



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

I prioritize a human rights approach and direct access to city services for all residents but especially those most vulnerable persons, combating discrimination. I would advocate for not only affordable housing but improved affordability to age in place, and for young families, greater rent stabilization, approving expenditures for wrap-around supports for students facing food and housing insecurity. We need to keep talking about race, implement policy with our collective equity-lens, and enact affirmative value of black and brown neighbors facing displacement. I will move the agenda for local jobs and equitable procurement of city contracts. I will legislate constructively, by providing a safety net to stabilize DEI programs for nonprofits experiencing federal funding cuts, and in a climate of fear from ICE raids, substantially foster protection of our neighbors.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

For five years I have served the appointment of Somerville Human Rights Commissioner, convening expert testimony on a wide variety of matters. As immediate past chair, I helped sustain and then build the Commission to now eleven seated members. I have worked with two city administrations and various city departments, Public Health and Racial and Social Justice, the Office of Immigrant Affairs, Office of Housing Stability and have broad familiarity with area nonprofits and stakeholder organizations. In addition, I

received a 2025 Somerville Arts Grant for my project “We Are Trull Street” conducting in-depth interviews with 80 of my neighbors and extensive research in local history archives, and departments of engineering, gathering public records from Department of Public Works, Somerville Police and Fire, attending local planning meetings to better understand constituent services. This background prepares me to not only help constituents navigate city services, but also use the investigatory powers, hold public discussion, and open hearings to monitor progress implementing new ordinances, as well as make assessment of the annual budget proposal.

3. What is the one policy you’ve seen pioneered in another city that you’d most like to adopt locally?

Medford’s passage of the ordinance for divestment from fossil fuels is exciting.

(B) Open-Ended Policy Questions

1. Given state law, municipalities in Massachusetts are limited in their taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue to support essential city services?

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is expected to supply an assessment of the impact of federal funding cuts and recommend where current stop-gaps available to cities and towns may be implemented.

2. What are your top priorities for ensuring that all students in your city can receive a high-quality public education?

First of all, at combined School Committee and City Council meetings I will advocate for wraparound supports for students facing food and housing insecurity. I have supported adjusting state curriculum, voted out MCAS, participated in a focus group for the Somerville Public School District strategic plan. As a Human Rights Commissioner I elicited student entries for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day observances and supported the fully-fund Somerville schools campaign for wage increases to teachers. If elected, I will support an anti-racist framework.

Second of all, I am an embedded member of two Somerville community schools. I have three children, two of whom are school-aged, attending Winter Hill and the East Somerville Community School’s UNIDOS Spanish-immersion program. In the past year, at Winter Hill I have served as a substitute for English language learners and AIM students (Autism Immersion). My wife is

the incoming PTA President for Winter Hill. I prioritize construction for a new Winter Hill school at Sycamore Street because of criteria that our schools are walkable and do not diminish city-wide recreation. If elected, these roots in the community will propel my support for community schools.

The outlook for our district is improving. While most of Somerville is an environmental justice area, we are one of the most diverse districts in the Commonwealth; twenty-seven languages are spoken by students at Winter Hill Elementary, the most under-performing school in the district. Quality improvements are now at least on paper in the strategic plan for Somerville Public Schools, which incorporated feedback such as addressing the fact we have a white teaching staff and more opportunity for meaningful engagement of parents.

3. What can your city do to help protect immigrant communities under attack from ICE and ensure genuine community safety?

Immigrants have not received adequate support from the City of Somerville in a few key areas. For instance, our city can center language justice in its way of conducting city meetings for residents. The city is under constraints under law and provides legal services and disperses basic needs through intermediaries. Some residents feel empowered to civic engagement, but others are sheltering in place. Some can participate with LUCE and mobilize in ready response. Some can upskill in active bystander training. City Liaisons to immigrant communities have long pointed to a difficulty navigating state institutions such as Family court or Eviction court or jails where ICE has a contract. I have vigiled at Suffolk to the point that ICE contract was discontinued. Individuals can support families with groceries through MAMAS or offer direct accompaniment of our neighbors to court. My daughter and I twice attended the Chemsford court in order to ensure legal representation, which in neither case was present for an individual detained. Stories from around the country are showing the efficacy of keeping vigilance, such as at Burlington. The power of nonviolent protest is necessary today more than ever. While the City of Somerville is an ordained Welcoming City, and Somerville Police in no way cooperate with ICE, current litigation by the City with Chelsea aims at relief from threats of federal funding. The Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs is working with stakeholders. Some neighbors reported at an August focus group of the Human Rights Commission that the LUCE alerts are tracking an ICE raid every week. One informed the Commission that they were giving sanctuary to a family--attempting to liaison with employment coaching services. These residents need to know that the City is doing everything in its power to protect our neighbors and has their back.

4. What are your top three policy priorities for making your city climate-resilient, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?

If elected, I will call for testimony on scheduled improvements, authorize spending for the Climate Ambassador position in addition to ongoing communication expenditures. Somerville is in year 4 of 7 years of increased water and sewer rates to pay for long overdue modernization of the sewer system.

Off of Foss Park, neighbors tell me about the regular floods they experience. The area is mapped corresponding with the lowest income. I will work with the State Department of Recreation and Transportation to promote opportunities for equity in the process--specifically by advocating for language justice.

We have a 3-1-1 citizen portal in which residents can request a tree--I've been on the list for a year. On my block we have 18 trees. In the past four years, we have lost one major tree every year and added three more. I support microforests such as near the Central Library, and our bi-annual plantings efforts at canopy diversity. Admittedly I have only just made contacts with the City's Forestry Commission and not read the 700-page tree canopy report, except for some dive I made a couple years ago, very upset that the Green Line Extension clearcut microforest unnecessarily.

The July report of the Assembly Row Neighborhood Plan has a vital criteria for improving tree canopy that I will work to ensure is implemented. That area is guaranteed to be underwater due to flooding expected by 10-day storms. According to the Climate Plan Forward, Somerville is scheduling its deep infrastructure investments to make up for lost time.

The Combined Sewer Overflows in Alewife, for example, demand attention not just because the EPA will penalize Somerville--but because we know how to mitigate these environmental impacts. As a City Councilor I would jump at an opportunity to tour the Spring Hill Sewer Separation.

The two-year massive tank scheduled in Albion Park will make climate resilient what historically were the swamps off an old railroad line--now our bike path. It was there, 130 years ago, where the typhoid cases were most prevalent in unregulated crowded tenement houses without sewers.

Somerville Museum has an exhibit currently called History on the Line, part of an effort confronting inequity from a historical lens.

5. What steps would you take to reduce dependence on cars and better facilitate the ability of city residents to safely get around by walking, biking, or public transit?

I support the SomerVision 2040 goal of 75% reduction in car-mode, continuing piloted N-S bus routes, and implementing the Safe Street Ordinance's increased protective bike lanes along major arteries. See more in response to Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets Questionnaire

<http://www.crspicer.net/2025/08/responses-for-somerville-alliance-for.html>.

6. What policies will you advocate for to ensure that your city can be a place that is affordable for residents to live at any stage of life?

I have two focuses. One, according to the 2025 Housing Needs Assessment--not yet released--I will evaluate what I expect to see as an even worse situation for the poorest residents of Somerville. A trend evident in the 2017 and 2021 Assessments recommended rent stabilization and a deeper commitment to very low income residents facing an extreme housing burden 30% Area Mean Income. The recent April 2025 Aging Needs Assessment had a telling factor for persons of color 41% were greatly concerned about food prices. If we take the idea of affordability as having purchasing power after the burden of housing, we should be eradicating food deserts, brown zones, approving zoning for grocery in new construction, preferably mixed use and holding the line on 20% affordable. See more in response to Fair Housing Commission Questionnaire:

<http://www.crspicer.net/2025/08/fair-housing-commission-questionnaire.html>

7. [If relevant] How would you assess your city's MBTA Communities Act rezoning efforts so far?

Somerville tracks consistent with the MBTA Communities Act. Rezoning was passed in 2023, as Somerville voted to approve construction of 3-decker homes near public transit without permit or "as of right."

8. What strategies would you employ to resist federal overreach from the Trump Administration while protecting critical services and funding for residents?

Many are unaware of a time lag before currently passed cuts will take effect. If elected, I will educate the public to keep enrolled in existing critical services. The duty to our residents compels continuance of services for all residents. I will authorize funding for critical services and funding for all residents, take to the streets, and navigate options to legislate in defense of basic needs.

9. How would you model transparency and accountability if elected?

In addition to stringent ethical disclosures I made at the outset of my campaign that I have no conflicts of interest, and the state's OCPF reporting, in questionnaires and on social media I have given indication of our current family income, qualifying for heat assistance, carrot card and MBTA pass.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES/ NO**
NO
2. Do you support the creation of an unarmed, community-based emergency response program, separate from the Police Department, to respond to mental and behavioral health crises? **YES/ NO**
YES
3. If your community has not already, do you support adopting the new specialized stretch code, which would require new construction and major renovations to be built to a very high-efficiency standard with all-electric (as opposed to fossil fuel) heating and cooling systems? **YES/ NO**
Unsure
4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES / NO**
YES
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES / NO**
YES
6. Would you support a home rule petition to establish a small transfer fee on high-end real estate transactions to create dedicated funding for affordable housing production and preservation? **YES / NO**
YES

7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents?
YES / NO
YES--below.
8. According to the American Library Association, in 2022 there were at least 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA schools, disproportionately books that speak to the experiences of LGBTQ students and students of color. Would you oppose such book-banning efforts if they occurred in your city? **YES / NO**
YES--below.

(D) Additional Comments

(Use this space to make any final comments you deem important for progressive voters assessing your candidacy.)

#3 I will work to implement the City Council passage of the Safe Streets Ordinance which will increase the network of bike lanes to almost 30 miles. I discuss this more in response to Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets Questionnaire <http://www.crspicer.net/2025/08/responses-for-somerville-alliance-for.html>

#7 To show support for the in-progress Somerville Home Rule Petition I attended the July State House hearing on rent stabilization with my three daughters. At the July focus group for the Human Rights Commission we received strong testimony in favor of rent stabilization from the Executive Director of Community Action Agency of Somerville as well as from the CEO of Somerville Community Corporation.

#8 At an August focus group of the Somerville Human Rights Commission we received testimony reflecting the reality of “shadow banning” where a school or library quietly removes a book from the catalogue caving into anti-LGBTQ activists or where someone checks out a book and never returns it to circulation.