

GUIDE TO HOSTING A **SomerSupper**

What is a SomerSupper?

SomerSuppers are **conversations about Somerville’s past, present, and future** hosted by **you!**

The usual comprehensive plan involves committees, meetings, reports, and debates. SomerVision 2040 will involve all these things, but we want to encourage community members to hold their own discussions and create environments that are more welcoming to folks who typically don’t attend public meetings.

The notes and ideas participants submit to SomerVision 2040 staff will be summarized and provided to the SomerVision Committee.

How do I host a SomerSupper?

1. Plan your SomerSupper.

- *Where will it be, and how many people will you invite?* We recommend limiting it to between five and eight people. Feel free to pair up with someone else to co-host together!
- *When will it be?* We’d like them to be complete by April 1, 2019.
- *Will there be food?* You can host a potluck, cook a meal, offer a snack, order in, or forgo the food entirely. It’s up to you.
- *What do you want to discuss?* See the “Conversation Menu” in this packet for prompts designed to get people sharing and discussing from different points of view. Want to tackle something “off the menu”? Feel free to reach out to LDrago@SomervilleMA.gov or 617-625-6600 ext. 2515 to brainstorm other ideas.

2. Invite your guest list.

- *This could be your friends, family, neighbors – or anyone else in the community.* Try to expand your guest list beyond people you already know well.
- *The SomerVision process will create a community plan, but is also about creating and strengthening the Somerville community.* Do you always see someone on your morning commute or at the dog park but don’t know their name? Do you know your neighbors? This could be an opportunity to say hello and get to know them.

3. Host the SomerSupper!

- *As the host, be prepared to facilitate the conversation.* You should actively participate in the discussion, but also try to maintain a respectful and inclusive dialogue (see our suggested guidelines) and keep the conversation on topic.
- *Stick to a rough schedule*—we’ve included one in the Conversation Menu, but you can adjust it depending on how the conversation progresses. If the meeting will run long, check with guests to be respectful of their time.
- *At the end, please fill out the SomerSupper Report as a group, either in a print copy (enclosed) or at this address: <http://bit.do/SomerSupper>.* This is important, because otherwise we won’t be able to incorporate your feedback into the plan!

What do SomerSuppers look like?

Feel free to tweak the SomerSuppers model to fit your needs. Here are some examples:

- After church services, a congregation splits into groups of ten participants, with each group tackling a different topic from the Conversation Menu.
- A resident posts flyers around her neighborhood to recruit a group of five people to come over for a post-dinner discussion over tea, coffee, and desserts.
- A multifamily building gets together to share a potluck-style dinner at one of the units.
- A resident who wants to meet new people posts flyers about his SomerSupper around the neighborhood and invites someone he always sees walking her dog to come personally. He uses some of the recipes in this packet, and attendees bring dessert.
- A community non-profit invites their board members, email subscribers, and leaders to participate in a SomerSupper hosted in their conference room over food they’ve ordered from a local restaurant for delivery.

In this packet, you’ll find additional information and resources for a successful SomerSupper:

- *Guidelines for Good Conversation:* Recommended ground rules to help everyone have an engaging, kind conversation (pg. 3)
- *Conversation Menu:* Pick a topic from the menu to discuss (pg. 4)
- *SomerSupper Report:* Please let us know what you learned during your SomerSupper using the enclosed form or the online version at: <http://bit.do/SomerSupper> (pg. 5)
- *Food Inspiration:* Recipes and recommendations, if you decide to include food in your SomerSupper (pg.9)
- *Flyer template:* If you decide to promote your event throughout the neighborhood or in your office (pg. 12)

Guidelines for Good Conversation

It can be helpful to share these guidelines with the group so all guests understand the best practices.

1. **Show respect.** Everyone should be treated with respect. Respect is evident when we listen to each other, refrain from talking over one another, and indicate to others that their opinions and perspectives are valued.
2. **Listen without interrupting.** Everyone should work together to ensure everyone gets to speak. No one should dominate the conversation. As the host and facilitator, gently ask someone to wrap up their point or engage a quiet guest with a direct question as needed.
3. **Encourage everyone to participate.** All perspectives, expertise, and contributions should be valued.
4. **It's okay to disagree.** Embrace disagreement and counter-arguments--you don't need to decide who "wins," and there are no wrong opinions. Try to understand the nature of the differing opinions and include it in your SomerSupper report. As the facilitator, please do your best to keep the conversation in "healthy debate" territory rather than veering towards an argument. A well-timed break can help reset the mood if necessary.
5. **Ask questions to understand.** Let genuine curiosity lead your questions and be open-minded about the answers. This is a great opportunity to learn about different perspectives.
6. **Speak to your own perspective.** Avoid stereotyping or generalizing.
7. **Work together to help everyone understand.** Don't be afraid to identify what you don't know or what you don't understand. Relatedly, avoid using technical words or jargon. Regardless of background or expertise, be patient with each other and don't hesitate to explain or ask for clarification.
8. **Stay on topic.** Many of the conversation topics will involve topics and challenges that exist beyond Somerville—these may be regional, national, or even global issues. Talk about these big challenges, but make sure to eventually consider how they affect Somerville in particular, and how Somerville itself can be part of the solutions.

Conversation Menu

These topics are designed to facilitate conversations inspired by our SomerVision values and some key issues facing our community. We recommend picking one topic and following the timeline below.

Recommended Timeline (Approximately 90 minutes)

- **Introduction** - 10 minutes:
 - Host begins the SomerSupper by having everyone introduce themselves: Who are you? Where do you live? What do you get excited about? The host can also provide an ice breaker if the group doesn't know each other well.
 - The host then introduces the topic to be discussed, shares the questions and rough timeline.
 - The host shares the Group Summary report questions, so people have in mind what they will be asked at the end of the discussion. Consider giving everyone a copy of the group summary report to take notes on during the discussion.
 - The host shares the Guidelines of Good Conversation., and asks if anyone has any changes or additions.
- **Question 1** – about 3 minutes per attendee: Ask everyone to think quietly for 1-2 minutes about the question. Then ask people to share a story about their experience. Consider having each attendee answer the question, going around the table or room.
- **Question 2** - 20 minutes: This can be unstructured conversation, or each person can share individually.
- **Question 3** – 20 - 30 minutes: This is a great time to brainstorm and debate! Consider setting a certain amount of time for coming up with ideas (like 5-10 minutes) – no discussion, just listing the ideas. Then go through each idea and talk about the good things about the idea and the potential barriers to making it work in Somerville.
- **Survey** - 15 minutes: The most important part, since this is how your conversation will become part of SomerVision 2040. The host or a volunteer should read the questions to the group and take notes on the responses. These tasks could change with each question to encourage participation from everyone. We want one submission per SomerSupper conversation. If you're hosting one at your house, it would be one submission. If you're hosting a bunch of conversations in a bigger space, have each group submit a report.

Economy

Discuss jobs, small businesses, income inequality, socioeconomic status, or the economy.

1. Share an example of how economic inequality or economic status has personally affected your life, either positively or negatively.
2. What are the most significant economic issues do you see affecting Somerville as a community?
3. How can Somerville solve the issues identified in question 2? How can Somerville make the economy fairer?

Housing

Discuss housing stability, homelessness prevention, aging in place, or residential development.

1. Share an example of how housing issues have directly affected you or people you know well.
2. What housing issues do you see affecting Somerville as a community?
3. How can Somerville solve the issues identified in question 2? How can Somerville improve housing options, prevent displacement, and rein in housing costs?

Sustainability & Environment

Discuss open space, climate change, trees, wildlife, or energy efficiency.

1. Share how Somerville’s natural environment affects you directly—describe the places you love or the places that cause you problems.
2. What are some of the most important environmental issues facing Somerville today?
3. What can Somerville do to solve some of the issues identified in question 2? How can Somerville improve the natural environment and promote sustainability?

Community & Inclusion

Discuss civic engagement, diversity, transparency, or inclusion.

1. Share an example of a way you are engaged or have been engaged with a community (“community” could be a church, volunteer group, neighborhood, or Somerville as a whole).
2. What barriers exist prevent people from participating in Somerville’s communities, and who is likely to be left out because of these barriers?
3. What can Somerville do to solve some of the issues identified in question 2? How can Somerville create a sense of community for everyone?

Transportation & Accessibility

Discuss streets, transit service, bike infrastructure, or parking.

1. Share how you usually get around Somerville and the region. Where do you go most often and how do you get there?
2. What would it take to get more people to ride the T, walk, or bicycle to the places they go (work, school, shopping, etc.?)
3. What can Somerville do to solve some of the issues identified in question 2? How can Somerville help people get around?

Business

Discuss local businesses, minority-owned businesses, entrepreneurship, or quality jobs.

1. Share a story about your own employment—what’s a job that you currently have or want to have?
2. What are some issues you see affecting the business community or workforce of Somerville?
3. What can Somerville do to solve some of the issues identified in question 2? How can Somerville support high-quality jobs and independent businesses?

SomerSupper Report

Host Information

This is a print version of the report available at <http://bit.do/SomerSupper>. We're asking each SomerSupper group to submit ONE report—if there are multiple conversations at the same event, please have each discussion group submit the report. Please set aside some time at the end of your SomerSupper (15 minutes) event to decide as a group what you'd like to submit.

Who hosted this event? _____

Date of the event: _____ **How many people attended this event?** _____

How was this SomerSupper organized? Is this a group of people meeting together for the first time? A pre-existing group? How were participants recruited?

In what language was this SomerSupper? _____

What neighborhood was this event hosted in?

___ Assembly Square

___ Magoun Square

___ Ball Square

___ Porter Square

___ Brickbottom

___ Powder House

___ Boynton Yards

___ Spring Hill

___ Davis Square

___ Teele Square

___ East Somerville

___ Ten Hills

___ Hillside

___ Other: _____

___ Inner Belt

___ I don't know

What topic did the group discuss?

___ Economy

___ Business

___ Housing

___ Community & Inclusion

___ Sustainability & Environment

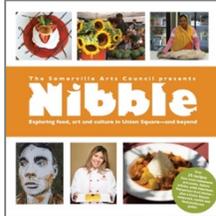
___ Other: _____

___ Transportation & Accessibility

Food Inspiration



If you're planning on ordering in, consider using a Shape Up Somerville Healthy Caterer! The menu on the Shape Up Somerville Website features lots of local, independently-owned caterers who have menu offerings that include healthy options. This can be a great opportunity to try something new. Learn more at the Shape Up Somerville website, SomervilleMA.gov/departments/health-and-human-services/shape-somerville



If you're cooking for your SomerSupper and want to try a new recipe, consider one of these recipes from the Nibble cookbook created by the Somerville Arts Council! The cookbook includes tips about which local markets sell the ingredients you need to make these dishes come alive. *Check out some recipes below or contact the Somerville Arts Council to buy your own copy of the book.*

RAJMA (NEPALI KIDNEY BEAN CURRY)

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 teaspoon ground turmeric	1 teaspoon meat masala powder or ground cumin
1 tomato, chopped	¼ teaspoon red chili powder (or to taste)
1 onion, chopped	1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil	1 can (13 oz. of kidney beans, washed and drained)
1 teaspoon grated or minced ginger	1/3 cup fresh chopped cilantro
1 teaspoon garlic	

Directions

1. Brown the chopped onion in oil for about 5 minutes on medium heat.
2. Add turmeric and stir. Then add tomato, masala powder or cumin, chili powder, salt, ginger, and garlic; mix and heat through for a few minutes while rinsing the kidney beans.
3. Add kidney beans and cook for 5-7 minutes. Add about ½ cup of water (more or less depending on how you like the consistency)
4. Serve with chopped cilantro on top.

DONUT MUFFINS

Ingredients

½ pound butter, at room temperature	½ teaspoon salt
2 eggs, at room temperature	3 cups flour
1 cup sugar (plus 1 cup for topping)	1 cup plain yogurt
½ teaspoon baking soda	2 teaspoons nutmeg
1 tablespoon baking powder	2 tablespoons cinnamon

Directions

1. Cream ½ pound butter with an electric mixer (use paddle attachment if you have one). Add 1 cup of sugar and whip on medium-high speed until fluffy (about 3 minutes).
2. Add baking soda, baking powder, and salt and mix well, stopping the mixer to scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl, making sure everything is fully incorporated.
3. Add eggs and beat on medium-high until the batter is fluffy and resembles custard.
4. Add 1 ½ cups flour and mix well (again scrape sides and bottom of bowl).
5. Add ½ cup yogurt and mix well.
6. Add nutmeg and mix well.
7. Add 1 ½ cups flour and mix in spurts, taking care not to overwork the batter.
8. Add ½ cup yogurt and mix, again taking care not to overwork the batter.
9. Prepare 12 small muffin tins with canola oil spray.
10. Put batter into muffin tins so that each tin is slightly mounded with dough.
11. Bake at 350° for approximately 25-30 minutes, rotating tins halfway through the baking time. Muffins should be golden brown, and a toothpick inserted in the center should come out with a few moist crumbs. Allow the muffins to cool for about 15 minutes.
12. Melt some additional butter in the microwave or on the stove top and prepare a small bowl with 1 cup sugar and 2 tablespoons cinnamon mixed together.
13. Roll each muffin top in the melted butter and place upright on a paper towel to allow the butter to soak into each muffin.
14. Roll each muffin top in the cinnamon sugar mixture and serve.

SOPA AZTECA (TORTILLA SOUP)

Ingredients

8 plum tomatoes or 5 regular tomatoes, cut in halves	1 tablespoon dried, chopped epazote leaves
1 medium white onion, thinly sliced	2 dried avocado or bay leaves
3 garlic cloves, peeled	Corn tortillas
Approximately 2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil, plus oil for frying tortillas	1 avocado, pitted, flesh scooped out, cut into small cubes
2 large dried pasilla chilies	1 cup chopped queso fresco or mild feta
3 cups chicken broth	Optional: Mexican crema, chopped cilantro and lime wedges

Directions

1. Roast tomatoes, onion, and whole garlic cloves on a grill; or in an oven with a little olive oil at 400°. Roast until garlic is fork tender; cover with foil if necessary.
2. Meanwhile toast chilies in a small dry pan on medium heat, for 2 minutes each side, do not burn. Then devein and deseed the chilies or leave in some seeds if you like it spicy. Next, add chili pieces to a pan of boiling water (use just enough water to cover chilies). Soak for a few minutes to soften.
3. Add chilies to a blender and puree.
4. Next add roasted onions and garlic and puree. Then add tomatoes and puree.
5. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to a large pan and heat. Add tomato mixture and boil for 5 minutes; the mixture will reduce. Then add chicken stock, epazote, and avocado leaves (or bay leaves) and cook on low for 15 minutes. Add salt to taste—go easy if stock is salty. Remove avocado leaves (or bay leaves).
6. Cut several tortillas into strips and fry in about a half inch of vegetable oil until golden brown. Remove with tongs and place on a paper towel.
7. In a bowl, arrange pieces of avocado, cheese, and tortilla strips. Pour the broth over these ingredients. If you like, garnish with Mexican crema, cilantro, and a lime wedge.

You are invited!

Join us for a **SomerSuppers** conversation at

[Location]

on

[Date and Time]

hosted by

[Name or Organization]

We will be discussing the Somerville community, identifying challenges, and brainstorming solutions for the City's updated Comprehensive Plan, SomerVision 2040. For more information, visit SomerVision2040.com.

RSVP to:

[Contact]