

City of Somerville



Zoning Listening Session

Somerville Artists



September 19, 2023



Section

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Introduction

Tonight's Agenda

I. Introduction

- Goals and intent
- Who is listening?

II. Why are we here?

- *Art Space Risk Assessment*
- Findings and recommendations

III. Context – existing zoning

- What is zoning
- Somerville's zoning and the arts

IV. What are we proposing to change?

- Arts and creative enterprise definitions
- Artist housing

V. Next steps



Goals and Intent

- Overview past work related to zoning and the arts.
- Update on the changes being proposed
- Kick-off the zoning amendment process, with a first look at the changes presented the artist community
- No decisions are being made at this meeting, but you can provide feedback through the SomerVoice page.



Who is Listening?

City of Somerville Staff



Dan Bartman

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Executive Director
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Why Are We Here?

Somerville Art Space Risk Assessment



The *Somerville Arts Space Risk Assessment* analyzes the impact of development pressure on arts organizations across the city and makes recommendations for how to protect art spaces and support the creative economy.



Main Findings

Affordability of workspace and access to workspace are key to retaining and expanding Somerville's artistic community as one of the drivers of its local cultural and creative economy.

A mismatch exists between the quantity and quality of spaces facing the highest exposure to development pressure and the ability for the Somerville Arts Council to respond to the potential loss of those spaces by exercising the ACE-use set aside requirements.

Equitable access to arts space is an ongoing challenge, and policies designed to preserve or replace existing arts spaces will not in themselves address issues of equity.



Recomendations

Provides many recommendations regarding changes and policies to help preserve art space in Somerville



Separate and define arts and creative workspace within new ACE use subcategories

expand zones where arts and creative workspace is an allowable use

incentivize the development of arts and creative workspace, particularly in the FAB district.



See the [Somerville Art Space Risk Assessment](#) for the full list of recommendations.

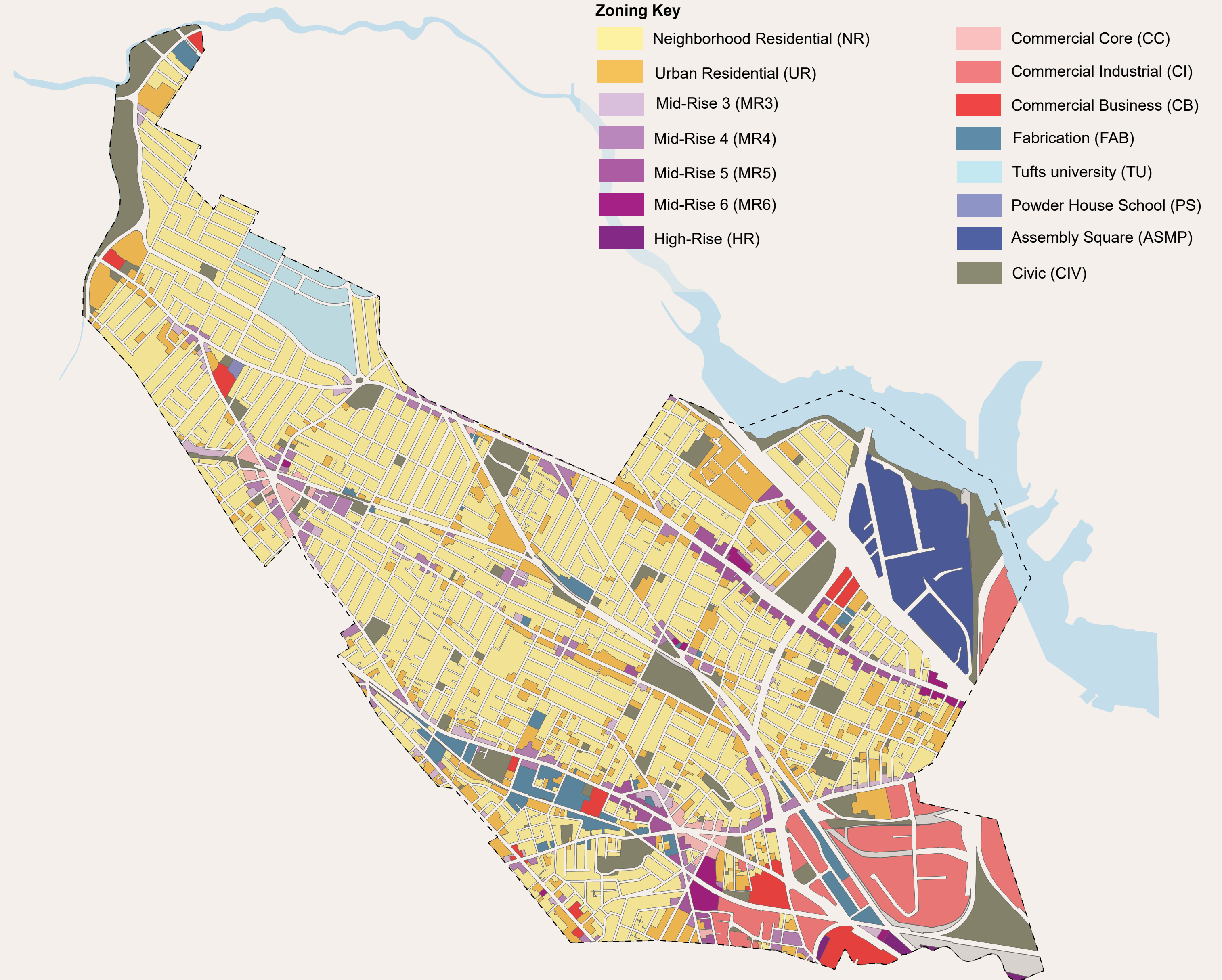


Context— Existing Zoning

What is Zoning?

Zoning separates land into districts to separate incompatible uses of the land, such as heavy industry and residential.

Somerville's Zoning Ordinance has **15 distinct base zoning districts**. Each with their own building standards and allowed land uses.



What is Land Use?

Land Use is the actual use of the land and building: Retail, Housing, Industrial, Restaurant, etc.

Somerville's Zoning Ordinance divides land use into Land Use Categories which contain specific land uses within.

There are 13 distinct Land Use Categories

Arts & Creative Enterprise

Auto-Oriented

Cannabis Establishments

Civic & Institutional

Commercial Services

Food and Beverage Services

Industrial

Lodging

Office

Residential

Retail Sales

Urban Agriculture

Accessory Use



Somerville Zoning and the Arts

With the 2019 zoning change came benefits for the artistic and creative community of Somerville:

- Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE) became a Use Category
- ACE allowed “by-right” in many zones
- Fabrication Zone was created
- 5% ACE Set-Asides in 6 zones



Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE)

Artisinal
Production

Arts Exhibition

Arts Sales
or Services

Co-Working

Design Services

Shared Workspace or
Arts Education

Work/Live
Creative Studio



ACE allowed by-right

Somerville Zoning Ordinance Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	NR	UR	MR3	MR4	MR5	MR6	HR	FAB	CC	CI	CB	CIV
Arts & Creative Enterprise Categories												
Artisanal Production	SP	SP	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Exhibition	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Sales or Services	SP	SP	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Co-Working	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Design Services	SP	SP	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Shared Workspaces or Arts Education	SP	SP	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Work/Live Creative Studio	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	SP	N	N	N	N

P – Permitted
 N – Not Permitted
 SP – Special Permit



Fabrication Zone (FAB)

FAB zoning was created to acknowledge, support, and preserve existing arts uses and old industrial buildings across the city.

This zone allows all ACE uses by-right except Work/Live Creative Studio.



Photo Credit: Miller Street Studios



Photo Credit: Washington Street Art Center

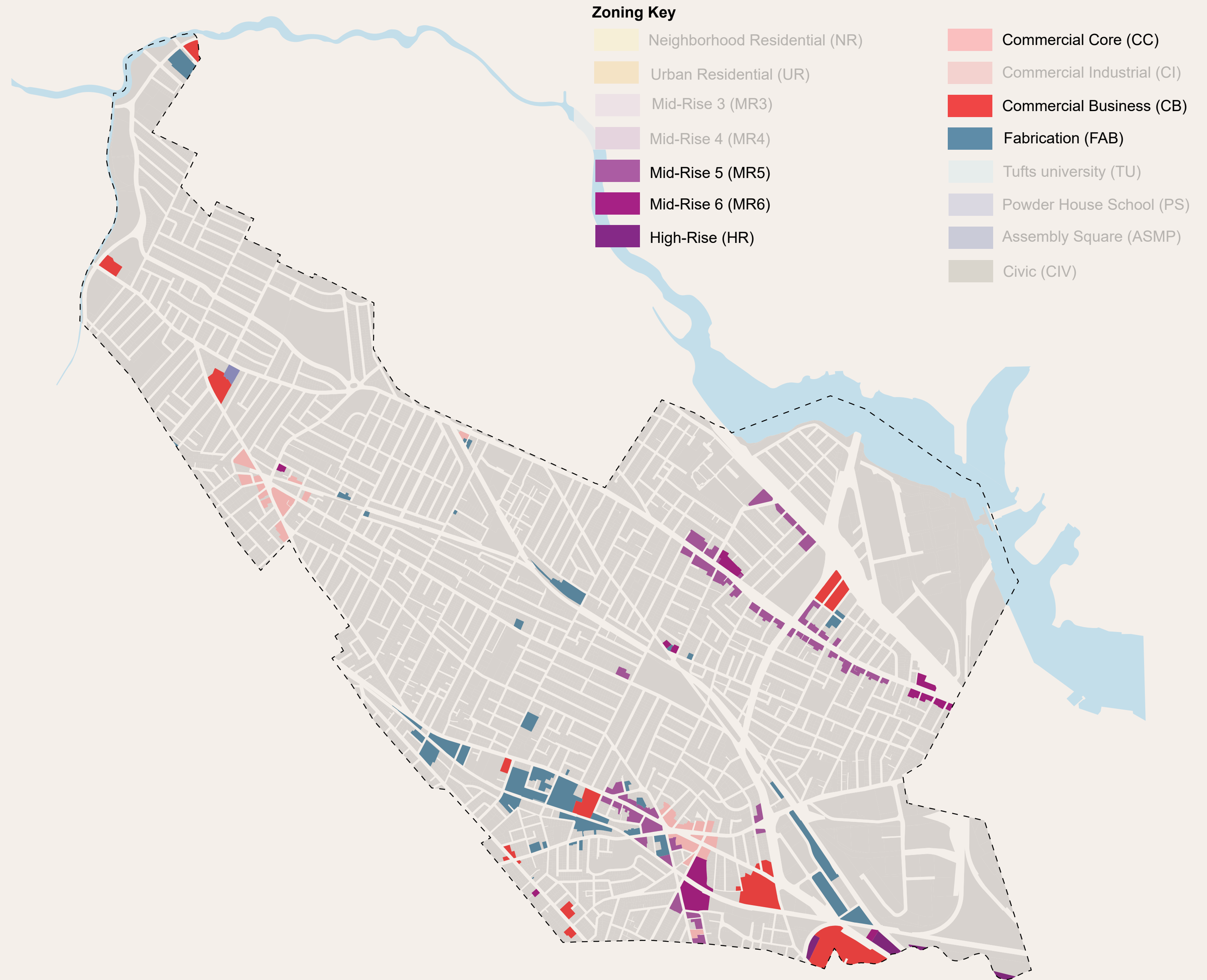


ACE Set-Aside

The ACE Set-Aside requires that 5% of the total commercial space be allocated to a use that fits into the Arts and Creative Enterprise Use Category.

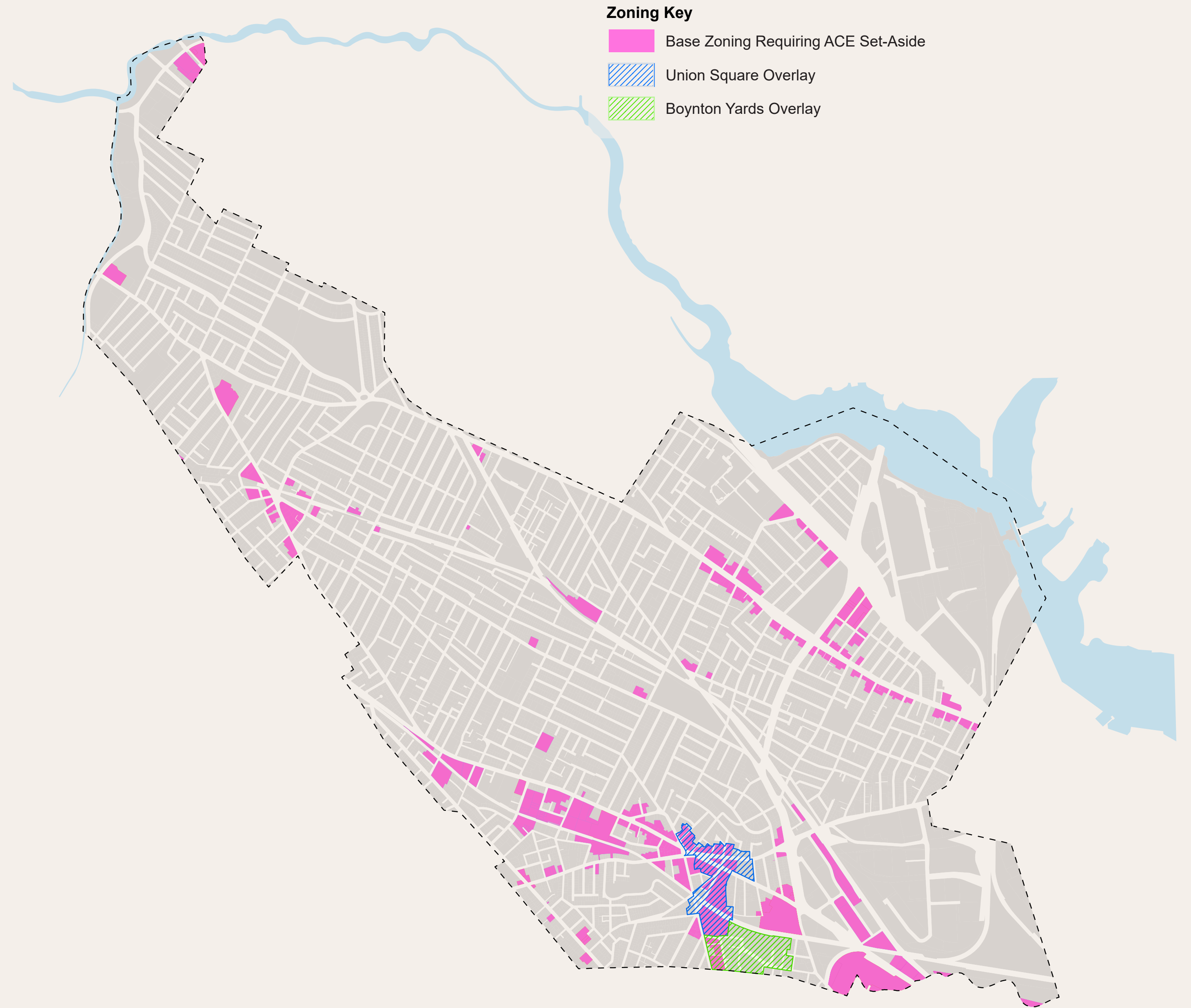
This requirement is housed within the following zones:

- MR5
- MR6
- HR
- CC
- CB
- FAB



ACE Set-Aside

Additional ACE Set-Aside requirements also occur in the Union Square and Boynton Yards Master Planned Development Overlay Districts.



Proposed Zoning Changes

Core Changes

Redefine arts and creative enterprise (ACE)

- Separate arts shared workspace and arts education
- Remove co-working from ACE

Re-imagine artist housing

- Remove the old work/live use category
- Create a residential category for artist housing



Redefine Arts and Creative Enterprise

See [Document 3](#) (Article 9–Use Provisions) on the [Somerville Voice Page](#) for the full changes to the existing zoning code.

EXISTING

Arts and Creative Enterprise Use Categories

d. Co-Working

f. Shared Workspaces or Arts Education

NEW

Arts and Creative Enterprise Use Categories

b. Arts Education

f. Arts Shared Workspaces

NEW LOCATION

Office Use Categories

a. Business Incubator

b. Co-Working



Re-Imagine Artist Housing

See [Document 3](#) (Article 9–Use Provisions) on the [Somerville Page](#) for the full changes to the existing zoning code.

EXISTING

Arts and Creative Enterprise Use Categories

g. Work/Live Creative Studio

NEW

Residential Use Categories

- a. Household Living**
- ii. Artist Housing**



New Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE) Uses

Artisinal
Production

Arts Exhibition

Arts Sales
or Services

Arts Shared Workspace

Design Services

Arts Education



Proposed Use Table

- ACE uses permitted in most of the zones
- New Office Uses not permitted in FAB
- Artist housing allowed in districts that allow residential uses

Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	NR	UR	MR3	MR4	MR5	MR6	HR	FAB	CC	CI	CB	CIV
Arts & Creative Enterprise Categories												
Artisanal Production	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
<u>Arts Education</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>
Arts Exhibition	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Sales or Services	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Design Services	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
<u>Arts Shared Workspaces</u> or Arts Education	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Office Categories												
<u>Business Incubator</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Co-Working</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>
General Office	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	N
Research and Development or Laboratory	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	N
Residential Categories												
Household Living	P	P	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N
<u>Artist Housing</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>SP</u>	<u>SP</u>	<u>SP</u>	<u>SP</u>	<u>SP</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>
Group Living (except as follows)	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N
Community or Group Residence	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	N	N	N	N
Dormitory or Chapter House	N	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N
Homeless Shelter	N	N	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N
Nursing Home/Assisted Living Facility	N	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N
Rooming House	N	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N

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



How Does this Effect You?

- Clearer definition of ACE uses
- Less ACE competition with office-based and higher revenue business types
- Better defined Artist Housing



What is Next?

How to Comment

Provide feedback and read the full proposed zoning language changes online through the SomerVoice web page.



SCAN FOR
SOMERVOICE



<https://voice.somervillema.gov/zoning-somerville-artists>





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Zoning for Somerville Artists




Throughout 2021 the [Somerville Arts Council \(SAC\)](#) and the [Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\)](#) worked in partnership to create the [Somerville Art Space Risk Assessment](#). This report analyzes the impact of development pressure on arts organizations and spaces across the city and makes recommendations for how to protect art spaces and support the creative economy.


In January 2022 SAC and MAPC hosted a [public forum](#) and subsequently released the final report that provides analysis and recommendations to address policies concerning arts spaces, zoning, and planning.


The first round of draft zoning changes based on the recommendations outlined in the Somerville Art Space Risk Assessment are ready to be implemented. As a community let's continue to roll out these policies and initiatives.

Learn more: [Somerville Arts Space Risk Assessment](#)

Documents

 [Article 2 - Glossary \(110 KB\)](#)
(pdf)

 [Article 9 - Permitted Use Table \(153 KB\)](#) (pdf)

 [Article 9 - Use Provisions \(170 KB\)](#) (pdf)

Who's Listening



We want your feedback!

Zoning Listening Session for Somerville Artists (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, September 19 at 6:00 P.M.

To register: <https://tinyurl.com/4ys9kykh>

Join us to learn more about potential zoning changes resulting from the findings of the Somerville Arts Space Risk Assessment.

At the meeting, a presentation will outline the potential changes, then city staff want to hear thoughts and reactions from Somerville Artists in attendance. The three documents attached to this webpage display the potential zoning changes in detail, and there is a summary of each document below.

Can't make it to the meeting or prefer to submit written feedback?

[Complete the survey here.](#)



Summary of Potential Zoning Changes

Document 1: Article 2 - Glossary Changes

The proposed zoning amendment results in changes to the definitions section of the zoning ordinance (Article 2 - Glossary). Changes to the glossary section include the addition of a Live/Work Studio definition and revisions to the definitions for Creative Studio and Rooming Unit.

Document 2: Use Table Changes

This table shows where uses are allowed either by-right (P), Special Permit (SP), or not permitted (N) in certain zoning districts. This amendment permits Arts & Creative Enterprise (ACE) uses by-right in the MR, HR, and Commercial zoning districts (including Fabrication). Office uses will not be permitted in the Fabrication zoning district as proposed with this zoning amendment.

Document 3: Article 9 - Use Provisions

This document shows the changes to the zoning ordinances use provisions including ACE Use and Office Use. Main changes as a result of this zoning amendment are as follows:

1. Arts shared workspace and arts education are separated out and now independent uses categories within the ACE
2. Move Coworking out of ACE uses and into the Office Uses
3. Repeal Work/live creative studio ACE use category
4. Create Live/work creative studio - Dwelling unit with attached Creative Studio
5. Create Artist Housing land use



Timeline

- Artist feedback on SomerVoice
- Hearing process with Land Use Committee & Planning Board
- City Council Vote

Further recommended changes from the *Art Space Risk Assessment* coming in future





Thank you



Q & A