
SECTION TWO:

**ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**

I. Introduction

History of Economic Development in Somerville

The Late Industrial Period (1870-1915) was a time of phenomenal growth for Somerville in all spheres including civic and commercial ventures. Infrastructure such as water lines and an electric substation were established and connected to surrounding towns. In 1870, brick production in Somerville was at its peak. Somerville's 12 brickyards produced over 24 million bricks annually. However, only a few short years later, by 1885, only two yards remained and most yards were forced out of business by rising land values and the cost of new equipment which competition demanded.



FIGURE 1: UNION SQUARE MURAL
Source: City of Somerville 2007

The meat packing and slaughtering industry grew rapidly in both Somerville and the state in the late 19th and early 20th century. Somerville was at the center of the slaughtering industry, housing 70% of the state industry total in 1909. The rendering of tallow and the production of soap was a natural offshoot of the meat packing business, and Norton Soap Works located near the meat packing plants.

One of the results of the City's phenomenal growth was a strong building industry. Almost half of all of Somerville's residential construction took place

between 1890 and 1900. Many architectural, woodworking, furniture, and other related companies were established during this period.

The period between 1900 and 1930 was one of growth for most commercial areas and squares. Although Union Square and Davis Square continued to be the largest commercial areas, smaller areas such as Ball Square, Magoun Square, Teele Square, and lower Broadway were developed with one or two story masonry commercial buildings. Retail development also spread. Banking facilities, which had formerly been located only in Union or Davis Square, began opening branches in some of the smaller squares. Another important commercial enterprise was automobile service. In 1914, the Ford Motor Company established an assembly plant in Cambridge and, by 1920 there were 24 separate automobile related headings in the City business directory.

During the Early Modern Period (1915-1930), Somerville's industries consolidated rather than expanded and the period's most important enterprises were meat packing, dairy processing, ice and food distribution, and car assembly. Somerville's location adjacent to Boston and its proximity to rail and road transportation made it an ideal location for distribution facilities.

Inner Belt District / Brickbottom

The area within the Inner Belt District was filled with rail yards and tracks with the growing railroad industry. From 1900 to 1930, the only development in the district was along the south side of Washington Street. During this time, there was a small mix of residential and industrial uses. Some

factories included production of milk, sawdust, vinegar, steel and iron. Separating the various factories were four streets, which were lined with tenement buildings and some free standing residential buildings. It is likely the residential buildings provided homes for the workers of the various factories.

From the 1930's to the 1950's, the small strip of development evolved into exclusively industrial use. The factories continued to produce similar products; however their physical footprint grew substantially. The four streets were removed and replaced with more factories. The only buildings that still exist today are two structures that belonged to the old HP Hood & Sons Ice Cream Factory. The HP Hood buildings were erected between 1936 and 1942 and are only accessible through the City of Boston.



It was not until the late 1960's that the Inner Belt District was advertised as a modern industrial center. This was the first "modern" vision for the area that once housed the wasteland of railroad lines. At the time, the proposal to build an interstate connection known as the "Inner Belt" through Somerville, Cambridge and Boston was in the process of being implemented. The state had gone as far as buying much of the right of way and clearing houses and other structures for the proposed highway. With the anticipation of the Inner Belt, the Inner Belt District was advertised in a real estate booklet as a "unique parcel [which] combines the advantages of a suburban type development in a downtown location."¹ The assets of the district such as accessibility, proximity to Boston and the metropolitan region, auto-designed roads, and the large surrounding work force, were marketed to potential investors.

FIGURE 2: INNER BELT
Source: City of Somerville 2007

The Inner Belt Expressway (I-695) went through many years of intense debate and controversy at a state and local level. First conceived in 1930 in a transportation report, the Inner Belt Expressway

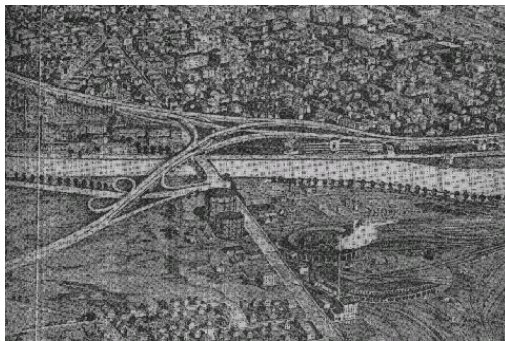


FIGURE 3: PROPOSED INNER BELT EXPRESSWAY
Source: Google Images 2007

would be an elevated inner ring highway connected to the Central Artery and cutting through Somerville, Cambridge, Brookline and Boston. The highway was later adopted as part of the 1948 Master Highway Plan. In the 1950's, most of the historical houses in Brickbottom were demolished in anticipation of the project. During the 1960's all planning for Somerville anticipated the Inner Belt Expressway plan, leading to the birth of the Inner Belt Industrial Center and the Redevelopment Plan for Washington Street. However, it was not until 1969 preliminary contracts and construction began for the Expressway. The path was cleared for the first one-mile stretch that came within 1/10 of a mile of Somerville and a \$22 million dollar

¹ Inner Belt Existing Conditions study

contract was awarded to begin the construction. Large-scale public protests claiming that the highway was not necessary for the metropolitan area soon arose and the state reconsidered its grand plan. In 1970, a Highway Halt bill went through the state legislature ending the construction of the Inner Belt Expressway.

Although the Inner Belt Expressway never developed, the 'Inner Belt Industrial Center' did. However, without the highway it did not develop to its full potential. From the late 1960's through the 1970's, Inner Belt Road ended just past Third Avenue. The first buildings to be erected were the windowless one-story concrete block style structures. Each was set back 20' to 30' from the road, with landscaping in between. Warehouses, offices, distribution facilities and light manufacturing were primary uses. In 1969, the city signed a contract for Filenes's Basement to build a warehouse facility at 70 Inner Belt Road. The Holiday Inn was built in 1974 on the corner of Washington Street and the Inner Belt Road as part of a larger proposal, including office uses, which was never completed, but the hotel remains as a major part of the district. The retro 1970's architecture continued the 'large block' look. Unlike the other structures in the district, the hotel reached heights of 90 to 110 feet.

In the 1980's, the City of Somerville purchased excess railroad land from the Boston & Maine' Railroad Corporation and obtained state funds to extend Inner Belt Road. The extension opened up additional developable parcels. 121 Inner Belt Road was one of the many newer developments located towards the end of the extension. Abutting properties purchased railroad land during this time to create larger lots.

Along Washington Street, non-industrial uses continued with the construction of the Cobble Hill Apartments in 1982. The complex provided 310 units and was subsidized by the Federal government. It was the first and only residential use for the district. A small shopping center at Washington Street and New Washington Streets developed at the same time. The Somerville City Club was built in 1981 across from the Holiday Inn.

Cobble Hill Apartments

During the mid-1980's to the late 1990's, little significant development influenced the area. Like many U.S. cities, industrial and manufacturing companies left the area to be replaced by service and business uses. Although at times it was a struggle, large-scale vacancies were not an issue. However the vision of the 'Inner Belt Industrial Center' seemed to be vanishing.

The completion of 200 Inner Belt Road in 2001 was the first major development to enter the district in over a decade. The building reflects a new vision for the area that began in the late 1990's: telecommunications uses. With the booming start-up and dot-com economy, it seemed obvious to promote such a use in an area that needed economic stimulation. Once again, the district provided many advantages including accessibility, a prime surrounding work force, vacating facilities and some room to build. The Northeast had a strong growing telecom market with new facilities developing just outside the city along Route 128 and Route 495. 70 Inner Belt Road, once home to the Filenes's Basement warehouse, was sold to Cathartes Investments, which was able to negotiate with neighboring properties to lay down fiber optics to the building.

In 1998, a joint venture named CO Space moved into the building to lease space to other internet and telecommunications companies that wanted to hook their equipment up to the fiber optic networks in Boston. Soon after, other telecom companies came to the area. HomeRuns, a web company that delivers groceries, also moved to 70 Inner Belt Road. Cathartes Investment began efforts to propose two new buildings that would house more telecom uses. City officials welcomed the development and assisted with the zoning process. The hope was that 150-200 Inner Belt Road would provide an example to the surrounding buildings of the new vision for the Inner Belt District. The momentum of the telecom vision propelled growth and property values in the area until early 2001 when a downturn in the economy brought the telecom movement to a halt across the nation. Some of the companies that came to revitalize the area left, leaving vacant buildings. The newly built 200 Inner Belt Road was without tenants and with little interest from prospective tenants.

Brickbottom

Elevated railroad right-of-way separates the Brickbottom area located to the west of the Inner Belt District. The two areas resemble each other in terms of use. However, Brickbottom has older dense development in a grid pattern. Brickbottom houses one major residential development, called the Brickbottom Artist Lofts. The previous commercial lofts were converted to residential units in 1992.



FIGURE 4: COURTYARD AT BRICK BOTTOM LOFTS
Source: Google Images 2007

This building is an important landmark in Somerville, which is well known for its active artist community: out of the 53,298 respondents of the City's census for 2005, 1,759 of those, or approximately, 3.3%, were involved in the creative sector, with the highest numbers going to Architects, Musicians, and Designers.



FIGURE 5: ART AT BRICK BOTTOM
Source: Google Images 2007

Davis Square

The Cambridge City Council worked with the MBTA to consider the extension of the Red Line beyond Harvard Square as an alternative to the proposed highway. The original design for the Red Line extension to Alewife in Cambridge did not include a station in Davis Square. The route was to run from Harvard Square north through Cambridge to Arlington. Somerville residents, businesspeople, and public officials, realizing the economic benefits that a train and bus station would bring to their community, launched a campaign in 1973 requesting that



FIGURE 6: DAVIS SQUARE
Source: City of Somerville 2007

the extension be routed through Davis Square. Somerville was providing 5% of the MBTA's budget, and did not have a subway station within its borders.

Somerville residents felt that their transit service was unequal to their contribution. The City's well-coordinated effort was rewarded with the construction of the Davis Square T station. The City of Somerville used the creation of the new station as a catalyst for revitalizing Davis Square, promoting new commercial development and sponsoring other physical and infrastructure improvements. In 1977, while the Red Line Extension was in the planning stage, the City and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council put together the first Davis Square urban design and business study to provide a



FIGURE 7: DAVIS SQUARE HOME
Source: City of Somerville 2007

framework for the revitalization plans and the type and extent of development. Advocates wanted Davis Square to retain and build on its traditional urban character. The City commissioned consultants to study potential land uses (including office and retail uses), as well as traffic, parking, and other concerns.

With input from the Davis Square Task Force, a group composed of local business owners, residents, and officials, the studies culminated in the Davis Square Action Plan, adopted in 1982. The primary goal of the Plan was to use the new Red Line Station as a cornerstone for redevelopment, strengthening Davis Square as a viable shopping district while preserving the residential character of the neighborhood.²

Assembly Square

During the 17th century the marsh and wetland area of the Mystic River that Assembly Square lies on was a place for the transport of people and goods. This trading led to the expansion of the region's economy as well as its population. By the early 1800s there were ten shipyards, and development continued when two railroads were installed in the middle of the 19th century.

Construction of the McGrath Highway in 1925 marked the beginning of Somerville as an industrial city, which continued when the Ford Motor Company built a plant in Assembly Square in 1926.³ The Ford branch at Somerville, Massachusetts, had one of the unique contracts in the Ordnance Department's nationwide system. The plant was the only one in the U.S. to build universal carriers, and it did so during the entire World War II. The Somerville plant produced its first universal carrier in March 1943.⁴

Over the next thirty years, Assembly Square was one of the largest sources of employment in the region, but this changed soon after when in 1958 the Ford Assembly Plant closed due to a change in Ford's manufacturing strategies. As a result, hundreds of jobs were lost.

² Cynthia Nikitin, Project for Public Spaces, Inc.

³ Rachel Sliman, To shop and to work: the re-making of Assembly Square.

⁴ HAER, Ford's Richmond Assembly Plant

From the late 1950's through the early 1970's, Finast Supermarkets used the building that had earlier housed the Ford assembly plant on Middlesex Avenue. Finast also had additional operations in the area, most notably the office building at 5 Middlesex Avenue. In 1976, Finast moved all of its operations out of Somerville, leaving several vacant buildings and the loss to the City of more than \$1 million in annual tax revenues.

In the late 1970's, a development company called East Bay Corporation contacted the City and expressed interest in redevelopment of the former assembly plant and the office building. They were willing to invest \$20 million in redevelopment of these sites if the City would work to improve access to the area. At the time, I-93 had left the district isolated, with the only vehicular points of access being on Mystic Avenue and Middlesex Avenue. In 1979, the City sought and received a \$3.3 million HUD-funded Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) to fund access improvements to the site. In order to implement these improvements, the Somerville Redevelopment Authority and the City submitted the Assembly Square Urban Revitalization Plan to the state and federal governments to have the district named an urban renewal area.

The Plan was also written to make the area eligible for designation as a Commercial Area Revitalization District. Both of these designations made the district eligible for additional state and federal aid and allowed the Redevelopment Authority to exercise additional powers of eminent domain in the district, which was renamed "Assembly Square."

In the 1990's, IKEA furniture secured a permit to build a large sized store and restaurant along the waterfront in Assembly Square. However, community protest resulted in nearly a decade of litigation to encourage the store to be moved inland. In 2004 a zoning amendment was passed to create the Assembly Square Mixed Use District. This zoning laid the framework for the type of mixed-use development envisioned by the City to proceed. However, litigation caused delays in the process. However, litigation by the Mystic View Taskforce remained an impediment to development.

Union Square



FIGURE 8: BOW STREET UNION SQUARE

Source: City of Somerville 2007

This junction became a gateway for goods into Boston by way of bridges and ferries and paved the way for subsequent growth in industries such as blacksmithing, brick production, and meatpacking. In addition, construction of the railroad occurred and further

The history of Union Square is diverse and far-reaching, dating back to the Revolutionary period. The historic heart of the Square originally consisted of Miller's River surrounded by marsh. In 1813, the first major road was constructed over the marsh and named Somerville Avenue. The Square itself came into being when three main streets (Somerville Avenue, Bow Street, and Washington Street) were constructed and intersected.



FIGURE 9: VINTAGE POST CARD

Source: City of Somerville 2007

reinforced Union Square as a commercial center. The establishment of a horse-drawn streetcar system in the 1850s, the institution of an electric streetcar system in the early 1900s, and the incorporation of trolley lines marked the Square as a transit node in the greater Boston area. The concentrated development of brick row houses, apartments and hotels strengthened the residential base. The housing stock compounded by three-to-four-story commercial buildings rendered the Square much denser at the turn of the century than it is today.

The widespread use of automobiles in the 1950s and increased mobility for consumers triggered Union Square's decline as a strong commercial center. Presently, Union Square remains primarily a commercial square that shares features found in traditional neighborhood commercial centers in New England with most buildings now standing just one or two stories in height. A number of existing structures have been identified as architecturally and/or historically significant.

II. Five Year Consolidated Plan Goals (2003-2008)

As noted in the City's adopted Consolidated Plan, during the past five years, the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) has worked toward accomplishing the following goals:

- a) Expansion of economic opportunities for low and moderate income residents;
- b) Elimination of economic distress which, unchecked, results in both the reduction of employment opportunities and the creation of slums and blight;
- c) Physical improvements and infrastructure development in commercial districts;
- d) Improved access and mobility for disadvantaged populations; and,
- e) Provision of suitable living environments within Somerville's neighborhoods.

III. Accomplishments 2003-2008

In the context of these goals, the City has worked on numerous projects that are described as follows:

Union Square Main Streets

In December 2004, the Union Square Main Streets (USMS) organization was incorporated after a series of grassroots efforts to involve the community. Their Executive Director was hired in January 2005 to implement a series of very successful initiatives, described below:

- **Union Square Farmers Market:** co-led 3 annual series of weekly farmers market with the City and the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets. Attendance grew to over 1,300 people each week, bringing fresh fruits, vegetables, baked goods and meats to the area. The ArtsUnion, an initiative of the Somerville Arts Council, helped expand this market initiative to include 6 Crafts Markets. The total economic impact is estimated at over \$500,000.
- **Fluff Festivals:** organized 2 very successfully festivals



FIGURE 10: FARMER'S MARKET
Source: Google Images 2007

based around Marshmallow Fluff, which was invented in Somerville. The Fluff Festival has attracted thousands of visitors to the area.

- **Media Outreach:** secured local and regional coverage in print and electronic media including numerous articles in the Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Stuff at Night, Improper Bostonian, Somerville Journal, Somerville News, Somerville Classifieds, and Weekly Dig. Also, USMS presented its projects on five cable access programs.
- **Business Inventory:** conducted detailed business inventory and developed database of all businesses in the NRSA of Union Square. Tabulated information and presented as part of the Union Square Visioning Project in September and October. The Business Inventory catalogued all the parcels, buildings, and businesses in the Central Business District of Union Square as well as the businesses of the extended Union Square area.
- **Survey of Union Square Users:** developed and implemented Customer Intercept Survey in Union Square. Presented information as part of the Visioning Project and made data available on-line. The Customer Intercept Study surveyed passersby on who they were, how they shopped in the Square, and what they thought of the business district. Volunteers provided the fifteen question sheets in four different languages and collected 278 surveys in July, August and September 2005.
- **Zoning Use Survey:** participated in ArtsUnion Task Force and at community meetings to advise on zoning and permitting changes to create an overlay district that fosters cultural uses and overall economic development.
- **Foster New Businesses in Union Square:** began detailed research for the fostering of innovative business models such as a Kitchen Incubator, a shared commercial kitchen for new businesses. Attended Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and Licensing Board meetings to assist business development. Advised businesses one-on-one as needed.
- **Streetscape Improvements:** advised and supported ArtsUnion on the selection, placement and installation of artist created street furniture. Consulted with City planners on the selection of streetscape elements such as bus shelters and reconstruction of Somerville Avenue.
- **Mural Project:** initiated mural creation for fence behind 90 Union Square. Secured five sponsors and recruiting skilled artists.
- **Improve Vehicular and Pedestrian Movement and Safety:** advocated for effective snow removal and street maintenance to Head of Department of Public Works and Aldermen. Advised City Planners on repainting of lanes, turning and crosswalks.



FIGURE 11: RIO DANCERS IN WHITE

Source: City of Somerville 2007

East Somerville Main Streets

In September 2006, the East Somerville Main Streets (ESMS) organization was incorporated with the State of Massachusetts. The formation of ESMS was a yearlong effort that began with an initial informational community meeting on September 19, 2005. The event was followed by a series of meetings in 2006 involving the City and stakeholders to discuss the formation of ESMS. Events such as a Summer Clean Up were held to increase visibility in the neighborhood. A Board of

Directors was established in that same year and the Board hired an executive director in December 2006.

In January 2007, ESMS became a fully functioning organization with a full-time director and Board. In April 2007, the ESMS held a public open house to introduce itself to the community. For the most part, the group has been busy building relationships with area businesses, residents, and elected officials. The group has also accomplished the following:

- Advocated on behalf of East Somerville with regards to the citing of a sludge plant in Charlestown (with potential to increase traffic and air pollutants in East Somerville);
- Advocated on the behalf of East Somerville to the EPA to expand the Environmental Impact Review of the Assembly Square Development – to increase pedestrian access both to and from the area;
- Opened contact with all managers at Assembly Square Market Place, to inform them about the launch of East Somerville Mains Streets and include them as community members;
- Collaborated with City Historic Preservation Director to coordinate Patriot’s Day celebration in East Somerville - where Paul Revere made his historic ride;
- Actively participating in the Somerville Community Corporation’s “East Somerville Initiative” designed to develop an action plan to improve the neighborhood;
- Maintained a strong board with 80-100% attendance at meetings;
- Held a logo competition and received 20+ entries from local artists and worked with the winning artist to refine logo to reflect the East Somerville neighborhood;
- Successfully held Design, Economic Support & Development, and Promotions committee meetings, setting short term goals with each group; and,
- Participating in the Lower Broadway Streetscape Improvement project.



FIGURE 12: EAST SOMERVILLE
Source: City of Somerville 2007

Small Business Loans program

Established in April 2007 this program targets microenterprises in partnership with ACCION USA, a leading microlender in New England. In order to promote the program, the City organized a roundtable with 13 representatives of local banks, a networking event in partnership with East Somerville Main Street where 5 business owners were exposed to the program, and a block walking in East Somerville and Union Square. Also, the City has advertised the program in the press, a Spanish-speaking radio station and on the Somerville Community Access television in 3 languages. As of November 2007, 10 small business owners have applied to the program, and 3 have received loans from ACCION, with a total amount of loans disbursed of \$16,378.09.

Somerville4Business

Launched in August 2006, Somerville4Business is a Capital Assistance Website for businesses looking for funding that provides information of local, regional and national funding sources. As of October 2007, 1,076 visitors browsed the site, over 50% inquiring about start up or general business

support funding, and 17% looking for minority/women owned business assistance.

Welcome Kit

In April 2007, a new Welcome Kit for Businesses was created to summarize basic information for businesses wishing to open or having recently opened their doors in Somerville. Over 250 packages have been distributed through the City's website and other local community organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Union Square Main Streets, the Davis Square Residents and Business Initiative and the East Somerville Main Streets. In September 2007, the Welcome Kit was translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole to better serve minority business owners that hold an important place in the City's business community.

Technical Assistance for Businesses

Presently, the City is working with ACCION USA to offer financial literacy workshops for businesses on several key topics, such as money management, understanding credit, fundamentals of running a successful business and business taxes and insurance. As of November 2007, 2 workshops were delivered and 6 more are scheduled for the first trimester of 2008.

Storefront Improvement Program

The Storefront Improvement Program was established in 1980 to keep the City's local business districts vital and to set a design standard for retail shops in Somerville. From 2003 to date, 13 facades have been improved using CDBG funds.

Originally designed to target low/moderate income areas in the City, the eligibility criteria for the Storefront Improvement Program was extended to include micro-enterprises in 2007. This has provided access to the program to low/moderate income businesses owners city-wide. The result was a 50% increase in the number of applications the City received within the first six months of 2007.

Also in 2007, an additional expansion of the Storefront Improvement Program - the Awning / Lighting / Signage Program - was launched to allow business owners to apply for small grants towards the improvement of the physical appearance of their stores, without having to re-do the entire façade.

Following are examples of storefronts that have received City funding towards physical façade improvement since 2003:



FIGURE 13: 99 BEACON ST BEFORE

Source: City of Somerville 2007



FIGURE 14: 99 BEACON ST AFTER

Source: City of Somerville 2007



FIGURE 15: 171 BROADWAY BEFORE

Source: City of Somerville 2007



FIGURE 16: 171 BROADWAY AFTER

Source: City of Somerville 2007



FIGURE 17: 282 BROADWAY BEFORE

Source: City of Somerville 2007



FIGURE 18: 282 BROADWAY AFTER

Source: City of Somerville 2007

Assembly Square



**FIGURE 19: ASSEMBLY SQUARE CITY
SCAPE**

Source: City of Somerville 2007

Redevelopment of Assembly Square has made significant strides forward in the past year. In the fall of 2006, Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT), Swedish furniture retailer IKEA, and the Mystic View Task Force finalized a settlement agreement with the Mystic View Taskforce, allowing the development to proceed with a unified shared vision. As a result, by the end of the year the Planning Board had reviewed and conditionally approved the Preliminary Master Plan for the district, totaling 66.5 acres. The Master Plan consists of 2,100 residential units, 1.75 million square feet of office and 1,150,800 square feet of retail space (including the existing

Marketplace and a proposed IKEA store), and a 200-room hotel. In addition, FRI Trust and IKEA jointly committed to contribute \$15 million towards the design and construction of a future Orange Line T-stop at Assembly Square. The IKEA is anticipated to break ground in the fall of 2008 and open in late 2009. Additional phases are anticipated to follow shortly after, the first of which will be mixed-use residential along the Mystic River waterfront. The Assembly Square project is projected to reach full build out by 2019.

Union Square District Improvement Financing (DIF) Analysis

In order to identify resources to aid in revitalization, in 2006, the City secured consulting services to prepare an analysis of the potential revenues that could be generated by the adoption of a District Improvement Financing (DIF) boundary in Union Square. DIF is a state-operated program that allows authorized jurisdictions to use the growth in property tax increment within identified boundaries for the purposes of re-investment within those boundaries. A DIF would also allow for the bonding of the tax increment in order to expedite key capital improvements. The consultant's analysis made recommendation regarding possible investments in the area, their cost, and means to use DIF to support. In recent months, City staff has further refined the concepts. However, it is anticipated that additional analysis will be required prior to giving a formal recommendation to the City's policy makers.

Development Implementation Strategy for Union Square

In 2007, the City began working on a Development Implementation Study for Union Square. This study, prepared by an outside consultant, recommends specific action plan steps to jump start development in Union Square. The study analyses several public-private partnerships that could be used as models for the City's efforts in Union Square and recommends that the City initiate an RFQ/RFP process relative to the City-owned parcels in the area. This report further ties into the DIF analysis by making recommendations of needed infrastructure improvements to facilitate development.

Union Square Rezoning

In the 2003 *Union Square Master Plan*, zoning is identified as a key tool in the revitalization of Union Square and encouragement of economic development in the area. A zoning analysis found that while the existing zoning is generally supportive of the type of new development desired in the area, the parking requirements and the number of dwelling units permitted per parcel were found to be highly restrictive for Union Square.

In 2005, the City applied for and received an Adams Arts Grant for economic development that provided an opportunity to examine the Somerville Zoning Ordinance with the wider goal of creating an arts-friendly district in Union Square and foster economic development to make it easier for artists to work in the Square. A series of meetings with an advisory group composed of various stakeholders in Union Square occurred in the summer of 2005 and their feedback was incorporated in the initial recommendation of the draft zoning changes.

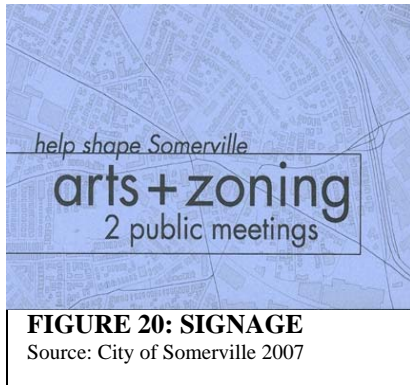


FIGURE 20: SIGNAGE
Source: City of Somerville 2007

A comprehensive working draft was submitted to the Board of Aldermen for public comment in October 2006 and a public community workshop that was scheduled to discuss the proposed zoning and gather feedback. This workshop was quickly followed by a community meeting, a joint Board of Aldermen / Planning Board public hearing, and several Land Use Committee meetings. In March 2007, the later voted to table the amendment in order for staff to revise the zoning and more effectively address the concerns expressed during the review process

Later in the spring of 2007, a community meeting to discuss a revised zoning amendment that incorporated changes recommended in previous public comments. That amendment was submitted to the Board of Aldermen and a joint Board of Aldermen / Planning Board public hearing was held in May 2007. In September, the Board of Aldermen decided to take no action so that additional issues may be resolved within the amendment. Staff is further refining the rezoning and anticipates holding a community meeting and introducing the rezoning to the Board of Aldermen during the winter of 2008. With each version, the draft zoning ordinance is further addressing community concerns while strengthening the economic development potential of the area.

ArtsUnion

ArtsUnion, a cultural economic development initiative for Union Square began in February 2005. This initiative - a collaboration between OSPCD, the Somerville Arts Council, and community partners - has provided cultural economic development for local businesses, residents, and artists. The effort has five components: art & cultural events, markets, cultural and historical tours, street furniture fabrication, and zoning analysis and reform. A three-year CDBG monetary



FIGURE 21: SOMERVILLE CRAFT FAIR
Source: City of Somerville 2007

commitment of \$130,000 secured a matching commitment of \$130,000 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). MCC matching funds for the fourth year have been secured.

Accomplishments have included:

- **Producers Series:** Working with other independent producers, ArtsUnion has co-produced thirty large scale art/cultural events. Ranging from film/music series to public art exhibits within the square, each event attracted 300 to 1,500 visitors. This work in addition to changing the perception of the square, attracted visitors who subsequently provided additional economic benefit to local business establishments.
- **Markets:** Within the first year, six craft markets were organized to take place in conjunction with a new farmers market. For the second summer, twelve weekly craft markets were organized. In the third year, a shift in focus led to the development of four larger, 25-30 vendor, thematic markets held in the afternoons to provide more economic development opportunity for vendors and local businesses.
- **Tours:** Working with the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission, three tours were developed that highlight Union Square's built environment. One tour was expanded to include the development of a self-guided brochure. In addition, a brochure and a series of tours highlighting the Square's ethnic markets were developed. During 2007, ten tours were



FIGURE 22: STREET ART UNION SQUARE

Source: City of Somerville 2007

conducted, attracting major press coverage, new out-of-town audiences, all contributing to support the existing ethnic businesses within the square. In

2005, an Arts Studio tour, with accompanying



FIGURE 23: STREET ART UNION SQUARE

Source: City of Somerville 2007

brochure, highlighted the 50+ studios within the area.

- **Street Furniture:** Ten benches, two trash receptacles, and two information kiosks were designed, fabricated, and installed within the square. This work creates both functional, utilitarian amenities for local residents and businesses, while also providing economic development opportunities for local artists/fabricators.
- **Zoning/Infrastructure:** Through numerous community meetings, the hiring of and recommendation by a zoning consultant, an Arts Overlay for Union Square has been developed. The Overlay will provide incentive for developers to expand arts and cultural related development within the square.
- **ArtSpace Improvement program:** Released in 2007, this program mirrors traditional storefront improvement programs but goes further to stimulate economic activity. This program provides financial support for physical improvements to space but also requires the applicant to enhance art and cultural activity within that space.

- Cultural Economic Development: Evaluation services by the University of Massachusetts Center for Policy Analysis documented that total economic impact generated by ArtsUnion activities were \$190,296 and \$352,470 for years 2005 and 2006, respectively.

Symposium on Strategic Growth

The event, entitled “Advancing Somerville: Symposium on Strategic Growth”, was hosted by Tufts University President Lawrence Bacow on March 29, 2005. More than 100 developers, business and government leaders and other invited guests heard presentations by Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone and then-Strategic Planning and Community Development Director, James Kostaras. This presentation was followed by a panel discussion that focused on growth opportunities in Somerville in the context of a dynamic economic region.

Simultaneously, the City launched the Somerville Business Development Initiative, which entailed a series of roundtable discussions, each one focused on the competitive advantages for several industries of locating in Somerville.

Brickbottom Design Competition

Along with Union Square, the Brickbottom District is recognized as a dynamic hub for local artists. However, the vital Brickbottom Artists Collaborative and the Joy Street Studios are located in an area of industrial buildings that are less than fully utilized. In January 2006, the City of Somerville held an international urban design ideas competition entitled “Edge as Center: Envisioning the Post-Industrial Landscape.”

This competition, funded by a local business owner, sought redevelopment strategies and design visions for the Brickbottom District and invited entrants to project the future of a pivotal post-industrial site. The competition was intended to activate redevelopment in the Brickbottom area, transforming it in intelligent ways that will benefit Somerville and its residents for generations. In May 2006, the City received over 50 entries and in June, four winners and eight honorable mentions were selected. A professionally produced publication has captured in vivid colors the many creative ideas that were generated.

Somerville Life Sciences Collaborative

In the summer of 2006, Somerville initiated a series of conversations around life sciences and launched the Somerville Life Science Collaborative (SLSC), in cooperation with the Bedford Stem Cell Research Foundation (BSCRF), a stem cell laboratory located in Davis Square. The purpose of the collaborative is to bring together experts from different sectors to talk about the future of the Life Science industry in Somerville. It is clear that the best way to promote and develop this industry is through partnerships with academia, scientists, investors and the private sector.

One key action that the City has undertaken was its participation in the BIO International Convention, an international convention that hosted over 20,000 attendees. The Somerville booth was created in collaboration with the BSCRF and Federal Realty Investment Trust, a local developer. The City’s participation generated 70 leads, 4 articles in newspapers and international visibility for the City. The BIO Convention was an extraordinary opportunity to promote Somerville to biotech

companies and showcase Somerville's affordable real estate, strategic location, close to major research and academic institutions, and municipal commitment and leadership.

IV. Needs Assessment

In analyzing the city's strengths and weaknesses, several needs exist in order to fully to capitalize upon the economic potential of the City of Somerville. These needs include:

Redevelopment of Under-Utilized Districts



FIGURE 24: EAST BROADWAY NOW
Source: City of Somerville 2007

Although in very close proximity to downtown Boston, Somerville is home to several commercial and industrial districts that are recognized as under-utilized. These



FIGURE 25: E BROADWAY STREET SCAPE DESIGN
Source: City of Somerville 2007

include the Inner Belt, Brickbottom, and Boynton Yards industrial districts and the Union Square commercial district. In addition, the Somerville Avenue corridor and Broadway corridor in East Somerville are not utilized to their full potential. Combined, these represent several hundred acres of land that could be used for more intensive business or residential purposes. Fortunately, the largest of these areas – Inner Belt, Brickbottom, Boynton Yards, and Union Square – will receive direct mass transit access through the extension of the Green Line MBTA railway during the next five years. This transit access represents an opportunity to catalyze development that can benefit the entire Somerville community through increased jobs and municipal revenues.

The City is actively developing visions and plans for these areas that analyze and are designed to capture their full potential. This will be followed by establishing regulations (zoning, etc.) that support the vision. However, to truly fulfill each area's potential, the City will need to work with partners to reduce existing barriers, such as infrastructure, parcel size, environmental conditions, etc., that are presently hampering development. The City will need to evaluate multiple funding mechanisms including state programs such as state tax credits and District Increment Financing (DIF) and federal programs such as HUD 108 loans and other grants for economic development.

Re-Use of Existing Structures

The City's largely built environment and historical structures has meant that re-use of buildings is more prevalent than new construction. However, several obstacles come with re-outfitting existing structures to meet the needs of businesses today. These include:

- *ADA Compliance:* incorporating the space requirements and design standards under Federal Regulations 28 CFR Part 36 into existing buildings can be a challenge for new businesses looking to alter portions of a building. For example, ADA compliance may necessitate re-grading portions of a site to comply with slope requirements. This may be just one component of many that could make a project financially difficult.
- *Parking Requirements:* parking requirements are often an impediment to re-using or expanding existing buildings and redeveloping the types of small parcels found in many of Somerville's commercial districts. A recent study by a Harvard Rappaport fellow has suggested several avenues that need to be explored in the near future including reducing requirements, encouraging shared parking, and establishing parking in lieu funds.
- *Environmental Remediation:* Somerville was previously home to a number of industries such as auto manufacturing, glass making, meatpacking, and brick production. While the majority of these industries have since left the City, many left extensive contamination. While a number of brownfields have been identified, additional contaminated properties have not yet been identified. The contaminants can be a major obstacle to re-use of buildings and/or demolishing an existing building to make way for new construction. The unpredictability in the level of remediation involved in a development can be cost prohibitive and halted development from moving forward, even after securing the necessary permits from the City.

Improved Transportation Access

Sliced by Interstate 93, Routes 16, 28 and 38 and by the rights of way for the Orange MBTA Line, and the Newburyport, Rockport, Haverhill, Lowell, and Fitchburg commuter rail lines, no other city in Massachusetts compares to Somerville's position as the most vital gateway for downtown Boston and Cambridge. However, there are two issues with transportation access to the City.

First, while Somerville supports substantial vehicular and rail traffic destined for downtown Boston and Cambridge, there are few lines that actually stop in the City. In fact, Somerville only houses the Davis Square Station along the Red Line. Even though East Somerville has access to the Orange Line through the Sullivan Square Station in Charlestown, the fact remains that most residents and businesses do not have ready access to transit. This prevents businesses from connecting to consumers and workers that live in the Boston metropolitan region. Further, most Somerville residents do not have transit supported access to jobs and services.

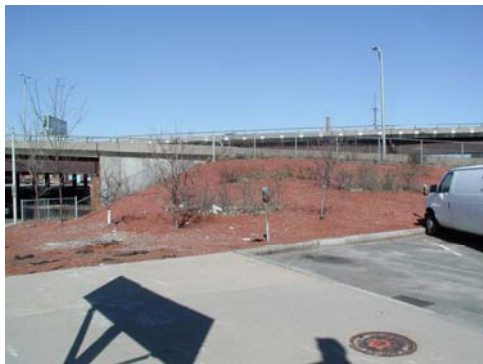


FIGURE 26: ELEVATED HWY
Source: City of Somerville 2007

Second, areas that can support intensive economic development, such as the Inner Belt and Brickbottom, are severely constrained by existing rail lines and elevated freeways. This has proven to be a severe impediment to securing private investment despite the areas' significant assets.

In upcoming years, to address the first issue, the City will need to continue to advocate strongly for implementation of the extension of Green Line and opening of commuter rail station(s) in Somerville. To address the second issue, advocacy will be needed to prompt the realignment of rail right-of-ways and the reduction of freeway and railway barriers.

Revitalization of Commercial Districts

The City of Somerville contains several local and regional serving commercial districts. However, storefront vacancies do exist in these areas and the business mix may not be fully conducive to supporting vibrant economic activity. The City will likely need to take actions to further support these areas in upcoming years.

During the summer of 2007, staff of OSPCD conducted a tally of storefronts in all commercial districts throughout the City (44.5% of the total number of businesses in Somerville were tallied). The results of the survey were compared with the business mix of typical commercial areas in the U.S. The results are as follows:

Business Mix	Tally	Percentage of Somerville's Business Mix	Compared to Typical U.S. Central Shopping District
Restaurants, Bars, Bakeries, Food Services	130	20.3%	21%
Drugstore, Beauty, Salon	65	10.2%	1%
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate	62	9.7%	5%
Automotive	59	9.2%	1%
General Merchandise and Grocery	51	8.0%	29%
Other Office	38	5.9%	2%
Personal Services	37	5.8%	6%
Home Furnishings and Services	31	4.8%	5%
Other Retail	26	4.1%	3%
Industry and Manufacturing	26	4.1%	0%
Medical and Dental	26	4.1%	0%
Clothing, Accessories, Shoes	23	3.6%	9%
School and Instruction	17	2.7%	0%
Liquor	13	2.0%	1%
Electronics, Appliances, Computers	10	1.6%	2%
Fraternal Organizations and Religious	10	1.6%	0%
Gifts, Specialty, Florist	5	0.8%	8%
Travel Agent	5	0.8%	0%
Building Materials and Hardware	2	0.3%	4%
Entertainment	2	0.3%	4%
Post Office	2	0.3%	0%
Total # of Businesses	640	44.5%	100%

Source: City of Somerville commercial land use inventory 2007

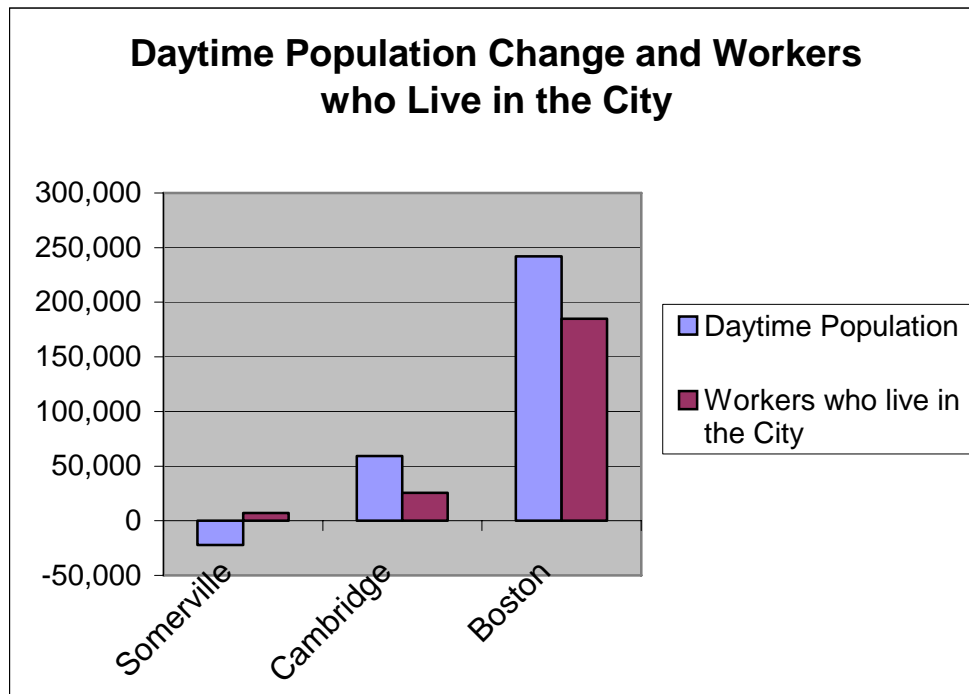
The black sections indicate markets gaps, i.e., businesses or services that Somerville could attract to improve the business mix of its commercial districts. The gray sections indicate saturated markets. Bold sections indicate differences in the mix of office space.

As can be seen, the most significant gaps exist in retail and specialty stores. This can be attributed, in part, to a lack of foot traffic in most commercial areas and the scarcity of daytime population in the City.

Increase Daytime Population⁵

Figures from the 2000 Census indicate that a disproportionate number of Somerville residents work outside of the City of Somerville. This leads to increased costs for residents as they must either pay for transit or use their private vehicles to get to work and results in a daytime drain of population, as people go to work in other cities in the region.

City	Daytime population change due to commuting	Daytime population % change due to commuting	Workers who live and work in this city	% of Workers who live and work in this city
Somerville	-22,057	-28.50%	7,092	15.80%
Cambridge	59,174	58.40%	25,554	46.50%
Boston	242,062	41.10%	184,954	66.40%



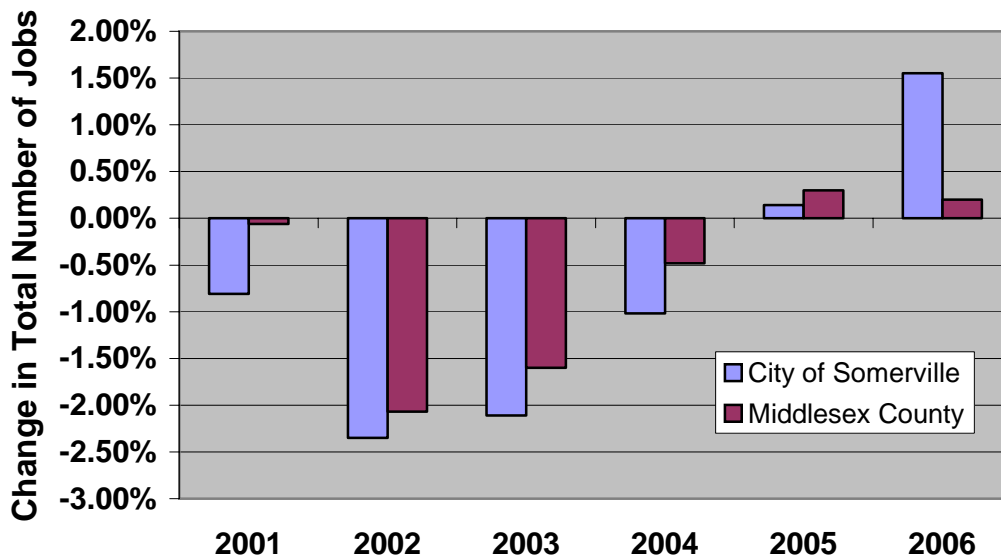
⁵ For 2004. Source: City-Data.com

As neighboring communities gain population during the day, Somerville loses almost 30% of its population, and 85% of its workforce. Considering the fact that most workers expend income in the vicinity of their work – either for food or goods and services – it is no surprise that Somerville’s commercial districts are having difficulties attracting a significant number of customers during the day to keep their doors open. This directly affects business owners, resulting in high turnover rates in commercial districts and a business mix that does not offer a wide variety of goods or services.

Decrease Unemployment and Increase Job Growth

Somerville’s workforce has not experienced any significant changes over the past 5 years. In fact, 2005 marked the first year of net job growth since 2000. This is a disappointing figure given that increasing local employment is an important goal for the City. Increasing employment represents opportunities for local residents, increase to the tax base, and potential spin-off effects as employees shop or eat locally. That said, job growth in Somerville in 2006 exceeded that of Middlesex County likely due to the jobs added at the Assembly Square Market Place. Increased development activity could potentially build upon this growth in upcoming years.

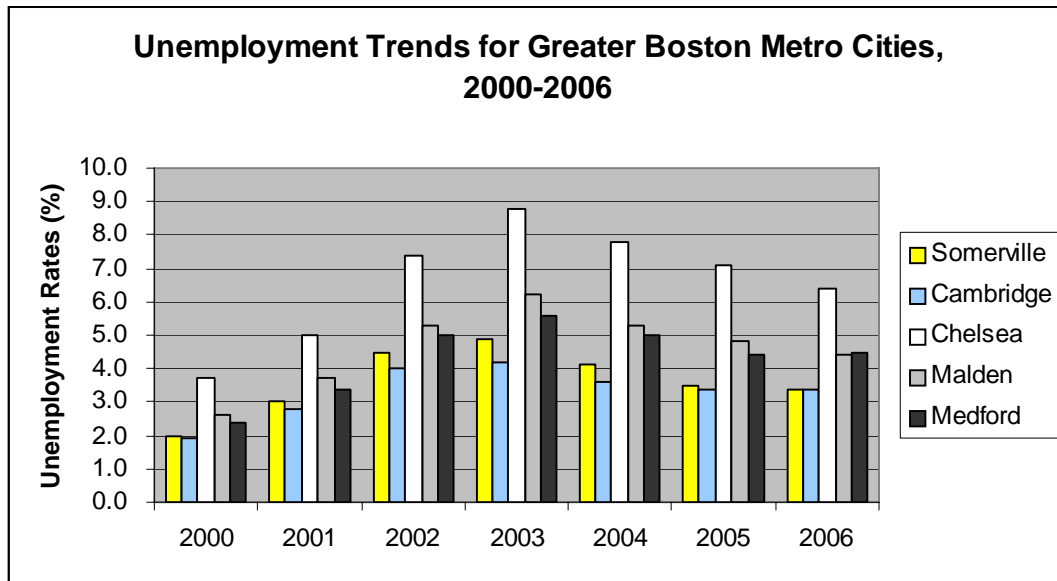
Annual Rate of Job Growth



In recent years, Somerville has consistently had a lower unemployment rate than surrounding communities and the state average. In 2006, the unemployment rate in Somerville was 3.4%, well below the state average of 4.6%.

Somerville’s unemployment rate vs. State’s unemployment rate⁶

⁶ Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development



City's unemployment decline ⁷

Streamlined Development Review

Many businesses looking to alter space in an existing building must undergo the development review process and seek some form zoning relief. Often times the zoning relief sought involves parking variances. This has been a problem for many businesses because the small lot size in the City makes it difficult for many businesses to comply with parking requirements.

Parking variances are difficult to secure due to the strict conditions that allow for issuance of a variance. In many instances, the permitted business uses on a site are constrained by the parking allowance that is grandfathered on site and not conducive to the market conditions that could increase economic development for the City.

V. Prioritization of Needs

a. Methodology of Prioritization

The City has taken a number of steps to prioritize the many needs with regards to economic development. These include:

- analyses of key redevelopment areas, their needs and possible strategies to address;
- preliminary review of development impediments resulting from parking requirements;
- self assessment through the Northeastern University Self-Assessment tool; and,
- evaluation of accomplishments during 2003-2008 Consolidated Plan.

Economic development was also a topic of discussion during the public hearings for development of the 2008-2013 Consolidated Plan and a specific focus group of stakeholders was held on October

⁷ Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development

25th, 2007 to discuss economic development needs and strategies. Comments from participants at the focus groups included the need to:

- o implement strategies to attract prospective developers and businesses;
- o assist home based businesses elevate to next level; and,
- o shape zoning regulations to be more reflective of individual neighborhoods.

b. Matrix of Needs and Relative Priority

TABLE 3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS & PRIORITIES		
	Need Level	Units
Redevelopment of Under-Utilized Districts	High	Projects
Re-Use of Existing Buildings	Medium	Buildings
Improved Transportation Access	High	Stations
Revitalization of Commercial Districts	High	Businesses
Increased Daytime Population	Medium	Workers
Decreased Unemployment	Medium	Jobs
Increased Job Growth	High	Jobs
Streamlined Development Review	Medium	Permits

VI. Obstacles to Meeting Underserved Needs

a. Monetary Gap Analysis

- Shortage of staff: due to limited financial resources, the City of Somerville has a restriction on the number of economic development projects it can undertake, since staffing is limited, leaving other needs unmet.
- Restrictions in HUD fund eligibility do not allow the City to establish city-wide programs: the population of City is diverse in income, and most of the western side of the City is not eligible for programs financed with funds that target low/moderate income individuals. This reduces the effectiveness of the programs, since some locations that could use City assistance cannot receive it.
- Somerville is under great pressure to expand its commercial tax base in order to relieve its citizens of the burden of funding basic city services with residential property taxes. Somerville’s commercial tax base remains very small in comparison to Boston and Cambridge that derive 66% and 60%, respectively, of their property tax revenue from businesses. By contrast, Somerville derives only 28% of its property tax revenue from businesses.

b. Additional Obstacles

- Construction inflation: due to the increasing cost in utilities and construction materials, the City is finding the cost of its infrastructure and beautification projects increase significantly. This cost increase is an extra burden on the City’s budget, since City funds do not grow at the same pace inflation does.
- Rapidly increasing real estate costs: one of Somerville major competitive advantages is its proximity to Boston and Cambridge while having affordable property costs. In the past 5

years, Somerville's real estate cost has increased considerably, making the City less competitive in comparison to surrounding communities. Also, this real estate cost increase is having a negative impact in the business community, as older businesses may not be able to afford the cost of rent anymore.

- Competition from other municipalities to attract same type of companies and jobs: Somerville's competitive advantages are often comparable to neighboring cities (affordability, highly skilled labor force and location, being some of them) and the competition to attract companies in growing industries (such as biotech, medical devices or green energy) is fierce.

VII. Vision, Goals, and Strategies

Vision

Increase and maintain the economic vitality of the City of Somerville for both residents and businesses.

Goals

1. Encourage investment and development in underutilized areas of the City.
2. Enhance vitality of existing commercial districts through support of existing businesses and attraction of others to support a healthy business mix.
3. Increase local job opportunities.
4. Enhance skills and abilities of Somerville residents.
5. Build a partnership between City Hall and community members to encourage public participation in economic development initiatives

Strategies

1. Encourage investment and development in underutilized areas of the City.
 - 1.1. Focus on redevelopment of strategic districts, especially those along the Green Line Corridor, including, but not limited to:
 - 1.1.1. Assembly Square
 - 1.1.2. Inner Belt
 - 1.1.3. Brickbottom
 - 1.1.4. Union Square
 - 1.1.5. Boynton Yards
 - 1.1.6. Somerville Avenue
 - 1.1.7. Broadway in East Somerville
 - 1.2. Evaluate and revise land use regulations to encourage more intensive development in strategic districts and remove/reduce regulatory impediments, such as parking requirements.
 - 1.3. Identify regional and local business growth industries, such as life sciences and clean energy, and market Somerville to prospective developers and investors.
 - 1.4. Assess feasibility of financial incentives including but not limited to, tax incentives, grants, loan programs, 108 Loan Guarantees, District Increment Finance, etc. to address potential impediments to development such as infrastructure needs, environmental conditions, etc.

- 1.5. Streamline the permitting process.
- 1.6. Encourage expansion of regional transit within Somerville including but not limited to the Green Line extension, Orange Line station at Assembly Square and identification of future commuter rail station(s).
- 1.7. Utilize municipally-owned properties, as appropriate, as catalyst for economic development.
- 1.8. Facilitate redevelopment of vacant and underutilized property through site assemblage and predevelopment activities.
- 1.9. Promote redevelopment of strategic “anchor” sites and job creation through the use of HUD Economic Development Initiatives, Brownfield Development Initiative, and Section 108 Loan Guarantees and other state and Federal funding sources.
2. Enhance vitality of existing commercial districts through support of existing businesses and attraction of others to support a healthy business mix.
 - 2.1. Promote pedestrian-friendly and attractive business districts through infrastructure investments, design review criteria, etc.
 - 2.2. Provide technical assistance to business owners to ensure health of businesses.
 - 2.3. Facilitate access to capital and financing through programs such as the City’s Small Business Loan Program.
 - 2.4. Assist with physical improvement of commercial spaces, such as through the Storefront Improvement Program.
 - 2.5. Provide site-finding services for business wishing to locate in Somerville.
 - 2.6. Encourage art-related businesses and other target industries.
 - 2.7. Encourage collaboration among businesses in commercial districts such as through a shared marketing program, area-wide events, and possible establishment of Business Improvement District.
 - 2.8. Encourage maintenance and enhancement of historic properties as a way to improve appearance of commercial areas and to encourage tourism.
3. Increase local job opportunities
 - 3.1. Attract businesses to Somerville in growth industries that will provide desirable jobs for Somerville’s residents.
 - 3.2. Inform businesses about federal and state programs that encourage/support local hiring.
 - 3.3. Build partnership with universities and career centers to gather information about Somerville’s available workforce to encourage potential investors and companies.
4. Enhance ability of Somerville residents to compete for local jobs.
 - 4.1. Encourage local workforce development organizations to initiate programs/services in Somerville.
 - 4.2. Increase the opportunity of jobs for youth and disabled in collaboration with business community.
5. Build a partnership between City government and community members to encourage participation in economic development initiatives
 - 5.1. Continue to support Main Streets organizations
 - 5.2. Establish City liaisons with community groups to get them involved in strategic planning activities

VIII. Performance Measures

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES		
Goal	Strategies	Benchmarks
1. Encourage investment and development in underutilized areas of the City.	1.1. Focus on redevelopment of strategic districts, especially those along the Green Line Corridor, including, but not limited to: 1.1.1. Assembly Square 1.1.2. Inner Belt 1.1.3. Brickbottom 1.1.4. Union Square 1.1.5. Boynton Yards 1.1.6. Somerville Avenue 1.1.7. Broadway in East Somerville	1.1.1 Facilitate permitting of Phases 1-2 in next 5 years 1.1.2 Prepare Master Plan for Inner Belt and Brickbottom in next 5 years. 1.1.3 Prepare Master Plan for Inner Belt and Brickbottom in next 5 years. 1.1.4 Submit rezoning package for Union Square to Board of Aldermen within 2 years. <i>(See Union Square NRSA 2.2.1)</i> 1.1.5 Analyze Boynton Yards zoning within 2 years. <i>(See Union Square NRSA 2.3.1)</i> 1.1.6 Analyze zoning of Somerville Ave in next 3 years. 1.1.7 Submit rezoning package for lower Broadway to Board of Aldermen within 3 years. <i>(See East Somerville NRSA 4.3.1)</i>
	1.2. Evaluate and revise land use regulations to encourage more intensive development in strategic districts and remove/reduce regulatory impediments, such as parking requirements.	1.2.1 Revise City parking regulations in next 5 years.
	1.3. Identify regional and local business growth industries, such as life sciences and clean energy, and market Somerville to prospective developers and investors.	1.3.1 Participate in at least 1 industry event (ex. convention) annually for the life sciences and clean energy industries.
	1.4. Assess feasibility of financial incentives including but not limited to, tax incentives, grants, loan programs, District Increment Finance, etc. to address potential impediments to development such as infrastructure needs, environmental conditions, etc.	1.4.1 Evaluate multiple incentives in next two years.
	1.5. Streamline the permitting process.	1.5.1 Complete Permit Streamlining Action Plan in next year.
	1.6. Encourage expansion of regional transit within Somerville including but not limited to the Green Line extension, Orange Line station at Assembly Square and identification of future commuter rail station(s).	1.6.1 Regularly advocate on behalf of increased transit in Somerville.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES		
Goal	Strategies	Benchmarks
	1.7. Utilize municipally-owned properties, as appropriate, as catalyst for economic development.	1.7.1 Prepare RFP for City-owned parcels in Union Square in next 5 years.
	1.8. Facilitate redevelopment of vacant and underutilized property through site assemblage and predevelopment activities.	1.8.1 Prepare and/or execute surveys, title abstracts, environmental reviews, appraisals, purchase options, property swaps etc. for strategic sites on an annual basis.
	1.9. Promote redevelopment of strategic “anchor” sites and job creation through the use of HUD Economic Development Initiatives, Brownfield Development Initiative, and Section 108 Loan Guarantees and other state and Federal funding sources.	1.9.1 Apply for HUD grant programs also use CDBG Funds to leverage state and private grant funds.
2. Enhance vitality of existing commercial districts through support of existing businesses and attraction of others to support a healthy business mix.	2.1. Promote pedestrian-friendly and attractive business districts through infrastructure investments, design review criteria, etc.	2.1.1 Complete design of Lower Broadway streetscape within 2 years and initiate improvements within 5 years. (See <i>Transportation & Infrastructure 3.1.1 and East Somerville NRSA 4.1.1</i>)
	2.2. Provide technical assistance to business owners to ensure health of businesses.	2.2.1 Run workshops, training, and/or consultations for 30 businesses or individuals in 5 years. (See <i>Economic Development 2.61</i>)
	2.3. Facilitate access to capital and financing through programs such as the City’s Small Business Loan Program.	2.3.1 Ensure at least 3-4 loans are provided to businesses in Somerville annually. (See <i>East Somerville NRSA 2.5.1</i>)
	2.4. Assist with physical improvement of commercial spaces, such as through the Storefront Improvement Program.	2.4.1 Provide at least 3-4 storefront improvement grants each year. (See <i>East Somerville NRSA 2.4.1</i>)
	2.5. Provide site-finding services for business wishing to locate in Somerville.	2.5.1 Maintain an up-to-date database of available sites in Somerville
	2.6. Encourage art-related businesses and other target industries.	2.6.1 Continue to financially support Arts Union activities
	2.7. Encourage collaboration among businesses in commercial districts such as through a shared marketing program, area-wide events, and possible establishment of Business Improvement District.	2.7.1 Engage in discussion with at least one business district regarding the benefits of a BID in the next 5 years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES		
Goal	Strategies	Benchmarks
	2.8. Encourage maintenance and enhancement of historic properties as a way to improve appearance of commercial areas and to encourage tourism.	
3. Increase local job opportunities	3.1. Attract businesses to Somerville in growth industries that will provide desirable jobs for Somerville's residents.	3.1.1 Attract at least one new business to Somerville each year.
	3.2. Inform businesses about federal and state programs that encourage / support local hiring.	3.2.1 Prepare informational materials for businesses on employment programs within one year.
	3.3. Build partnership with universities and career centers to gather information about Somerville's available workforce to encourage potential investors and companies.	3.3.1 Initiate discussions with Tufts University on how can collaborate on data gathering within one year.
4. Enhance ability of Somerville residents to compete for local jobs.	4.1. Encourage local workforce development organizations to initiate programs/services in Somerville.	4.1.1 Work with at least one workforce development organization to increase focus on Somerville within next 2 years.
	4.2. Increase the opportunity of jobs for youth and disabled in collaboration with business community.	4.2.1 Work with developer of Assembly Square to identify ways to provide jobs for youth and disabled within next 5 years.
5. Build a partnership between City government and community members to encourage participation in economic development initiatives	5.1. Continue to support Main Street organizations.	5.1.1 Engage in at least 2 collaborative projects with each Main Street organization each year.
	5.2. Establish City liaisons with community groups to get them involved in strategic planning activities.	5.2.1 Engage in at least 2 collaborative projects with community and business groups each year.