



Joint Hearing

March 20, 2025

Overview of Tonight

Four Interconnected Amendments

1. ACE Use Changes
2. Office Use Changes
3. Research & Development District
4. Arts & Innovation Sub-Area

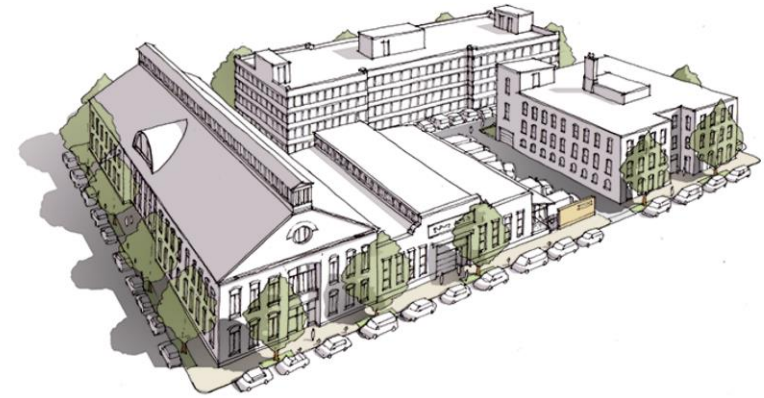
Zoning Recommendations

- Create an Artist Studios use
- Address concerns about Arts Education & Design Services uses
- Remove business incubator uses from Shared Workspaces
- Remove Co-working
- Amend Work/Live Creative Studio to Artist Housing model
- Permit arts-oriented Home Occupations in all districts that permit residential
- Provide incentives for development to go beyond standard ACE requirements
- Establish implementation mechanisms (database of need, in-lieu payment option, municipal fund to reinvest in arts, hire staff)



Fab District Intent

1. protect buildings [] from residential conversion,
2. preserve existing workspace, and
3. **retain incubator spaces for start-up, entry-, and mid-level businesses.**



6.1.2 Intent

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

6.1.3 Purpose

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

6.1.4 Applicability

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

6.1.5 Development Review

- a. Development review is subject to the provisions of Article 15: Administration of this Ordinance.
- b. This Ordinance may also require Subdivision Plan Approval, Site Plan Approval, a Special Permit, or a Hardship Variance based on the nature of a development proposal. In such cases, additional development review is required in accordance with Article 15: Administration.



Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	NR	UR	MR3	MR4	MR5	MR6	HR	FAB	CC	CI	CB	CIV
Arts & Creative Enterprise Categories												
Artisanal Production	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Exhibition	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Sales or Services	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Co-Working	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Design Services	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Shared Workspaces or Arts Education	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Work/Live Creative Studio	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	SP	N	N	N	N
Industrial Categories												
Manufacturing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	P	N	P	N	N
Wholesale Trade or Distribution	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	P	N	P	N	N
Office Categories												
General Office	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	N
Research and Development or Laboratory	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	N

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

Retail Use Categories & Uses

- Consumer Goods ← (category)

A **Use Category** that includes all types of principal uses that sell consumer goods, unless one is identified separately.

Anything that can fall into the category is treated the same.

- Consumer Goods
 - Pet Store ← (use)

A specific principal use identified separately from the rest of the category so that it can be regulated differently than others in the category.

25-0129 – Arts & Creative Enterprise

Use Category Changes

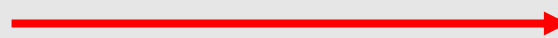
Arts & Creative Enterprise (ACE) Use Categories

1. Artisanal Production
2. Arts Exhibition
3. Arts Sales & Service
4. Co-Working
5. Design Services
6. Shared Workspaces & Arts Education
7. Work/Live Creative Studio

Changes to ACE Categories

1. Artisanal Production
2. Arts Exhibition
3. Arts Sales & Service
4. Co-Working
5. Design Services
6. Shared Workspaces & Arts Education

~~7. Work/Live Creative Studio~~



Residential Housing:
Artist Housing

Changes to ACE Categories

1. Artisanal Production
2. Arts Exhibition
3. Arts Sales & Service
4. ~~Co-Working~~
5. Design Services
6. Shared Workspaces & Arts Education

Office: Co-Working

Changes to ACE Categories

1. Artisanal Production
2. Arts Exhibition
3. Arts Sales & Service
4. Design Services (software) → Office: General Office
5. Shared Workspaces & Arts Education

Changes to ACE Categories

1. Artisanal Production
2. Artist Studios & Creative Incubators
3. Arts Exhibition
4. Arts Sales & Service
5. Design Services
6. Shared Workspaces & Arts Education

Office: Business Incubator



Changes to ACE Categories

1. Artisanal Production

2. Artist Studios & Creative Incubators

3. Arts Education

4. Arts Exhibition

5. Arts Sales & Service

6. Design Services

~~Shared Workspaces & Arts Education~~



(also, not ex: Berklee)

Changes to ACE Categories

1. Artisanal Production (allow retail sales & customary F&B; bakeries)
2. Artist Studios & Creative Incubators
3. Arts Education
4. Arts Exhibition (allow retail sales & customary F&B; broadcast/recording)
5. Arts Sales & Service
6. Design Services

Office Use Categories

1. General Office
2. Research and Development or Laboratory

Changes to Office Categories

1. Business Incubator
2. Co-Working
3. General Office
4. Research and Development or Laboratory

Food & Beverage Service Use Categories

1. Bar, Restaurant, Tavern
2. Bakery, Café, Coffee Shop

Changes to Food & Beverage Service Categories

1. Bar, Restaurant, ~~Tavern~~ or Food Hall
- ~~2. Bakery,~~ Café or Coffee Shop

Residential Use Categories

1. Residential Housing
2. Institutional Housing
 - Community or Group Residence

Changes to Residential Categories

1. Residential Housing
 - Artist Housing
2. Institutional Housing
 - Community or Group Residence

Accessory Use Categories

1. Home Occupations
 - Creative Studio
 - Hobby Kennel
 - Home-Based Business
 - Home-Based Child Day Care
 - Home Office
2. Urban Agriculture
3. Vehicle Parking

Accessory Use Categories

1. Home Occupations

- ~~○ Creative Studio~~
- Hobby Kennel
- Home-Based Business
- Home-Based Child Day Care
- Home Office

2. Urban Agriculture

3. Vehicle Parking

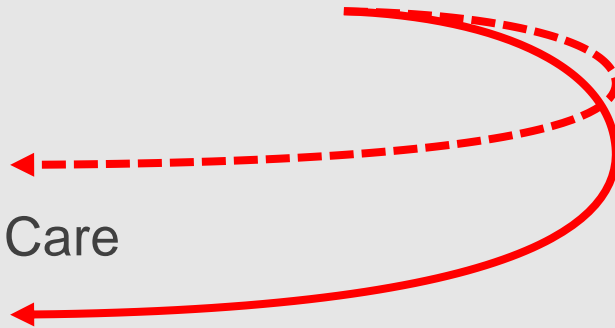


Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	NR	UR	MR3	MR4	MR5	MR6	HR	FAB	R&D	CC	CI	CB	CIV
Arts & Creative Enterprise Categories													
Artisanal Production	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Artist Studios & Creative Incubators	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Education	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Exhibition	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Arts Sales or Services	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Design Services	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Office Categories													
Business Incubator	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	N
Co-Working	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	N
General Office	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	N	P	P	P	N
Scientific Research and Development (except as follows)	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	N
Biomedical Technology	N	N	N	N	N	P	P	N	N	P	P	P	N
Medical Laboratory	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	N	P	P	P	N
Testing Laboratory	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	N
Residential Categories													
Residential Housing	P	P	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N	N
Artist Housing	P	P	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N	N
Institutional Housing (except as follows)	N	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	N	N	N	N	N	N
Community or Group Residence	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	N	N	N	N	N

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

24-1460 – R&D Uses and Laboratory Buildings

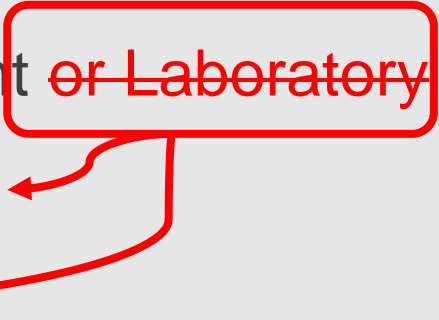
Changes to Offices Uses & Building Types

- Breaking up the “Research & Development or Laboratory” land use category
- Elimination of the Lab building type

Office Categories Changes

1. Business Incubator
2. Co-Working
3. General Office
4. Research & Development or Laboratory

Office Categories Changes

1. Business Incubator
 2. Co-Working
 3. General Office
 4. **Scientific** Research & Development ~~or Laboratory~~
 5. Medical or Diagnostic Laboratory*
 6. Testing Laboratory*
- 

*Definitions based upon relevant North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

Office Categories Changes

1. Business Incubator
2. Co-Working
3. General Office
4. **Scientific** Research & Development
 - Biomedical Technology*  “Labs”
5. Medical or Diagnostic Laboratory*
6. Testing Laboratory*

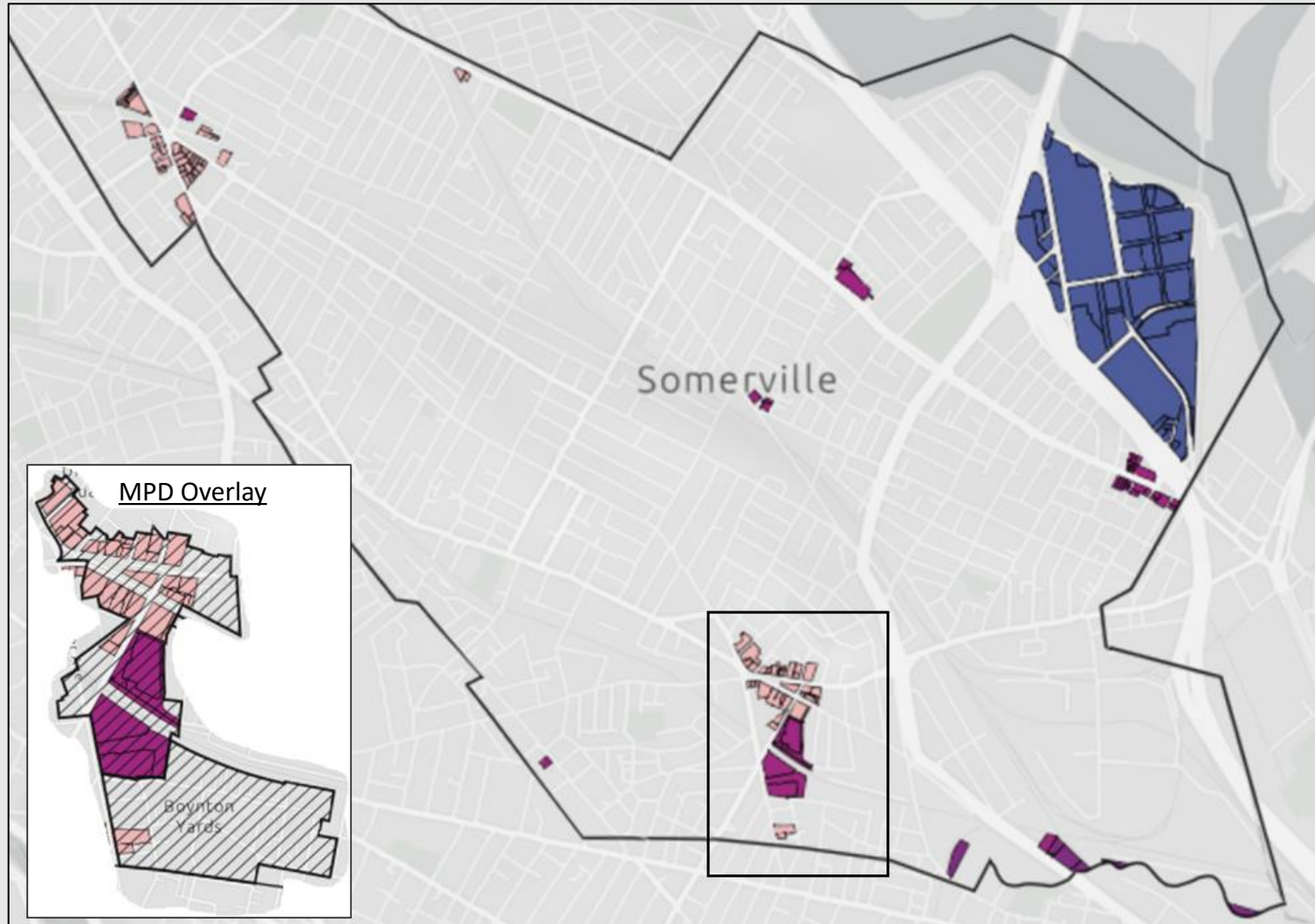
*Definitions based upon relevant North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

Districts where the Lab Building type is currently allowed:

Districts

- CC
- MR-6
- HR
- ASMD*
- MPD Overlay

*All Building Types are allowed in ASMD.



Where biomedical laboratory uses are occurring:



Biomedical
Technology R&D
Land Use



Commercial
Buildings
Purpose-Built for
Biomedical



- Developers propose Commercial Buildings that are effectively Lab Buildings.
- Example: Proposed building at 32-44 White Street (Porter Square)



- Finding: Regulating laboratory location by Building Type has not worked.

Goal: regulate “labs” by land use instead of building type.

- Eliminate Lab Building as a building type.
- Adjust dimensional standards for Commercial Buildings in the three zoning districts where Lab Buildings were permitted.

Dimension (max)	Commercial Core (CC)		Mid-Rise 6 (MR-6)		High-Rise (HR)	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
Height (FT)	Varies	+ 5-10 ft	85	<u>95 ft</u>	150	<u>155 ft</u>
Width (FT)	200	<u>240 ft</u>	200	No change	200	<u>240 ft</u>
Floor Plate (SF)	30,000	<u>35,000 sf</u>	30,000	No change	30,000	<u>35,000 sf</u>

Scientific Research & Development

Biomedical Technology

- Allows us to regulate biomedical technology uses differently from other research & development uses.

9.1 PERMITTED USES

Table 9.1.1

Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses												
Use Category Specific Use	NR	UR	MR3	MR4	MR5	MR6	HR	FAB	CC	CI	CB	CIV
Office Categories												
General Office	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	N
<u>Scientific</u> Research and Development or <u>Laboratory</u>	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	N
<u>Biomedical Technology</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Medical or Diagnostic Laboratory</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Testing Laboratory</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>

25-0128 – Research & Development District

- Establish a new R&D zoning district



SOMERVILLE AVENUE

SOMERVILLE AVENUE



R&D District Intent

To create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for:

- moderately scaled single- and multi-use commercial buildings;
- neighborhood- and community-serving uses; and
- employment opportunities in the scientific research sector.

6.5 RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (R&D)

6.5.1 Description

The Research & Development district is characterized by large floor plate buildings up to four (4) stories in height. The district is entirely commercial with a concentration of business incubator and scientific research & development principal uses with supporting businesses.

6.5.2 Intent

- To implement the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Somerville for commercial development.
- To create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for moderately scaled single- and multi-use commercial buildings; neighborhood-, community-serving uses; and employment opportunities in the scientific research sector.

6.5.3 Purpose

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

6.5.4 Applicability

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

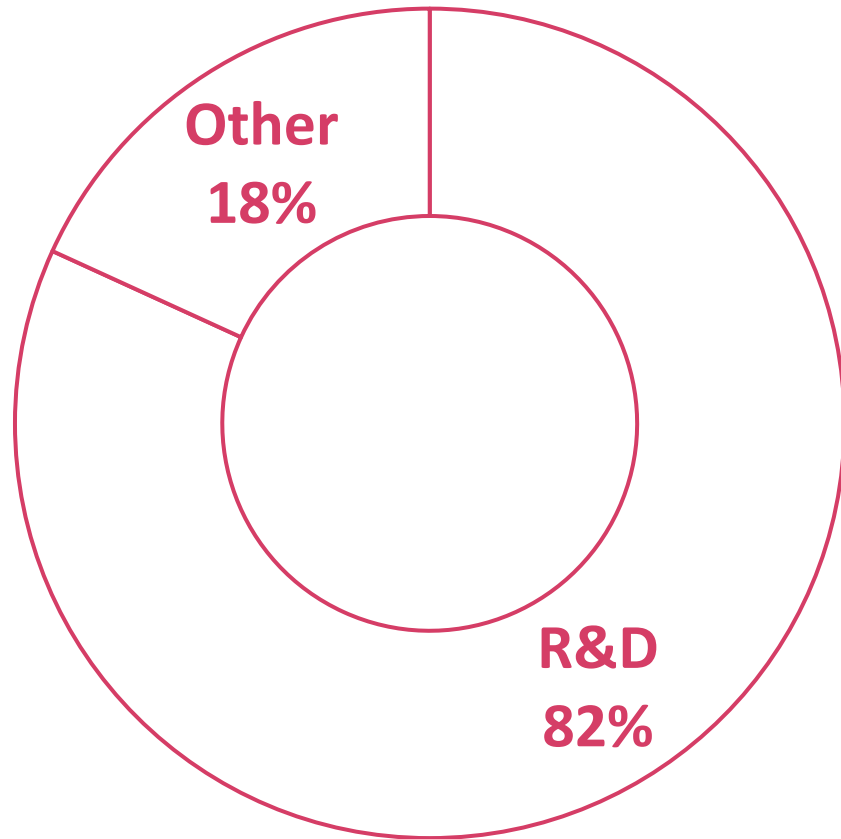
6.5.5 Development Review

- Development review is subject to the provisions of Article 15: Administration of this Ordinance.
- This Ordinance may also require Subdivision Plan Approval, Site Plan Approval, a Special Permit, or a Hardship Variance based on the nature of a development proposal. In such cases, additional development review is required in accordance with Article 15: Administration.
 - The Planning Board is the decision-making authority for all development that requires Site Plan Approval or a Special Permit.
 - The Zoning Board of Appeals is the Review Board for all Hardship Variances.

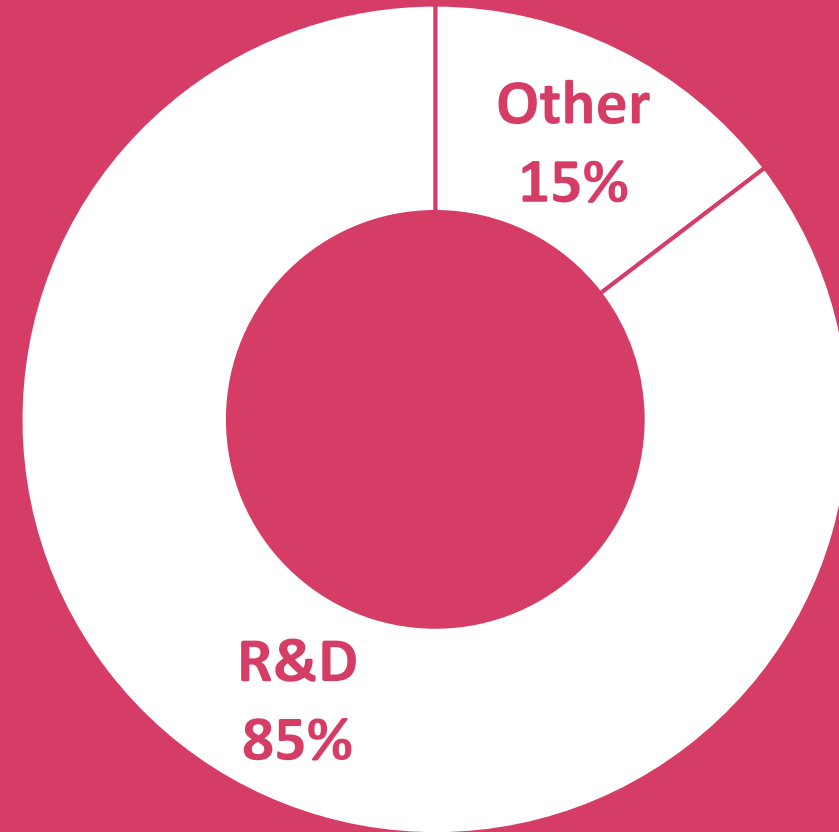
6.5.6 Building Types

- One (1) principal building is permitted on each lot.
- The following principal building types are permitted by Site Plan Approval in the Research & Development district:
 - Commercial Building
- Accessory structures are regulated according to Article 10: Development Standards of this Ordinance.

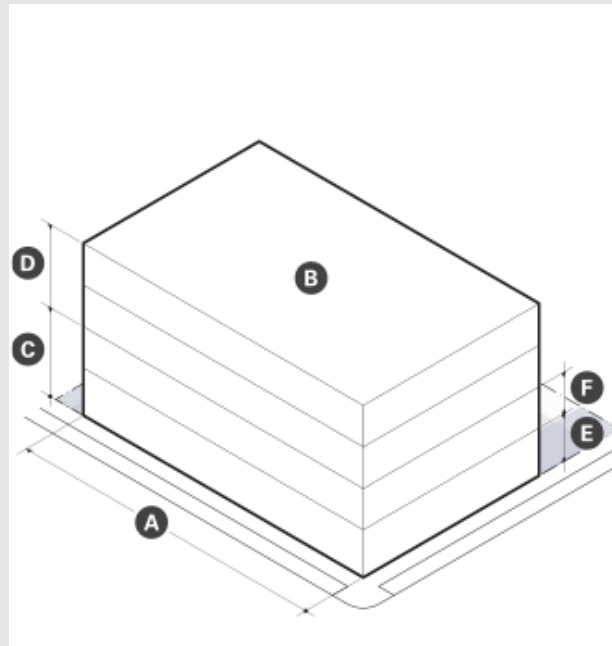
GREENTOWN LABS



MIT ENGINE

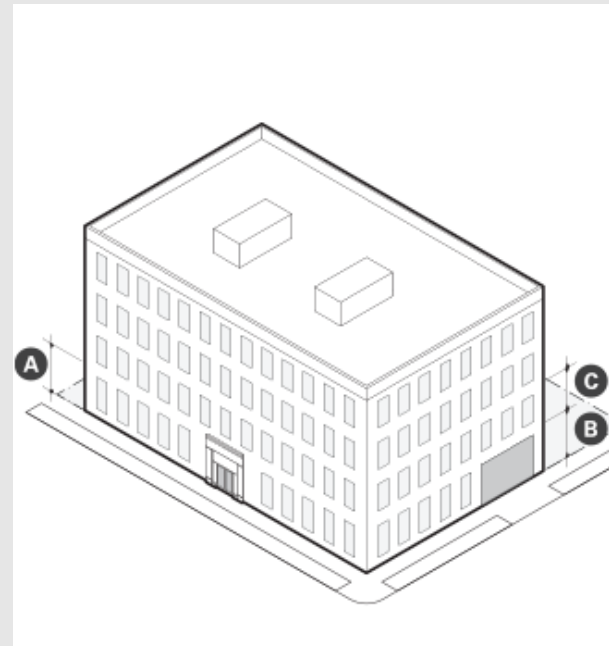


a. Massing & Height



Main Mass	
A Building Width (max)	n/a
Facade Build Out (min)	–
Primary Front (min)	65%
Secondary Front (min)	65%
B Floor Plate (max)	45,000 sf
C Ground Story Height (min)	15 ft
D Upper Story Height (min)	10 ft
E Number of Stories (min/max)	2 4
F Building Height, Feet (max)	78 ft
Roof Type	Flat

b. Uses & Features



Facade Composition	
Ground Story Fenestration	–
A Primary Facade (min)	50%
B Secondary Facade (min/max)	15%
C Upper Story Fenestration (min/max)	15% 70%
Blank Wall (max)	50 ft

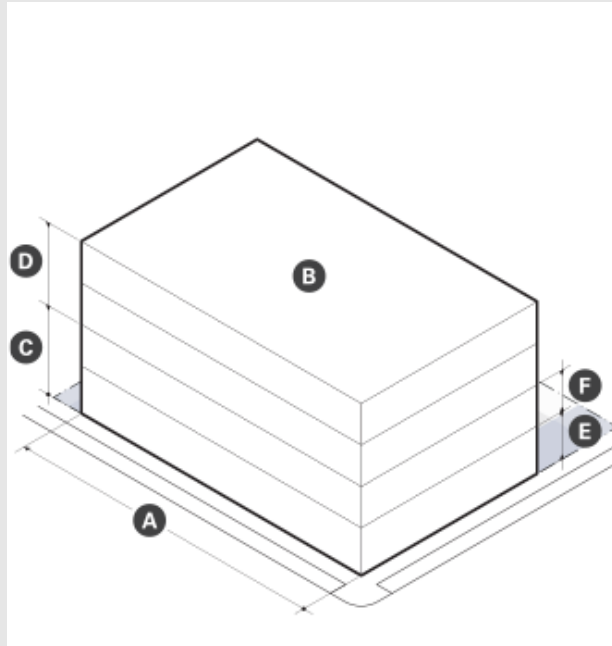
Use & Occupancy	
Ground Story Entrance Spacing (max)	n/a
Commercial Space Depth (min)	30 ft



SOMERVILLE AVENUE

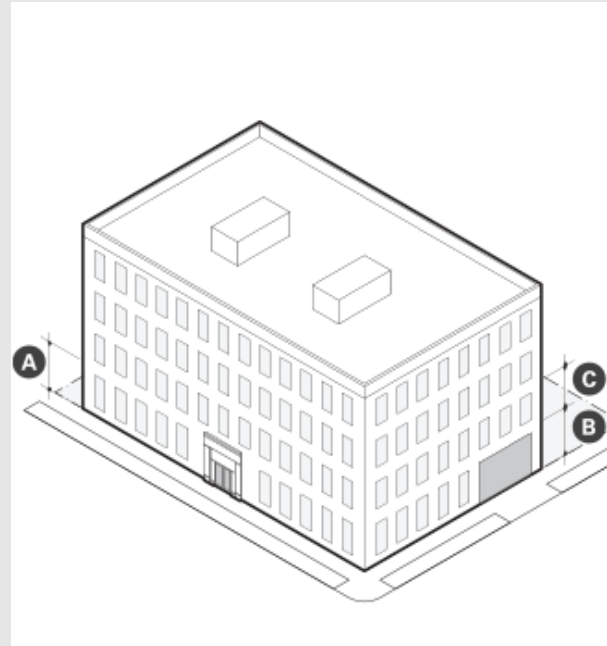
SOMERVILLE AVENUE

a. Massing & Height



Main Mass	
A Building Width (max)	n/a
Facade Build Out (min)	–
Primary Front (min)	65%
Secondary Front (min)	65%
B Floor Plate (max)	45,000 sf
C Ground Story Height (min)	15 ft
D Upper Story Height (min)	10 ft
E Number of Stories (min/max)	2 4
F Building Height, Feet (max)	78 ft
Roof Type	Flat

b. Uses & Features



Facade Composition	
Ground Story Fenestration	–
A Primary Facade (min)	50%
B Secondary Facade (min/max)	15%
C Upper Story Fenestration (min/max)	15% 70%
Blank Wall (max)	50 ft
Use & Occupancy	
Ground Story Entrance Spacing (max)	n/a
Commercial Space Depth (min)	30 ft

High Bay R&D Space

large, open-plan facility with high ceilings, suitable for activities like prototyping, testing, or assembly of large-scale equipment

16 – 25 feet





Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	FAB	R&D
Arts & Creative Enterprise Categories		
Artisanal Production	P	P
Artist Studios & Creative Incubators	P	P
Arts Education	P	P
Arts Exhibition	P	P
Arts Sales or Services	P	P
Design Services	P	P
Commercial Services Categories		
Assembly or Entertainment	N	SP
Maintenance or Repair Services	N	P
Personal Services (except as follows)	N	P
Fitness Services	P	SP
Health Care Services	N	SP
Recreation Services (except as follows)	SP	SP
Recreational Camp for Children	P	P

Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	FAB	R&D
Food and Beverage Services Categories		
Bar, Restaurant, or Food Hall	N	SP
Café or Coffee Shop	N	SP
Industrial Categories		
Manufacturing	P	P
Wholesale Trade or Distribution	P	N
Lodging Categories		
Bed & Breakfast	N	N
Hotel or Hostel	N	SP
Office Categories		
Business Incubator	N	P
Co-Working	N	P
General Office	N	N
Scientific Research and Development (except as follows)	N	P
Biomedical Technology	N	N
Medical Laboratory	N	N
Testing Laboratory	N	P

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

Required Uses

- At least **ten percent (10%)** of the gross leasable commercial floor space in any building must be provided as leasable floor area for principal uses from the Arts & Creative Enterprise use categories.

25-0131 – Arts & Innovation Sub-Area

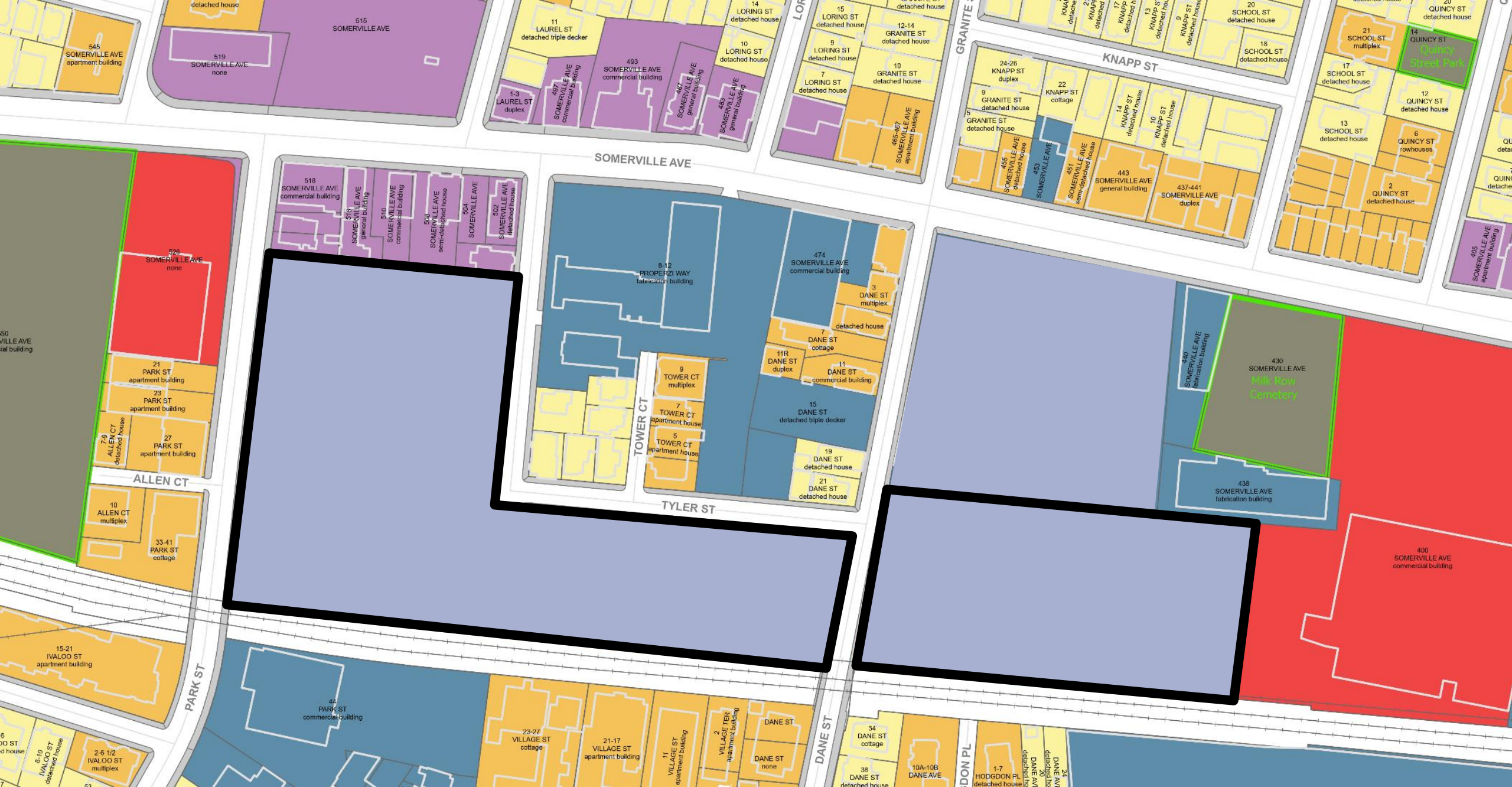
Master Planned Development Overlay District

- Establish a new Sub-Area of the Master Planned Development overlay district









Master Plan Standards

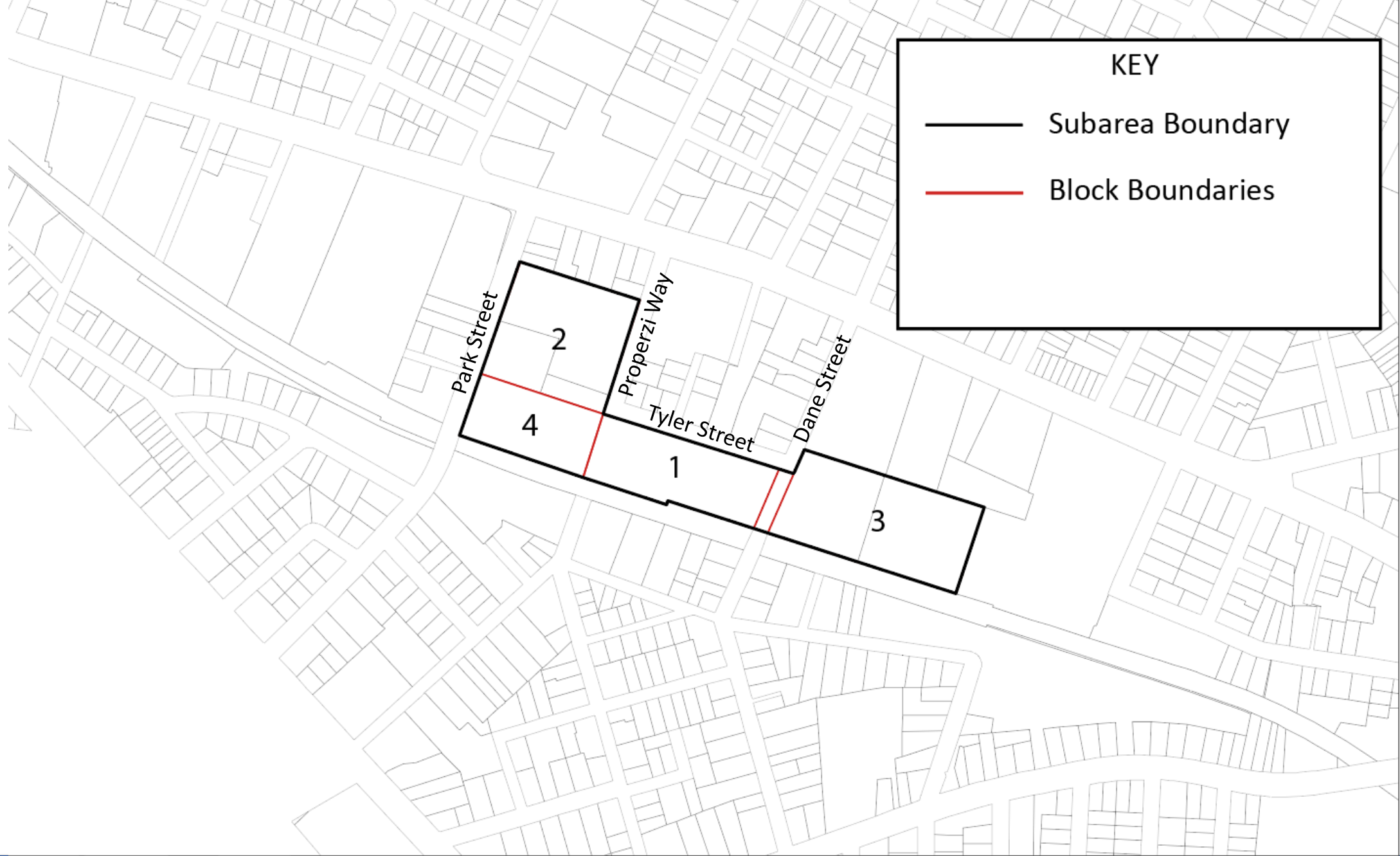
- Minimum land area 250,000 square feet
- 10% must be two (2) or more civic spaces
- 25% of parking must be electric vehicle charging stations
- 75% of parking must be electric vehicle ready
- 85% of the total proposed gross floor area must be non-residential uses

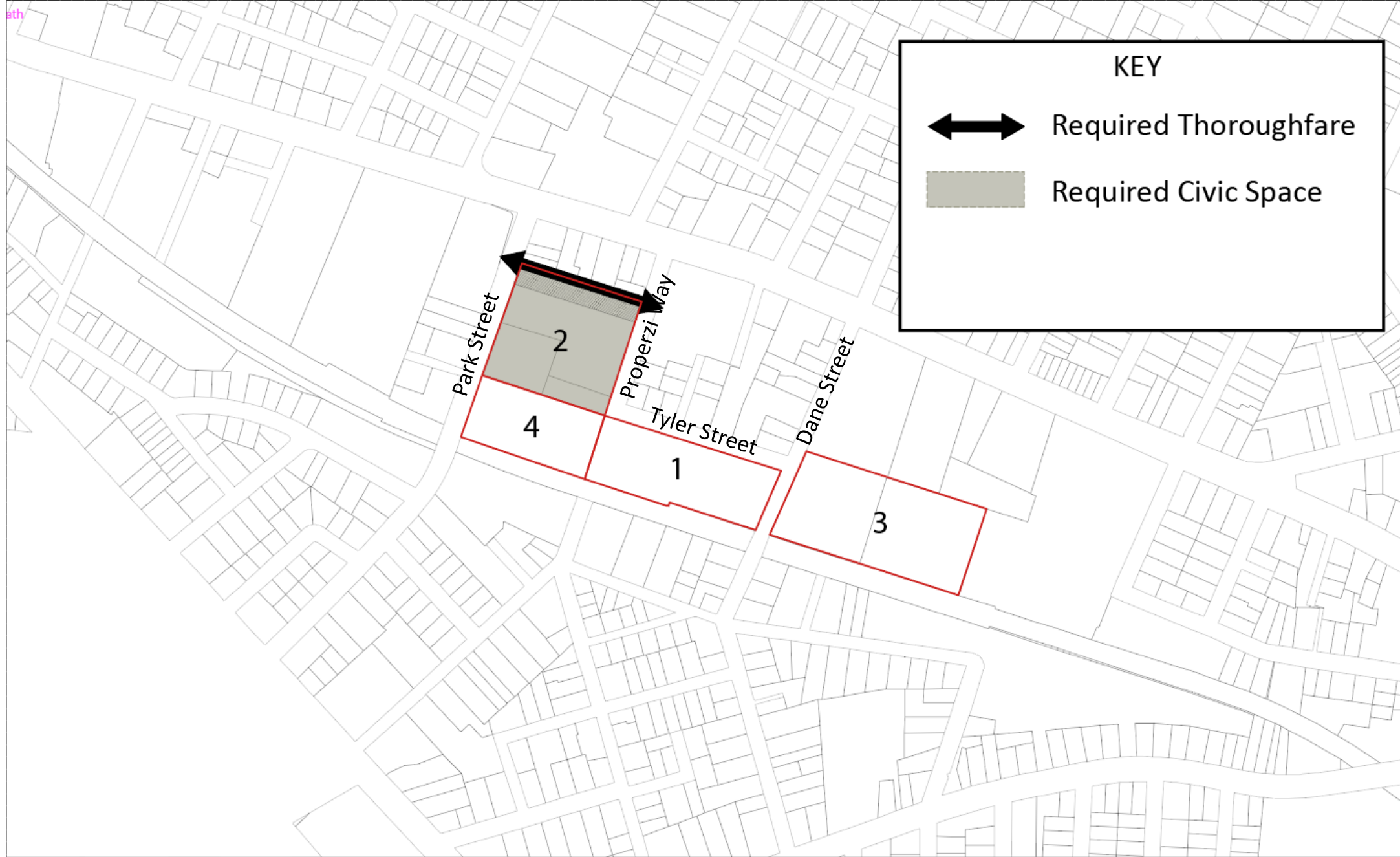
Master Plan Standards

- 85% of the total proposed gross floor area must be non-residential uses
 - Lodging uses are calculated as a residential use
 - At least **2% or 40,000** square feet must be for **Business Incubator** uses
 - At least **10,000** sf must be for **Community Center** uses
 - At least **8%** must be for Arts & Creative Enterprise uses
 - At least **40,000** square feet must be for **Arts Exhibition** principal uses
 - At least **20,000** square feet must be for **Artist Studios & Creative Incubators** uses

Master Plan Standards

- By Special Permit, the Planning Board may permit up to 37.5% of the total required Arts & Creative Enterprise floor area to be provided as:
 - an in-kind off-site contribution (floor space)
 - an in-lieu payment (financial)
- Required floor area for Arts Exhibition and Artist Studio & Creative Incubator uses is exempt.





Parking & Mobility Standards

- Commercial Parking Facility permitted; Accessory Parking not permitted
- 750 total parking spaces permitted
 - Planning Board regulates the amount of parking for each building using a Parking Demand Model calibrated by the City.
 - Planning Board can impose conditions to mitigate individual or cumulative impacts
- Mobility Management Planning
 - Required for Master Plan, Buildings, & Large Employers
 - Must commit to 40% non-automobile mobility now, 25% upon full occupancy
 - Must include programs & services to achieve goal; additional interventions if not
- Commercial Parking Facilities report parking use monthly.
- Property owners and Businesses report travel mode quarterly.

Use Standards

Upon the approval of a Master Plan Special Permit:

- a) Uses permitted by Special Permit in any underlying zoning district are permitted by-right.
- b) Residential Housing uses including, but not limited to, Artist Housing are permitted by-right.

Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	FAB	R&D
Arts & Creative Enterprise Categories		
Artisanal Production	P	P
Artist Studios & Creative Incubators	P	P
Arts Education	P	P
Arts Exhibition	P	P
Arts Sales or Services	P	P
Design Services	P	P
Commercial Services Categories		
Assembly or Entertainment	N	SP
Maintenance or Repair Services	N	P
Personal Services (except as follows)	N	P
Fitness Services	P	SP
Health Care Services	N	SP
Recreation Services (except as follows)	SP	SP
Recreational Camp for Children	P	P

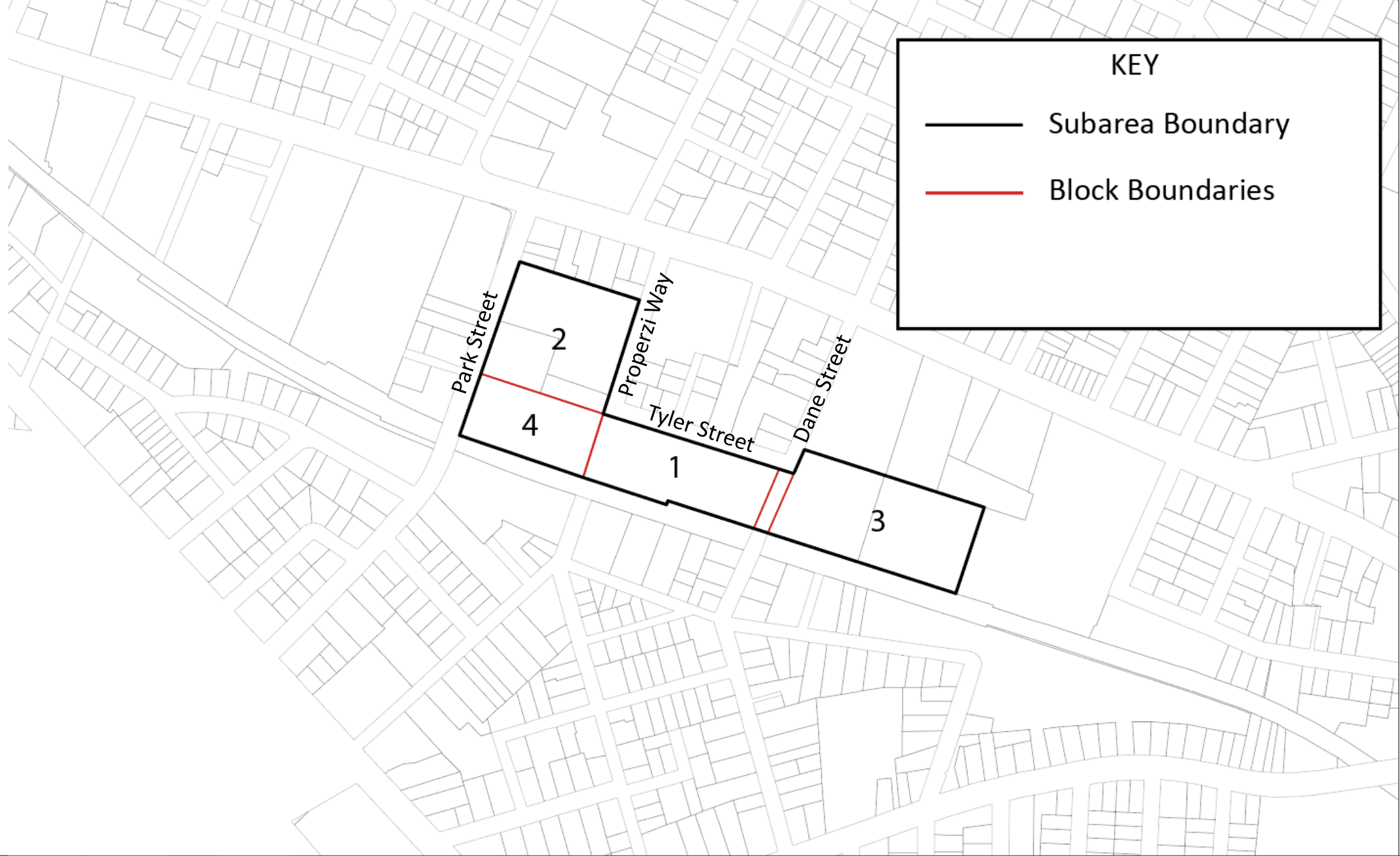
Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses

Use Category Specific Use	FAB	R&D
Food and Beverage Services Categories		
Bar, Restaurant, or Food Hall	N	SP
Café or Coffee Shop	N	SP
Industrial Categories		
Manufacturing	P	P
Wholesale Trade or Distribution	P	N
Lodging Categories		
Bed & Breakfast	N	N
Hotel or Hostel	N	SP
Office Categories		
Business Incubator	N	P
Co-Working	N	P
General Office	N	N
Scientific Research and Development (except as follows)	N	P
Biomedical Technology	N	N
Medical Laboratory	N	N
Testing Laboratory	N	P

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

Building Standards

- Buildings permitted by Site Plan Approval (General or Commercial)
- 5% tolerance for compliance:
 - Green Score
 - Front Setbacks
 - Blank Wall
 - Commercial Space Depth
 - Upper Story Step-backs



KEY

- Subarea Boundary
- Block Boundaries

Building Standards

- Superseding Dimensions

	Height	10' Step Backs	30' Setbacks
Block 1	130 ft	Tyler Street: 3 rd Story & Above	Dane Street: 3 rd Story & Above
Block 2	165 ft	Properzi Way: 3 rd Story & Above Park Street: 4 th Story & Above	
Block 3	200 ft		Dane Street: 4 th Story & Above
Block 4	200 ft	Park Street: 4 th Story & Above	

END