

# SomerStat



## Report to the Mayor:

Resident Happiness and Satisfaction with the City of Somerville 2013



# Report to the Mayor

**From:** Daniel Hadley, SomerStat Director; Skye Stewart, Senior Analyst; Hannah Weinstock, Fellow

**Date:** September 2013

**Re:** Data from the 2013 Happiness and Satisfaction survey

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## Executive Summary

Survey data suggest that Somerville residents are generally happy and satisfied with the City. A feeling of safety as well as satisfaction with City aesthetics, especially its parks, seems to be driving this sense of wellbeing. The average response to “How happy do you feel right now?” is 7.7 (out of 10), which is up from 2011 when the average was 7.5. Satisfaction with the City has remained constant at 7.6.

There are geographic disparities in how people rank their neighborhood satisfaction. Residents of Davis and Magoun Square are significantly more satisfied with their neighborhood than residents of other neighborhoods, particularly East Somerville.

In terms of City amenities, residents gave the lowest rating to the “cost of housing” and the highest rating to “availability of social community events”. Advanced analysis suggests that school quality, aesthetics, and safety are key predictors of satisfaction with the City as a whole; while safety, aesthetics, and the quality of local parks are the best predictors of satisfaction at the neighborhood level.

## Methodology

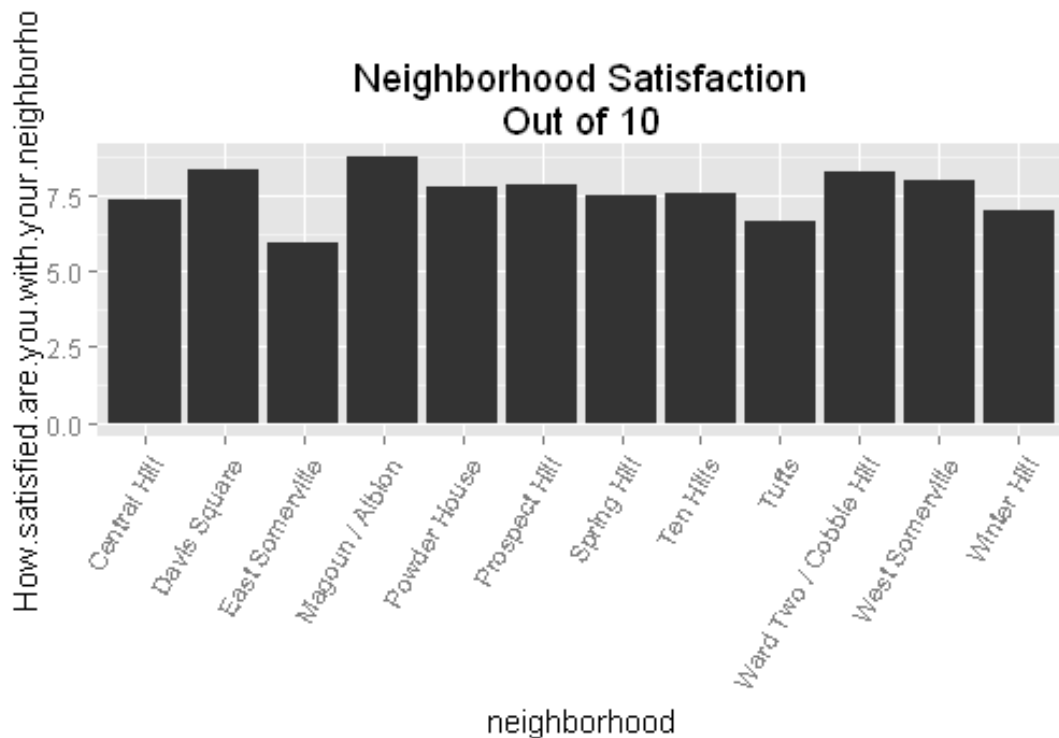
A random sample of 400 Somerville residents were surveyed by mail in March and April of 2013. Selected residents received a two-page paper survey in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Residents subsequently received a reminder postcard as well as a last chance reminder with additional copies of the survey. SomerStat received 194 completed surveys for a response rate of 48%. The surveys were anonymous and were analyzed in aggregate at citywide and neighborhood levels.

## Analysis

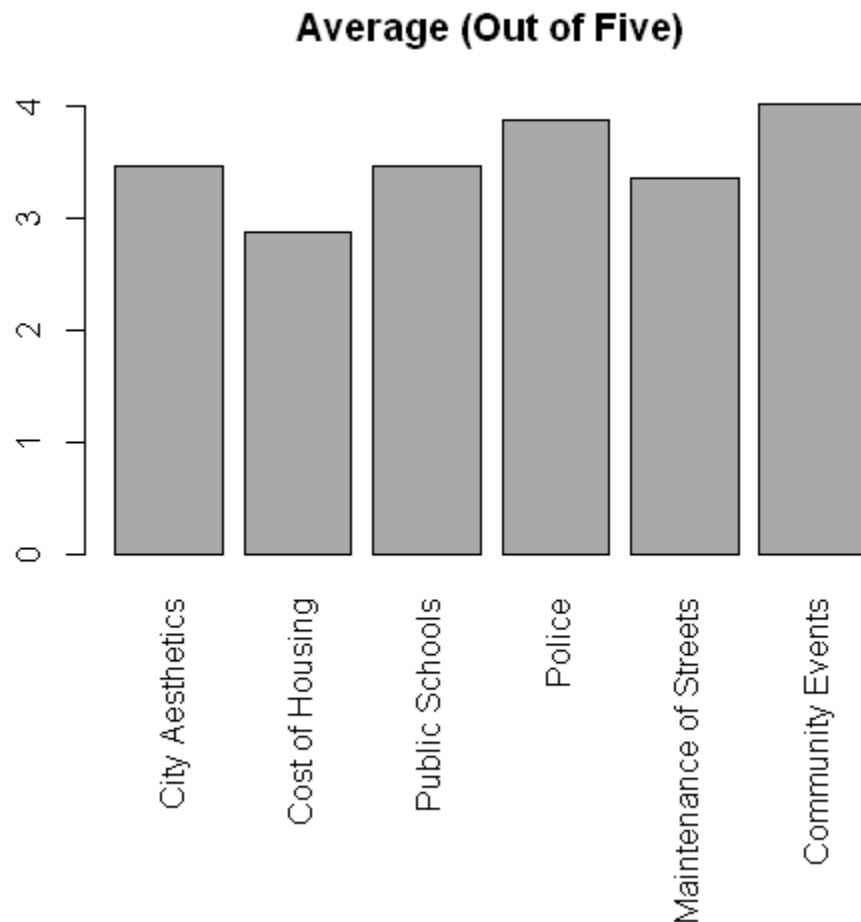
**Figure 1:** Shows the distribution of response to “How satisfied are you with Somerville as a place to live?” The most common response is an 8/10.



**Figure 2:** Shows the geographic disparities in neighborhood satisfaction.



**Figure 3:**Shows the column means for six of the indicators respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5.



**Cross Tabulations:** This section of the analysis notes statistically significant variation among respondents. The Student's t-test was used to test for statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. (All demographic categories below are self-identified by the respondent)

#### **VARIATION BY SEX**

##### Female Respondents:

- less satisfied with their neighborhood
- feel less safe walking in their neighborhood
- less satisfied with the beauty and physical setting of their neighborhood

##### Male Respondents:

- more satisfied with their neighborhood
- feel more safe walking in their neighborhood
- more satisfied with the beauty and physical setting of their neighborhood

## **VARIATION BY RACE**

White Respondents: (NOTE: multi-racial respondents counted as not white)

- more satisfied with the effectiveness of local police
- more satisfied with social community events

Hispanic/Latino Respondents:

- happier right now
- more satisfied with their lives
- more satisfied with Somerville as a place to live

Asian Respondents: (NOTE: multi-racial Asian respondents counted as Asian)

- less satisfied with the effectiveness of local police,
- less satisfied with social community events

Black Respondents:

- *Sample size too small to analyze*

## **VARIATION BY INCOME**

Respondents Earning less than \$25,000:

- *nothing statistically significant*

Respondents Earning less than \$50,000:

- more satisfied with the beauty and physical setting of the city,
- more satisfied with the quality of public schools

Respondents Earning over \$100,000:

- less satisfied with the beauty and physical setting of the city,
- less satisfied with the quality of public schools

## **VARIATION BY AGE**

Respondents Under 35 years old:

- less satisfied with the quality of public schools

Respondents 35-64 years old:

- *nothing statistically significant*

Respondents 65 or older:

- more satisfied with the beauty and physical setting of the city,
- more satisfied with the quality of public schools,
- more satisfied with the effectiveness of local police,
- more satisfied with the beauty of their neighborhood,
- more satisfied with the appearance of parks in their neighborhood

Respondents with children at home:

- *nothing statistically significant*

Student Respondents:

- *nothing statistically significant*

## **VARIATION BY LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Respondents living here 3 years or less:

- *nothing statistically significant*

Respondents living here 10 years or less:

- *nothing statistically significant*

Respondents living here 21 years or more:

- more satisfied with their lives
- more satisfied with the quality of public schools

Respondents who plan to move away in the next two years:

- less happy and less satisfied in *EVERY* variable

## **VARIATION BY NEIGHBORHOOD**

Respondents living in:

Spring Hill (27 people):

- are less satisfied with the quality of public schools

East Somerville (18 people):

- are less satisfied with Somerville as a place to live,
- are less satisfied with their neighborhood,
- feel less safe walking in their neighborhood,
- are less satisfied with the beauty and physical setting of their neighborhood,
- are less satisfied with the appearance of parks in their neighborhood

Powder House (13 people):

- *nothing statistically significant*

Central Hill (4 people):

- *Sample size too small to analyze*

Prospect Hill (14 people):

- less happy with their lives

Magoun/Albion (13 people):

- more satisfied with their neighborhood,
- more satisfied with the quality of public schools,
- more satisfied with the effectiveness of local police,
- more satisfied with social cultural events

West Somerville (11 people):

- feel more safe walking in their neighborhood

Ward Two/Cobble Hill (25 people):

- are more satisfied with the effectiveness of local police,
- feel safer walking in their neighborhood

Davis Square (29 people):

- more satisfied with their neighborhood

Winter Hill (17 people):

- are less satisfied with the maintenance of streets and sidewalks,
- feel less safe walking in their neighborhood

Tufts (9 people):

- feel less happy now,
- less satisfied with Somerville as a place to live,
- less satisfied with the cost of housing,
- less satisfied with the quality of public schools

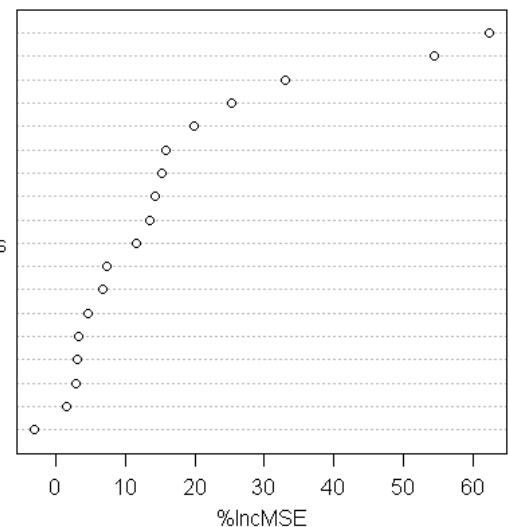
Ten Hills (13 people):

- more satisfied with their lives,
- feel less safe walking in their neighborhood

**Figure4:** Key predictors of neighborhood satisfaction. This is the plot of variables that can be used to predict how people will rate their neighborhood.

A person's rating of her neighborhood's aesthetics is the single best predictor of overall satisfaction, followed by safety, park maintenance, and the quality of local schools.

How.satisfied.are.you.with.the.beauty.or.physical.setting.of.your.neighborhood.  
How.safe.do.you.feel.walking.in.your.neighborhood.at.night.  
How.satisfied.are.you.with.the.appearance.of.parks.in.your.neighborhood.  
How.would.you.rate.the.following..The.effectiveness.of.the.local.police  
How.would.you.rate.the.following..The.beauty.or.physical.setting.of.Somerville  
How.would.you.rate.the.following..The.overall.quality.of.public.schools  
How.long.have.you.lived.here.  
How.would.you.rate.the.following..The.availability.of.social.community.events.  
Age.  
How.would.you.rate.the.following..The.maintenance.of.streets..sidewalks..and.squares  
Are.you.of.Hispanic..Latino..or.Spanish.origin.  
Are.you.a.student.  
What.is.your.race.  
How.would.you.rate.the.following..The.cost.of.housing  
What.is.your.sex.  
Do.you.plan.to.move.away.from.Somerville.in.the.next.two.years.  
What.is.your.annual.household.income.  
Do.you.have.children.age.18.or.younger.who.live.with.you.



**Conclusion**

The information included in this report is preliminary analysis – the very tip of the iceberg of what we ultimately hope to learn from this resident data. The SomerStat team is taking a deeper dive into the data now and will compare this year's data with the inaugural resident happiness survey data from 2011. We believe the data will become even more useful each year as we are able to analyze the trends in happiness and city satisfaction across neighborhoods and demographics. SomerStat will present additional analysis about resident happiness at the upcoming ACE Stat meeting scheduled for October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, at 9:30am. We invite you all to attend this meeting. We thank you for your continued support of this project.



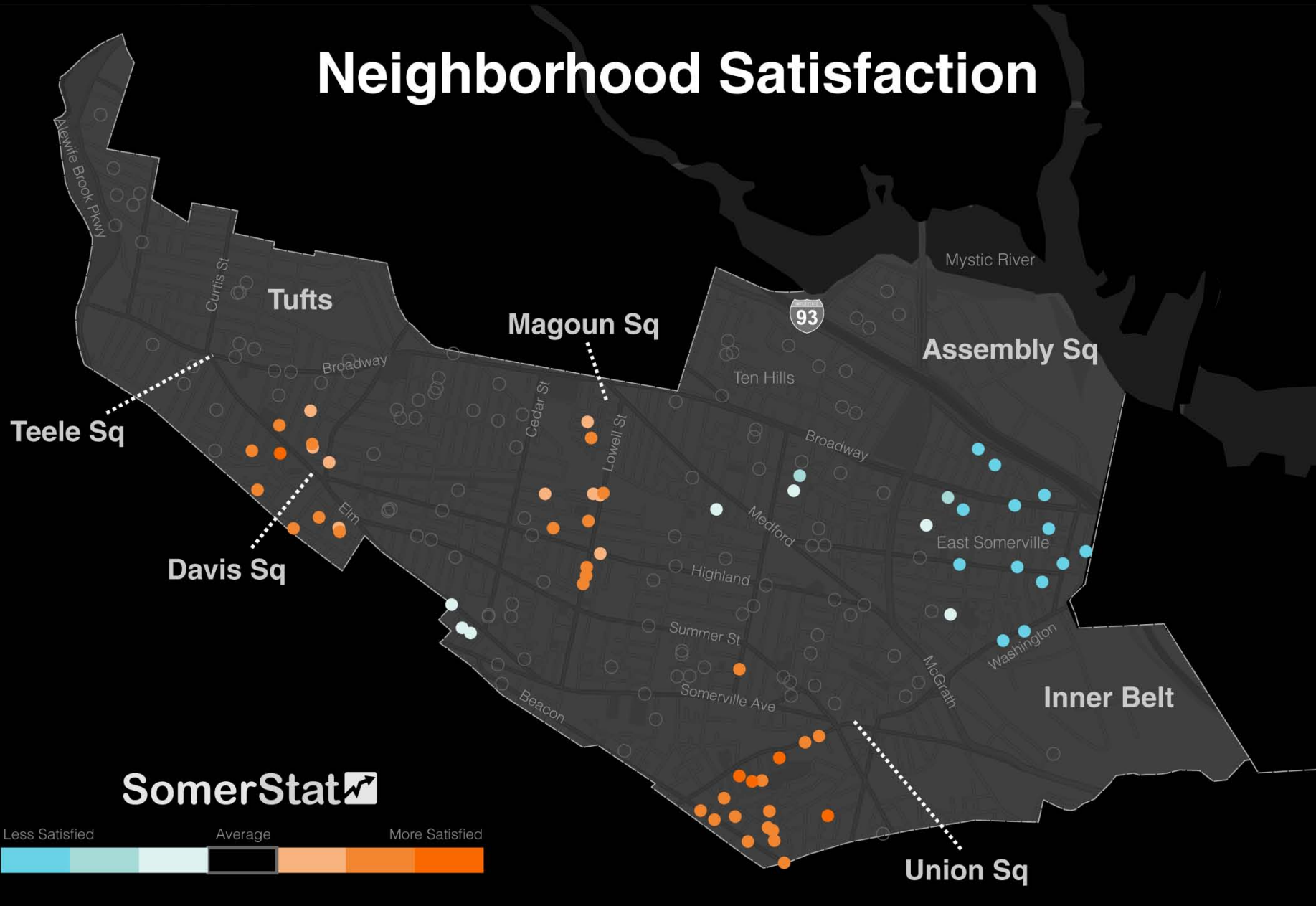
# Heat Maps

<-2.6   -2.6 to -2   -2 to -1.7   1.7 to 2   2 to 2.6   > 2.6

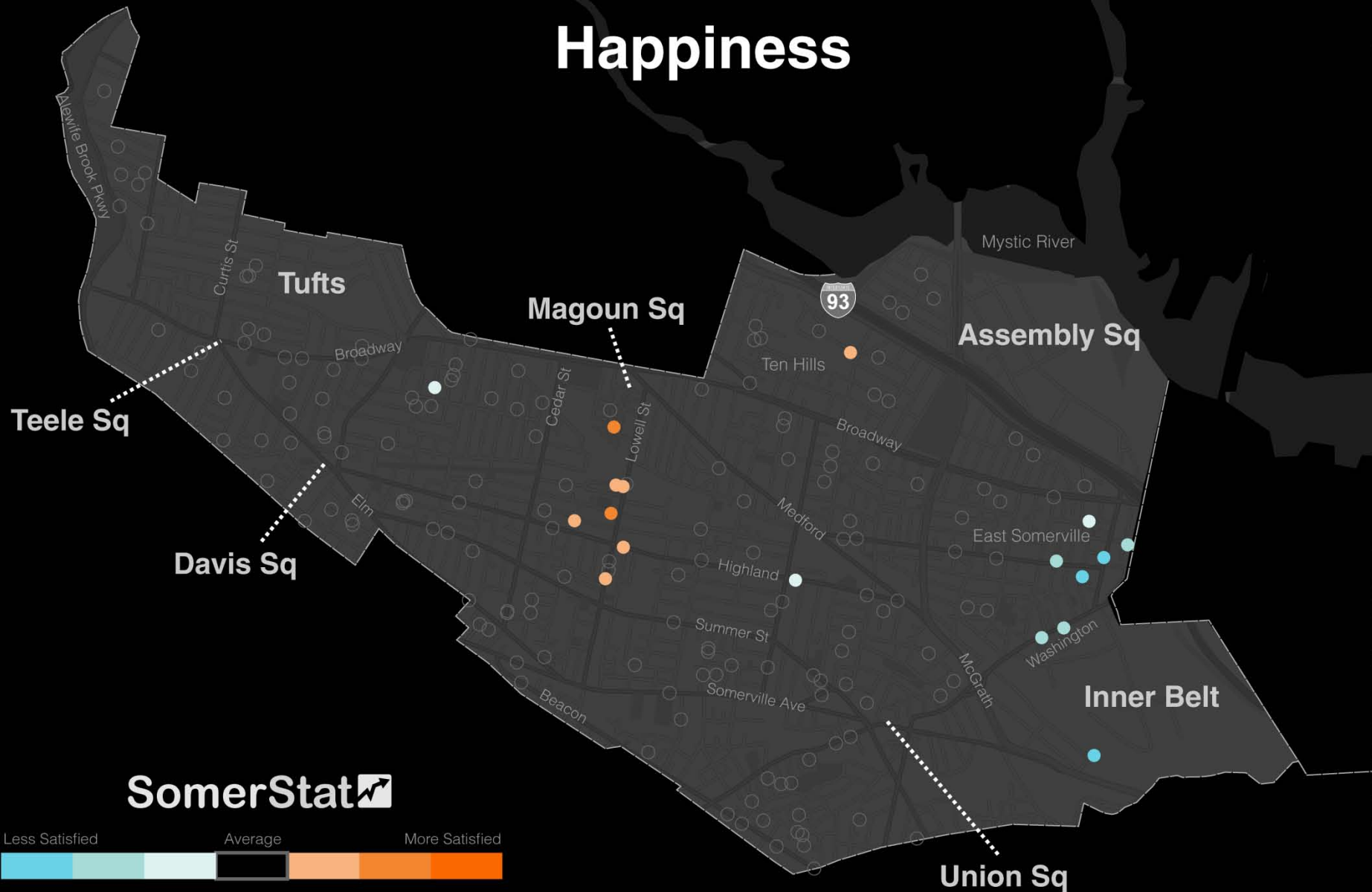
Standard Deviation

-1.7 to 1.7

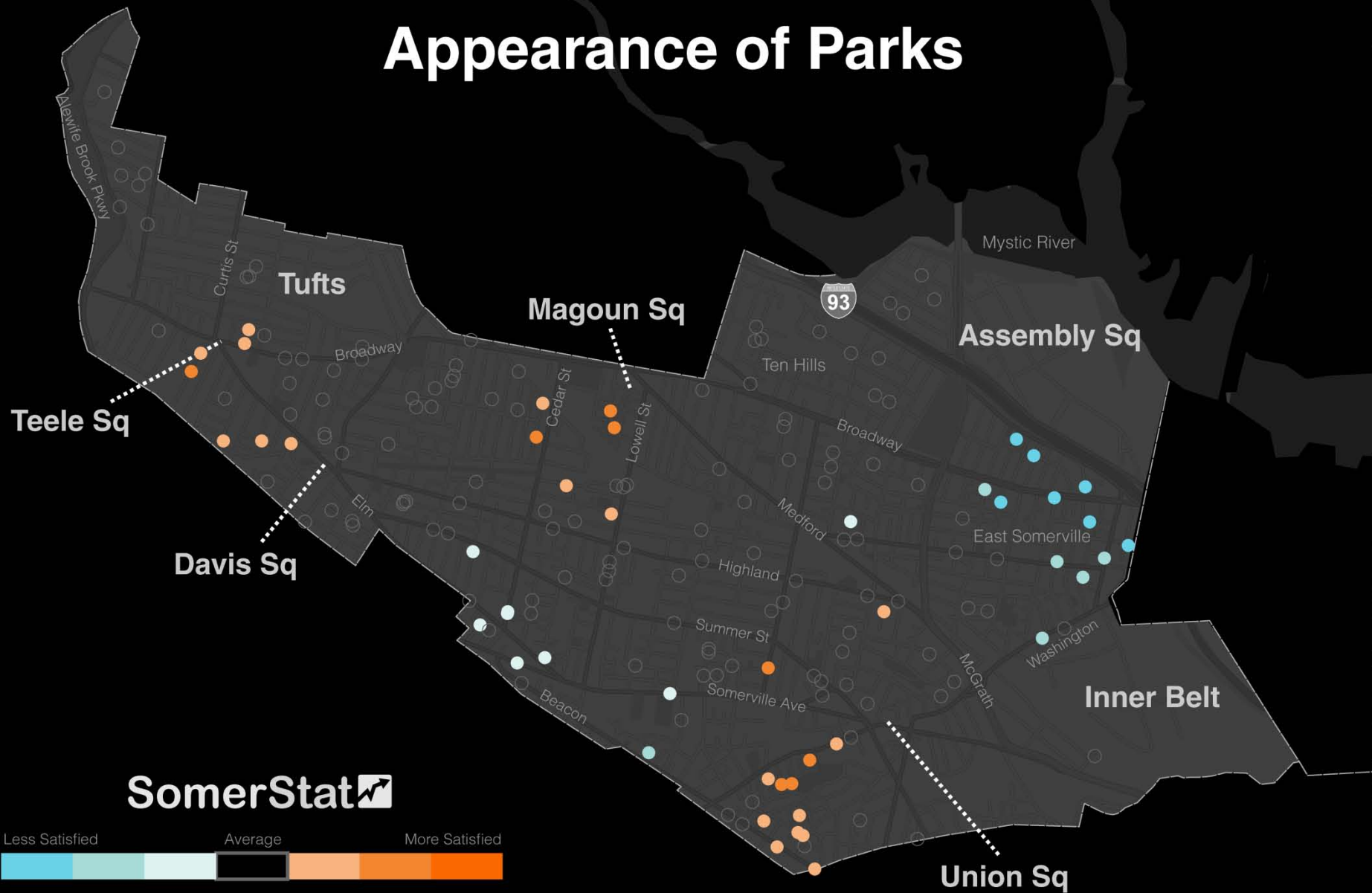
# Neighborhood Satisfaction



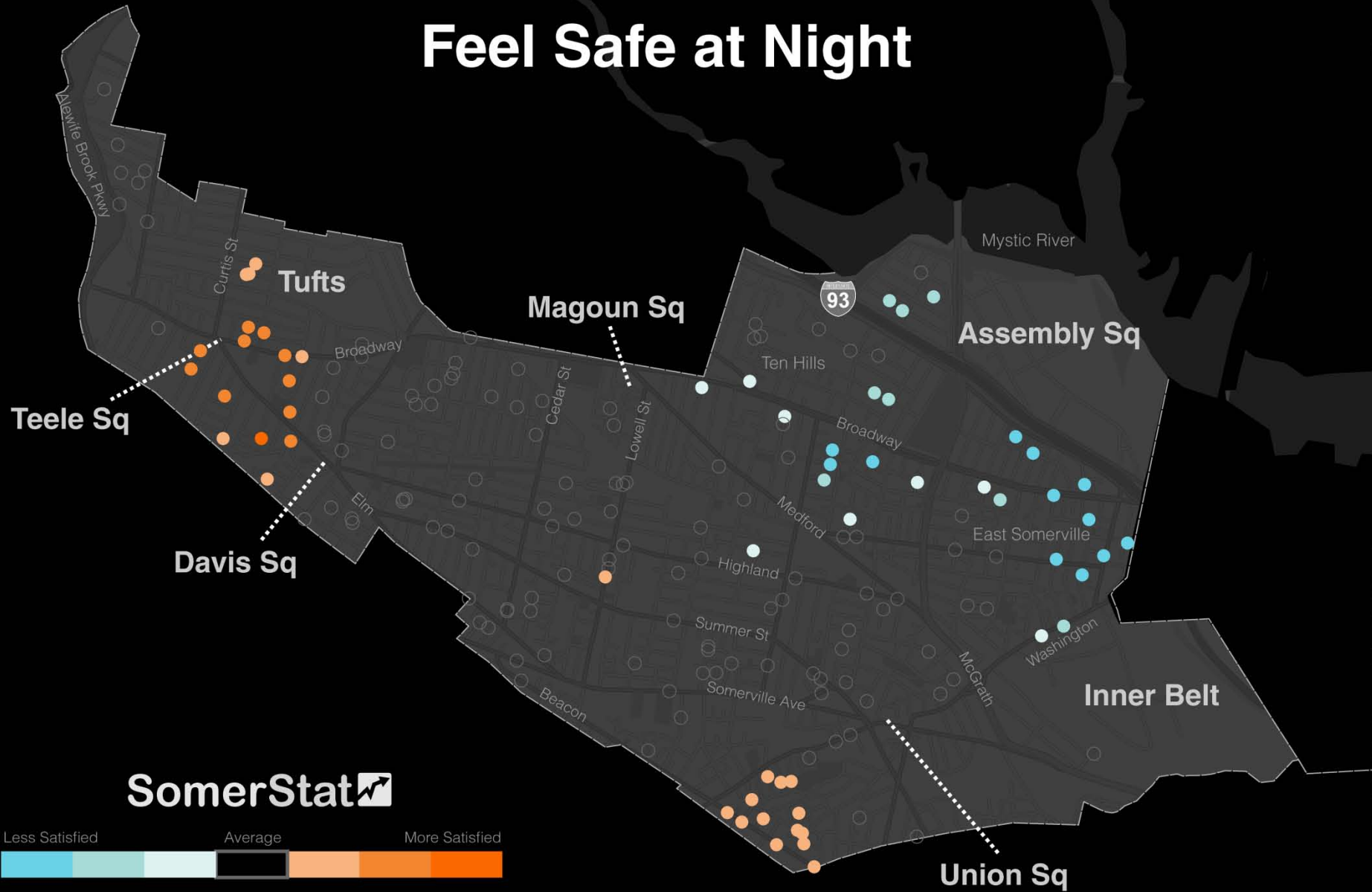
# Happiness



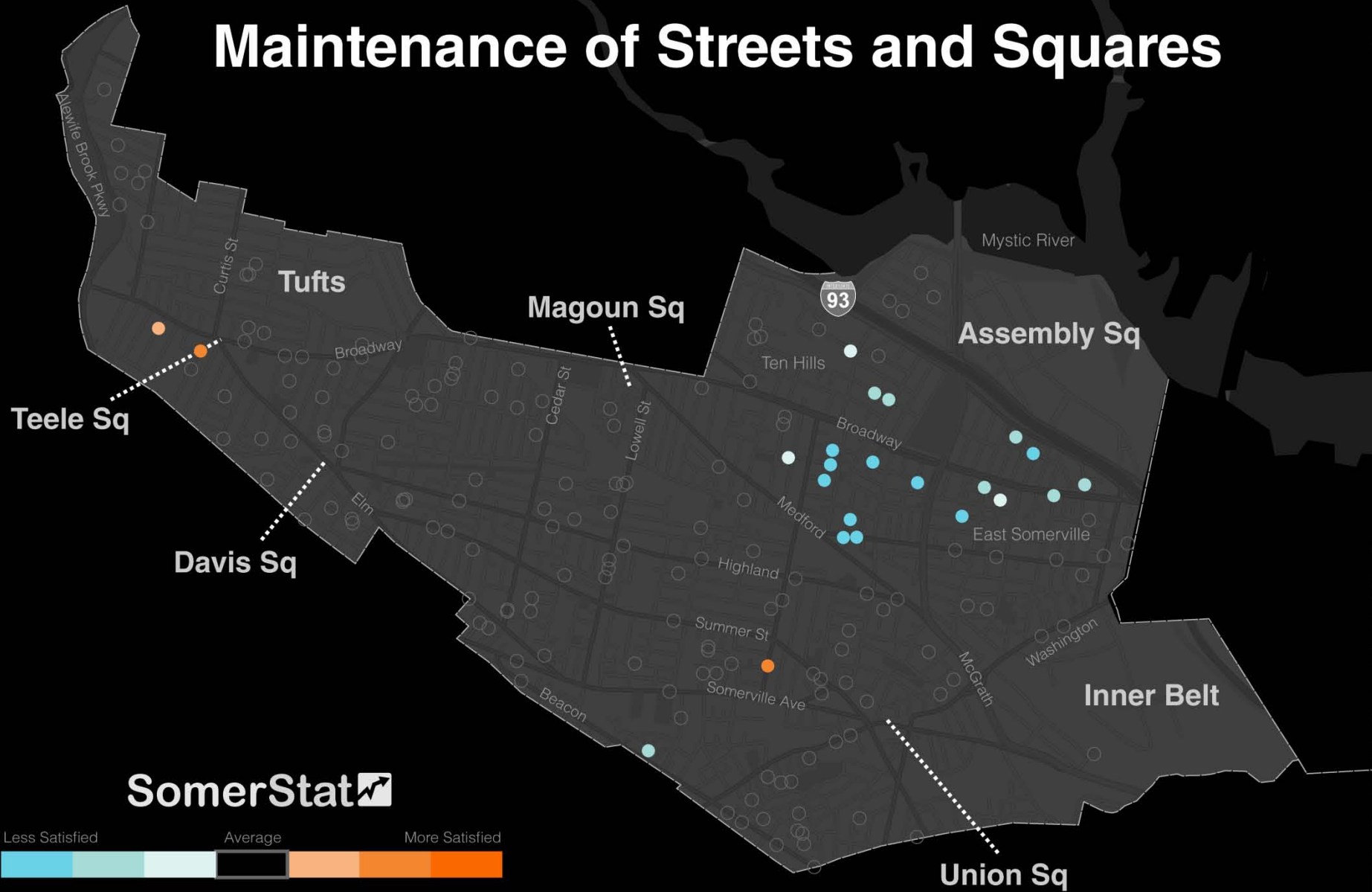
# Appearance of Parks



# Feel Safe at Night



# Maintenance of Streets and Squares





# Neighborhood Aesthetics

