

# WELCOME TO SOMERVILLE



## Business Welcome Kit

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone  
Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development



# Business Check List

Recommended steps to successfully operate your business

## I AM PLANNING ON OPENING A BUSINESS

- Visited the Business Development Specialist at the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development to find out about financing, consulting and real estate services that are available for my business

## I JUST IDENTIFIED A SPACE FOR MY BUSINESS

- Visited the Inspectional Services Division to make sure that my plans comply with the state building code and zoning ordinance and that the use I intend to give to the space is allowed
- Arranged an Inspector visit from Inspectional Services to make sure that my space is “up to code”
- Visited the Planning Department, in case I got a Letter of Denial from the Inspectional Services Division

## I WANT TO RENOVATE / ADAPT THE SPACE FOR MY BUSINESS

- Visited the Inspectional Services Division with my Architect/Contractor to make sure my plans comply with applicable state building code and zoning ordinance
- Went to Inspectional Services for a building permit
- Visited the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development to find out about assistance programs

## MY BUSINESS PROVIDES FOOD SERVICES

- Called the Health Inspectors at the Inspectional Services Division to ensure that my plans comply with the State Sanitation Code
- Called the Licensing Commission to apply for a Common Victualer’s License
- Called the Licensing Commission if I want to apply for a Liquor License or a Beer & Wine License

## BEFORE I OPEN MY BUSINESS

- Visited the City’s Clerk to file for a Business Certificate, if:
- I haven’t incorporated my business at the State and/or
- I am operating under my business name, not my own name
- Confirmed with the Inspectional Services Division that I complied with all zoning requirements and was granted permits and variances from the Planning and Zoning Boards in case I needed them (Special Permit, Special Permit with Site Review, and Zoning Variances).
- Contacted local community groups (Somerville Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Organizations, etc.)

# Who To Contact And What For?

Dial 311 from any land line/cell phone (617-666-3311 outside Somerville)

## Constituent Services (311)

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue

- One Call to City Hall
- Information and Referral
- City Wide Work Order Request
- Business Recycling
- Disposal, Recycling, Hazardous Waste
- Business Parking Permits or ParkCards
- Snow Emergency Parking Procedures
- Any other non-emergency service or information request

## City Clerk

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue - (617) 625-6600 ext. 4100

- Business Certificates
- Advertising, Sign or Awning Licenses
- Auction, Raffle & Bazaar Licenses
- Billiard Table/Pool Table/Bowling Alley/Video Game Licenses
- Physician/Optometrists/Osteopath/Chiropractor Registration
- Extended Retail Hours Licenses
- Garage/Auto Repair/ Used Car Dealer Licenses
- Peddler/Vendor/Dealer Licenses
- Outdoor Parking or Seating Licenses
- Taxicab Related Licenses
- Closing out Sale Permits
- Open Air/Transient Vendor Licenses

## Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development

### Planning Department

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue - (617) 625-6600 ext. 2500

- Zoning & Special Permits
- Planning Board
- Zoning Board
- Zoning Variances

### Economic Development

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue - (617) 625-6600 ext. 2500

- Business Development (Planning, Financing, Site location...)
- Assistance Programs

### Inspectional Services

1 Franey Road 1<sup>st</sup> floor- (617) 625-6600 ext. 5600

- Building, Demolition, Disposal Permits
- Plumbing, Wiring, Gas Permits
- Health Inspectors (Ex 4330), Rodent Control & Sanitary Code Compliance

## Fire Prevention Bureau

255 Somerville Avenue - (617) 623- 1700, ext. 8400

- Smoke Detectors Inspection
- Fire Prevention

## Licensing Commission

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue – (617) 625-6600 ext. 4107

- Liquor Licenses
- Beer and Wine Licenses
- Innholder Licenses
- Entertainment and Dance Licenses
- Common Victualer Licenses

Or, visit our website at [www.ci.somerville.ma.us](http://www.ci.somerville.ma.us)

# Somerville Squares

## **Davis Square**

Home to bookstores and boutiques, cafes and restaurants, theatre, cinema and music clubs, Davis Square is a true urban destination. The Square features prime office space and houses high-tech corporations, national nonprofit organizations, financial services and insurance companies, and small businesses of all kinds. Davis Square is also home to health care providers including large medical practices and a variety of alternative health care practitioners. Davis Square is a stop on the Red Line subway, is served by several MBTA bus lines and threaded by the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway.

## **Union Square**

Union Square is the rising star of Somerville's squares, with an eclectic mix of ethnic restaurants and groceries, unique retailers, music venues, nonprofits and offices. This business community, along with regular cultural events and a weekly Farmers Market, has built the Square's reputation beyond Somerville's boundaries. On nearby Prospect Hill, the first American flag was raised on January 1, 1776, and the hill features one of the most spectacular, panoramic views of the Boston area. Union Square offers excellent values in commercial real estate that include traditional, small scale retail spaces as well as opportunities for larger scale projects. MBTA buses serve the square, with direct service from Cambridge's Central Square and Harvard Square, Charlestown's Sullivan Square, and Somerville's Davis Square. An extension of the Green Line transit line to Union Square is projected for the year 2014. Union Square is slated for strategic rezoning and redevelopment of a number of key parcels in conjunction with this transit expansion.

## **Teele Square**

Within walking distance from Davis Square, Teele Square features several excellent restaurants and shops. More residential than Davis, Teele's proximity to Tufts University makes the neighborhood a popular spot for off-campus living.

## **Magoun Square**

Located at Somerville's border with Medford, Magoun Square's traditional commercial storefronts are home to a vibrant mix of businesses from clothing to hardware, and from to artisan workshops to restaurants. Magoun Square's concentrated commercial district is surrounded by a dense residential neighborhood and has ample parking availability.

## **Ball Square**

Ball Square's business mix gives visitors a true Somerville neighborhood feel. Lines of hungry students wait for brunch or sip coffee at its cafés, diners, and pubs, while locally owned retail stores and service businesses meet local needs.

## **Assembly Square**

On the Mystic River waterfront, Assembly Square was formerly the home of the Ford Auto Plant. Located 2 miles from downtown Boston and Kendall Square in Cambridge, Assembly Square's 145-acres are today being transformed into a model of Smart Growth, transit-oriented development with a mixture of residential, commercial and retail uses and a distinct walkable character. An IKEA store is planned for the area, and a new Orange Line transit stop is scheduled for completion by 2015.

## **East Somerville**

East Somerville's diversity is matched only by its eclectic architecture. Served by the Sullivan Square MBTA Orange Line station and several bus routes, East Somerville includes the larger commercial properties of the Inner Belt such as the Holiday Inn, Biogen IDEC, and Grossman Marketing Group, as well as some "taquerias" and smaller retail businesses off the eastern end of Broadway.

Please call the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (SPCD) at 617 625 6600, x2500, to find out about commercial and industrial space available for lease or sale.

# Somerville Facts

## The City

Incorporated as a city:	1872
Registered voters:	41,841 <sup>1</sup>
Location:	Middlesex County, two miles north of Boston
Surface:	Slightly over 4 square miles
Mayor:	Joseph A. Curtatone 93 Highland Ave – (617) 625-6600 ext 2100 – mayor@ ci.somerville.ma.us
Board of Aldermen:	<b>AT LARGE: Bruce M. Desmond</b> 220A Summer Street - (617) 666-1757- BRUCEMDESMOND@YAHOO.COM <b>AT LARGE: Dennis M. Sullivan, Vice President</b> 8 Florence Street - (617) 628-1857- ALDERMANSULLIVAN@AOL.COM <b>AT LARGE: William A. White, Jr.</b> 16 Browning Road - (617) 625-9110 - WILLIAM.A.WHITE@VERIZON.NET <b>WARD 1: William M. Roche</b> 17 MacArthur Street - (617) 623-6661 - ALDERMANROCHE@COMCAST.NET <b>WARD 2: Maryann M. Heuston</b> 115 Beacon Street - (617) 492-5331 - MHEUSTON@HOTMAIL.COM <b>WARD 3: Thomas F. Taylor</b> 32 Vinal Avenue - (617) 776-1618 - TFTALD32@AOL.COM <b>WARD 4: Walter F. Pero</b> 392 Medford Street - (617) 628-0137 - WPERO@COMCAST.NET <b>WARD 5: Sean T. O'Donovan</b> 30 Warwick Street - (617) 776-6456 - SEAN@ODONOVANLAW.COM <b>WARD 6: Rebekah L. Gewirtz</b> 36 College Ave. #53 - (617) 718-0792 - REBEKAH@RCN.COM <b>WARD 7: Robert C. Trane, President</b> 70 Hooker Avenue - (617) 623-5767 - ROBERTTRANE@AOL.COM

## Demographics

Population:	77,478 (most densely populated community in New England)
Diversity:	1/3 of Somerville residents are foreign born
Languages:	More than 50 spoken languages in Somerville schools
Median age:	31.1
Education:	High school graduate 80.6%, Bachelor's degree or higher 40.6%
Per capita income:	\$23,628
Median family income:	\$32,455 <sup>2</sup>
Commuters:	11% of Somerville residents carpool, 27% use public transportation, 13% walk to work or work at home

## Business Climate

Labor force:	44,217
Unemployment rate:	3.4% <sup>3</sup>
Commercial Tax Rate:	\$18.90 <sup>4</sup>

## Other facts

Recognition:	National recognition as a model of innovation and efficiency for 311 customer service help line and SomerStat, a data-driven style of managing services.
Arts:	Only New York has more artists per capita than the City of Somerville!

1 \*Source: City of Somerville's Election Department, 2000

2 \*Source: Federal Census Bureau estimate, 1990

3 For 2006. Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce & US bureau of Labor Statistics

4 For 2006. (Tax rate has dropped 27% since 2000). Source: Somerville Assessor's Office

# City's Business Assistance Programs

## **Storefront Improvement Program**

The City of Somerville offers business and retail property owners financial assistance and design guidance through the Storefront Improvement Program (SIP). This program exists to keep our local business districts vital and to set a design standard for retail shops in Somerville.

Through SIP, participants (owners or tenants) may be eligible for a 50% matching grant toward storefront renovation costs. The 50% rebate is used toward construction costs of a renovation and may also be used toward the architect's fees.

A new, expedited initiative for 2007 is the Sign/Lighting/Awning program. This is a smaller program designed for the owner who wishes to change only those components of the exterior. The city may specify design standards to be eligible for this expedited program. The total rebate goes up to \$40,000 toward construction renovation costs, and \$5,000 for the Sign/Lighting/Awning program.

To be eligible for either program, business owners must either be in a HUD-eligible area or have five or fewer employees, including the proprietor. To determine your business' eligibility, please call:

Chris Daveta, Program Manager  
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development  
617-625-6600 ext. 2500 - [cdaveta@ci.somerville.ma.us](mailto:cdaveta@ci.somerville.ma.us)

## **Small Business Loans Program**

The City of Somerville, in partnership with ACCION USA, offers business owners access to capital through the Small Business Loans Program. With loans available up to \$25,000 for established businesses, and \$10,000 for start-ups, the City wishes to assist businesses to ensure that Somerville's business community remains healthy and vibrant. To be eligible for the Program, businesses must have five or fewer employees (including the proprietor).

To determine the eligibility of your business, or for more information about the program, please contact:

Maria Ortiz Perez, Business Development Specialist  
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development  
617-625-6600 ext. 2500 - [mortiz@ci.somerville.ma.us](mailto:mortiz@ci.somerville.ma.us)

## **Business Capital Assistance Website**

The City of Somerville has chosen to work with "j4b plc", a world leader in providing funding information, to give businesses access to a free business funding portal, Somerville4Business. Check out Somerville4Business website at <http://www.open4business.us/somerville>, for over 450 funding programs that businesses are eligible for from Federal, State and Local sources.

- 60-second funding search or category browse for easy and quick access at [www.ci.somerville.ma.us](http://www.ci.somerville.ma.us)
- 24-hour update for comprehensive funding information
- Full program & contact details linking you directly to funding providers
- Local information, support and contact details to help your organization meet its potential

For more information about the website, please contact:

Maria Ortiz Perez, Business Development Specialist  
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development  
617-625-6600 ext. 2500 - [mortiz@ci.somerville.ma.us](mailto:mortiz@ci.somerville.ma.us)

## **Brownfield Programs**

### **Brownfield Economic Development Program (BEDP)**

Under BEDP, a commercial or industrial business or developer who is interested in purchasing a Brownfield site (either known, or suspected to be contaminated) would be eligible to receive two types of assistance:

- Site Testing Services: a full round of environmental site testing services from a qualified environmental consultant, and a cost estimate for any remediation determined to be necessary. This site testing occurs prior to executing any purchase and sale agreement for purchase of a Brownfield site.
- Cost Overrun Coverage: Based on the cost estimate for site remediation, the participant may elect to enter into an environmental remediation cost overrun agreement with the City of Somerville.

### **Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF)**

Properties referred to as "brownfield" sites are parcels of land that have confirmed or suspected contamination. Brownfields often experience difficulties during real estate transactions due to prospective buyers' fears of unknown or unquantified cleanup costs. The BCRLF is a program created through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under which the City of Somerville can lend money to help finance brownfields cleanup.

The City of Somerville offers:

- Flexible loan amounts
- Flexible interest rates
- Flexible loan terms and conditions

The BCRLF can be utilized by itself or in combination with Somerville's BEDP. For more information about these programs, please contact:

Peter Mills, Environmental Programs Manager  
617 625 6600 ext 2106 - [pmills@ci.somerville.ma.us](mailto:pmills@ci.somerville.ma.us)