

# Somerville Armory Master Plan

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BRIEFING

SOMERVILLE CITY COUNCIL

9.20.23

# Outline

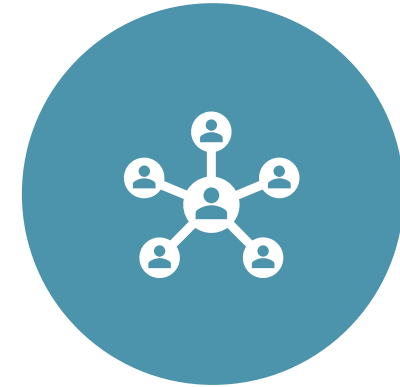
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PROJECT TIMELINE



IMPROVING INTERIM  
OPERATION OF ARMORY



COMPLETION OF  
MASTER PLAN

# Armory Timeline – Acquisition

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- **May 2021** - City acquires Armory by Eminent Domain for the public purpose of operating it for community and arts-related uses
- **Winter 2022** - City releases a Request for Proposal (RFP) to procure a consultant to prepare a Master Plan for municipal operation of the Armory as a public community arts center
- **Spring 2022** - City selects Create Today LLC to prepare Armory Master Plan
- **May 2022** - Create Today starts work on the Master Plan, briefs municipal staff and Armory tenants

# Armory Timeline – Master Planning

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May 2022 – Today: Phase I: “What Can the Armory Be?”

- May – December 2022 – Background research, stakeholder interviews and case study analysis
- Fall 2022 – Development of a Vision for the Armory by Master Plan Advisory Committee
- March 2023 – Possibilities and limitations – Focus group research
- May 2023 – Governance analysis, review of five different operating models
- July-August 2023 – Public process, three community meetings to review progress and obtain feedback on governance options, principles and policies

# What comes next? Armory Operations

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To better serve tenants and foster a more iterative conversation about Armory's future, the City has:

- Improving coordination of staff involved in Armory operations for better maintenance and communications.
- Hosting quarterly tenant meetings to inform discussions about short and long-term management of the building.
- Developing an interim Armory occupancy plan to provide a clear roadmap for the facility over the next 2-3 years as the Master Plan is completed and its recommendations are implemented by the City.
  - ✓ *Offering a stable option to current tenants throughout the interim period.*
  - ✓ *Determining what short-term investments in the building are needed to meet current operational needs.*

# What comes next? Master Plan

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To complete the Armory Master Plan while listening to public input received to date, the City will:

- Clarify decision-making and communication protocols for the next phase of the Armory Master Plan process.
- Set expectations for additional, iterative conversations on linking the Armory's future vision to guiding principles, policy goals, governance options, programming options and financial models to achieve that vision. City staff will facilitate these discussions and will shape the next phase of community meetings.
- Revise the Master Plan process that will resume once the City-led community meetings are complete, with a goal to deliver a final Plan to the Mayor and City Council in 2024 for implementation in the following years.

# Appendix

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# A Vision for Success for the Armory

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**ARTISTS:** A place that offers community, a sense of belonging, and makes artists feel proud and excited to use. Affordability and stability permits artists to focus on their art. Artists call the Armory 'home'.

**NON-ARTISTS:** The Armory is unexpected, inspiring, and uniquely Somerville. Warm and welcoming, it is open for non-artists to use. Diverse activities and programming create bridges between non-artists and artists / Armory tenants.

**VISITORS:** An open and inviting space that is easy to visit. Brimming with programming, activity, and creativity. Energetic, engaging, exciting. Activities and events are as unique as Somerville.

**TENANTS:** Transparent, accessible, and supportive experience from application to departure. Collaborative, collegial spirit; trustworthy processes. Feel seen and heard by the City.

**NEIGHBORS:** Clear, open, and thoughtful communication channels. Pride and excitement to live near the Armory. Feeling heard, appreciated, and engaged. Open to compromise and the occasional disruption.



# A Vision for Success for the Armory

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Developed and refined by the Armory Master Plan Advisory Committee:

- Based on background research, survey data, stakeholder and focus group interviews.
- Reflects the Armory's core constituencies and their diverse needs:
- Artists, Non-Artists (public), Visitors, Tenants and Neighbors
- Accomplishing this vision requires a complex operating structure that requires additional work and extension of the Master Plan process.