect existing warehouse and former factory buildings that are suitable for artist and creative workspaces from conversion to higher value uses (personal communication, March 2, 2018). Residential and general office uses are restricted in the Fabrication District, which effectively limits the competition for land in an attempt to keep these spaces affordable (City of Somerville, 2018b).



The form-based zoning of the Fabrication District seeks to ensure building dimensions that are suitable for arts and creative businesses. Fabrication buildings have a minimum of two stories and a maximum of four. The ground floor height is a minimum of 14 feet and the upper story heights are a ten-foot minimum. There is a maximum floor plate of 30,000 square feet, which is smaller than many of the existing artist buildings, including Vernon Street Studios, Artisan's Asylum, and Brickbottom. The maximum height of four stories is also shorter than some existing spaces like Vernon Street and Brickbottom. The new zoning removes all mention of FAR requirements, opting instead to define the building's mass through height restrictions and setback requirements (City of Somerville, 2018b).

The allowable uses in the Fabrication District reflect the explicit intent to preserve these spaces for the creative economy. Each of the Arts & Creative Enterprise uses are permitted by right, except the Work/Live Creative Studio, which requires a special permit. It also allows for other manufacturing uses and some civic and educational uses but explicitly excludes housing, general office space, and retail space other than those that fit under the Arts & Creative Enterprise use group (City of Somerville, 2018b). Dan Bartman says the planning department originally proposed that these districts be reserved solely for core arts uses but received feedback from property owners, who felt that the restriction would unacceptably reduce the value of their properties. Including Co-working and Design Services into the mix helped to win over property owners by creating the opportunity to diversify the tenant mix with higher and lower rent users, as seen now within the Ames Business Park complex (D. Bartman, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

## *Takeaways*

The proposed zoning overhaul takes a two-pronged approach to protecting and promoting the development of artist workspaces: The Fabrication District seeks to separate uses to protect existing spaces from being displaced from conversions, and the expanded 5% requirement is designed to ensure that new spaces will be built in future developments throughout the city. According to Greg Jenkins, the main concern is with the broad definition of Arts & Creative Enterprises that includes artist spaces as well as offices for design and software development professionals (personal communication, February 21, 2018). The intent behind this language is to provide space for entrepreneurs and creators in all parts of the creative economy, but if left unchecked, it is likely that developers will favor the higher value office spaces over the makerspaces and artist studios. There are no affordability restrictions on these spaces, which further reduces the likelihood that a developer would forgo higher rent creative spaces.

In its current form, the design review process presents the best opportunity to combat this tendency but will require significant community organizing to effectively push for more artist spaces. However, it is unclear as to what the goals are for providing new workspace since there is no overall cultural plan outlining the needs of artists and guiding the development of new spaces.

George Proakis says there is a significant concern that the number of requirements on new projects will slow development (personal communication, March 14, 2018). The City requires 20% of residential units to be affordable through its inclusionary development policy. In Union Square there is a requirement that 60% of gross square footage be commercial and the remaining 40% be residential. Included in the 60% commercial is the 5% arts requirement as well as infrastructure improvements and building fees. However, developers are still proposing new projects, indicating that it is still profitable to build in Somerville (G. Proakis, personal communication, March 14, 2018).



## CHAPTER VI: RECOMMENDATIONS

Studying the existing artist workspaces in Somerville reveals the complex nature of these spaces, how they function, and the urban environments that support them. It is clear that these spaces rely on a mix of uses and users to remain financially viable artist workspaces. These spaces presently exist largely in isolation from other uses with very little integration into the urban fabric. However, these isolated spaces are disappearing as real estate pressures lead to redevelopment, which will exacerbate the need for artist workspaces to adapt in order to survive. The increased connectivity of the public realm should be leveraged to create spaces that serve both consumption and production functions of artist spaces, diversifying their business models and contributing to a more active urban environment. This suggests that future artist workspaces will need a mix of users or be a part of a mix of uses that can support the affordability for artists. In addition, these spaces should include both the consumption and production functions of artist space, like workspace and education or living spaces, to create active urban environments. Artisan's Asylum reflects this ideal by appealing to users across the creative economy and acting as both a production and consumption space.

Land use planning and zoning as an implementation tool of planning can play a big part in protecting and promoting the development of artist workspace. This research explores four techniques that the City of Somerville has used, which are seen in a few permutations. One technique is the relaxation and clarification of the use provisions for artist spaces to eliminate overbearing restrictions that prevent the creative use of artist space. The second is incentive zoning, exemplified by the density bonuses offered to developments that include artist spaces in the Arts Overlay District. The third strategy is to create mandates for artist space, setting aside 5% of floor space for arts-related uses in the Transit-Oriented Development districts, and in the expanded commercial and mixed-use districts of the proposed zoning overhaul. Finally, the City intends to stratify the land markets by restricting the uses in the Fabrication District so that arts and creative economy uses will not have to compete with residential and general office space users for the same land.

Somerville is much more progressive in terms of using zoning to protect and incentivize the development of artist workspaces than other cities. Most of the conversation

around zoning for artists is about removing restrictions to allow for artist spaces in underutilized, often industrial or vacant downtowns. This is the step that Somerville took in the 1980s to allow for the Brickbottom Artists Building to be developed in an industrially zoned area. However, the context of the city has changed, and simply allowing for these spaces to exist will not ensure their survival. Very few cities have tried to use zoning to provide incentives, requirements, and restrictions in order to protect existing spaces and spur the development of new ones. However, there are a few additions and modifications to these policies and ordinances that would help further this goal.

These recommendations begin with a cultural plan, then suggest zoning edits, and finally propose a city directed pilot project to demonstrate what the future of artist workspace will look like in Somerville. The zoning recommendations are based on edits to the proposed zoning overhaul, as it is likely to replace the existing zoning ordinance in its entirety. Some or all of these recommendations should be incorporated into the proposal in order to better serve the artist community and guide future development towards affordable and dynamic artist workspaces.

### *1. Complete a Comprehensive Cultural Plan*

Perhaps the most important suggestion here is to complete a comprehensive cultural planning process for the city of Somerville. This is a necessary first step to understand the supply and demand for both arts production and consumption spaces in order to measure the success of the zoning measures introduced in the proposed zoning overhaul. As SomerVision calls for 6,000 units of housing to be created by 2030, a cultural plan should target a certain number of artist studios and creative workspaces to maintain and grow the artist community in Somerville. This target will be used to guide the types of spaces proposed to fulfill the 5% arts requirement in the Areas to Transform.

Dan Bartman, Senior Planner for the City of Somerville, says there would be a desire to undertake a cultural planning process, but there is little bandwidth in the department to carry it out now, as they are still completing the neighborhood plans for the districts that surround the future Green Line stations (personal communication, March 2, 2018). If this is the case, the City should hire a private consultant to lead the effort, with assistance from the Planning department and the Somerville Arts Council. The

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) provides cultural planning services to cities and towns all around the Boston region and could be a valuable resource in this endeavor. Working with MAPC would also emphasize the importance of a regional approach to supporting artists, and could assist in coordinating the cultural planning goals of neighboring cities and towns.

## *2. Involve the Somerville Arts Council in Design Review Process*

As the effective liaison between the artist community and city government, the Somerville Arts Council (SAC) should take a position on all developments subject to 5% requirement, taking advantage of the opportunity for public comment during the development approvals process. Using the cultural plan as a guide, the SAC can use this platform to rally the artist community around providing specific types of spaces that will meet the goals of the cultural plan.

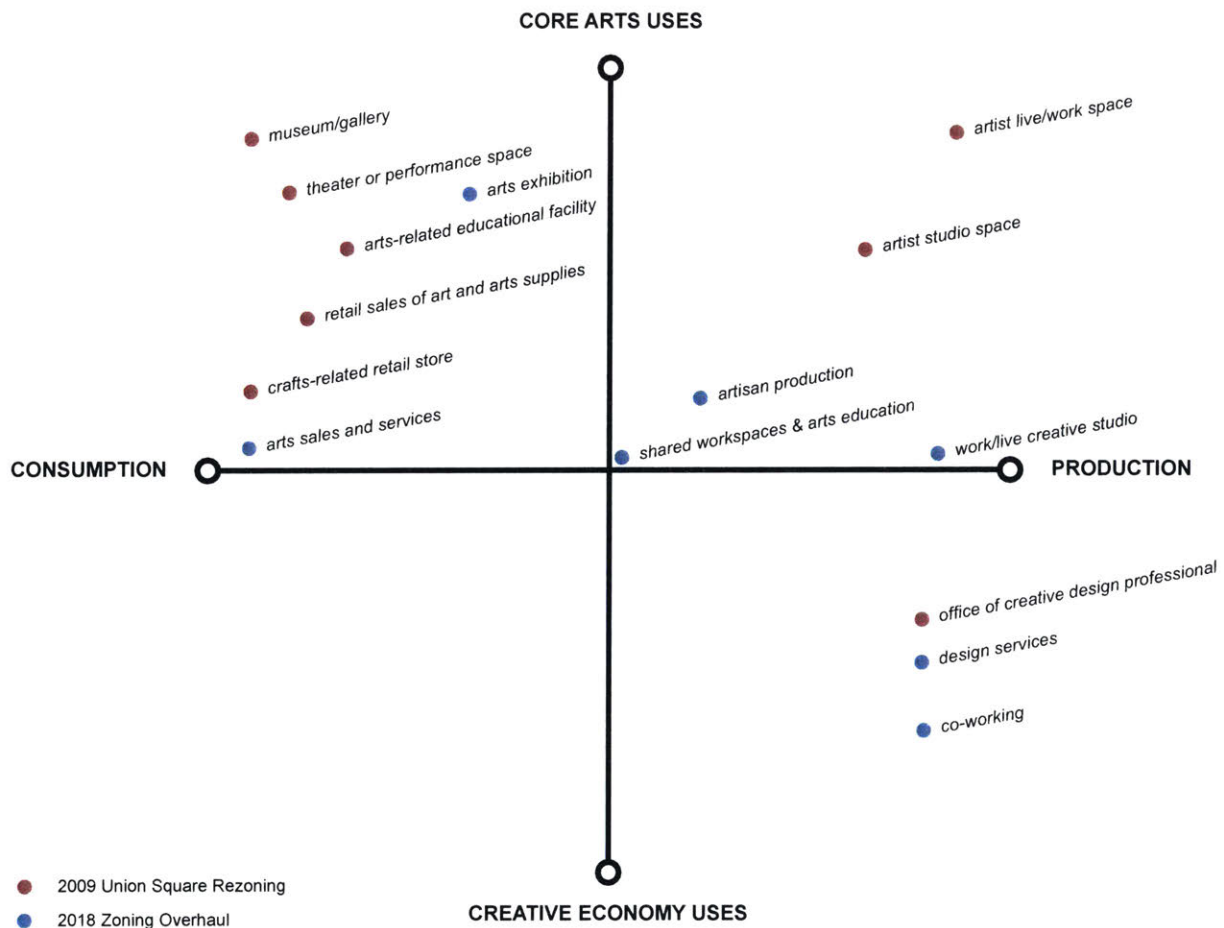
## *3. Refine Use Regulations*

Use definitions for artist workspaces should reflect the ability of these spaces to serve both production and consumption functions of artist space. Some of the proposed definitions do this well, for example, the definition of Shared Workspaces & Arts Education explicitly describes a multipurpose space that caters to the production as well as the teaching of art, much like the Artisan's Asylum model. However, overly restrictive regulations like the limitation on visitors from 7am to 9pm discourages these spaces from serving as performance venues or event spaces as well. The Arts Exhibition use should be explicitly allowed as an ancillary use to the Artisan Production and Shared Workspaces & Arts Education uses without any time limitations.

The expansiveness of the Arts & Creative Enterprise use group may be concerning to the artist community, many of whom would like a clearer separation between art and the broader creative economy (G. Jenkins, personal communication, February 21, 2018). Respecting the City's goal of supporting the creative economy as a whole, there should be a subset of the Arts & Creative Enterprise group called "Core Arts Uses" that would include the Artisan Production, Arts Exhibition, Arts Sales & Services, Shared Workspaces & Arts Education, and Work/Live Creative Studio uses. This will allow for a divergent set of policies that will benefit the core artist community.

Artist live/work spaces are an essential part of providing affordable space, especially

to young artists who cannot afford to pay rent for two spaces (G. Summers, personal communication, March 7, 2018). The proposed zoning flips the language to Work/Live in order to emphasize that these spaces are primarily work spaces with an accessory living space, which is important to set the expectation of noise and vibrations that come with the production of art. It also requires that kitchen, dining, and bathroom facilities are shared among the tenants of each floor further emphasizing the intended primary function of workspace. However, the proposed zoning limits the districts in which these spaces are allowed to solely the Fabrication Districts, representing a smaller geography than what is currently permitted. These regulations should be rewritten to be more permissive, and to allow for new models of live/work space that combine smaller separate housing units with a shared workspace. The City of Boston recently issued a Request for Proposal to build this model of shared live/work space on publicly owned land in East Boston (Lynds, 2017). The zoning should allow for the separation of these aspects in order to provide more studio space to young artists.





#### *4. Add Affordability Requirements*

The 5% requirement guarantees the development of new creative spaces in many of the Areas to Transform as defined by SomerVision, but there are no affordability requirements for that space, creating uncertainty over who those spaces will be for. It is likely that a developer would seek to fill those spaces with higher paying tenants, like the Co-Working or Design Services spaces, resulting in an imbalance that fails to meet the overall intent of the policy. Without reducing the types of uses that can fill this requirement, an affordability mandate may allow for a greater variety of arts uses that are proposed for these spaces and would ensure the ability for artists to access them. The neighboring city of Cambridge requires 10% for “Innovation Space” within the Kendall Square area, 25% of which must be set aside for below market rate space (City of Cambridge, 2017). An affordability requirement in the mixed-use and commercial-only districts makes sense because they are already designed to leverage the higher paying tenants to subsidize the Arts & Creative Enterprise uses, emphasizing the intent of the policy. The City should undertake a deeper study of artist space rents to better understand what artists can afford to pay. One suggestion would be to mimic the rent of Vernon Street Studios, which is around \$11 per square foot.

#### *5. Allow for Offsite Compliance*

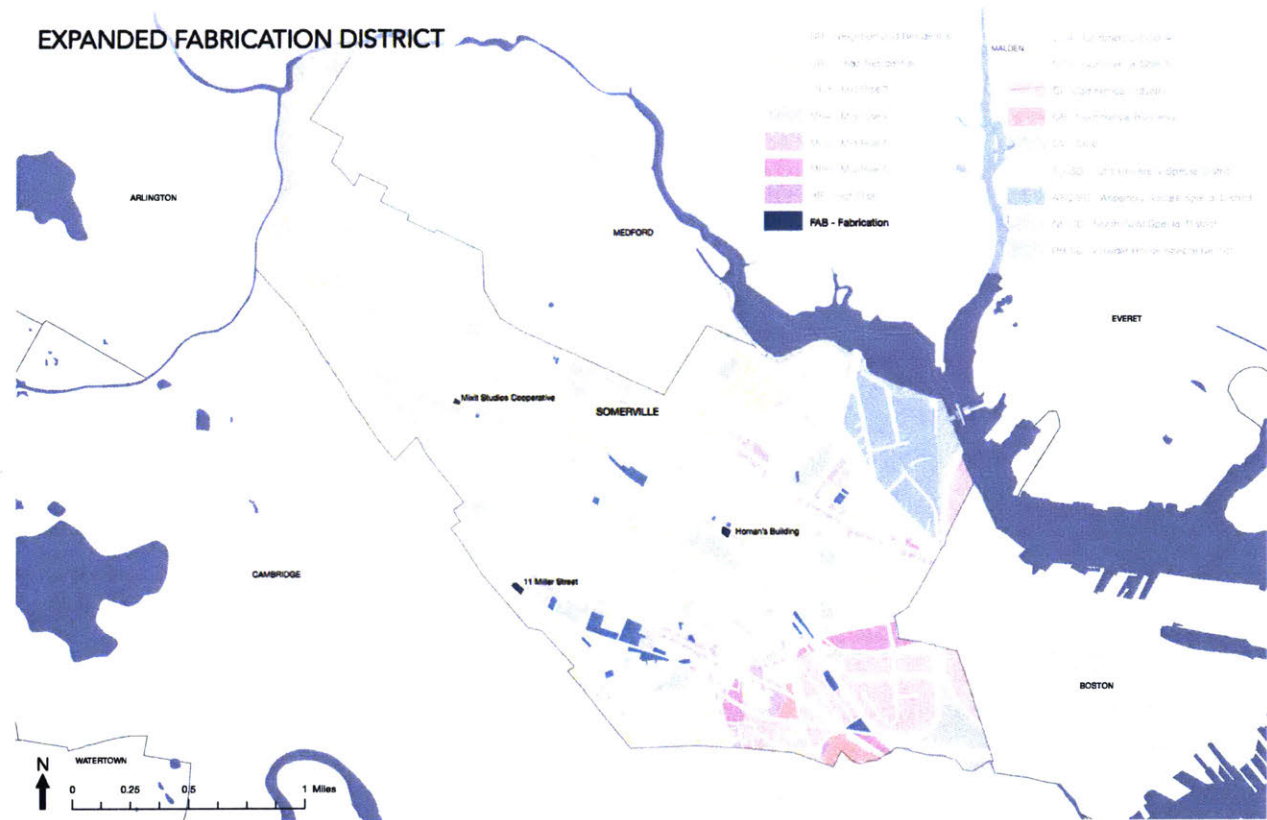
The ability to consolidate the 5% requirement into fewer spaces is a key addition to that policy, encouraging larger spaces that can provide more to the artist community. Without this, it is likely that the requirement would be filled by small storefront type spaces that significantly favor consumption over production spaces. This could be taken a step further by allowing for offsite compliance for every development that is subject to this requirement, not just those that need to go through the Coordinated Development Special Permit process.

## *6. Augment 5% Requirement in Fabrication Districts*

The Fabrication District presents another opportunity to refine the 5% requirement. Since these districts exclude most uses other than those in the Arts & Creative Enterprise use group, it makes little sense to require 5% of the gross square footage to be reserved for those uses. Instead, the City should consider reducing the uses that fulfill that requirement to only those in the “Core Arts Uses” as defined above. This would further ensure space for the artist community and protect against the displacement of artist studios in favor of broader creative economy workspaces. The City could be even more aggressive with this requirement as well, increasing the required Core Arts Uses to 10% of gross square footage. For comparison, Artisan’s Asylum, at 40,000 square feet, takes up about 30% of the entire building. This doesn’t include Aeronaut Brewing, which is also in the same building and would fall under the Artisan Production use of the Core Arts Uses as well. This may not be exactly the right number, but it seems that there is room for a more aggressive policy in requiring arts uses within the Fabrication Districts without disrupting the mix of users that are needed to remain financially stable.

## *7. Expand the Fabrication District*

The geography of the Fabrication District zoning was determined by existing uses and the structures that supported them, overlaying over many of the existing artist workspaces in the city. However, there are a few spaces that are not included in the proposed zoning change, including the Miller Street Studios and Mixit Studios. Where it is most appropriate, this zoning should be expanded to protect as many existing spaces as possible.



### 8. Provide Density Bonuses in Fabrication Districts

The failure of the density bonuses included in the 2009 Arts Overlay District zoning should not preclude this tactic from being used, but the requirements should be adjusted to reflect realistic expectations. The key is to find the numbers that make the project financially viable while providing the space that the policy intends to create. Since the proposed zoning is a form-based system and does not use FAR as the standard for density, the City should offer a two-story increase to those developments that provide 20% affordable Core Arts spaces. With a four-story maximum in these districts, a two-story bonus with a 20% requirement would result in 1.2 floors dedicated to affordable Core Arts Uses. The Rogers Foam building that houses Vernon Street Studios is seven stories and Brickbottom is five stories, so the four-story limit in the Fabrication District already seems to be too low. When designed correctly, density bonuses in these districts can further encourage the development of new artist spaces.

## *9. Lead a Pilot Project*

To demonstrate what these spaces could look like, the City should issue an RFP for the redevelopment of publicly owned property as an Arts & Creative Enterprise building. The Homan's Building in Gilman Square would be a perfect opportunity to show what this kind of space would be. The building was built in 1925 as a food storage warehouse and bought by the City in 1999, sitting vacant ever since. Its future is uncertain as the MBTA had planned to demolish the building in order to accommodate the Green Line Extension, while the Historic Preservation Committee voted to preserve the building in 2014 (Atkinson & McLean, 2015). Whether the building is preserved or replaced, the City should rezone the property as a Fabrication District and focus on creating a mix of creative uses that highlight the intent of the new zoning district. The City should issue an RFP for the property and encourage non-profit artist space developers to submit proposals.

Though there aren't any non-profit artist space developers that actively work in the Boston area, there are a few that develop spaces nationally, like Artspace, based out of Saint Paul, Minnesota, which has been developing artist space since 1979. They have projects in 30 different cities across the country but haven't entered the Boston market ("Artspace," 2016). AS220 is another example, which has had incredible success revitalizing the downtown of Providence, Rhode Island by providing a variety of artist spaces including live/work studios, maker spaces, and performance venues ("AS220," 2018).



## LESSONS FOR OTHER CITIES

Somerville, Massachusetts is one of the only cities using zoning as a tool to protect and promote the development of artist workspaces. Many cities have used zoning to create a more permissive environment to revitalize neglected areas, for example, allowing for live/work artist studios in industrial or downtown districts. However, only a few cities have used zoning to prevent the displacement of artists at the other end of the gentrification cycle, and most of them have been enacted too recently to fully understand their impacts. Though the effects of many of these techniques have yet to fully materialize, there are a few lessons to be learned from this research that can guide land use planning and zoning in other cities.

First of all, zoning should allow for, and encourage the development of artist spaces that fulfill multiple space needs. Use definitions should more clearly allow for the mixing of the consumption and production functions of artist space to encourage more creative and space efficient uses. As real estate values rise, this consolidation of functions will become more and more important in order to keep spaces affordable. Incentivizing live/ work space is similarly an important way to provide affordable space, by giving artists the chance to reduce their overall space burden.

Using the zoning code to create mandates and incentives to build new artist workspace is a worthy tactic to attempt. However, these policies need to be designed with realistic development proposals in mind, in order to avoid overregulating and slowing down development. Somerville's 5% requirement does not seem to be too burdensome, given the continued development activity around Union Square, but this may not be the right number for other municipalities. Density bonuses and other incentives also need to be designed such that the incentive brings more value to the project than the cost of adding the artist space. The density bonuses failed in the Arts Overlay District partly because the requirements were too onerous for the market to bear. The separation of uses in the Fabrication District is also an effective way to stratify land markets and keep arts uses from competing with higher value uses. This technique requires a balance between higher and lower value uses as to not completely devalue the property.

Encouraging the ways that these artist spaces can cater to a mix of users, both in the individual space scale and the building scale, not only helps subsidize the lower-rent

users, but also creates a more dynamic urban environment. In space-constrained cities like Somerville, it is important to leverage available land for an appropriate mix of uses and users that create successful and interesting places, while providing protections for vulnerable populations that contribute to the identity of the place.

It is important to note that zoning is not a comprehensive solution for retaining artists and cultural producers. Other strategies like tax incentives and financial and technical assistance for arts organizations should be employed in addition to enacting zoning that works for artists. That being said, zoning can be a powerful tool in protecting existing workspaces, and allowing for and encouraging the development of active, financially stable artist spaces by appropriately utilizing the four techniques described in this thesis.

# APPENDICES

## WORKS CITED

- AEP5: Download the Report. (2017, May 17). Retrieved from <http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/research-studies-publications/arts-economic-prosperity-5/use/download-the-report>
- Ames Business Park. (2018). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://amesbp.com>
- ArtFarm. (2016). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://www.somervilleartscouncil.org/artfarm/>
- Artisan's Asylum. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://artisansasylum.com/about/>
- Artspace. (2016). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://www.artspace.org/>
- AS220. (2018). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://as220.org>
- Atkinson, D., & McLean, D. (2015). Snow-covered Homans building in Somerville blocked off, old report says "structural integrity severely compromised." Somerville Journal. Retrieved from <http://somerville.wickedlocal.com/article/20150219/News/150215895>
- Brickbottom Artists Association. (2017). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://brickbottom.org/>
- Brooks, A. C., & Kushner, R. J. (2001). Cultural Districts and Urban Development. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 3(2), 4–15.
- Cassel, E. (2014, November 14). SCOUT OUT: 40 Years at Vernon Street Studios. Scout Somerville. Retrieved from <http://scoutsomerville.com/40-years-at-vernon-street-studios/>
- Cavalcanti, G. (n.d.). Artisan's Asylum | Imagination Fabrication. Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://imaginationfabrication.com/artisans-asylum/>
- City of Cambridge. (2017). City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.
- City of Seattle. (2017). The CAP Report.
- City of Somerville. (2018a). City of Somerville Zoning Ordinance.
- City of Somerville. (2018b). City of Somerville Zoning Overhaul.
- Cole, D. B. (1987). Artists and Urban Redevelopment. *Geographical Review*, 77(4), 391–407. <https://doi.org/10.2307/214280>
- Conti, K. (2018). These tenants pay \$3,000 rents, but are still being displaced - The Boston Globe. Retrieved from <https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2018/03/30/these-tenants-pay-rents-but-are-still-being->

displaced/rgKyLkqUisGj3zP8TKuA9L/story.html

- Costonis, J. J. (1972). The Chicago Plan: Incentive Zoning and the Preservation of Urban Landmarks. *Harvard Law Review*, 85(3), 574–634. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1339624>
- Deborah Mason School. (2016). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://www.deborahmasonschooldance.com>
- Durmaz, S. B. (2012). Creative clusters and place-making: analysing the quality of place in Soho and Beyoglu. Retrieved from <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/12720/>
- Ellickson, R. C. (1980). The Irony of Inclusionary Zoning. *Southern California Law Review*, 54, 1167–1216.
- Evans, G. (2009). From Cultural Quarters to Creative Clusters: Creative Spaces in the New City Economy. *The Sustainability and Development of Cultural Quarters: International Perspectives*.
- Florida, R. (2014). *The Rise of the Creative Class--Revisited: Revised and Expanded*. Basic Books.
- Gdaniec, C. (2000). Cultural industries, information technology and the regeneration of post-industrial urban landscapes. Poblenuou in Barcelona - a virtual city? *GeoJournal*, 50(4), 379–387. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010804102645>
- Grodach, C., Foster, N., & III, J. M. (2014). Gentrification and the Artistic Dividend: The Role of the Arts in Neighborhood Change. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 80(1), 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2014.928584>
- Hoffman, S. (2017, December 1). City Planning Approves National Black Theater Building in East Harlem. *CityLand*. Retrieved from <http://www.citylandnyc.org/city-planning-approves-national-black-theater-building-east-harlem/>
- Hutton, T. A. (2006). Spatiality, Built Form, and Creative Industry Development in the Inner City. *Environment and Planning A*, 38(10), 1819–1841. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a37285>
- Jamspot. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://www.jamspot.com/>
- Kautz, B. E. (2001). In Defense of Inclusionary Zoning: Successfully Creating Affordable Housing Comment. *University of San Francisco Law Review*, 36, 971–1032.
- Lynds, J. (2017). Four Bids Come in for Condor Street Parcel | East Boston Times-Free Press. Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://www.eastietimes.com/2017/08/09/four-bids-come-in-for-condor-street-parcel/>
- Markusen, A. (2006). Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from a Study of Artists. *Environment and Planning A*, 38(10), 1921–1940. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a37285>



doi.org/10.1068/a38179

- Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A. (2010). Arts and Culture in Urban or Regional Planning: A Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 29(3), 379–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X09354380>
- Mass Cultural Council. (2018). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org>
- Millbrook Lofts | Somerville Apartments | Home. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://millbrooklofts.com/>
- Mixit Print Studio. (2014). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://www.mixitprint.com/>
- Montgomery, J. (2003). Cultural Quarters as Mechanisms for Urban Regeneration. Part 1: Conceptualising Cultural Quarters. *Planning Practice & Research*, 18(4), 293–306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1561426042000215614>
- Montgomery, J. (2007). Creative industry business incubators and managed workspaces: A review of best practice. *Planning Practice & Research*, 22(4), 601–617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697450701770126>
- New York City Department of City Planning (DCP). (2018). New York City 125th Street Special District Zoning.
- ONCE Somerville. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://www.oncesomerville.com/about-us/>
- Porter, M. (1998). Clusters and the New Economics of Competition. *Harvard Business Review*, 98609.
- Powell, B., & Stringham, E. (2005). The Economics of Inclusionary Zoning Reclaimed: How Effective are Price Controls? (SSRN Scholarly Paper). Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. Retrieved from <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1674474>
- Public meeting on new affordable artist live/work spaces in Somerville Feb. 3. (2016). Wicked Local Somerville. Retrieved from <http://somerville.wickedlocal.com/article/20160201/NEWS/160209547>
- Rogers Foam. (2018). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://www.rogersfoam.com/company/history/>
- Ryberg, S. R., Salling, M., & Soltis, G. (2013). Putting Artists on the Map: The Geography of Artists in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 35(2), 219–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2012.00623.x>
- Schuetz, J., Meltzer, R., & Been, V. (2009). 31 Flavors of Inclusionary Zoning: Comparing Policies From San Francisco, Washington, DC, and Suburban Boston. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 75(4), 441–456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01909320903254444>

doi.org/10.1080/01944360903146806

Shkuda, A. (2015). The Artist as Developer and Advocate: Real Estate and Public Policy in SoHo, New York. *Journal of Urban History*, 41(6), 999–1016. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144215602008>

Somerville Arts Council (SAC). (2009). Rezoning Union Square: The Arts Perspective.

Somerville Assessing Department. (2016). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://gis.vgsi.com/somervillema/Parcel.aspx?Pid=539>

Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD). (2012). SomerVision Comprehensive Plan.

Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD). (2014a). Gilman Square Station Area Plan.

Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD). (2014b). Lowell Street Station Area Plan.

Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD). (2016). Union Square Neighborhood Plan.

Somerville Open Studios. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <https://www.somervilleopenstudios.org/>

Strom, E. (2010). Artist Garret as Growth Machine? Local Policy and Artist Housing in U.S. Cities. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 29(3), 367–378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X09358560>

Thompson, J. T. (2018, April 4). Finding Room for Art. Scout Somerville. Retrieved from <http://scoutsomerville.com/finding-room-for-art/>

Union Square Neighbors. (2015). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://www.unionsquareneighbors.com/brickbottom.html>

Union Square Station Associates (US2). (2017). Coordinated Development Special Permit Application: Union Square Redevelopment.

Vernon Street Studios. (2012). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://vernonstreet.com/about.html>

Wolf-Powers, L., Doussard, M., Schrock, G., Heying, C., Eisenburger, M., & Marotta, S. (2017). The Maker Movement and Urban Economic Development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 83(4), 365–376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2017.1360787>

#### All GIS Data:

City of Somerville, [data.somervillema.gov](http://data.somervillema.gov), January 2018

MassGIS, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massgis-bureau-of-geographic-information>, January 2018

## ZONING TEXT

### *2009 Use Definitions*

- 1) Artist Live/Work Space
  - a) A building or any portion thereof containing units of at least seven hundred fifty (750) square feet in size that is used by the occupant(s) therein for both residential use and Artist Studio Space. Such households must include at least one (1) artist certified by the City of Somerville. Inclusionary Units in Artist Live/ Work Space projects will be made available to households in which at least one (1) member is an artist certified by the City of Somerville subject to inclusionary housing income eligibility requirements. Retail sales of art produced on-site that does not take place more than twelve (12) hours per week will be an allowable accessory use.
  
- 2) Artist Studio Space
  - a) Space used for the creation, production, rehearsal or teaching of any visual art or craft, including but not limited to painting, drawing, graphic design, photography, video, film, sculpture, and pottery; of written works of fiction or nonfiction; or of any performing art, whether for live or recorded performance, including music, dance, and theater, and accessory sales of such art. Activities must conform to the following requirements:
    - i) The use, including storage of materials or products, shall be carried on strictly within an enclosed building.
    - ii) The production of offensive noise, vibration, smoke, dust or other particulate matter, heat, humidity, glare, or other objectionable effect shall be prohibited.
    - iii) Retail sales of art produced on-site that does not take place more than twelve (12) hours per week will be an allowable accessory use.
  
- 3) Home Occupation
  - a) A home occupation shall include, but is not limited to: the studio of a visual artist, craftsperson, musician or other performing artist, photographer, or writer; and the office of an architect, landscape architect.

## 2018 Zoning Overhaul Use Definitions

### 1) Artisan Production

- a) Individuals and firms involved in the on-site production of hand-fabricated or hand-manufactured parts and/or custom or craft consumer goods through the use of hand tools or small-scale, light mechanical equipment. The artisan production category includes apparel manufacturing, breweries, cabinetry, chocolatiers, confectionery, furniture making, glass working, jewelry making, metal working, pottery, sculpture, wood working, and their substantial equivalents. Showrooms and the ancillary sales of goods produced on-site are permitted. The following standards apply:
  - i) The production of offensive noise, vibration, smoke, dust or other particulate matter, heat, humidity, glare, or other objectionable effect is prohibited, except in the Fabrication and Commercial Industry districts.
  - ii) In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing an artisan production use, the review board shall consider the following:
    - (1) The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
    - (2) Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
    - (3) Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
    - (4) The limitation of visitors and ancillary retail sales to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.

### 2) Arts Exhibition

- a) The production, rehearsal, or live performance of cultural entertainment or artistic expression such as singing, dancing, comedy, literary readings, performance art, musical theater, live plays, and concerts. The arts exhibition category includes venues such as assembly halls, auditoriums, cinemas, concert halls, dinner theaters, gallery space, performance halls, rehearsal & preproduction studios, live theaters, and their substantial equivalents along with the administrative offices, booking agencies, and ticket sales of performing arts organizations.

### 3) Arts Sales & Services

- a) The display and retail sale, lease, or rental of finished artwork, art supplies, musical instruments, multi-media, or publications and activities that provide various arts related services to individuals, groups, or businesses including galleries, supply stores, printing shops, set design studios, and their substantial equivalents. The following standards apply:
  - i) Outdoor display of products and merchandise is permitted according to the following:
    - (1) Outdoor display is permitted in any storefront frontage or on a public sidewalk subject to all City Ordinances as an ancillary activity.
    - (2) Outdoor display must be removed and placed inside a fully-enclosed building at the end of each business day.
    - (3) Display areas extending more than eight feet from the facade are prohibited.
    - (4) A minimum four (4) foot wide clear path of access must be maintained to the principal entrance.

- (5) Display areas are permitted to occupy no more than 30% of the frontage area.
- (6) Display areas must comply with the sidewalk standards of Article 8: Public Realm.
- ii) In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing an arts sales & service use, the review board shall consider the following:
  - (1) The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
  - (2) Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
  - (3) Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
  - (4) The limitation of visitors and ancillary retail sales to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.
- 4) Co-Working
  - a) A commercial or non-profit organization providing multiple individuals and small firms access to workplace facilities, including but not limited to, creative studios, office suites, for-rent ‘hot-desks’, dedicated workstations, conference rooms, meeting rooms, event space, resource libraries, and business or administrative support services.
- 5) Design Services
  - a) Individuals and firms that provide design services to individuals, groups, or businesses including architectural design, fashion design, graphic design, interior design, industrial design, landscape architecture, product development, software development, urban design, and their substantial equivalents. The following standards apply:
    - i) In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing a design services use, the review board shall consider the following:
      - (1) The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
      - (2) Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
      - (3) Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
      - (4) The limitation of visitors to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.
- 6) Shared Workspaces & Arts Education
  - a) The transfer of knowledge or skills related to the creative enterprises through teaching, training, or research; organizations providing collaborative workplace facilities and business planning, finance, mentoring, and other business or administrative support services to creative enterprises; and multipurpose facilities dedicated to providing space for multiple creative enterprises. The shared workspace & arts education category includes arts centers, creative incubators, culinary incubators, design & fabrication centers, fabrication laboratories, and their substantial equivalents. The following standards apply:
    - i) In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing a shared workspace & arts education use, the review board shall consider the following:



## *Keeping Somerville Weird by Zoning for Artist Workspace*

- (1) The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
  - (2) Appreciable methods to mitigate noise for abutting residential properties.
  - (3) Location of loading, trash and recycling storage, and the procedure for drop-off and pickup.
  - (4) The limitation of visitors to between the hours of 7:00am to 9:00pm.
- 7) Work/Live Creative Studio
- a) Creative studio space consisting of not more than one (1) room, including an area for accessory living, where the work needs of creative industry activities within the same building take precedence over any “quiet expectations” of the residents and neighbors residing in work/live creative studios within the same building. The following standards apply:
    - i) Kitchen, dining, and bathroom facilities, excluding work sinks, must be shared between the tenants of each floor.
    - ii) Floor area for accessory living space is limited to 200 sq. ft. or 30% of the total floor space of a Work/Live Studio, whichever is less.
    - iii) The occupant(s) of the Work/Live Creative Studio must be a certified Artist with the Somerville Arts Council.
    - iv) In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing a work/live creative studio use, the review board shall consider the following:
      - (1) The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria.
      - (2) Width of doorways and hallways to accommodate the moving of large objects.
      - (3) Weight capacity of elevators to accommodate heavy equipment.
      - (4) Access to natural light within each studio with a preference towards northern exposure.
      - (5) Sound transmission co-efficients to prevent the transmission of sounds from equipment or repetitive tasks.
      - (6) Ventilation and air handling techniques to ensure the safety and health of residents, visitors, and neighbors.
      - (7) Ceiling heights that allow for the creation of large works and equipment, including machinery and lighting.
      - (8) Weight-bearing capacity of the floor.
      - (9) Ability to install flooring for specific users such as dancers or performers.

## Arts Overlay District

### 6.1.23 Arts Overlay District (AOD).

- A. *Purpose.* The Arts Overlay District (AOD) is established in order to encourage the preservation and enhancement of Arts-Related Uses, particularly within Union Square. The district is also intended to preserve and enhance the area as a center for a variety of retail, business services, housing, and office uses and to promote a strong pedestrian character and scale throughout the district.
- B. *Conflict in Standards.* Development in the AOD shall be governed by the underlying zoning except when developing arts-related uses. For projects incorporating Arts-Related Uses and qualifying under Section 6.1.23.F hereunder, certain benefits may be conferred; in the event of conflicts in standards, the standards of this section shall prevail over those of Section 8.5 (Table of Dimensional Standards).
- C. *Powers of the SPGA in the Arts Overlay District.* In the AOD, the Planning Board shall serve as the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) for arts-related uses. The SPGA may approve, approve with conditions, or deny any application after consideration of the criteria set forth in Article 5 of this Ordinance.

There shall be no variances in the AOD except as granted separately by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

- D. *Review Requirements for New Development<sup>1</sup> under the Arts Overlay District.* All new development exercising more permissive dimensional requirements conferred only by the AOD shall meet the review requirements for the underlying district(s) and the following requirements:
  1. *Special Permit Uses.* All new development for a use requiring a Special Permit (SP)<sup>2</sup> shall be subject to Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR).
  2. *By-Right Uses.* All new development for a by-right use shall be subject to Design and Site Plan Review (DSPR) under Section 5.4. If some uses in a new development are permitted by right and some are allowed by Special Permit (SP) the entire development shall be subject to SPSR review.
  3. *Additional Submission Requirements.*
    - a. Applications for Building Permits or Special Permits shall include an explanation of how the project would meet the "Design Guidelines for Artist Live/Work Space".
    - b. When an application involves any new development as defined by footnote 1 to Section 6.1.23.D above, a series of axonometric drawings or digital 3-D model must be submitted in addition to the information required for the applicable permits pursuant to Article 5 of this Ordinance. The model must show the proposed development as well as abutting properties.
  4. *Alterations to Structures in the AOD.* Alterations to a façade approved under AOD provisions shall require a new Special Permit, with findings giving consideration to the Design Guidelines of Section 6.1.23.G.
- E. *Use Regulations in the Arts Overlay District.*
  1. Land within the Arts Overlay District shall continue to be subject to the use regulations of the underlying district(s) in which it is located, except that certain uses, as outlined in Section 7.11 (Table of Permitted Uses) shall only be allowed, or shall have a lesser review requirement, within the context of the Arts Overlay District.
  2. For projects requiring SPSR, Artist Live/Work Spaces shall be clustered within the development to promote collaborative public engagement and art display.

3. In order to ensure the continuation of desired uses, a development that is granted a more permissive dimensional requirement for the provision of specific uses (e.g., Artist Live/Work Space) shall be subject to a deed restriction or other enforceable legal instrument which reflects that the bonus is conditional upon continuation of an arts-related use, in form satisfactory to the SPGA, commencing upon the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the Development.

F. *Dimensional Requirements in the Arts Overlay District.* For projects located within the Arts Overlay District and meeting the criteria below, the minimum lot area per dwelling unit and maximum Floor Area Ratio requirements shall be subject to the following dimensional standards, which shall supersede those of Section 8.5.

1. *Residential Districts within the AOD.*

- a. For a development consisting solely of deed-restricted Artist Live/Work Space within the AOD and a residential base district:
  - i. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit shall be seven hundred fifty (750) square feet; and
  - ii. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) shall be increased by 0.25 above the base district's allowable FAR.

2. *Non-Residential Districts within the AOD.*

- a. For a development within the AOD and a non-residential base district consisting solely of deed-restricted Arts Related Uses above the ground floor:
  - i. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit shall be seven hundred fifty (750) square feet; and,
  - ii. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) shall be increased by .25 above the base district's allowable FAR.
- b. For development within the AOD and a non-residential base district consisting of one hundred (100) percent deed-restricted Arts Related Uses:
  - i. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit shall be seven hundred fifty (750) square feet; and,
  - ii. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) shall be increased to 0.5 above the base district's allowable FAR.

G. *Design Guidelines in the Arts Overlay District.*

*Design Guidelines.* Projects containing Arts-Related Uses may qualify for certain less restrictive zoning standards, as provided in Section 6.1.23.F. In reviewing such projects the SPGA shall consider the following design guidelines, which supersede those in Section 5.2.4. These guidelines are not intended to inhibit design creativity or discourage innovative architectural design solutions. Rather, they provide general standards for building massing, siting and articulation. It is understood that Buildings and Structures may not be able to comply with all of the following Guidelines. For projects located in both the Arts Overlay District and Corridor Commercial District, the Design Guidelines for the Corridor Commercial District under Section 6.1.22.H shall apply.

1. Building(s) should complete the streetwall along the primary street edge(s).
2. Massing of the building should be articulated in a manner compatible with the surrounding district, particularly where a building abuts a lot or lots within a residential district.

3. Major building entrances and entrances to retail stores and other sources of pedestrian activity should be oriented to existing public sidewalks and other open space.
4. On-site, off-street parking should be located either at the rear of the lot behind the building or below street level; parking should not abut the primary street edge(s) of the parcel.
5. Access to on-site, off-street parking should be provided from either a side street or an alley; Where this is not possible, provide vehicular access through an opening in the street level facade of the building of a maximum of twenty-five (25) feet in width.
6. Signage and awning design should respect buildings' context (e.g., scale, design, style, colors, materials), be oriented to pedestrians, and be subordinate to the overall building composition. Creative shapes must be carefully designed and coordinated with the overall appearance of the building. The design should also maintain an existing "signage line" and respect the character, scale, and locations of adjacent signs and awnings. Large, interior-lit or back-lit signs or awnings, neon "open" signs, vinyl or plastic materials and overly bright colors are generally discouraged. To add interest and character to the retail environment signs or awnings may convey interesting elements or logos without excessive wording. They should be limited to advertising the business name and its main goods or services, with minimal or no national brand names or logos. Type styles should enhance readability of the sign and provide information simply and legibly. Use awnings to create pleasant shaded spaces in front of a building. Signs and awnings should enhance important architectural details and not conceal or obliterate them.
7. Individual Artist Live/Work Spaces should be designed as closely as possible in accordance with the "Design Guidelines for Artist Live/Work Space" produced by the Somerville Arts Council.

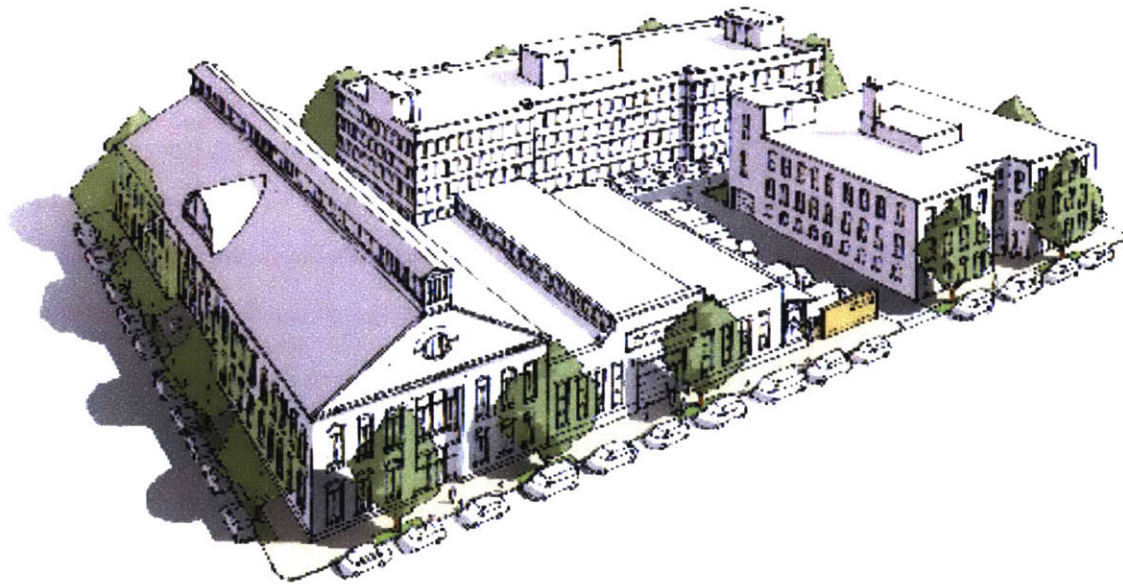
## Fabrication District

### 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS Fabrication (FAB)

#### 6.1 FABRICATION (FAB)

##### 1. Description

The Fabrication district is characterized by moderate to large floor plate buildings up to four (4) stories in height. Buildings are set close to the sidewalk to create a defined street wall that supports pedestrian activity and a sense of place. The district is entirely commercial with buildings typically designed or retrofitted to support multiple tenants.





## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

### Fabrication (FAB)

#### 2. Intent

- a. To implement recommendations of SomerVision related to the arts & creative economy.
- b. To protect buildings that are key assets to the creative economy of Somerville from residential conversion, preserve existing work space, and retain incubator spaces for start-up, entry-, and mid-level businesses.
- c. To create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for small- and moderate-scale, single- and multi-use buildings; activities common to the arts & creative economy and supporting commercial activities; and a variety of employment opportunities in the arts & creative enterprises.

#### 3. Purpose

- a. To permit the development of single- and multi-use buildings that do not exceed four (4) stories in height.
- b. To provide quality commercial spaces and permit a mix of uses common to the arts & creative economy and supporting commercial activities.
- c. To prohibit residential principal uses.

#### 4. Applicability

- a. The section is applicable to all real property within the Fabrication district as shown on maps of the Official Zoning Atlas of the City of Somerville.

#### 5. Development Review

- a. Development on any lot requires the submittal of a development review application to the Building Official and the issuance of a Zoning Compliance Certificate.
- b. Proposed development may or may not necessitate the need for Site Plan Approval, a Special Permit, or a Variance based on the nature of the proposal. In such cases, additional development review is required in accordance with Article 15: Administration.
  - i. The Planning Board is the decision making authority for all development that requires Site Plan Approval or a Special Permit.
  - ii. The Zoning Board of Appeals is the Review Board for all Variances.
- c. Upon verification that no additional development review is necessary or completion of the required development review, a Zoning Compliance Certificate shall be issued by the Building Official to certify compliance with the provisions and procedures of this Ordinance.

#### 6. Building Types

- a. One (1) principal building type may be built on each lot.
- b. The following building types are permitted by Site Plan Approval in the Fabrication district:
  - i. Fabrication Building
- c. Accessory structures are regulated according to Article 10: Development Standards of this Ordinance.

## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

### 7. Fabrication Building

A moderate to large floor plate, multi-story building type typically designed with tall ceilings, expansive windows, wide corridors, service elevators, and loading docks. Fabrication buildings are sometimes naturally lit with a monitor, clerestory, or sawtooth roofs.

The following images are examples of the fabrication building type and are intended only for illustrative purposes.

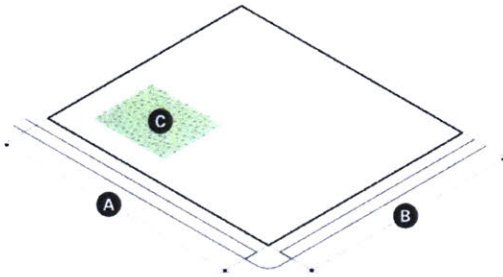


## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

### 7. Fabrication Building (continued)

a. Lot Standards

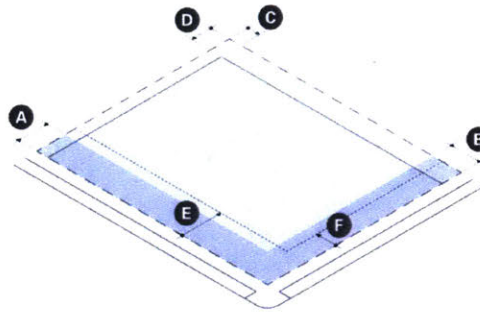


| Lot Dimensions |       |
|----------------|-------|
| A Width (min)  | 30 ft |

| Lot Coverage         |      |
|----------------------|------|
| B Lot Coverage (max) | 100% |
| C Green Factor (min) | 0.20 |

b. Building Placement



| Building Setbacks                   |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| A Primary Front Setback (min/max)   | 10 ft | 20 ft |
| B Secondary Front Setback (min/max) | 10 ft | 20 ft |
| C Side Setback (min)                | 5 ft  |       |
| D Rear Setback (min)                | 20 ft |       |

| Parking Setbacks                |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| E Primary Front Setback (min)   | 20 ft |
| F Secondary Front Setback (min) | 10 ft |

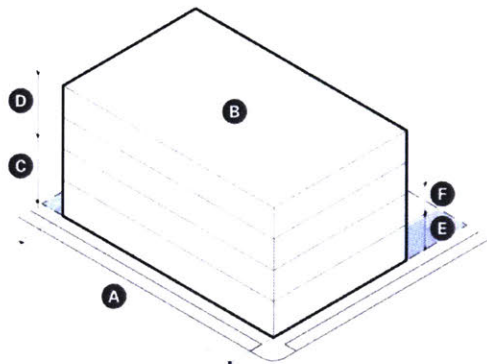


## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

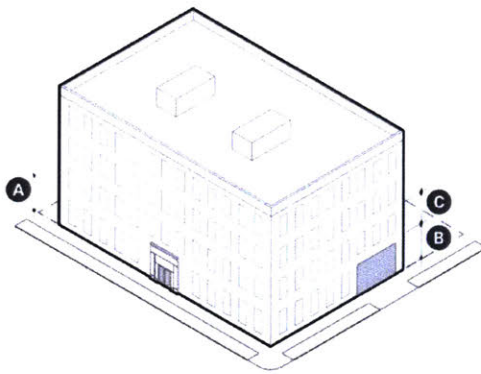
### 7. Fabrication Building (continued)

c. Height & Massing



| Main Body                               |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>A</b> Building Width (max)           | n/a       |
| Facade Build Out                        |           |
| Front Street (min)                      | 65%       |
| Side Street (min)                       | 65%       |
| <b>B</b> Floor Plate (max)              | 30,000 sf |
| <b>C</b> Building Height, Stories (min) | 2 stories |
| <b>D</b> Building Height, Stories (max) | 4 stories |
| <b>E</b> Ground Story Height (min)      | 14 ft     |
| <b>F</b> Upper Story Height (min)       | 10 ft     |
| Building Height, Feet (max)             | 65 ft     |
| Roof Type                               | n/a       |

d. Uses & Features



| Facade Composition                          |         |
|---|---------|
| Ground Story Fenestration (min)             |         |
| <b>A</b> Front Street                       | 50%     |
| <b>B</b> Side Street                        | 20%     |
| <b>C</b> Upper Story Fenestration (min/max) | 20% 50% |
| Blank Wall (max)                            | 50 ft   |

| Use & Occupancy                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Ground Story Entrance Spacing (max) | n/a   |
| Commercial Space Depth (min)        | 30 ft |

## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

- i. Reserved



## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

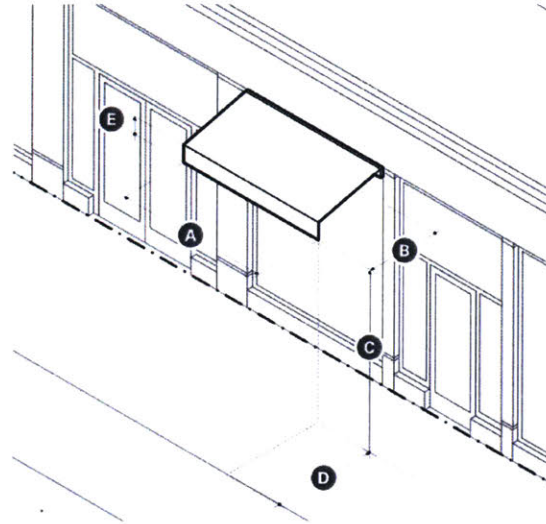
Fabrication (FAB)

### 8. Building Components

- a. Building components are accessory features that increase the habitable square footage or enhance the usefulness of a building.
- b. The following building components are permitted in the Fabrication (FAB) district:
  - i. Awning
  - ii. Entry Canopy
  - iii. Bay
- c. Building components not expressly authorized are prohibited.

### D. Awning

- i. A wall mounted, pitched covering extending from a building to provide shade and weather protection for pedestrians.



| Dimensions                       |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>A</b> Width (min)             | See §X     |
| <b>B</b> Projection (min)        | 3 ft       |
| <b>C</b> Clearance (min)         | 8 ft clear |
| <b>D</b> Setback from Curb (min) | 1.5 ft     |
| <b>E</b> Valance Height (max)    | 12 in      |

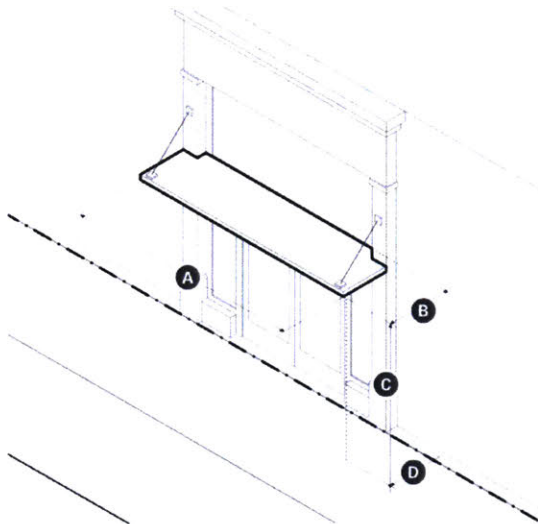
- ii. Standards
  - a). Awnings must be securely attached to and supported by the building and must fit the windows or doors the awning is attached to.
  - b). An awning must be made of durable, weather-resistant material that is water repellent.
  - c). Internally illuminated or back-lit awnings are prohibited.
  - d). An awning that projects over the sidewalk of a public thoroughfare requires compliance with all City Ordinances.

## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

### E. Entry Canopy

- i. An entry canopy is a wall-mounted structure that provides shade and weather protection over the entrance of a building.

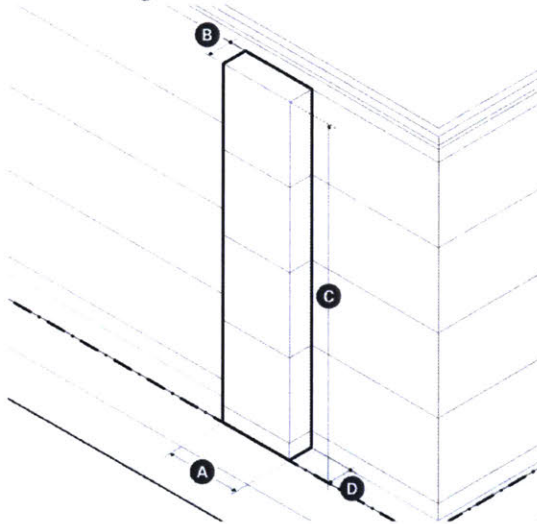


| Dimensions                                    |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>A</b> Width (min)                          | See §X     |
| <b>B</b> Depth (max)                          | 3 ft       |
| <b>C</b> Clearance (min)                      | 8 ft clear |
| <b>D</b> Permitted Setback Encroachment (max) | 100%       |

- ii. Standards
  - a). Entry canopies must be visually supported by brackets, cables, or rods.
  - b). The width of an entry canopy must be equal to or greater than the width of the doorway surround or exterior casing it is mounted over.

### F. Bay

- i. A bay is a window assembly extending from the main body of a building to permit increased light, provide multi-direction views, and articulate a building's facade.



| Dimensions                           |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Width (min)                 | 50% of facade or elevation |
| <b>B</b> Depth (max)                 | 3 ft                       |
| <b>C</b> Height (max)                | Height of Building         |
| <b>D</b> Fenestration (min)          | 60%                        |
| Permitted Setback Encroachment (max) | 3 ft                       |

- ii. Standards
  - a). Bays must have a foundation extending all the way to ground level or be visually supported by brackets or other architectural supports.
  - b). Bays projecting over the sidewalk of a public thoroughfare must have two (2) stories of clearance and compliance with all City Ordinances.

## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

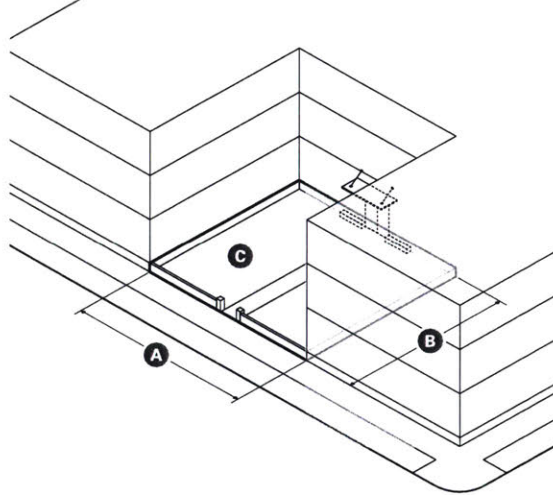
Fabrication (FAB)

### 9. Private Frontage

- a. Private frontage must be designed as a building frontage type.
- b. Building frontage types facilitate access to principal entrances and serve as the interface and transition between the private realm (building interiors) and the public realm (sidewalks and civic spaces).
- c. The following building frontage types are permitted in the Fabrication (FAB) district:
  - i. Forecourt
  - ii. Lobby Entrance
  - iii. Storefront
  - iv. Terrace
  - v. Arcade
- d. Building frontage types may be combined as indicated for each type and multiple frontage types may exist for buildings that have more than one principal entrance.

### E. Forecourt

- i. A forecourt is a frontage type featuring a landscaped semi-public area, open to the sky, formed by a recess in a central portion of a building's facade.



| Dimensions                     |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| <b>A</b> Width (min)           | 12 ft  |
| <b>B</b> Depth (min)           | 12 ft  |
| Height to Width Ratio (max)    | 2 to 1 |
| <b>C</b> Landscaped Area (min) | 30%    |

- ii. Standards
  - a). Paving, excluding driveways, must match the abutting sidewalk unless paved with permeable paving.
  - b). Forecourts are considered part of the building for the purpose of measuring facade build out.
  - c). A forecourt must be enclosed by walls on three sides.
  - d). Porches, stoops, porticos, entry canopies, and balconies may encroach into the forecourt.
  - e). Driveways, parking spaces, passenger drop-offs, garage entrances, loading and service areas, exhaust vents, mechanical equipment, and refuse or recycling storage are not permitted in forecourts.

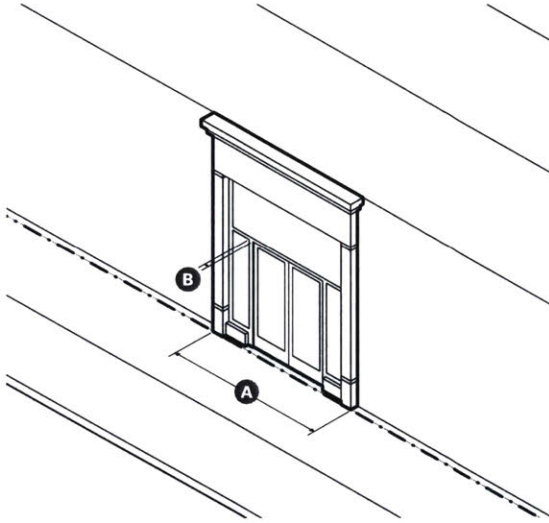


## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

### F. Lobby Entrance

- i. A lobby entrance frontage type featuring an at-grade principal entrance providing access to upper story uses of a building.

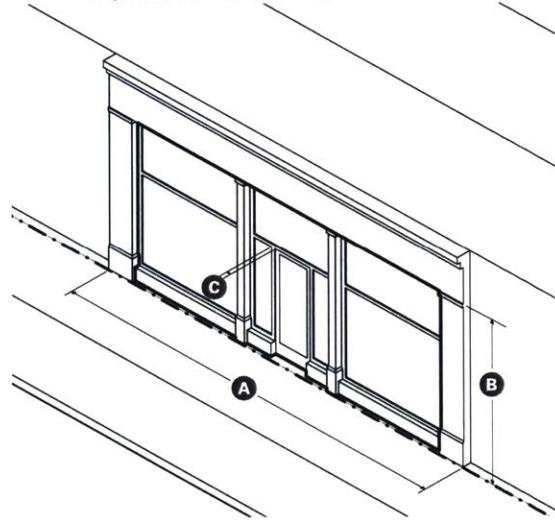


| Dimensions |                                     |       |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>A</b>   | Width (max)                         | 20 ft |
| <b>B</b>   | Distance between Fenestration (max) | 2 ft  |
|            | Depth of Recessed Entry (max)       | 5 ft  |

- ii. Standards
  - a). Lobby entrances must be well-defined, clearly visible, and universally accessible from the abutting sidewalk.
  - b). When a lobby entrance is setback from the front lot line, the frontage must be paved to match the abutting sidewalk.
  - c). Lobby entrances should be made clearly identifiable using a difference in design from the rest of the facade.
  - d). Lobby entrances should include weather protection.

### G. Storefront

- i. A storefront is a frontage type conventional for commercial uses featuring an at-grade principal entrance and substantial windows for the display of goods, services, and signs.



| Dimensions |                                     |       |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>A</b>   | Width (max)                         | 30 ft |
| <b>B</b>   | Display Window Height (min)         | 8 ft  |
| <b>C</b>   | Distance between Fenestration (max) | 2 ft  |
|            | Depth of Recessed Entry (max)       | 5 ft  |

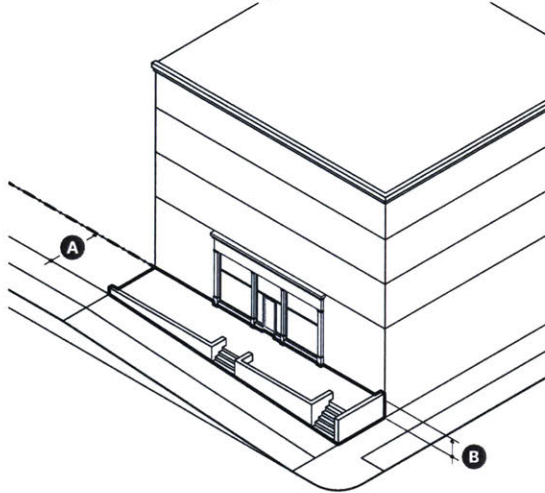
- ii. Standards
  - a). When storefronts are setback from the front lot line, the frontage must be paved to match the abutting sidewalk.
  - b). Open-ended, operable awnings are encouraged for weather protection.
  - c). Bi-fold glass windows and doors and other storefront systems that open to permit a flow of customers between interior and exterior space are encouraged.

## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

### H. Terrace

- i. A terrace is a frontage type featuring an elevation of the ground level to accommodate a change in grade that provides circulation and access along the front of a building.

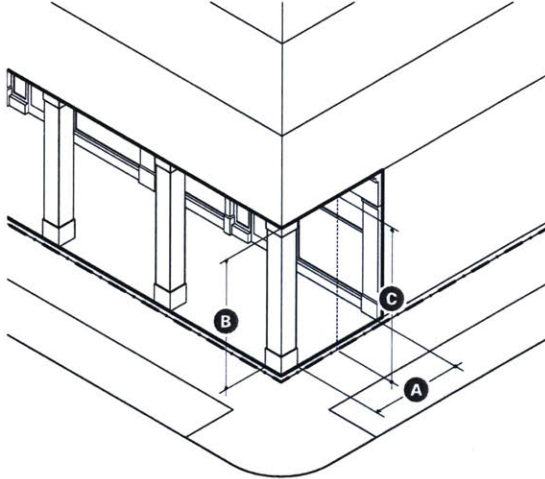


| Dimensions                               |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>A</b> Depth (min)                     | 20 ft        |
| <b>B</b> Finish above Sidewalk (min/max) | 18 in   4 ft |
| Distance between Stairs (max)            | 50 ft        |

- ii. Standards
  - a). Terrace frontage must be paved to match the abutting sidewalk.
  - b). Frequent steps up to the terrace are required to avoid blank wall along the sidewalk and maximize pedestrian access.

### I. Arcade

- i. An arcade is a frontage type featuring a pedestrian walkway covered by the upper floors of a building. The ground story facade is setback and upper floors are supported by a colonnade or supports.



| Dimensions                   |         |       |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|
| <b>A</b> Depth (min/max)     | 10 ft   | 15 ft |
| <b>B</b> Height (max)        | 1 story |       |
| <b>C</b> Clearance (min/max) | 14 ft   | 24 ft |

- ii. Standards
  - a). Arcades must extend the entire width of a building and must have a consistent depth.
  - b). Support columns or piers may be spaced no farther apart than they are tall.
  - c). Arcades are considered part of the building for the purpose of measuring facade build out.
  - d). Arcades may be combined only with storefront and lobby entrance frontages
  - e). The finished ceiling of an arcade interior may be arched or flat, but must have a greater clearance than the openings between columns or piers.



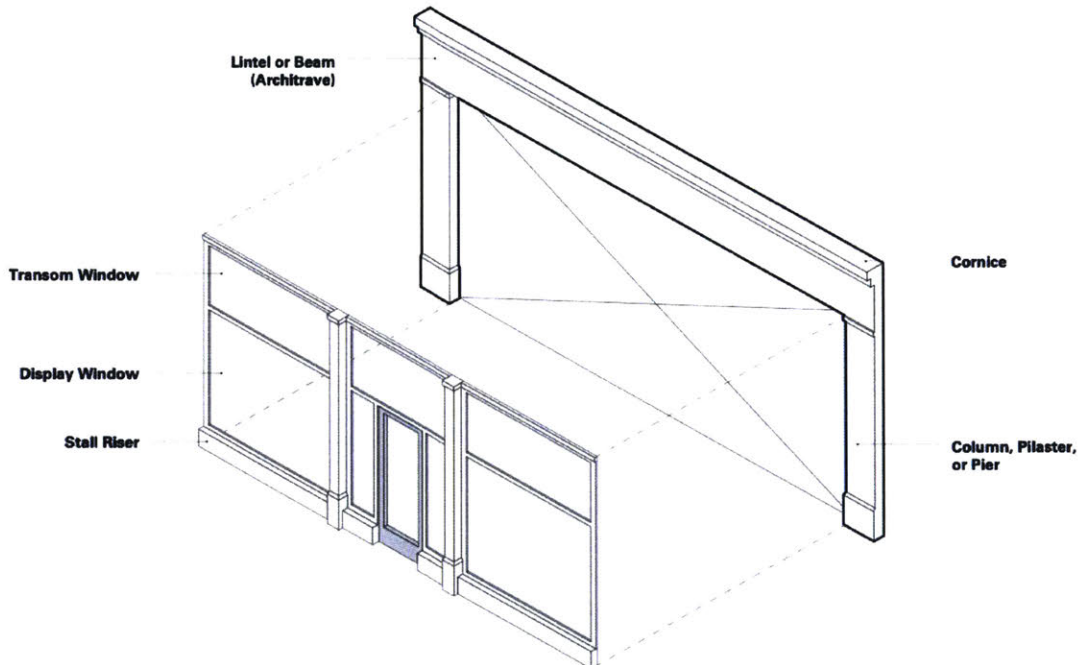
## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

### 10. Building Design Standards

- a. Facade Design
  - i. All facades must provide surface relief through the use of balconies, Bay Windows, cladding, columns, corner boards, cornices, door surrounds, moldings, piers, pilasters, sills, sign bands, windows, and other architectural features that either recess or project from the average plane of the facade by at least four (4) inches.
  - ii. Vents, exhausts, and other utility features on building facades must be architecturally integrated into the design of the building.
- b. Storefronts
  - i. Storefronts must be designed to include, at minimum, columns, pilasters, or piers supporting a proportional fascia or frieze and cornice that serves as a sign band.
    - a). Display windows must extend to at least eight (8) feet above the grade of the Abutting sidewalk.
    - b). A paneled or rendered stallriser at least one (1) foot in height should be included below display windows.
  - ii. Storefront entrances may be recessed up to five (5) feet behind the plane of the facade, provided that the recessed area is no wider than fifteen (15) feet per individual entry.
  - iii. Where height permits, transom windows should be included above storefront doors and display windows to allow additional natural daylight to penetrate into the interior space.
  - iv. When present, awnings and canopies must be mounted between storefront columns, pilasters, or piers; above doorway and window openings; and below the fascia/frieze of a storefront sign band.
  - v. An unobstructed view of the ground story interior space or maintained and lighted merchandise display(s) must be provided for a depth of at least four (4) feet behind the glass of storefront display windows.
  - vi. Security grills, gates, and roll-down security doors

FIGURE 6.1 (a) Elements of a Storefront



## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

and windows are prohibited.

**11. Architectural Design Guidelines**

- i. Reserved

**12. Use Provisions**

- a. Permitted Uses
  - i. The use of real property is subject to the provisions of Article 9: Use Provisions of this Ordinance. Where the provisions of this section conflict with those of Article 9, the provisions of Article 9 apply.
  - ii. Uses are permitted as specified on Table 6.1 (a). Use categories not expressly authorized are prohibited.
  - iii. All uses must comply with any use-specific standards applicable for each use in §9.2 Use Definitions & Limitations.
  - iv. Uses permitted by Special Permit require additional development review in accordance with §15.2.1 Special Permits.
- b. Use Limitations
  - i. Gross floor area of Manufacturing uses within the Fabrication district is limited to five-thousand (5,000) square feet per establishment.
- c. Required Uses
  - i. A minimum of five percent (5%) of the gross floor area of any Fabrication Building must be provided as leasable floor area for uses from the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category.

**TABLE 6.1 (a) Permitted Uses**

| Use Category<br>Specific Use          | FAB | Use Specific<br>Standards |
|---------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| <b>Arts &amp; Creative Enterprise</b> |     |                           |
| Artisan Production                    | P   | §9.2.2.a                  |
| Arts Exhibition                       | P   | §9.2.2.b                  |
| Arts Sales & Services                 | P   | §9.2.2.c                  |
| Co-working                            | P   | §9.2.2.d                  |
| Design Services                       | P   | §9.2.2.e                  |
| Shared Workspaces & Arts Education    | P   | §9.2.2.f                  |
| Work/Live Creative Studio             | SP  | §9.2.2.g                  |
| <b>Civic &amp; Institutional</b>      |     |                           |
| Community Center                      | P   | §9.2.4.a                  |
| Library                               | P   | §9.2.4.c                  |
| Minor Utility Facility                | SP  | §9.2.4.d                  |
| Museum                                | P   | §9.2.4.f                  |

P - Permitted    SP - Special Permit Required    N - Not Permitted

## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

**TABLE 6.1 (a) Permitted Uses (continued)**

| Use Category<br>Specific Use                                 | FAB | Use Specific Standards |
|--|-----|------------------------|
| Religious & Educational Uses Protected by M.G.L. 40A. Sec. 3 | P   | §9.2.4.h               |
| <b>Commercial Services</b>                                   |     |                        |
| Broadcast and/or Recording Studio                            | P   | §9.2.5.d               |
| Caterer/Wholesale Food Production                            | P   | §9.2.5.g               |
| Day Care Service (as noted below)                            | --  | §9.2.5.h               |
| Child Day Care Center  | P   | §9.2.5.h.ii            |
| Educational Institution                                      | P   | §9.2.5.i               |
| Personal Services (except as noted below)                    | P   | §9.2.5.k               |
| Body-Art Establishment                                       | P   | §9.2.5.k.i             |
| Gym or Health Club   | N   | §9.2.5.k.ii            |
| Funeral Home   | N   | §9.2.5.k.iii           |
| Health Care Provider   | N   | §9.2.5.k.iv            |
| Recreation Facility  | SP  | §9.2.5.l               |
| Vehicle Parking, Commercial (except as follows)              | P   | §9.2.5.m               |
| Bike Share Parking   | P   | §9.2.5.m.i             |
| Car Share Parking (3 or less spaces)                         | P   | §9.2.5.m.ii            |
| Car Share Parking (4 or more spaces)                         | P   | §9.2.5.m.ii            |
| Public Parking   | P   | §9.2.5.m.iii           |
| <b>Industrial</b>  |     |                        |
| Manufacturing  | P   | §9.2.6.c               |
| <b>Urban Agriculture</b>                                     |     |                        |
| Farming (as noted below)                                     | --  | §9.2.11.a              |
| Commercial Farm  | P   | §9.2.11.a.i            |
| Community Farm   | P   | §9.2.11.a.ii           |
| Community Gardening  | P   | §9.2.11.b              |
| <b>Accessory Uses</b>  |     |                        |
| Urban Agriculture (as noted below)                           | --  | §9.2.12.d              |
| Commercial Farming   | P   | §9.2.12.d.iii          |
| Vehicle Parking, Accessory (except as follows)               | P   | §9.2.12.e              |
| Home Business Vehicle Parking                                | P   | §9.2.12.f              |

P - Permitted    SP - Special Permit Required    N - Not Permitted



## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

### 13. Vehicular Parking

- a. General
  - i. Vehicular parking must be provided as specified on Table 6.1 (b), except as follows:
    - a). Non-residential uses with five thousand (5,000) square feet or less of gross leasable floor area are exempt from any minimum requirements
  - ii. There are no parking requirements for accessory
    - of Table 6.1 (b).
    - b). Any change in use within a non-residential structure constructed before the effective date of this Ordinance, provided that the change is to a permitted use, is exempt from any minimum requirements of Table 6.1 (b).

**TABLE 6.1 (b) Vehicular Parking**

\*See Transit Orientation Map for distance to a Transit Station

| Use Category<br>Specific Use               | BICYCLE             |                    | MOTOR VEHICLE                     |                                       |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|  | Short-Term<br>(min) | Long-Term<br>(min) | Within a<br>Transit Area<br>(max) | Outside of a<br>Transit Area<br>(min) |
| <b>Arts &amp; Creative Enterprise</b>      |                     |                    | <b>1/4 mile</b>                   |                                       |
| Artisan Production                         | 1 / 10,000 sf       | 1 / 3,000 sf       | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 1,000 sf                          |
| Arts Exhibition                            | 1 / 10,000 sf       | 1 / 3,000 sf       | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 650 sf                            |
| Arts Sales & Services                      | 1 / 10,000 sf       | 1 / 3,000 sf       | 1 / 200 sf                        | 1 / 1,000 sf                          |
| Co-Working                                 | 1 / 20,000 sf       | 1 / 3,000 sf       | 1 / 1,200 sf                      | 1 / 800 sf                            |
| Design Services                            | 1 / 10,000 sf       | 1 / 3,000 sf       | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 1,000 sf                          |
| Shared Workspaces & Arts Education         | 1 / 10,000 sf       | 1 / 3,000 sf       | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 650 sf                            |
| <b>Civic &amp; Institutional</b>           |                     |                    | <b>1/4 mile</b>                   |                                       |
| Community Center                           | 1 / 10,000 sf       | 4 / 10,000 sf      | 1 / 1,800 sf                      | 1 / 600 sf                            |
| Educational Facility                       | 1.0 /<br>classroom  | 4.0 /<br>classroom | 1.5 /<br>classroom                | 3.0 /<br>classroom                    |
| Library                                    | 1 / 3,000 sf        | 1 / 5,000 sf       | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 500 sf                            |
| Minor Utility Facility                     | n/a                 | n/a                | n/a                               | n/a                                   |
| Museum                                     | 1 / 2,000 sf        | 1 / 10,000 sf      | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 500 sf                            |
| Private Non-Profit Club or Lodge           | 1 / 2,000 sf        | 1 / 10,000 sf      | 1 / 200 sf                        | 1 / 1,000 sf                          |
| <b>Commercial Services</b>                 |                     |                    | <b>1/4 mile</b>                   |                                       |
| Broadcast and/or Recording Studio          | 1 / 2,500 sf        | 1 / 10,000 sf      | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 600 sf                            |
| Caterer/Wholesale Food Production          | 1 / 2,500 sf        | 1 / 10,000 sf      | 1 / 800 sf                        | 1 / 1,000 sf                          |
| Day Care Service                           | 2                   | 1 / 10,000 sf      | 1 / 900 sf                        | 1 / 600 sf                            |
| Recreation Facility                        | 1 / 2,500 sf        | 1 / 10,000 sf      |                                   |                                       |
| <b>Industrial</b>                          |                     |                    | <b>1/4 mile</b>                   |                                       |
| Manufacturing                              |                     |                    |                                   |                                       |
| Wholesale Trade & Distribution             |                     |                    |                                   |                                       |
| <b>Office</b>                              |                     |                    | <b>1/4 mile</b>                   |                                       |
| General Office                             | 1 / 20,000 sf       | 1 / 3,000 sf       | 1 / 900 sf                        | 1 / 650 sf                            |
| Research and Development and/or Laboratory | 1 / 20,000 sf       | 1 / 5,000 sf       | 1 / 1,000 sf                      | 1 / 1,000 sf                          |

sf - Gross Leasable Square Footage

DU - Dwelling Unit

## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

### Fabrication (FAB)

- uses.
- iii. Motor vehicle parking spaces may be shared between uses on the same lot and buildings on the same block in accordance with §11.3 Shared Parking.
- b. Type
  - i. Motor vehicle parking may be provided as above ground structured parking or underground structured parking.
- c. Unbundled Parking
  - i. Motor vehicle parking spaces must be rented or leased as an option rather than a requirement of the rental, lease, or purchase of a dwelling unit or non-residential floor space.
  - ii. Bicycle parking must be provided at no cost or fee to customers, visitors, employees, tenants, and residents.
- d. Parking Design
  - i. The design of all parking is subject to §11.1 Bicycle Parking and §11.2 Motor Vehicle Parking of this Ordinance.
  - ii. Driveways, curb cuts, and vehicular entrances to parking lots, parking structures, loading docks, and service areas are not permitted along primary front lot lines abutting a pedestrian street, but may provide access from a side street or alley.
  - iii. Driveways may be located within a required side and rear setback areas, but are not permitted between the facade of a building and any front lot line.
  - iv. Driveways may be no more than twenty four (24) feet in width at the frontage.
  - v. Driveways may provide access in whole or in part on or across an abutting lot(s), provided that an access easement exists between all property owners.
  - vi. Unless otherwise specified, only one (1) curb cut is permitted per front lot line.
  - vii. Curb cuts must be located to minimize conflict with pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles on the thoroughfare they provide access to and from.
  - viii. Curb cuts may be no wider than the driveway or vehicular entrance they serve, excluding flares or returned curbs.
  - ix. Driveway crossings traversing sidewalks with paved furnishing zones must be designed to maintain the grade and clear width of the walkway they cross and must include sloped flares on either side of the driveway apron.
  - x. Driveway crossings traversing sidewalks with continuously planted furnishing zones must be designed to maintain the grade and clear width of the walkway they cross and must include returned curbs.
  - xi. The appearance of any walkway (ie. scoring pattern or special paving) must be maintained across any driveway or alley to indicate that, although a vehicle may cross, the area traversed by a vehicle remains part of the sidewalk.
- e. Parking Location
  - i. Required motor vehicle parking, excluding any required handicapped parking, may be provided off-site according to the following:
    - a). The off-site parking must be located within one thousand three hundred and twenty (1,320) feet in walking distance to the lot it will serve, measured from the nearest point of the off-site parking along block faces and walkways to the principal entrance of the use served;
    - b). Pedestrian access to off-site motor vehicle parking must be via a paved sidewalk or walkway.
    - c). A lease, recorded covenant, or other comparable legal instrument guaranteeing long term use of the site must be provided to the review board or building official and executed and filed with the Registry of Deeds.
  - ii. For real property located in more than one municipality, motor vehicle parking need not be located within the City of Somerville.
- f. Parking Relief
  - i. Relief from the parking standards of Table 6.1 (b) requires a special permit.
    - a). In its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing relief from the parking standards of Table 6.1 (b), the review board shall consider the following:
      - i). The supply and demand of on-street parking in the neighborhood, as determined through a parking study.
      - ii). Mobility management programs and services provided by the applicant to reduce the demand for parking.
      - iii). That parking provided in excess of any maximum permitted does not result in the increase in impervious lot area.

#### 14. Site Development

- a. General
  - i. Development is subject the provisions of Article 10: Development Standards of this Ordinance. Where the provisions of this section conflict with those of Article 10, the provisions of Article 10 apply.
- b. Signs
  - i. A sign, individual numerals or letters, or a nonelectrical nameplate identifying the property address is required for all real property as follows:
    - a). Each ground story non-residential use must



## 6.0 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Fabrication (FAB)

- identify the street address either on the principal entrance door or above or beside the principal entrance of the use.
- b). All residential building types must identify the street address either on the principal entrance door, above or beside the principal entrance, or on a mailbox.
  - ii. Address signs must be made easily visible through the use of colors or materials that contrast with the background material they are attached to and must be conspicuously located to provide visibility from the thoroughfare that the building faces.
  - iii. Address signs must be twelve (12) inches in height or less and may include the name of the occupant.