



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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Office Sought: Somerville Ward 5 City Councilor

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

Tackling the Housing Crisis: My top priority is to combat displacement and create more affordable housing. This means strengthening tenant protections against eviction, pursuing policies that create permanently affordable housing units, and ensuring that new development supports and benefits current residents.

Advancing Climate Resilience and Environmental Justice: I will work to fully implement our Climate Forward plan, focusing on municipal buildings decarbonization, flood mitigation, expanding green spaces, and achieving our zero-waste goals. A key part of this is ensuring that our environmental policies protect our most vulnerable neighborhoods and building a city that is prepared for the future.

Building a Holistic System of Community Health and Safety: I will champion a public health approach to safety by fully supporting and expanding the Somerville Mobile Assistance Program so that mental health professionals, not police, are the first responders to crises. This also includes making our streets safer for everyone through traffic-calming and thoughtful streets designs.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

My qualification is rooted in my professional background and my deep, long-term commitment to serving the Somerville community.

In my first term, I worked to address a broad range of issues:

- I have supported art organizations by promoting better understanding and more productive dialogue between the City Administration, Arts at the Armory, and community residents about the future of the Armory.
- I worked to enhance residents' housing stability by advocating for sustained funding of the Office of Housing Stability's expanded staff and housing assistance resources. I helped amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow residents to make their homes accessible by right.
- I advanced environment-friendly initiatives. I helped draft a new ordinance requiring energy efficiency disclosures to renters via creation of a rental registry. I was involved in strengthening the Tree Preservation Ordinance, and I put forward a resolution that outlines a step-by-step plan to decarbonize our municipal buildings. I worked with the administration to extend yard waste pickup to December and I advocated for composting in our schools.
- I worked on making our roads safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and residents using other wheeled transportation by having the City install a raised crossing at the Community Path intersection with Cedar Street and by adding to the speed bump evaluation list the streets that are experiencing high speed. I worked with the Mobility division on accelerating the process for the installation of a crosswalk on Lowell St and the process for making the Community path safer for everyone by installing lighting, clear signage and speed limit. I advocated and will continue to advocate for better road safety infrastructure and traffic enforcement at unsafe intersections.
- In partnership with Ward 5 School Committee member Laura Pitone, I have advocated for transparency and better communication with parents regarding the progress of school improvement projects and the plan for a swing space. I also advocated for expanded youth and after-school programming. As a former educator, I stood with the Somerville Educators Union in their fight for fully funded schools.
- In keeping with our Sanctuary City commitment, I stood with our immigrant neighbors in introducing a Resolution in support of the Massachusetts Safe Communities Act and the Immigrant Legal Defense Act, and have advocated for the resources needed to make Somerville the Sanctuary City we want it to be, including adequate resources to ensure the availability of translation and interpretation services.
- I have supported local businesses by working with the City to ensure that businesses are being notified about construction projects and parking

changes. I have provided help to secure loading zone spaces for deliveries. I have communicated updates on power outages. I continue to advocate for an economic development improvement plan for Magoun Sq.

- In response to constituents' requests, I have been ensuring developer compliance with ordinances and other requirements.

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

Municipal buildings decarbonization policies that would focus on energy efficiency, electrification and retrofits.

(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?

Advocate for PILOTs and Linkage Fees: We must ensure new commercial and large-scale residential development pays its fair share. I will advocate for strengthening and regularly reviewing Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements and impact linkage fees to directly fund affordable housing and community benefits.

I will continue to be a strong voice at the state level to give Somerville and other cities the local option to enact a real estate transfer fee on high-value property sales, a crucial tool to directly fund affordable housing creation

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

As a former Somerville Public Schools educator and union organizer, I fought for a school budget increase and a fair contract for educators. As a City Councilor, I will advocate for a school budget that provides robust funding for social-emotional learning, mental health staff, and targeted academic support to close opportunity gaps. In addition, we must continue to ensure Somerville is leading in paying all educators a living wage. I also support expanding affordable, high-quality out-of-school-time programs, summer learning, and early childhood education.

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

We must defend our existing Sanctuary City policies that limit collaboration with ICE. I will resist any attempts to weaken these protections and ensure they are fully implemented across all city departments.

We also must increase access to legal defense funds for immigrants and support community-based organizations that provide critical know-your-rights training and direct support to our immigrant neighbors.

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?

My climate priorities are guided by environmental justice:

1. Flood mitigation in vulnerable areas: Prioritize green infrastructure and stormwater management projects in low-lying and historically underserved neighborhoods like the Mystic Watershed, which face the greatest flood risk.
2. Continue to expand urban tree canopy and green spaces: Focus tree planting and park investments in "heat island" neighborhoods with little shade, which disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color.
3. Decarbonizing buildings: Accelerate the transition off fossil fuels in buildings through incentives and support for low-income homeowners and renters to ensure the clean energy transition does not lead to displacement or unaffordable retrofits.

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 will continue to advocate to implement traffic-calming measures citywide, especially near schools and in high-crash areas, to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety. We also must ensure the Community Path is well maintained and well connected, and build a protected, interconnected network of bike lanes so people of all ages can bike safely. I will also advocate for increased MBTA bus and train frequency, expanded service hours, and reduced fares to make transit a more reliable and affordable option for all residents.

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 will push for the creation of more family-sized affordable housing, senior housing, and housing for young adults to ensure people can stay in Somerville as their needs change. We also must strengthen eviction protections and enact a city/non-profit "Right to Purchase" policy to preserve existing affordable rental stock and prevent

displacement. We also must expand property tax relief programs for low-income seniors and explore other tools to help long-term residents on fixed incomes remain in their homes.

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

As a City, we are working on upzoning the transit areas from Midrise 4 to Midrise 6 in order to address the housing shortage and encourage housing developments in areas with transit access.

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

We must be proactive in protecting our residents. I will continue to advocate to strengthen and enforce our local ordinances that protect civil rights, immigrant safety, and the environment, using them as a bulwark against regressive federal policies. I also believe we must work in close coalition with other municipalities, the state government, and our federal delegation to present a united front, challenge harmful policies in court, and advocate for funding that supports our communities.

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

I believe in a government that is open, accessible, and responsive. I hold regular, accessible office hours with fellow elected officials, and provide clear, timely updates on city issues through my newsletters and social media. I will continue to champion participatory budgeting and ensure that major planning processes include meaningful, early community input, especially from underrepresented communities.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

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

4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES / NO**
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES / NO**
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**
7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES / NO**
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**

(D) Additional Comments

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