

Somerville

Redevelopment Authority

2018 Annual Report

Prepared by the Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community
Development – Economic Development Division

November 2022

Somerville Redevelopment Authority

The Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) was founded in 1956, pursuant to the authority granted by the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 121B, § 3.

Staff and SRA Board member names below reflect the individuals who were in these roles during 2018.

SRA Board

Nancy Busnach, Chair
Iwona Bonney, Secretary
William Gage
Phil Ercolini

Mayor

Joseph A. Curtatone

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development staff to the SRA

Michael Glavin, Executive Director
Thomas Galligani, Director of Economic Development
Sunayana Thomas, Senior Economic Development Planner
Eileen McGettigan, Special Counsel

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/somerville-redevelopment-authority>

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Introduction

The Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) has helped revitalize Somerville since its founding in 1956. Over the past six decades the SRA has significantly enhanced the City's neighborhoods, squares, and industrial districts by fostering construction of new development in deteriorated and under-used property.

The SRA Annual Report for 2018 reviews the projects under the Authority's jurisdiction during this year. Submittal of annual reports are required by the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). This report will be filed and recorded with DHCD.

Background

The SRA has helped revitalize Somerville since its establishment in 1956 under Massachusetts General Laws c. 121B. This law provides the SRA power to declare an area "substandard, decadent, and/or a blighted open area", to prepare an urban renewal plan for redevelopment of such areas and undertake eminent domain takings to implement such plans. Over the past six decades the SRA has significantly enhanced neighborhoods and commercial areas by fostering construction of new development in deteriorated and under-used property.

Meetings & Votes

Meeting date	Type	Vote count
March 1, 2018	Regular	4
April 26, 2018	Regular	4
May 31, 2018	Regular	4
June 28, 2018	Regular	4
July 19, 2018	Regular	2
October 11, 2018	Regular	2
November 15, 2018	Regular	6
December 13, 2018	Regular	5

2018 Project Highlights

Assembly Square

The jewel in the SRA's redevelopment crown, Assembly Square is Somerville's newest neighborhood, arising over the past decade from a moribund factory district centered around the former Ford assembly plant.

In 2018, Assembly Square welcomed a broad range of new retailers and restaurants, including Zo Greek, Fitness Hub Activewear, Arrow Express, Barbershop, Lucky Strike, Cycle Bar, American Fresh Brewhouse, Medici, Bath & Bodyworks, Polo Ralph Lauren, Smoke Shop BBQ, Burlington Coat Factory, True Religion, Xfinity, Top Shelf, and Lash Lounge. Regarding local hiring efforts, Assembly Row hosted a Job Fair in April that attracted 80 local attendees, and twelve Assembly Row retailers participated in the annual Somerville High School Career Fair.

Development also progressed steadily. Construction proceeded on the Montaje Apartments, and construction of the ground floor retail space located on Block 6 continued. The City also approved permits for several projects, including Assembly Edge's "The Row" development—comprised of a 180-room hotel and a 215-unit apartment building that total nearly 600,000 square feet of space—and a 329-unit apartment building being developed by XMBLY. Foundation work for Blocks 5B and 8 started at the end of the year.

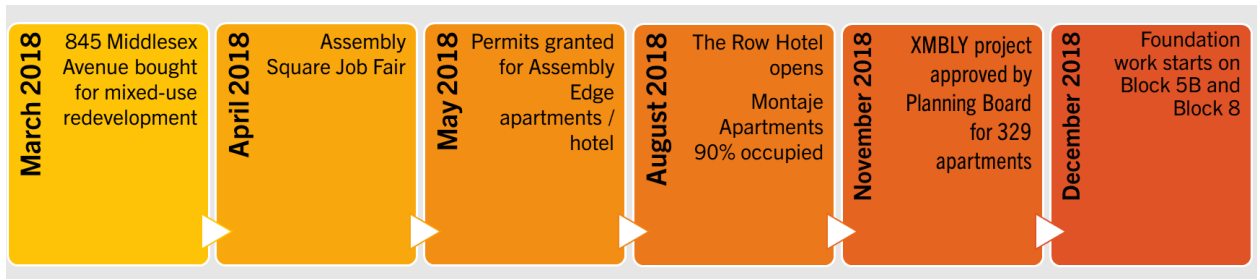


Figure 1: Assembly Square 2018 Redevelopment Milestones

Union Square

Building upon legal and zoning groundwork completed in 2017 towards implementing the SRA Union Square Urban Revitalization Plan, 2018 saw the progression of several important steps for development in Union Square. Union Square Associates (US2), the Master Land Developer for the Urban Renewal Area at Union Square, hosted several neighborhood meetings and continued negotiating a Community Benefits Agreement with the Union Square Neighborhood Council. They also began the environmental permitting process, and underwent Design and Site Plan Review for permitting on the D2

site. During this review process, the underground parking provision emerged as a point of contention with the neighborhood. The SRA also approved USAA Real Estate as a non-controlling equity and debt partner to US2.

In addition to supporting the work of US2, the SRA also approved the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to begin work on the new Union Square Green Line Extension station.

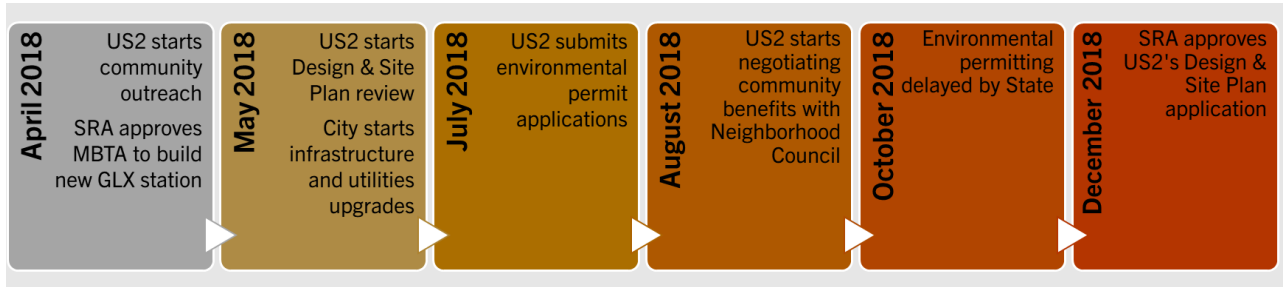


Figure 2: Union Square 2018 Redevelopment Milestones

Inner Belt

In late 2018, the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development informed the SRA about the possibility of acquiring a four-acre site at 90 Washington Street that could serve as the site of a new Public Safety Building as well as for associated commercial, residential, and civic development. Home of the former Cobble Hill Plaza shopping center, the property was vacated for construction of mid-rise apartment buildings in 2016 until internal conflicts among its ownership stalled momentum.

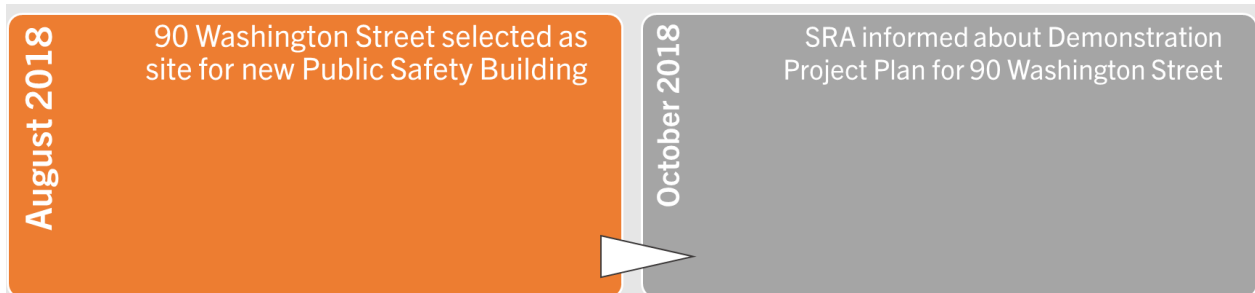


Figure 3: Inner Belt 2018 Redevelopment Milestones