

SomerVision Plan to be honored by American Planning Association, Mass. Chapter

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The city's 20-year Comprehensive Plan, SomerVision, is set to be honored by the American Planning Association's Massachusetts Chapter on December 14 as part of its Annual Awards Program, honoring innovative planning efforts across the Commonwealth. Somerville is one of thirteen communities to be honored in 2012, and will receive the Comprehensive Planning Award for a municipality with a population of over 50,000. The Comprehensive Planning Award honors a plan, program, or process of unusually high merit. Somerville will share the distinction with the Westford Strategic Planning Retreats, given to the Town of Westford, MA for the community with a population of under 50,000. Awards will be presented during an Annual Holiday Awards Luncheon on December 14.

"In Somerville, we are proud to be on the cutting edge of public policy issues. Unlike many states, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not require municipal governments to prepare comprehensive plans for the future, but Somerville's residents and elected officials stepped up and demanded one," said Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone. "The SomerVision plan reflects our shared values of making Somerville a great place to live, work, play and raise a family, and it lays out an ambitious yet realistic policy framework for achieving our goals."

"We are honored to be recognized by the Massachusetts chapter of the American Planning Association. One of the elements that plans were judged on was readability," said Planning Director George Proakis. "SomerVision is the result of the input of so many residents and stakeholders, and it really shows what can happen when a diverse group works together and makes compromises to achieve a larger goal. The resident volunteers who spent three years working on SomerVision really wanted the final document to be accessible and fun to read, and to tell interesting stories about the great things happening in our city. We've gotten a lot of positive feedback so far – pick up a copy at City Hall or download it from the City's website and let us know what you think."

SomerVision is the city's 20-year Comprehensive Plan, which serves as a blueprint for a sustainable, equitable development future. SomerVision is based on three years of extensive community input from residents, businesses and other community stakeholder, and incorporates a series of research reports in areas such as demographics, economics, housing, and transportation and land use.

The Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change.