



Mayor Katjana Ballantyne,
City of Somerville

Keeping Our Neighbors

Anti-Displacement Summary Report

2025



Anti-Displacement Task Force

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Introduction

If a community's identity can be imagined to be made up of woven threads, then Somerville's residents, businesses, non-profits, and creatives are the threads that make up the cultural fabric of the city's identity. These groups help turn a physical space into a place where people want to form a community. Displacement is that fabric breaking down, one thread at a time. As community members continue to leave, whether by choice or not, threads weaken and fray until they break.

The forces fraying the threads bear the weight and pressures imposed by an economic structure that pressures us all to prioritize the individual over the community's welfare. In this analogy, as newer threads are introduced and older ones cannot be preserved, the fabric's identity will eventually transform in a way that the community may not have intended.

Some may find this new, modern fabric appealing – the new buildings with modern amenities, and neighborhood and streetscape improvements can be interpreted as renewal and hope for a better future. But for others – particularly those who have been forced to leave or feel unable to stay – the changing fabric can represent the loss of a sense of belonging, community, support, and stability. The feeling for those who cannot afford to stay can be bittersweet as they watch their community modernize at what appears to be the expense of the people who made the community a desirable place to be.

The Anti-Displacement Task Force (ADTF) developed 50 programming and policy recommendations that aim to equitably reduce the displacement rate of people who live in, have businesses in, or create in the City of Somerville.



The Task Force was divided into three committees that would focus on a specific displacement topic area:

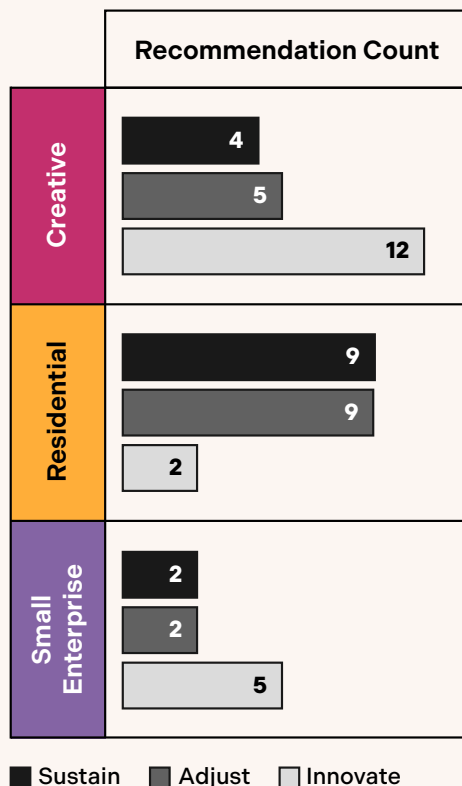


The task force had an emphasis on collaboration with City of Somerville staff, city council members, community members, practitioners, artists, and non-profits to

- identify those most susceptible to the impacts of displacement
- review current and potential strategies for anti-displacement, and
- develop a set of policy and programming recommendations that mitigate displacement from a holistic perspective but with an equitable focus on the community level.

The ADTF worked over the course of 18 months to develop their recommendations.

The ADTF met to explore potential root causes of displacement, what work the City has done to address it, establish priorities, and develop recommendations. All committees started with research into existing conditions and root causes of displacement.



Each committee developed recommendations based on the priorities they agreed on. Generally, the recommendations fell into three categories of work

1. **Initiatives that the City was already doing that should be preserved (Sustain),**
2. **Initiatives that the City could build off for broader impact (Adjust), and**
3. **New actions the City could take on (Innovate).**

Figure 1: Recommendations for each committee, broken into categories proposing sustained existing efforts, adjustment to existing efforts, or the proposal of new efforts.

Credit: City of Somerville



Creative Displacement Committee (CDC)

The CDC concluded that many support networks available to vulnerable residential, small business, and non-profit community members were unavailable for creatives. The CDC determined that the value of the cultural assets that creatives bring to Somerville and the economic development appeal of a creative identity warranted similar resources to mitigate the displacement of creatives in Somerville. Therefore, of the 21 recommendations the CDC proposes, 12 are considered new initiatives or policies that do not currently exist. This reflects the committee's findings that the creative community lacks the same investment as other communities.



Residential Displacement Committee (RDC)

The RDC established that their priorities were to maintain the existing efforts that the Office of Housing Stability and the Housing Division were making to stabilize tenants facing housing insecurity and to promote affordable housing. Of the 20 RDC-developed recommendations, 18 are within the Sustain or Adjust category. The recommendations reflect the committee's recognition of the strides made by the City in mitigating residential displacement while noting that the need is still great and requires continued funding and expansion.

DRAFTING OF A HOME RULE PETITION FOR RENT STABILIZATION

Home Rule Petitions (HRP) are used when a city doesn't have the legal authority to do something and seeks permission from the State to do so. The RDC started its work by writing a Home Rule Petition for a Rent Stabilization ordinance. The RDC met regularly over the course of four months to:

1. Review Rent Stabilization legislation and efforts nationwide to learn the best considerations and practices around drafting successful legislation.
2. Public Engagement to understand community priorities.
 - Three hybrid meetings were offered to the public to provide their input on the City's priorities in drafting the request to the Commonwealth for permission to enact a Rent Stabilization ordinance.
 - Alternative engagement options were provided, including language-inclusive voicemail options, in-person engagement events, and e-mail comment submissions.
3. Take public feedback and national best practices to draft the final ordinance proposal.



In the end, the subcommittee opted for a rent stabilization HRP with the following components:

- A. Annual rent increases would be limited to the annual increase in the consumer price index plus 2% up to a maximum of 5%;
- B. "Exception rents" would be allowed in some cases to enable landlords to recoup costs of extraordinary expenses such as major repairs and property improvements;
- C. Rent stabilization limits would stay in place when a tenant leaves a unit to preserve the affordability of housing and the diversity of Somerville renters into the future;
- D. Owner-occupants of one, two, and three-unit buildings; new construction; and affordable housing developments are exempt from rent stabilization;
- E. A "twelve-month roll-back period" to avoid rent "inflation" - if and when any rent control law is passed locally after receiving state approval, rents would be set at the amounts twelve months before the passage of the local Ordinance; and
- F. Just Cause Eviction Protections - just cause would be required for eviction from a rent-stabilized unit. Just cause includes, among other things, tenant causes such as non-payment of rent and most lease violations, criminal activity or illegal drug activity, the owner's desire to use a unit for themselves or a designated close family member, and/or a business reason such as wanting to convert the building to commercial use or for condominiums.

The RDC submitted the complete draft of the Rent Stabilization HRP to the council in November of 2023 where the Council approved it to be sent to the statehouse. This HRP, now SD2661, was filed by Senator Patricia Jehlen in January 2025 and is currently waiting to be heard.

If the State approves the City's HRP, the City of Somerville can start working with the community to draft the actual ordinance before it goes to the City Council for final legislative approval.





Small Enterprise Displacement Committee (SEDC)

The SEDC reached a consensus in prioritizing stabilizing businesses facing threats of imminent closure, especially those whose owners were socially disadvantaged individuals. Therefore, the committee prioritized short-term solutions that were immediately actionable. Several of the committee's recommendations, such as the development of a small business tenant's rights toolkit, were tasked to be implemented during the development of the recommendations, leading to some recommendations having been completed or being near completion at the time of the publication of this report.

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Because the SEDC focused on implementation in parallel to recommendation drafting, it had fewer recommendations overall; instead, focusing on selected short-term, medium-term, and long-term recommendations that would most impact the small businesses' pressing needs. The SEDC had nine recommendations, two each in the Sustain and Adjust Category and five in the Innovate category.



Clockwise from top left: Tulum Mexican Cuisine, Marlon's Barbershop, Rei Da Picanha, Hair Brasil, Deano's Pasta, Fadil African Hair Braiding

Methodology

Recruitment

Committee members were selected using a broad engagement approach, including advertising during community meetings at each ward, social media posts, and physical flyers posted prominently around high foot traffic areas. Engagement was also supplemented with a targeted approach where the Department of Racial and Social Justice and the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs assisted in outreach to community members who typically do not engage with the civic process with the intent of having representation from people closest to structures of oppression and with language access included in recruitment and ongoing task force participation.

Potential applicants were asked to send a resume explaining why they wanted to be a part of the committee as a member or co-chair, along with brief answers to questions to determine the person's area of interest, experience, and priorities. Resumes were accepted but not required because the City acknowledged that requesting a resume would introduce barriers to people applying. An alternative to submitting a resume was offered where individuals could express their interest by e-mail, mail, or by calling 311 to obtain assistance in applying either by telephone or in-person in the language of their choice and expressing in the format they were comfortable with why they wished to participate. City residency was encouraged but not required because the City recognized that those with lived experience in displacement would likely be non-residents. Applicants were instead asked to demonstrate their connection to Somerville and the experience of displacement.

Structure

Each committee was led by two co-chairs, one city staff member working on displacement policies in the committee's subject matter, and one community member with direct experience or subject matter expertise. The two co-chairs would set the agenda and facilitate discussions during the project. City staff were assigned to carry out the technical aspects of drafting the task force's recommendations.

City residency was encouraged but not required because the City recognized that those with lived experience in displacement would likely be non-residents.



Task Force Wide Public Meetings

While the committees determined their meeting logistics for the work of the task force, four task-force-wide meetings were pre-determined to provide an update to the public on progress and provide an opportunity for all committees to hear about external efforts that were happening in anti-displacement work. In between each public meeting, committees met in non-public work sessions to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive discussions involving individual experiences surrounding displacement and to encourage community members to allow themselves to be vulnerable in their discussions.

MEETING ONE:

ADTF Kick-Off and Logistics

A kick-off meeting was held where committees were introduced to the project charter, which set agreements on how the task force would structure itself and how consensus would be met. Members voted to adopt the charter at this kick-off meeting. The task force would establish its meeting schedules and structure with a shared expected deliverable of recommendations to reduce the displacement rate, emphasizing locally actionable programs and policies requiring minimal external authority to implement.

MEETING TWO:

Root Cause Analysis

The second ADTF-wide meeting was held on September 21st, 2023. Each committee provided an update on developing their priorities and recommendation drafting to see if they had progressed that far. Additionally, each committee worked on performing a root cause exercise using a “Five Whys” approach to understand the attempt to get to the root issues of displacement. The exercise asked committee members to identify the main problem they sought to solve and then list why it persisted. The resulting answer would then undergo an additional four layers of “why” to attempt to understand the root causes. The SEDC and CDC provided their results at the second meeting, while the RDC had not yet done that due to their continuing work on the home rule petition for Rent Stabilization. Committee readouts included business owners not having control or access over the space they lease as contributing to vulnerability to displacement pressures and the creatives not having the same access to resources available to residents and small businesses.



MEETING THREE:

Uplifting Youth Experiences

The third ADF-wide meeting provided all members with a special presentation on anti-displacement studies being conducted in parallel with the task force's work. Dubbed "Uplifting Youth Experiences", the night featured work by Somerville's youth and academia, including Somerville High School students and students from the Harvard Kennedy School.

The Somerville High School students described how they worked with students from the Harvard Kennedy School using a Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) model, which aims to explore ways to take the lived experience and explain it using traditional and non-traditional research methods.

In addition to traditional research methods like quantitative data assessment to connect data to factors that contribute to the displacement rate, the students also collected direct testimony from their student body using a survey to get qualitative data on how students understand their connection to displacement.

A survey showed that 75% of students knew someone who had to move from Somerville because they could no longer afford to live there. Additionally, the survey showed that nearly 75% of students were worried about the rising cost of living and its impact on their families and neighbors. One student participant expressed this sentiment by mentioning how they felt the improvements to Somerville High School were wonderful. Still, they didn't think their children would ever be able to enjoy it.

MEETING FOUR:

Presentation of Findings and Recommendations

The last task force-wide meeting was used to present the findings and recommendations of the task force. It was held on January 30th, 2025, via an online webinar. Each committee walked through the recommendations. At the time of this writing, a second event is planned in the Spring to recognize the community's contribution to the report and to screen the Displacement Stories short film, produced under ADF committee members' guidance.

Additional Projects

Displacement Stories Short Film

Following conversations within the CDC and in other groups like the Racial and Social Justice Department's Youth League, feedback was given that displacement can often be seen as technical and analytic, diminishing personal trauma to statistics. The ADTF intended to approach displacement from a trauma-informed practice, and a need was identified to contextualize the recommendations to center the human experience of community and grief. Members proposed injecting quantitative data with first-hand accounting of displacement's impact on the communities each committee represents. Staff created a project proposal for a short film documenting personal experiences from committee focus area groups that would humanize the topic of displacement and describe the urgency of the need for the issue to be prioritized.

The Department of Racial and Social Justice took on the role of funding and managing the project. The short film will be screened in the Spring of 2025. Community members will also be invited to a panel discussion with committee members to discuss their experience of the ADTF.

Watch Now:



Recommendation Matrix

The ADTF's committees made 50 recommendations to reduce the displacement rate in their respective focus areas. The recommendations have corresponding research and case studies that make communicating difficult. To make this research approachable and continue conversations within the community and City on this topic, a matrix was drafted to provide a visual way to summarize the recommendations and how the City might aim to take on the recommendations. The Recommendation Matrix and the Displacement Stories short film are expected to be released during the community event in the Spring of 2025.

[SEE THE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Historical Context

To draw connections from Somerville's history to today's conditions, research was performed on the social and industrial growth patterns since Somerville was founded. A historical research narrative was created that described the relationship between population growth patterns and the evolution of industries in the region. The report also goes over factors of displacement that applied to Somerville, such as redlining, rising housing costs, and limited stocks. Finally, the report investigates the socio-political history of racism both locally and in the region, which together also informed the shaping of our community structures today.



Historical Context of Somerville

1600s – 1700s
AGRICULTURE

Somerville is largely an agricultural extension of Charlestown.

1800s
HEAVY INDUSTRY

Somerville expands in heavy industries like production factories, mills, and food processing.

EARLY 1900s

DEPRESSION, WWII,
GREAT MIGRATION

Somerville opens the country's third-largest meat-packing hub, and Ford opens an assembly plant. Heavy industries are the largest land use in Somerville.

A significant emigration of the Southern Black population to the north, known as the Great Migration, created competition for housing and jobs. The increase of Black populations in the North shifted the racial boundaries of segregated United States of America and stoked white resentment.

1927

Article 34

The National Association of Real Estate Boards' Article 34 explicitly encourages racial segregation by prohibiting Realtors from introducing people of certain races or nationalities into neighborhoods, claiming it would harm property values.

1933

Homeowners Loan Act & Redlining

The federal government created the Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration, which worked with real estate leaders to produce redlining maps that institutionalized racial discrimination in housing.

LATE 1900s

DEINDUSTRIALIZATION
AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The US begins to deindustrialize as industries move production overseas. Manufacturing as an industry peaks in the early 1950s nationwide. Somerville's economic growth begins rapid decline. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a landmark U.S. law that outlawed segregation and discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in employment, education, and public accommodations.

1965

Racial Imbalance Act

The Racial Imbalance Act, passed by the Massachusetts state legislature in 1965, made segregated schools illegal.

1974

School Busing Protests

A U.S. District Court judge ruled that Boston's schools were unconstitutionally segregated, prompting a controversial busing program to integrate students from racially divided neighborhoods. The decision sparked intense resistance, including violent protests and riots—some supported by Somerville residents—that required intervention from police and the National Guard.

1984

Red Line Extension + Davis Square 

The arrival of the Red Line in 1984 connected Somerville to Cambridge and Boston, establishing it as an ideal commuter city. Davis Square became especially attractive as a rail-commutable neighborhood for those working in Cambridge and Boston. Thus, the community quickly became a highly desirable place to live.



KEY CONCEPT Redlining

Redlining was a racially discriminatory practice in which banks and federal agencies denied loans and investment in neighborhoods deemed "high-risk" based largely on the racial makeup of their residents. This systematic disinvestment, concentrated in Black and immigrant communities, entrenched segregation and created long-term barriers to wealth and housing access.



KEY CONCEPT Urban Renewal

A government-led process of redevelopment, often intended to modernize or improve so-called "blighted" areas, urban renewal disproportionately displaces long-established residents—particularly low-income and minority communities. This displacement can take the form of forced relocation, property seizure, and the dismantling of neighborhoods, frequently in the name of slum clearance, infrastructure expansion, or economic revitalization. In Somerville, the razing of the Brickbottom neighborhood to make way for highway construction stands as a stark example of how urban renewal can dismantle communities under the guise of progress.

1990

Somerville High School Incident

Tensions between Haitian and white students at Somerville High School erupted into violence. It exposed long-standing problems in the community. By August 1990, there was an apparent increase in violence against Latinos, albeit many of these occurrences went unreported. In one such instance, Salvadoran immigrant Edward Rivera was the victim of vandalism, car theft, and assault.

1991

Hispanic Child Assault Incident

In the Fall of 1991, a man from Somerville was found guilty of assaulting two Hispanic children. The judge said, emphasizing that these attacks were a sign of escalating racial tensions. City officials began talking about how to address and combat the alarming trend of racial violence.

1992

"Count on Me"

In response to rising tensions, Somerville launched the "Count on Me" campaign to support immigrants, promote inclusion, and encourage residents to pledge dignity, nonviolence, and opposition to discrimination. Just two weeks later, a brutal racist attack—where a white serviceman on leave mutilated a Black man—sparked public outrage and underscored the urgent need to confront deep-seated racial violence.

1993

Human Rights Ordinance & Commission

A Human Rights Ordinance was enacted on January 28, 1993, establishing a formal commitment to promoting equality and protecting residents from discrimination. The ordinance led to the creation of the Somerville Human Rights Commission, tasked with addressing complaints, raising awareness, and fostering a more inclusive and respectful community for all.

EARLY 2000s

RAPID GROWTH + ASSEMBLY SQUARE

With the shift from manufacturing to life sciences and the expansion of MBTA service, Somerville has become an increasingly attractive place to live. Its proximity to Cambridge and Boston's life science hubs, relatively affordable housing, vibrant small businesses, and strong creative community all contribute to its appeal. In response to rapid growth, the City launched Assembly Square—one of its most ambitious projects—envisioned as a 24-hour mixed-use district with residential, retail, office, and recreational space.

2014

Orange Line Extension



Somerville's identity as a bedroom community was further strengthened in 2014, when the Orange Line Station opened in Assembly Square.

2020

COVID 19

The pandemic exacerbated both Social and Economic Impacts of displacement and gentrification by amplifying all the cumulative vulnerabilities that structural discrimination and racism created.

2022

Green Line Extension



The Green Line extension opened, connecting Somerville to Medford, Cambridge, and Boston.

TODAY



Somerville's assets have continued to draw in biotech companies, research labs, and startups.



KEY CONCEPT House Affordability & Rising Rents

As Somerville increased connection through rail transit, building speculatively for the life science and healthcare industries becomes highly lucrative. Land values continuously shoot up as a feedback loop begins between rent costs and the arrival of populations from surrounding communities, such as students and highly salaried employees. Rents are driven higher as demand weighs on the increasingly limited housing supply.



KEY CONCEPT Limited Housing and buildable land

The scarcity of developable land drives incentives to demolish existing portions of the city in favor of new development. The cost of new development begins to not only effect buildings, but the people who lived in them.

Next Steps

The input developed and synthesized by the Anti-Displacement Task Force will inform the decisions of the City of Somerville, which will be responsible for carrying out the recommendations. Information has been provided in the recommendation matrix that can assist in developing priorities. Potential funding sources are provided where they may be applicable. An implementation strategy will likely be needed to forecast the resources and conditions needed to complete the recommendations.

To learn more, visit www.somervillema.gov/adtf



Acknowledgments

This report would not have been possible without the leadership of **Mayor Katjana Ballantyne** and the collaboration of the following City departments

- **Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development**
- **Somerville Arts Council**
- **Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs**
- **Office of Racial and Social Justice**

We extend our deep gratitude to the **community committee members** who generously volunteered their time, insights, and lived experience to help shape recommendations for a more equitable future in Somerville. A full list of committee participants can be found in the supplemental committee reports.

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Residential Recommendations

Complexity



Impact



Home Rule Petition

City should build on efforts of the residential committee in drafting and submitting a rent stabilization home rule petition and continue to advocate for its passage, and/or the passage of statewide rent stabilization enabling legislation.



Local Fair Housing Enforcement

Monitor whether increased availability of services to assist with Fair Housing Enforcement in Somerville is sufficient to meet demand for enforcement. If necessary, consider amending the existing local Fair Housing ordinance at Chapter 7, Article 3, Sections 7-41 through 7-48 to expand the investigatory powers and duties of the Fair Housing Commission to include cases where there would be simultaneous jurisdiction with MCAD. If undertaken, the administration of these new powers would require significant work.



Increasing Depth of Affordability in Units Designated through Inclusionary Zoning

Research and evaluate options to increase the depth of affordability required for rental housing under the inclusionary zoning ordinance.



Strategic Property Acquisition

Ensure continued funding of the Early Acquisition Fund to acquire market rate units to maintain affordability in perpetuity through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund but not limited to.



Work with a realtor to access unit listings in real time to enable purchase of properties through funding provided by the AHTF and research a system to prenotify owners about how to sell their properties for longterm affordability.



Continue to refile TOPA Home Rule Petition or other 'right of first refusal' and advocate for it; and if TOPA is incorporated into the Affordable Homes Act research how to implement it.



Condo Ordinance Revision

Update the Condominium Conversion Ordinance including increasing required relocation payments to more accurately reflect the actual cost of relocating in Somerville.



Expansion of Municipal Voucher Program

Ensure the long-term viability and growth of the Municipal Voucher Program with use of general funds, free cash, or other available funding sources on an annual basis.



Long-Term Availability of a Significant Pool of Flexible Rental Assistance

New fair housing coordinator has been hired (promoted a HD staff member from within).



Residential Recommendations

Complexity



Impact



Local “ Access to Counsel“ in Evictions

Maintain Funding

Retain and maintain, at minimum, existing levels of funding for legal services to remain able to offer referrals at current capacity.



Maintain Support

Continue to support state level legislation and funding for Access to Counsel.



Update HSNA

Update information in Housing Stability Notification Act (HSNA) on legal protections offered by applications for rental assistance in eviction cases (Mass. General Laws c.239 § 15).



Court Liaison

Ensure Office of Housing Stability materials are at the housing court for outreach on our resources.



Ensure the program runs smoothly and barriers removed or reduced where possible.



Coordinate local data collection with court, legal services orgs and OHS to understand relationship of resources and outcomes.



Affordable Housing as a Priority for the Disposition of Public Properties

Create municipal checklist that formalizes process for disposition of public properties which places priority for affordable housing where zoning allows.



Notice of Sale for Existing Tenants

Draft a local Ordinance requiring owners to notify tenants of intended building sale when they list their home on MLS or other real estate sales platform if no statewide enabling legislation (“TOPA”) is passed by the legislature during the FY23-FY24 legislative session.



Support Community Owned Land or Housing

Site Finding Assistance

Work with Community Land Trust (CLT) on their highest identified need - acquiring physical office space for the organization.



Technical Assistance

Investigate opportunities for CLT to work with the city or private developers for technical assistance to more quickly identify land/properties that would be ideal for their involvement.



Increase Support

Advocate for continued funding of CLT. Increased staff will allow them to increase their portfolio.



Small Enterprise Recommendations

Complexity



Impact



Affordable Commercial Space Zoning Amendment

Encourage provision of affordable commercial space in new buildings by offering density bonuses via amending the City's zoning ordinance.



Site Finding Assistance

Continue operating and expand the Economic Development Division's SiteFinder program, which provides information on commercial space listings to businesses seeking to locate/relocate in Somerville.



Commercial Tenant Toolkit

Publish a multi-lingual Commercial Tenant Toolkit for small business owners/operators to increase knowledge about leasing commercial property.



Fadil African Hair Braiding

Affordable Commercial Realty Corporation

Increase the amount of commercial space rented at sub-market rents in Somerville to small businesses.



Commercial Tenant Bill of Rights

Publish and advertise a Commercial Tenants Bill of Rights to highlight the needs of commercial tenants, particularly small neighborhood businesses.



Commercial Tenants' Assistance Program

Refine the pilot ARPA technical assistance program to run permanently under city funding, with continual upgrading of technical assistance services.



Montecristo Taqueria

Amendment of Vacant Storefront Ordinance

Reduce the length of commercial vacancies by revising Somerville's current ordinance with stronger penalties to property owners with unused storefronts.



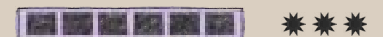
Emergency Swing Space Referral Program

Continue developing the Economic Development Division's informal short-term commercial space program to allow displaced businesses to continue earning revenue as they strive to permanently relocate.



ARPA Business Technical Assistance Pilot Program

Use federal ARPA funds to implement a pilot coaching program to improve business knowledge/skills for small neighborhood business owners/operators.



Creative Recommendations

Complexity



Impact



Integrate Arts and Creativity into the City's System

City Statement of Value for the Arts

The City adopts a Statement of Values for the Arts to:

- Signal to the community the role local artists have and will continue to have in the future growth of the City.
- Remind stakeholders of the importance of the arts and the creative economy.
- Ensure that arts and artists are top of mind for City officials when making decisions.



Arts and Culture Policy and Planning

The City continues to include and expand the role of arts and culture in all levels of decision making, community planning, and development processes.



Enhance Arts and Business Development

Somerville Arts Council Grant Expansion

The City expands Somerville Arts Council grant programs. It should allocate more funding and expand grant categories.



Somerville Arts and Culture Assistance Collective

The City works with the arts community to create a Somerville Arts and Culture Assistance Collective.



Artist Entrepreneurship Programming

The City expands entrepreneurship programs for artists developing their businesses.



Assess and Monitor Somerville's Arts Ecosystem

Creative Space Inventory

The City continues to develop an Arts and Cultural Space Inventory to track the arts and creative ecosystem of Somerville.



Artist Census

The City creates and maintains an artist census to track individual creatives living and working in the city.



Cultivate and Preserve Creative Space

Community Ownership of Cultural Space

The City supports community ownership of creative and cultural space.



More Affordable Artist Housing

The City incentivizes the creation of more affordable artist housing.



Tax Incentives

The City considers tax breaks for property owners for creating/maintaining affordable arts spaces.



Arts & Community Space Catalog

The City evaluates all indoor and outdoor spaces available for arts and community events. It shares a list that includes costs and contact information.



Creative Recommendations

Complexity



Impact



Support Arts and Culture through Zoning and City Ordinances

Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE) Refinements

The City enacts a protocol about how to manage ACE set-asides to ensure their success in supporting the creative community. The City adapts them when necessary.



Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE) Set-Aside Affordability

The City researches the feasibility of an affordability requirement in the 5% set-asides for Arts and Creative Enterprise.



Agent of Change Policy

The City adopts and supports an Agent of Change Policy.



Creative and Cultural Districts

The City creates and establishes Arts, Culture, and Creative Districts throughout the city. It does so using local ordinances and the Massachusetts Cultural Council Cultural District designations.



Identify and Establish Arts and Creative Funding Sources

District-Based Financing Mechanisms

The City funds the arts by exploring the feasibility of district-based financing mechanisms.



Short-term Rental Community Impact Fee

The City opts into the Short-term Rental Community Impact Fee, with at least 50% of the funds going to arts and cultural displacement.



Patrons for the Arts Program

The City creates a Patrons for the Arts crowdfunding platform to encourage the Somerville community to support local projects.



Property Tax Surcharge

The City explores the feasibility of a small property tax percentage supporting arts and culture.



Outside Grant Opportunities

The City invests more staff time and/or paid opportunities for residents to apply for grants to bring more funding for the arts into Somerville.



Percent for Art Program

The City considers adoption of a Percent-for-Art Program.

