

NEMSN Profile: Somerville, MA

Community Profile¹

<i>Area (sq. Miles):</i>	4.1
<i>Population:</i>	80,334
<i>Population Density:</i>	19,488.70
<i>Households:</i>	31,837
<i>Median Age:</i>	31
<i>Median Household Income:</i>	\$86,012
<i>Poverty Rate:</i>	11%

City Department:

Title: Office of Sustainability and Environment.

Staff: Oliver Sellers-Garcia: Director, Office of Sustainability and Environment, Vital Deshpande: Environmental Coordinator, Hannah Payne: Sustainability Coordinator

Responsibilities: Implement strategies that continually improve the environmental performance of Somerville city government and the community.

Programs/Policies: Programs pertaining to reducing energy usage and costs, minimizing environmental impact and waste, and addressing global climate change. Programs include SustainaVille, Somerville GreenTech.

Frameworks: Compact of Mayors, Metro Boston Climate Preparedness.

Interview:

What have been your biggest successes in the past 2-3 years?

- First citywide Carbon Neutrality goals set for 2050
- Solarize residential campaign
- SustainaVille updates
- Climate change progress report completed

Given the range of your priorities, which do you consider to be your top priorities?

- Mayor's carbon neutrality goal; focus on waste, air quality and energy.
- *City has limited scope to accomplish much of these programs on their own because of Somerville's interconnection with surrounding communities. At the federal level they can drag their feet because it is looked at as a regional level. Issues: (state energy policy-energy code, transportation, infrastructure funding).

Please explain why you have chosen these strategies?

Has great community support

Feasibility, although there are some aspects such as solar that are more difficult to implement.

How important are the metrics to projecting the progress of programs and policies?

How did you develop them?

- Climate change metrics completed.
- Cambridge reports through CDP for Global Covenant. All other reporting is done for internal performance management or external-facing reports to the community.

What resources are needed to complete your strategies and priorities? Are they currently available to you? If not, do you know where/how to obtain them?

- Funding
- Model program (i.e. green communities) need funding at municipal level.
- Need the level tools to be able to take new existing buildings to improve energy efficiency.
- Need regional look (neighboring communities) to assess sewer and transportation infrastructure.

How has the local community promoted its sustainability efforts to members in the community?

- Centralize messages on SustainaVille; solar outreach, climate change engagement, expands the community voice for Somerville.
- Receive a lot of community support and support from elected officials.

What are your top 3 barriers that you consider to be beyond the control of the municipality, which have limited your ability to implement sustainability initiatives?

- Connecting with businesses to become more sustainable.
- Old housing stocks, issues with housing affordability.
- Improving communication with landlords on sustainability.

Sustainable Profile²*Overview*

- Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling
- Food & Agriculture
- Transportation
- Storm Water
- Energy
- Development
- Greenhouse Gas Reduction
- Climate Preparedness
- Equity & Economics
- Community Engagement

Sustainable Plans

	Targets/Goals	Published Plan	Metrics/Reporting
Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling	✓		✓
Food & Agriculture			
Transportation	✓	✓	
Storm Water	✓		✓
Energy	✓		✓
Development	✓	✓	
GHG Reduction	✓	✓	✓
Climate Preparedness	✓	✓	
Equity & Economics	✓		✓
Community Engagement			
Totals	8	4	5

Data Source: University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute: Program Implementation Survey 2017

Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling

Top Priorities

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Strategies

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Food & Agriculture

Top Priorities

- Waste Wizard Program.

Strategies

-

Transportation:

Top Priorities

- Improving the 15 existing bus routes, bringing train service in the form of the Assembly Square T station (Green Line Extension project (2014)).
- Complete Streets Ordinance (passed in 2014).

Strategies

- Improve bicycle facilities.
- Making neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly.
- Encourage transit-oriented development.

Storm water:

Top Priorities

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Strategies

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Energy

Top Priorities

- GreenTech (2014)-Continue to pilot green technologies developed by local companies.
- Designated (Green Community)-receive grants funding from DOER to help finance energy efficiency projects throughout the City.
- Greening municipal fleet- switching to electric and hybrid vehicles when possible.

Strategies

- Solar Cell Phone Charging Pilot.
- Upgrade lighting in all four schools, the City Hall Annex and at Traffic and Parking.
- LED streetlight replacement (estimated \$264,815 saved on lighting bills).

Development

Top Priorities

- SEEN-works to make Somerville's housing more energy efficient by encouraging residents to take advantage of existing offers and programs through MassSave.
- MassSave provides no-cost Home Energy Assessments to Somerville homeowners, landlords and tenants.

Strategies

- If 1,001 Somerville residents complete Home Energy Assessments in 2017, the City of Somerville will earn \$40,000 for future energy efficiency initiatives from National Grid.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Top Priorities

- Carbon neutral goal by 2050.
- To decrease our contribution to climate change by reducing the collective carbon emissions of both the city and its residents.
- To prepare Somerville to thrive amid the potential impacts of climate change such as storms, flooding and heat waves.

Strategies

- Conduct baseline GHG inventory.
- Map possible pathways to carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Assess local and regional climate change vulnerabilities.
- Develop actionable, integrated solutions in a comprehensive Climate Change Plan.

Climate Preparedness

Top Priorities

- Maintain Somerville's green spaces to improve our environment and to keep residents healthy.
- Hyper-Local Weather Stations Pilot.

Strategies

- Selecting plant and tree species that are more resilient to warmer and more severe climates.
- Implementing sustainable maintenance practices.
- Reducing water usage through smart park design.
- Improving storm water retention with permeable pavers, rain gardens and underground storage.
- Increasing urban tree canopy to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Reducing energy consumption of lights and fountains at parks.

Equity & Economics

Top Priorities

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Strategies

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Community Engagement

Top Priorities

-

Strategies

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Initiative Implementation

Somerville, MA	Not Yet Considered	Planning	In Progress	Fully Implemented
Curbside Composting		✓		
Zero Waste Policy	✓			
Community Gardens				✓
Urban Agriculture & Local Food Programs				✓
Complete Streets				✓
Bike Share/ Rail Trail				✓
Green Storm Water Infrastructure Upgrades			✓	✓
Commercial/Municipal Building Upgrades			✓	
Municipal Energy Aggregation				✓
Municipal Solar Installations			✓	
Community Solar Installations		✓		
LED Conversions: Streetlight				✓
LED Conversion: Municipal Buildings			✓	
Mixed-Use Development			✓	✓
Urban Infill			✓	✓
Sustainable Housing for Low-Income Families			✓	✓
Aiding Local Business With Sustainable Programs		✓		
Updated Website with Events/Reports				✓
OTHER				
Totals		3	7	11

Data Source: University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute: Program Implementation Survey 2017

Sources:

- 1.) "Census Profile: Somerville, MA." *Census Reporter*. N.p., n.d. Web 22 May 2017.
- 2.) "SustainaVille." *SustainaVille | City of Somerville*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 May 2017.