



DRAFT **Somerville Armory** **Master Plan**

City of Somerville
Mayor Katjana Ballantyne

Somerville Armory
December 10, 2024



Office of Strategic Planning & Community
Development and Somerville Arts Council

Agenda

Introduction the Master Plan

- Mission & Vision
- Roles & Responsibilities
- The Balancing Arts
- Outline of the Plan
- Next Steps

Public Hearing

Want to follow along or page through the draft tonight?

<https://voice.somervillema.gov/armory-master-plan>

Page numbers will be referenced during this quick introduction as possible

MISSION

The Mission of the Somerville Armory, its governing body, and this Master Plan is to protect and ensure the long-term vitality of the historic Armory property as an affordable and accessible public center for art, community, and culture.

Vision of Success

The Somerville Armory will be a successful public arts center by:

- I. Focusing on Artists and Arts
- II. Nurturing Collaboration and Synergy
- III. Inspiring Community
- IV. Supporting the Creative Life Cycle
- V. Making Clear and Community-Based Decisions
- VI. Mitigating Conflict
- VII. Ensuring Financial Stability

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City of Somerville should **make space available** to those in the community already producing art

Roles & Responsibilities

Owner

Keep the building open

Governance

Advance the mission and vision of success and select aligned partners

Management

Address daily operational needs with services and policies (common area use, cleaning and grounds, conflict resolution)

Programming

Use the Armory to produce art that resonates with the Somerville community

Programming decisions are the responsibility of tenants

Roles & Responsibilities

	<u>Short Term</u>		<u>Long Term</u>
Owner	City of Somerville		City of Somerville
Governance	City of Somerville Armory Advisory Board	→	Non-profit or Cultural Trust
Management	City staff + contractors	→	TBD: City staff + contractors
Programming	Tenants		Tenants

Independent governance
from the City is preferred long term

more robust management services are valued

The Balancing Acts are many...

1. Armory meets its public purpose *without* the City running events
2. Give tenants a voice in decisions *while recognizing* that not all tenants will have the same perspective nor will the neighbors
3. Tenants need affordable space to create *but* the building needs to generate enough revenue to sustain support services
4. Wrap up this process quickly enough to stabilize tenancies *and also* keep the pathway to independent governance progressing

**Allow the
Armory to
evolve**

Only make
decisions that
need to be
made

Roadmap for a Public Art Center

1. Governing a Public Arts Center (pages 14-25)
2. Managing and Maintaining the Armory (pages 26-34)
3. Financing the Armory's Vision (pages 35-43)

Governing a Public Arts Center

- Establish a Transparent Advisory Board & Governance Structure
- Support Artists and Engage the Community
- Select Diverse yet Complementary Tenants
- Evaluate and Adapt Governance

Page 25 of the Draft

Managing and Maintaining the Armory

- Standardize and Expand Operation Protocols
- Ensure Safety & Security
- Invest in Infrastructure
- Nurture Community & Coordinate Programming
- Showcase Tenants and Programs

Page 34 of the Draft

Financing the Vision

- Stabilize and Diversify Revenue
- Subsidize Art
- Balance Resources
- Upgrade Operations and Management Incrementally
- Plan for Capital Investments

Page 43 of the Draft

Summary

The Somerville Armory has a dynamic 120-year history, transforming over the decades to meet different needs. Residents want the Armory to be a stimulating, vibrant public arts center that is efficiently managed and transparently governed.

By thoughtfully balancing investment with subsidy, the Armory can and will be a model center to empower working artists and deepen the connection between the community at large and the arts community in Somerville.

Next Steps

- Finance Committee Public Hearing
- Review all received feedback (online and at public hearing) and revise draft plan accordingly
- Reconvene with the City Council for discussion in January if of interest
- Finalize the Master Plan
- Form and recruit for the Armory Advisory Board
- Launch the Request for Proposals (RFP) for long term leases in 2025

Thank you!

**For your attention and participation
tonight!**

**For participating in two years of
community conversations about the
Armory's future!**

For supporting the arts in Somerville!