

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**  
**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-32<sup>31</sup>**  
**In City Council November 23, 2021**

Be it ordained by the Somerville City Council in session assembled, that the Somerville Zoning Ordinance is amended as attached by deleting the struckthrough text and adding the underlined text.

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

## 2. GLOSSARY & OVERVIEW

### Glossary

	characteristics, including the interrelationship between the intended uses, size, landscape design, and abutting real property.
<b>Cladding</b>	The exterior material that covers or overlays another material or structure.
<b>Clearance</b>	The height above the sidewalk or other surface, as specified, of the bottom edge of an object or building component.
<b>Co-Working</b>	An Arts & Creative Enterprise principal use category. See §9.2.2.d Co-Working.
<b>Commercial</b>	A term collectively defining permitted uses from all non-residential use categories, excluding parking.
<b>Commercial Farming</b>	A specific use type of the Farming principal use category (See §9.2.13.a.i Commercial Farming) and a specific use type of the Urban Agriculture accessory use category (See §9.2.14.d.iii Commercial Farming).
<b>Commercial Parking</b>	A specific use type of the Vehicle Parking principal use category. See §9.2.6.m.iii Commercial Parking.
<b>Commercial Space</b>	<u>One (1) or more rooms for the exclusive use of a specific tenant(s) separated by demising walls from other commercial spaces or building common areas.</u>
<b>Vehicle Repair &amp; Maintenance</b>	An Auto-Oriented principal use category. See §9.2.3.a Vehicle Repair or Maintenance.
<b>Community Center</b>	A Civic & Institutional principal use category. See §9.2.5.a Community Center.
<b>Community Farming</b>	A specific use type of the Farming principal use category. See §9.2.13.a.ii Community Farming.
<b>Community Gardening</b>	An Urban Agriculture principal use category. See §9.2.13.b Community Gardening.
<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>	The City of Somerville's official plan providing guidance and direction for future decision making that affects local government policy and community development as approved by the Planning Board per M.G.L. 41, 81d.
<b>Consumer Goods</b>	A Retail Sales principal use category. See §9.2.12.b Consumer Goods.
<b>Corner Board</b>	Flat vertical exterior casings framing siding or shingles at inside and outside corners.
<b>Cornice</b>	The molded and projecting horizontal member that crowns an architectural composition.
<b>Community or Group Residence</b>	A specific use type of the Group Living principal use category. See §9.2.11.b.i Community or Group Residence.
<b>Cost Burden</b>	When a household pays more than thirty percent (30%) of its income for housing.
<b>Cost Burden, Severe</b>	When a household pays more than fifty percent (50%) of its income for housing.
<b>Court</b>	An open, uncovered space, unobstructed to the sky, bounded on three or more sides by exterior building walls or other enclosing devices.
<b>Creative Incubator</b>	An organization providing startup and early-stage arts and creative enterprises with shared facilities and often providing business planning, access to finance, mentoring, and other business or administrative support services.
<b>Creative Studio</b>	A specific use type of the Home Occupation accessory use category. See §9.2.14.c.ii Creative Studio.
<b>Culinary Incubator</b>	An organization providing start-up catering, retail, and wholesale food businesses with shared kitchen facilities and often providing business planning, access to finance, mentoring, and other business or administrative support services.
<b>Cultivar</b>	A cultivated variety of tree; deliberately selected for its desirable physical characteristics.
<b>Curb Cut</b>	A section of sidewalk curbing removed to facilitate vehicular access to a driveway or vehicular entrance to a parking structure.
<b>Data Center</b>	An Industrial principal use category. See §9.2.8.b Data Center.
<b>Day Care Center, Adult</b>	A specific use type of the Day Care Services principal use category. See §9.2.6.h.i Adult Day Care Center.
<b>Day Care Center, Child</b>	A specific use type of the Commercial Services principal use category. See

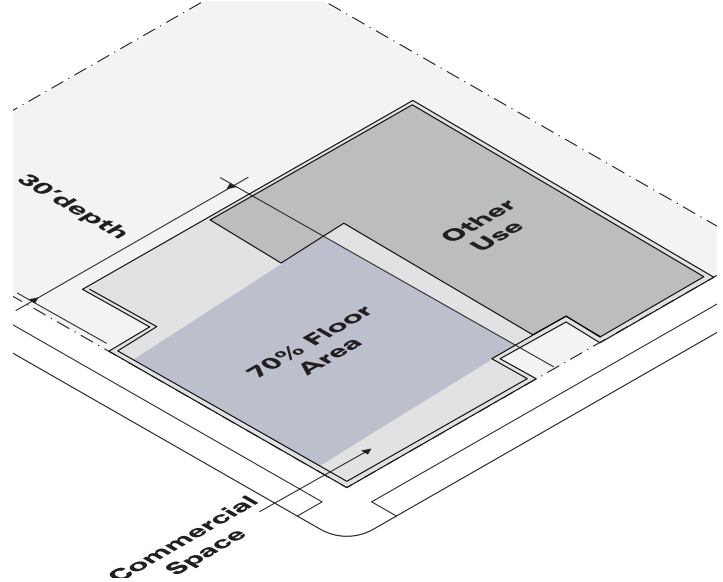
## 2. GLOSSARY & OVERVIEW

Standards & Measurements

for each BUILDING TYPE and is calculated as a percentage of the area of a FACADE.

- i). For buildings with GROUND STORY commercial spaces, GROUND STORY FENESTRATION is measured between two (2) feet and twelve (12) feet above the finished floor of the GROUND STORY.
  - ii). For all other buildings and all other stories, FENESTRATION is measured independently for each STORY, from the top of a finished floor to the top of the finished floor above.
- b). FENESTRATION enclosed with glazing may be included in the calculation if it meets the following criteria:
- i). For GROUND STORY FENESTRATION, glazing must have at least sixty percent (60%) VISIBLE LIGHT TRANSMITTANCE (VLT) and may have up to fifteen percent (15%) VISIBLE LIGHT REFLECTANCE (VLR).
  - ii). For UPPER STORY FENESTRATION, glazing must have must at least forty percent (40%) VLT and may have up to fifteen percent (15%) VLR.
- ii. BLANK WALL Area
- a). BLANK WALL area is any portion of a FACADE that does not include FENESTRATION (doors and windows) and surface relief through the USE of columns, CORNICES, moldings, PIERS, PILASTERS, sills, SIGN BANDS, other equivalent architectural features that either recess or project from the average plane of the FACADE by at least four (4) inches.
  - b). BLANK WALL area limitations apply both vertically and horizontally for all stories of a BUILDING for any FACADE.
- b. Use & Occupancy
- i. Pedestrian ACCESS
    - a). Buildings must have at least one (1) PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE. PRINCIPAL ENTRANCES must be located on the FACADE, provide both ingress and egress, and be operable at all times.
    - b). Multi-STORY buildings with GROUND STORY commercial spaces must have at least one (1) PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE for each commercial space in addition to any PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE(s) necessary for accessing the upper stories.
    - c). PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE spacing is measured as the distance between center line of doors along a FACADE.
    - d). All residential buildings developed after the adoption date of this Ordinance must provide at least one (1) zero step entrance at the front, side, or rear of the building. Per Article VI of the Code of Ordinances, City of Somerville,

**Figure 2.4.5 (c) Commercial Space Depth**



Massachusetts, reasonable accommodation may be requested to comply with this standard.

- e). Light wells may be provided within the FRONTAGE AREA to provide light and ACCESS into lower stories or to accommodate a change in grade across the front of a BUILDING.
  - f). The FRONTAGE AREA of a LOT may be terraced to accommodate pedestrian ACCESS where a change in grade exists across the front of a BUILDING.
- ii. HABITABLE Space Depth
- a). GROUND STORY DWELLING UNITS must have HABITABLE space at least twenty (20) feet in depth, measured as the distance from the FACADE towards the interior of the BUILDING.
- iii. GROUND STORY Commercial Space
- a). Any building fronting a PEDESTRIAN STREET must provide one (1) or more GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACES for one hundred percent (100%) of the total width of the building, excluding lobbies for UPPER STORY USES, means of egress, and any building systems rooms.
- iv. Commercial Space Factor
- a). When specified for a building type, the required minimum number of GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACES is calculated by dividing the building width at the primary facade by the commercial space factor indicated.
- v. Commercial Space Depth
- a). The depth of a COMMERCIAL SPACE is measured perpendicular from the facade toward the interior of a building.
  - b). The LEASABLE FLOOR AREA of any GROUND STORY

**8.2 SMALL BUSINESS (SB)**

**1. Intent**

- a. To implement recommendations of SomerVision for commercial DEVELOPMENT.
- b. To create, maintain, and enhance locations appropriate for neighborhood- and community-serving businesses.

**2. Purpose**

- a. To permit neighborhood- and community-serving commercial uses providing for the frequently recurring needs of local residents for real property in underlying residential districts.
- b. To USE discretion in permitting the occupancy of commercial spaces over five thousand (5,000) square feet in LEASABLE FLOOR AREA for real property in underlying residential districts.
- c. To require multiple ground story commercial spaces for real property in underlying mid-rise, high-rise, and commercial districts.

**3. Applicability**

- a. The section is applicable to all real property within the Small Business overlay district as shown on the maps of the Official Zoning Atlas of the City of Somerville.
- b. The provisions of this Section supplement or supersede the provisions of the districts upon which it is superimposed.
- c. Where the provisions of this Section conflict with those found elsewhere in this Ordinance, the provisions of this Section apply.

**4. Neighborhood Residence & Urban Residence**

- a. Applicability
  - i. This section is applicable to the establishment, change, or expansion of the use of real property.
  - ii. Development may comply with all of the applicable provisions of this Section in lieu of complying with those same provisions of the underlying zoning district.
- b. Use Provisions
  - i. Use categories are permitted as specified on Table 8.2.4 (a) in addition to the use categories permitted by the underlying zoning district.
  - ii. Occupancy of any commercial space over five thousand (5,000) square feet in LEASABLE FLOOR AREA by any permitted USE requires a Special Permit.
    - a). In addition to the review criteria for all Special Permits specified in §15.2.1.e. Review Criteria, the review board shall make findings considering the following in its discretion to approve or deny a special permit authorizing occupancy of a commercial space over five thousand (5,000) square feet in LEASABLE FLOOR AREA by any permitted USE specified on Table 8.2.4:
      - i). Compatibility with the intensity of activity associated with the surrounding land USES.
      - ii). Capacity of the local THOROUGHFARE network providing ACCESS to the SITE and the impact on pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic and circulation patterns in the neighborhood.
- c. Parking & Mobility
  - i. Vehicular parking must be provided as specified on Table 8.2.4 (b), except as follows:
    - a). Non-residential uses with five thousand (5,000) square feet or less of gross leasable floor area are exempt from any minimum requirements of 8.2.4 (b).

# 8. OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Small Business (SB)

**Table 8.2.4 (a) Additional Permitted Uses**

Use Category Specific Use	SB
<b>Arts &amp; Creative Enterprises</b>	
Artisanal Production	P
Arts Exhibition	P
Arts Sales & Services	P
Design Services	P
Shared Workspaces & Arts Education	P
<b>Civic &amp; Institutional</b>	
Private Non-Profit Club or Lodge	SP
<b>Commercial Services</b>	
Animal Services (as noted below)	--
Pet Grooming	P
Veterinarian	SP
Building & Home Repair Services	SP
Business Support Services	P
Day Care Service (as noted below)	--
Adult Day Care Center	P
Child Day Care Center	P

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

**Table 8.2.4 (a) Additional Permitted Uses (continued)**

Use Category Specific Use	SB
Maintenance & Repair of Consumer Goods	P
Personal Services (except as noted below)	P
Body-Art Services	P
Fitness Services	P
Funeral Services	SP
Health Care Services	SP
<b>Food &amp; Beverage Services</b>	
Bar, Restaurant or Tavern	SP
Bakery, Café, or Coffee Shop	SP
<b>Retail Sales</b>	
Building or Home Supplies & Equipment	SP
Consumer Goods (except as follows)	P
Alcohol Sales	SP
Firearms Sales	N
Pet Store	SP
Fresh Food Market or Grocery Store	P
Farm or Vendor Market	P

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

**Table 8.2.4 (b) Vehicular Parking**

\*See TRANSIT AREAS Map for LOTS located in a TRANSIT AREA

Use Category Specific Use	BICYCLE		MOTOR VEHICLE	
	Short-Term (min)	Long-Term (min)	Inside a TRANSIT AREA (max)	Outside of a TRANSIT AREA (min)
<b>Arts &amp; Creative Enterprise</b>				
All Permitted Uses	0.1 / 1,000 sf	0.33 / 1,000 sf	0.8 / 1,000 sf	1.0 / 1,000 sf
<b>Civic &amp; Institutional</b>				
All Permitted Uses	0.5 / 1,000 sf	0.1 / 1,000 sf	4 / 1,000 sf	1.0 / 1,000 sf
<b>Commercial Services</b>				
All Permitted Uses (except as noted below)	0.4 / 1,000 sf	0.1 / 1,000 sf	1.0 / 1,000 sf	1.0 / 1,000 sf
Business Support Services	--	--	--	0.75 / 1,000 sf
Day Care Service	2 (min)	--	--	0.75 / 1,000 sf
Maintenance & Repair of Consumer Goods	--	--	0.5 / 1,000 sf	--
Personal Services	--	--	0.5 / 1,000 sf	--
<b>Food and Beverage Service</b>				
All Permitted Uses	1.0 / 1,000 sf	0.2 / 1,000 sf	0.33 / 1,000 sf	0.5 / 1,000 sf
<b>Retail Sales</b>				
All Permitted Uses (except as noted below)	0.4 / 1,000 sf	0.1 / 1,000 sf	1.0 / 1,000 sf	0.66 / 1,000 sf
Farm/Vendor Market	none	none	none	--

sf - Gross Leasable Square Footage

DU - DWELLING UNIT

RU - ROOMING UNIT

# 8. OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Small Business (SB)

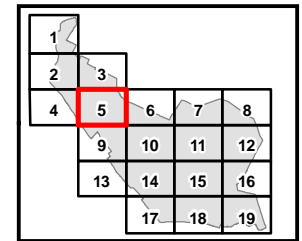
## 5. Mid-Rise, High-Rise, & Commercial Districts













- a. Applicability
  - i. This section is applicable to the construction of any new principal building.
  - ii. Development must comply with all of the provisions of this Section in addition to or in lieu of complying with the provisions of the underlying zoning district, as applicable.
- b. Building Types
  - i. GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACES must be provided as specified on Table 8.2.5.
    - a). Any fractional number resulting from this calculation is rounded to the nearest whole number.
    - b). Apartment Buildings are exempt.
  - ii. ONLY ONE (1) GROUND STORY COMMERCIAL SPACE OVER (35) feet in width is permitted to front a pedestrian street.

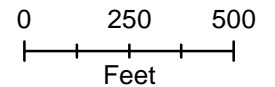
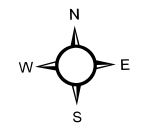
**Table 8.2.5 Dimensional Standards**

Use & Occupancy	
<u>Ground Story Entrance Spacing (max)</u>	<u>none</u>
<u>Commercial Space Factor (min)</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Commercial Space Depth (min)</u>	<u>20 ft</u>

CITY OF  
SOMERVILLE, MA  
**OFFICIAL PROPOSED  
ZONING**  
(UNADOPTED)



- |   |            |   |     |
|---|------------|---|-----|
|  | SB Overlay |  | CIV |
|  | NR         |  | FAB |
|  | UR         |  | CC4 |
|  | MR3        |  | CB  |
|  | MR4        |  | TU  |
|  | MR6        |  | PS  |



Date: December 12, 2019

