2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

   Reducing housing costs and entry ownership opportunities through increases in transit oriented upzoning

   Serving as a direct, proactive, and easily accessible conduit to city services and assistance for our neighbors most in need.

   Working to build progressive revenue driven by commercial growth in new mixed-use development to relieve the cost of living tax burden bedroom communities face.

2. **What qualifies you to hold this office?**

   I've been as involved as possible as a public citizen, volunteering my time as a city advisory committee member working on public parks, native plants, and flooding prevention and recently helping to author the Somerville Pollinator Action Plan. I am active in our community with numerous service and community organizations and have been an active participant in campaigns for office for several years. I'm running now to help organize and serve as a municipal elected official.

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

I've been really encouraged by Salem's experimentations with micro transit investments. We have a number of transit-inaccessible areas that are underserved by MBTA rain and bus service that would benefit from microtransit investments.

(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?**

   We are highly limited under state law in finding new revenues. I believe Somerville must more easily allow for and encourage mixed-use development and zone for high-revenue commercial space that will allow us to relieve our dramatic 80% tax levy on residents who fund city services much more directly than our neighboring cities. As a Councilor, I will also continue to be an advocate for progressive revenue at the state level, including supporting a corporate fair share.

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

   We have to fully fund our schools. This means continuing to increase annual funding and working with the MSBA to fix the Winter Hill Community School that is in disrepair. New revenues are essentially to our being able to do this in an equitable way that ensures that we have sufficient funding for our students. Students, parents, and caretakers need frequent communication and a democratic practice that ensures their views are entered into the discussion. As a Councilor, I will elevate the voices of students in deciding investments into their own futures. I will support Somerville Educators in ensuring their collective bargaining power is strong in our city.

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

   Our city has led the way in suing Trump, conducting municipally funded know your rights trainings, and ending data sharing at all levels with federal authorities or those who work with them to carry out unjust deportations. As a Councilor, I will ensure we use our local police department to protect residents against forced entries with administrative warrants and help to protect immigrants against unlawful searches. I will support efforts to

establish a reserve fund to pay for legal and immigration services for residents in need.

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?**

   I have been lucky to work for years as a volunteer on several of Somerville's climate resilience efforts. I supported our work to switch to native plants in new city projects, voted to switch to all native plans ahead of schedule, and established a fund to encourage private residents to grow new climate resilience and water absorbent plants at their homes—with a special emphasis I helped lead to include renters. I will advocate for continuing our water and sewer system upgrades on our city's three water systems without further rate hikes through new enterprise funds. I will continue to advocate using neighborhood curb space to install bioswales for true neighborhood safety and resilience. I will continue to support the Sustainaville goals of reducing 75% of work transits being from personal vehicles with enhanced city infrastructure to make public transit more appealing, convenient, and accessible to all residents.

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?**

   Our city has poorly integrated our new Green Line stations and bus stops into our streetscapes. Working with the MBTA, I will ensure we had benches, coverings, live expected arrival displays, properly located crosswalks, and safe short duration pick up and drop off curb space. I will support the Somerville Bicycle Network plan and Safe Street Ordinance pushing for more protected miles of bike infrastructure. I will also go further, and help to develop a new intersection safety plan to address where bike riders are most at risk with infrastructure and signaling timing changes at intersections.

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?**

   As a Somerville renter, one of only a handful of candidates, I will work aggressively to permit for 8,000 new homes, with the goal of having 4,000 built in the next 4 years. We need to work to substantially reduce rental prices by adding substantially more housing as part of our new transit stations. I will also work to increase our residential tax deduction, already one of the state's

highest, even higher to ensure REITs and professional rental companies pay their fair share and relieve the burden on fixed income residents. I will also use tools like the residential deduction to ensure 1-3 unit homes are owned by people, not management companies, and will fight to put up economic disincentives to private equity buying up more Somerville homes. I will fight to ensure we increase the percentage of owner-occupied rental properties. I will also ensure we approve enough larger apartment buildings subject to our city's 20% subsidized affordable unit requirement so that every person, from every economic background, can afford to stay in our city. I will also diligently work with the office of housing stability to enforce our fair housing laws, in particular working to protect Section 8 housing voucher holders from discrimination in our city.

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

   We were close to compliance due to our longstanding density. However our ultimate act to comply was a huge missed opportunity, relegalizing housing which already existed, that completely failed to meet the moment or fufil the goal of the MBTA Communities Act. We should be increasing all of our squares around transit stations to mid-rise zoning, allowing mixed uses development there by right, and providing density bonuses to any project that wants to provide additional subsidized permanently affordable units. We instead upzoned a few neighborhoods from 2 unit only, to allow 3 unit properties, many of which already existed above code. We must do better on housing in Somerville, particularly because we are at heightened risk for rent burdening and displacing our neighbors. We need to lead with a stronger resolve to ensure progress is made on Somerville housing prices, and our recent MBTA Communities Act driven changes were not enough.

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

   I will support the administration in suing for every dollar and ever violation of our resident's rights. I will also work with other elected officials nationwide to form a coalition opposed to unjust and frequently unlawful federal overreach and efforts to coerce cities like Somerville, which will ultimately be unsuccessful.

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

(C) **Yes/No Policy Questions**

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES**

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**

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**

4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES***

5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **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**

7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES***

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**

(D) Additional Comments

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

For #7 I would like to see stabilization controls that avoid dramatic unexpected rent increases or outrageous attempts to unfairly gouge tenants. I would not support restrictions at the level at which they would discourage investment in properties or new housing construction. I believe a local option for some anti-gauging stabilization tools would be useful to have as a municipal option.

For #4 I support moving to fare free transit in a way that does not result in a defunding of the MBTA. We must ensure a replacement funding sources is present to replace revenue from fares.