

Translating Research Into Effective Policy

April 10, 2008

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone



Shape Up Somerville: Eat Smart, Play Hard.

“Most people think the battle against obesity takes willpower. But the City of Somerville knows **it takes the will of an entire community.**”

- The Wall Street Journal



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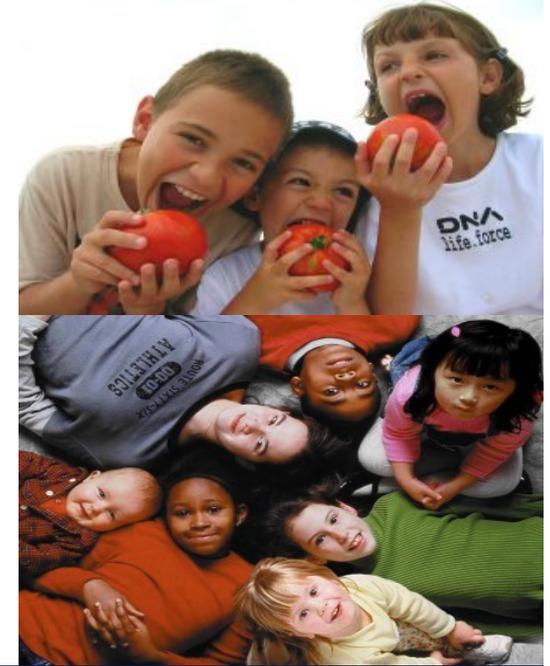
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Shape Up Somerville: *Design...*

- **Community-based approach**
- **School improvements**
 - ✓ fresher, healthier food options
 - ✓ refined curriculum
 - ✓ “walking school bus”
- **Community Improvements**
 - ✓ walkability/safe routes to schools
 - ✓ streetscape & infrastructure upgrades
 - ✓ Shape-Up-approved restaurants & menus (21)
- **Sustainable Results**



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Shape Up Somerville: *Design...*



- Relevant Demographics:
 - Somerville:
 - 80,000 residents, 3% minorities
 - 52 spoken languages
 - most densely populated community in New England, 5th nationwide
- Environments are obesigenic
- School environments are favorable for prevention
- Address individual behaviors in community



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Environment



During School Environment



Afternoon Environment



At Home
Safe Routes to School Maps
↑ Walking to School (-30 kcals)
Healthier Home Breakfast
↑ Fiber, ↓ Sugar, ↓ Fat
Appropriate Portion Sizes

Physical Activity Equipment for Recess
↑ Physical Activity (- 25 kcals)
Healthier School Lunch
↑ Fiber, ↓ Sugar, ↓ Fat
Increased Fresh Fruits & Vegetables
Appropriate Portion Sizes
Improved Presentation and Atmosphere
Social Marketing in Cafeteria
Alternative “Healthier” A La Carte Items
New Food Service Equipment

At home
Safe Routes to School Maps
↑ Walking Home (-30 kcals)
Healthy Home Snack
↑ Fiber, ↓ Sugar, ↓ Fat

Before School Program
Healthier School Breakfast
↑ Fiber, ↓ Sugar, ↓ Fat
Appropriate Portion Sizes
Increased Fresh Fruits
Breakfast Coordinator

Classroom Micro Units
↑ Physical Activity (- 25 kcals) 5 days/wk (10 min)
Nutrition & Physical Activity Education 1 day/wk (30 min)

Healthier Fundraising Alternatives

Professional Development

Teachers
Administrators
Food Service Staff
PE Teachers

After School Program
Curriculum:
Cooking Lessons
Physical Activity (-30 kcals)
Nutrition Education
Professional Development

Reinforcing Environments

Home Environment (~15 kcal)

Parent Newsletter w/ coupons
Growth Reports
↓ Screen Time
Promotional Gifts

Community Environment

Community “Champions”
Restaurant Participation
Pediatrician Training & Support
Community TV Appearances
Ethnic Group Outreach
Community PA Resource Guide
Community Events

Shape Up Somerville:

Evaluation...

- 1 pound less per year weight gain
- Increased activity
- Fresher, healthier food options
- 2 years later?
 - *continued study*
 - *sustainable results & community*
 - *community reaction*



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Shape Up Somerville: *Implementation...*

- 3-year environmental change intervention
 - *PROBLEM: obesity in culturally diverse, high-risk communities is disproportionately higher*
 - *SOLUTION: address specific needs in a dense, diverse city.*
 - *fresher foods, more physical activity, more education*
- Creating a sustainable city: policies and programs
 - *promoting walkability, active living*
 - *informing policy makers, community members*
 - *SomerStat, ResiStat*



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Data Informing Policy: *SomerStat Approach*

- What is SomerStat?
- Enables productive and efficient policy discussions by:
 - *facilitating data-driven discussions between Mayor, Departments*
 - *providing access to all data sources in the city to take into consideration constellation of policy implications*
 - *provide support for finding best practices in public and private sectors*
 - *Ensures that key decision makers and all relevant parties are at the table*
 - *allows for fast decision making*
 - *enables follow-up on implementation and service delivery change once policy decisions have been made*
- Informs legislative and communication processes
- Transparent government, policy discussions: *ResiStat*



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Community Wellness Policies:

Safe-START Initiative

*“ What's going on there in schools and homes all over the city is
nothing short of a revolution. ”*

– ABC News



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Community Wellness: Safe-START

➤ **Create policies that promote and support walkability**

➤ **Long-term & immediate community improvements**

- *Major roadway & infrastructure changes*
- *Pedestrian safety improvements*



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Community Wellness:

- **Safety/traffic improvements**

- **Immediate**

- *thermoplastic crosswalks*
- *traffic calming tables*
 - 30 proposed locations
- *One-way secondary roads*
- *extended “walk” time*
- *bollards at schools and parks*
- *reflective street signs*



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Community Wellness:

➤ Long-term

- *bike lanes on major roads*
- *tree inventory*
- *open space upgrades*
- *improved lighting*
- *sidewalk improvements*
- *reconstruction projects*
 - Somerville Avenue



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Shape Up Somerville: *Creating a Sustainable Community*



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Community Impact

- How has Shape Up Somerville, Wellness Policy impacted the community?
 - Creatively examined, restructured obesigenic environments, especially in at-risk sector
 - Convened long-term Task Forces, departments, services to sustain results
 - Sustain active living, “shaping up,” with specialized groups
 - *Fitness Buddies, Walk/Ride Days*
 - In a densely populated community, wellness not only affects active living, but also environment
 - *formation of Office of Sustainability & Environment, Environmental Strategic Plan*



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Community Wellness: Environmental Strategic Plan

- Creating sustainable growth and lifestyles
- Major Initiatives:
 1. *Hybrid, biofuel vehicle fleet*
 2. *Renewable energy, eco-friendly practices*
 3. *Single-stream recycling & Big Belly installation*
- Open Space & Recreation Plan
 - *Park upgrades*
 - *Open space promotes active living*
 - *Renovations from play structures to green space*



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