



2021 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Anyone planning to run for Somerville City Council this year was invited to apply for Our Revolution Somerville's endorsement by completing this questionnaire, which constitutes the first step in ORS's endorsement process (to be followed by a candidate forum and a vote of our membership). Candidates were notified that their responses would be sent to our members and also published online. They were asked to respond to every question, with questions marked with a "(Y/N)" answered with just a "Yes" or a "No," but could add additional thoughts in the comments field at the end of each section. With the exception of Question #5 (which had no word limit), each answer and comment was limited to 300 words. Answers or comments exceeding 300 words have been truncated, and answers to "(Y/N)" questions other than "Yes" or "No" were moved to the Comments sections and those instances noted with an asterisk (*). Questions that weren't answered have been marked with "No response."

Introductory/General Questions

1. What is your name, how is it pronounced, and what pronouns do you use?

JT Scott, any pronouns

2. Email address:

jtforward2@gmail.com

3. What is your campaign website?

Jtforward2.com

4. What office are you seeking?

Ward 2 City Council

5. Tell us about yourself and why you are running for this office.

Formerly a tenant, currently a homeowner and business owner in Union Square, always an activist who is part of and accountable to the Movement. In three years, I've hosted over 150 neighborhood meetings. During the 12 months of this pandemic, I have chaired over 50 public meetings online, with over 2000 participants. I've held Office Hours literally every week since taking office, to make myself available to and accountable to my neighbors.

The work that I campaigned to do back in 2017 ("Affordability, Transparency, Accountability") still isn't done - there's a long way to go despite many victories - but what's been crystal clear over my past several years in office is that the oversight capacity of the City Council to push policy, prevent abuses, inform the public, and

attempt to enforce some restraint on the Executive Branch is an absolutely essential part of this job. In addition, I'm proud of how many of my neighbors I've gotten engaged in Somerville politics and the public processes of our city. I look forward to continuing that work, while also continuing to get my neighbors engaged in matters of municipal governance and remove the barriers that prevent every resident from being informed and engaged.

6. Will you refuse/return campaign contributions from (Y/N):
 - a. Real Estate Developers and their Lawyers? **Yes**
 - b. Police Unions/Fraternal Associations? **Yes**
 - c. Health Insurance/Healthcare Executives, Board Members, and Lobbyists? **Yes**
 - d. Fossil Fuel Executives, Board Members, and Lobbyists? **Yes**
 - e. Charter School Executives, Board Members, and Lobbyists? **Yes**
 - f. Corporate PACs? **Yes**
 - g. Executives and board members of companies that have been cited for wage theft violations or that have had repeated claims of wage theft filed against them (See <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ags-fair-labor-division-complaints/>)? **Yes**
 - h. Executives and board members of companies and organizations that have employed union busting tactics? **Yes**

Comments: I very much appreciate that ORS is taking an aggressive and proactive role in endorsing City Council candidates this year. As always, I do not feel that the movement needs to endorse a full slate at-large nor to endorse in every race citywide to make a significant impact, and appreciate the membership's consideration. While many candidates may submit questionnaires, the timeline for this exceptionally long questionnaire was tight and the date for pulling papers has not yet arrived.

In light of the Mayoral race still being somewhat in flux, it's my hope that ORS will entertain a second round of endorsement considerations for additional candidates - for mayor, school committee, or otherwise - and in the event that less than 4 candidates for Councilor-At-Large pass the threshold criteria in the first round I would hope subsequent applications would be considered for said endorsement.

7. Do you share Our Revolution's values, as expressed in the organization's national priorities (<https://ourrevolution.com/issues/>)?
Yes

8. What does democratic socialism mean to you?
I believe that the more democratic our processes at every level are (including workplace organizing), the more that we return power to the agency of each member of our community to shape the world. Our government and economy must be radically transformed through greater democracy so that every American can participate in the many decisions that affect our lives. I also deeply understand the importance of having elected officials promoting explicitly socialist approaches in

local, state, and federal governance in order to reduce wealth inequality and achieve a more equitable world.

Socialism, to me, means that the product of our labor belongs inherently to the laborers and that the practice and products should be collectively determined by them instead of by private corporations; and that the extractive practices of capitalism and colonialism have acted hand in hand to create injustices on a grand scale and must be brought under more equitable government regulation in the short term - through democratic socialism - en route to a more socially owned series of production modes (be they public utilities or worker-owned co-ops).

9. ORS values diversity and believes that including diverse and underrepresented voices at the table is important in both politics and policymaking. How has your campaign demonstrated that it views this as a priority, and how will you continue to make it a priority if elected?
This has been an important part of my work over the past 3+ years. I've worked to get more BIPOC residents engaged in municipal government and activism, centered BIPOC and non-english-speaking voices in the Wage Theft Oversight Committee, and helped create the single most diverse and inclusive City Council process in recent history with the Civilian Oversight Commission work (including hiring two BIPOC experts to assist the process).

I currently have FOIA requests outstanding to obtain data from the Police Department to investigate discriminatory patterns of promotions and discipline within the department, and am committed to continue working with the colleagues who have been partners in creating structural change to our recruitment and hiring practices in aid of creating a more diverse city workforce at every level. This has been, and will continue to be, a focus of my work.

Within the next two months I hope to have a public hearing examining the success (or failure) of our Adult Use Marijuana licensing in attaining our equity goals, inviting prominent BIPOC activists and entrepreneurs to provide frank feedback and ensure their voices are front and center as we evaluate changes to more effectively reach those goals.

10. Since August 20, 1619, the day the first enslaved Africans arrived in Jamestown, and through the 402 subsequent years of slavery, Jim Crow, redlining, mass incarceration, and violent policing of black communities, racism has been a consistent thread woven into the fabric of America. How have race and culture affected your life and how do/would they inform your work and relationships with your constituents?
I grew up in Tennessee where racism was not subtly hidden, but it was built into every structure of my town. With a lifetime of learning behind - and still ahead of - me, I can see how these structures advantaged me and disadvantaged, in every way, my Black neighbors then and now. My job as a white person in a position of power is to challenge and remove those structural impediments to the success of BIPOC

residents in Somerville. That's a job I take seriously, and the initiatives I describe above show it. I look forward in the next term to continuing to democratize our city government and empower BIPOC residents by putting them in positions of authority in City Hall, and I believe a conversation about direct reparations is in order.

Voting Record Checklist

11. Did you vote in favor of -- or if you had been in office would you have voted in favor of -- the following items that were voted on by the City Council in its last two terms (Y/N):
- a. Transfer Fee **Yes**
 - b. Condo Conversion Ordinance **Yes**
 - c. Short Term Rental Ordinance **Yes**
 - d. Wage Theft Ordinance **Yes**
 - e. Tenant Right to Purchase Home Rule Petition **Yes**
 - f. Affordable Housing Overlay District **Yes**
 - g. Cuts to FY21 SPD personnel budget totalling \$1.18 million. (That vote did not pass. The City Council ultimately cut only \$650k) **Yes**
 - h. The mayor's request of an appropriation and bond for the [remediation and renovation of Conway Park](#) to a depth of only 18". **No**
 - i. Oak Street Block Party permit for BLM mural. **Yes**
 - j. Home Rule Petition Extending Municipal Voting Rights to 16- and 17-year olds **Yes**

Comments:

I am grateful that this group is watching the votes of the City Council closely and attempting to hold elected officials accountable for their actions in office.

Labor

12. Would you vote to fund city staff charged with fielding, tracking, and following up on wage theft complaints and a wage theft "know your rights" campaign that ensures all workers in Somerville know their rights and where to turn if they suspect a violation? (Y/N)
Yes
13. Would you refuse to support any transfer of land from the city to a developer in the absence of a Project Labor Agreement that ensures labor standards and local hire?(Y/N)
Yes
14. ORS believes that all city employees, contractors, and subcontractors should receive the full benefit of Massachusetts laws that protect workers, including living wage, earned sick time, and paid family and medical leave statutes. Unfortunately, some of these protections, such as earned sick time, do not automatically apply to municipal workers unless the city takes specific action to adopt them. Will you take actions within your power to ensure that all city workers receive the benefit of all worker protections currently in place for private employees in Massachusetts? (Y/N)
Yes

15. Do you oppose privatization of public municipal services in Somerville? (Y/N)

Yes

16. Would you support an ordinance that would require a minimum percentage of Somerville residents to be hired on large construction projects, and with major employers, in Somerville? (Y/N)

Yes

17. What steps would you take to incentivize and support worker-owned cooperatives in Somerville?

I support Rep. Uytterhoeven’s HD.1863, expanding the operating capacities of Adult Use Marijuana Cooperatives. But in addition, I believe we need to direct additional resources from OSPCD to help business founders establish coop models, and create ongoing financial incentives (including license fee relief) for businesses which are worker-owned coops. (This could potentially also be extended to businesses which comply with “One Fair Wage” standards and do not force their employees to rely upon tips for income.)

18. Somerville’s Job Creation and Retention Trust is now nearly two years old. How would you evaluate the impact of the trust so far and what would you do as an elected official to improve its mission and impact?

Though the JCRT is still relatively new, I am pleased with the creation of the Somerville Worker’s Center and the emergency COVID rapid response resources they’ve made available. I hope that in the next two years we can expand the JCRT’s resources for worker outreach and legal assistance, expanded Know Your Rights campaigns, and ability to take on oversight and assistance for negotiation and enforcement of Project Labor Agreements reached through CBAs or other documents created by Neighborhood Councils.

Comments:

Housing Justice

19. Name at least 3 protections that you would include in a Tenant Bill of Rights.

Rent Control, Right to Organize, Relocation Assistance, Just Cause Evictions, Right of First Refusal/TOPA, Right to Counsel. I have put forward legislation on, voted for HRPs granting, or advocated publicly for all of the above. Here in Somerville we actually obtained a limited Right of First Refusal and Relocation Assistance in our Condo Conversion Ordinance, which is now being legally challenged by a local landlord coalition.

20. What concrete steps should the city make to ensure all tenants and landlords know their rights and responsibilities?

Landlords are easy to contact; we have their info for property tax purposes. But at every point of contact with the city, we should be collecting contact information and

proactively providing communication regarding tenant rights: parking permits, email list signups, 311 contacts, city census, etc. I would love to see Tenant KYR information included with the city census mailings.

21. If elected, would you vote for the following (Y/N):
- A bill to provide right to counsel in Housing Court regardless of income level or documentation status. **Yes**
 - Directing city revenue to the Somerville Community Land Trust? (feel free to suggest possible sources for such funds in the Comments field for this section) **Yes**
22. What steps could Somerville take over the next five years to increase housing affordability, particularly to meet the needs of households with less than 50% AMI?
The city absolutely needs to devote more resources to supporting the Somerville Community Land Trust and empowering it to accumulate property for affordable housing creation and sustenance. In addition, I'd like to see the city engage in a focused program of public housing (or deepest affordability tier housing) creation, including using eminent domain to secure currently vacant parcels and create high-density public housing.
23. How will you support mobility and sensory accessibility as an inherent part of real estate development in Somerville? **One important step would be removing the "2ft elevation" requirement from the ground floor of residential buildings in NR and UR zones, thus eliminating the "default setting" being inaccessible design and marginalized access for mobility impaired residents. We can also strongly incentivize accessible design by establishing BOTH mobility and sensory accessibility guidelines (above and beyond the ADA), and providing height and density bonuses for buildings that comply with them. (This approach is similar to the one taken for Passive House energy efficiency standards.)**
24. How will you improve and expand upon mobility and sensory accessible affordable housing stock in Somerville? **Most "affordable housing" being created currently is via inclusionary zoning in UR and MR districts, though some will also occur in HR districts moving forward. Updating our inclusionary zoning specifications in the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to require more (or all) inclusionary ADUs to meet ADA standards (or enhanced standards as mentioned above) via their Special Permit requirements would dramatically increase the number of ADUs that are accessible.**
25. Do you support an eviction moratorium for the remainder of the COVID-19 Crisis and for one year thereafter (as outlined in the Housing Stability Act)? (Y/N)
Yes
26. Do you support increasing public housing, including in your ward? (Y/N)
Yes

27. How do you intend to address homelessness in Somerville?

We need to invest in additional support and outreach services, particularly including partnering with existing community agencies, while also working to create housing which is available to even the lowest-earning members of our community. (See above, regarding the creation of Public Housing.) In addition, I'm interested in purchasing buildings which may be suitable for temporary or transitional housing in the short-term, such as the LaQuinta Inn in Assembly Row, though of course that can only be successful if paired with long-term strategies for securing long-term housing stability.

28. Would you support legislation requiring that all brokerage fees in residential rental units are the responsibility of the landlord or property owner? (Y/N)

Yes

Comments:

PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes)

29. What steps will you take to make sure that Somerville gets the most out of future PILOT negotiations?

I support Rep Uyterhoeven's bill HD.3207 "Act relative to payments in lieu of taxation by organizations exempt from the property tax" and would urge its adoption. In the meantime, I believe the PILOT cannot be negotiated behind closed doors by the Mayor and Executive Office staff; the public must be involved and I support the formation of a resident PILOT negotiating committee.

30. Do you support the creation of a resident PILOT negotiating committee, and their ability to make binding recommendations regarding PILOTs? (Y/N)

Yes

31. How would you support state legislation that would increase municipalities' ability to receive fair and equitable PILOTs?

In addition to HD.3207 above, I'm eager to lobby for, testify on behalf of, and join organizing efforts statewide to ensure their adoption.

Comments:

Electoral Reform and Democracy

32. Do you support legislation that would create public financing for municipal elections? (Y/N)

Yes

33. Do you support expanding voting rights in municipal elections to include Somerville residents who are

a. Non-citizens? (Y/N) **Yes**

b. Presently incarcerated (outside Somerville) for a felony conviction? (Y/N) **Yes**

34. What will you do to ensure volunteer committees have city staff to support their success?
We should hire external support staff (not use existing city staff “part-time” hours) for these commissions, including Executive Directors for the most prominent Commissions. If the City Council had greater budgetary authority through Charter Reform, we could accomplish this directly.

35. What changes would you like to see through Somerville Charter reform?
Fundamentally, the Legislative branch must be strengthened. After 20 years of executive overreach and neglect, it had withered into a vestigial body by 2017. The election of an activist and radical group has injected great enthusiasm into the institution, as evidenced by the greatly extended hours of deliberation and investigation. However, this effort is not justified by the limited authority given to the Council, nor is it sustainable beyond the justifiable and estimable fervor of the activism which spurred these residents to run for office. If we seek to construct a more robust balance of power, the Legislative branch should obtain recall powers over appointed positions (including department Directors), secure direct budgetary power to establish and fund initiatives, and obtain authority “in the moment” to cancel funding for positions or initiatives which are not meeting the city’s needs or expectations.

36. How can charter reform be used as a tool for addressing racism and improving equity in our city?

I think there’s a wide open solution field here that includes both new models and lessons from the past, and I don’t think I have the “right answer” but it’s a question I hope the Charter Commission devotes serious attention towards. Obvious first-order answers include public funding of elections, allowing child care as allowable campaign expenses and reimbursable service activities during committee meetings, and paying councilors a sustainable living wage - all of which are structural impediments preventing low-income residents from serving.

Further creative structural changes are also possible, though. For example, the current model includes ward councilors who represent over 11k residents each; the number of wards could be increased to make that representation even more local. Alternatively, two councilors could be elected for each ward on overlapping 4 year terms, with a requirement that no more than one sitting councilor could be white and no more than one could be male-identified from each ward. As another possible solution, a “fourth level” of government could be created by formalizing Neighborhood Councils into “Ward Councils” who are elected during municipal elections and hyper-locally represented sub-areas within districts.

Regardless of more radical changes, I feel that the Mayor/Chief Executive must have a term limit, and that the budgetary power, staffing, and oversight capacity of the

Legislative Branch must be increased substantially to form a check against Executive excesses that we've seen grow in the past 20 years.

37. Will you reject any charter reform that includes a city manager? (Y/N)

Yes

38. What changes to the staffing, resources, or compensation of City Council will you fight for, and why?

My experience attempting to create the kind of representation I want to see for my ward over the last 3 years has been incredibly instructive and draining. The City Council requires staff (collectively) to assist with policy analysis and drafting, and staff (individually) to assist with coordinating neighborhood meetings, constituent services, and outreach efforts. As such, a budget must be set aside for each

Councilor to have a staff person paid a living wage; in addition, a reserved budget for additional collective staff is called for. The current City Council employees (Policy Analyst, Outreach Coordinator) have only been allowed by the Mayor to be 19-hr Part Time positions, and their salaries are 30% below what the City Council requested. That is punitive and directly hinders hiring BIPOC candidates for these positions. It must be remedied.

In addition, the lack of independent legal counsel is a glaring problem that the last 3 years have only highlighted further. The City Council requires its own lawyer, for a litany of reasons.

Finally, I would say that City Councilors should be paid a living wage that accurately reflects the time, energy, and effort we expect of the position. In the past 16 years, the Mayor's salary has increased from \$85k to over \$181k. On the City Council we are either compelled to be independently wealthy or work second jobs to make ends meet. This is not a recipe for diverse or representative democracy, and makes the job of recruiting working-class candidates much harder.

Defunding these positions encourages corruption and implicitly decreases diverse, working class representation. We must fund the City Council.

39. What specific changes would you prioritize to make meetings and community engagement more accessible?

The pandemic experience has shown us that increased online availability dramatically increases participation. I have chaired over 50 meetings in the past year, with over 2,000 attendees. An average of 40 attendee per meeting at City Council committees is unheard of, but in this digital (and isolated) age we have achieved it. We must continue a model which allows online (hybrid) participation in these forums, as Cambridge and other cities have demonstrated is possible.

From a language perspective, providing translation “on request with 24 hours advance notice” is not sufficient. We should provide dedicated 311 access lines in our major languages, staffed full-time and responding to messages received after-hours. In addition, we should have translation services available for every City Council meeting, and routine translation of the minutes and proceedings.

40. The City of Somerville has a wide variety of boards and commissions, with available seats, intended to be filled by residents. According to the Somervillema.gov website boards and commissions page, “Somerville residents have awesome ideas, a wealth of knowledge, and interesting perspectives that are invaluable to the City.” Please share your thoughts on the current structure of Somerville City Boards and commissions, giving consideration to posting/advertising, appointment practices, and terms of service (time commitment). Is the current structure working to assemble sustainable, functioning, democratic, and diverse boards? If yes, how so? If not, share your thoughts on improving structures currently in place.

Current practices are woefully inadequate to recruit, retain, and compensate these boards to be sustainable and functioning. There are many problems with these commissions, but perhaps the most pernicious is that they are not empowered; instead they are defunded, neutered, and told at every turn what they are not allowed to do. These boards must be allowed more autonomy to operate and funded to actually enact the functions with which they were empowered either by ordinance or by charter.

There is no incentive to donate one’s time to participate in a farce or a “performance” of civic engagement; it is incumbent on the City to demonstrate that it values residents’ time and service by giving them resources, power, and autonomy when pursuing the goals of their commissions. The executive authority under which each Commissioner serves at the pleasure of the Mayor is more than sufficient to retain a check on overreach. Beyond that, the Commissions must be given the ability to investigate, deliberate, and speak freely upon the issues within their purview.

Comments:

Public Accommodations/Transit

41. Do you support funding gender neutral public restrooms in city buildings? (Y/N)

Yes

42. Do you support making public transportation free to Somerville residents?(Y/N)

Yes

43. What actions/ordinances would you propose to make streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists in Somerville?

While the demands of SASS and others are sensible and easy to support (and I do), it’s important to note that our approach to several of the most high-visibility safer

streets projects has resulted in many “unforced errors” due to rushing to final implementation, when pilot projects could have told us more about the situation on the ground and built community support for a final design. By contrast, in ward 2 I led a process with community members on and around Washington Street wherein we held multiple hyper-local meetings to gather information block-by-block about how the public way served all the various users throughout the day, and built a set of proposed changes that could balance those needs. Thanks to a pilot project currently underway, we should be able to collect data (both formal and anecdotal, from residents) that will guide a final reconstruction that can be bold where needed to increase multimodal safety while still retaining critical functionality that would be sorely missed if overlooked.

44. What are the largest parking-related challenges facing Somerville, and how do you propose we address them?

How much we prioritize use of our public ways for private vehicle storage - given that the land area for a parking spot in Somerville is now worth roughly \$35,000 - should be closely examined. In addition, unless we are prepared to dramatically change the scope of our public ways and engage in a boom of reconstruction not seen since 1880-1920, we need to recognize that the square footage used for car storage is part of a scarce area that is constrained by current buildings and property, and under competition by modes of transport what weren't even conceived when our street grid was initially laid out. Surfacing the cost of owning and storing private vehicles on public land - especially when vehicle ownership and usage is directly correlated to income, as lower-income households rely far less on cars - is equitable. At the same time, access to transit must be expanded and made free to users.

Finally, it cannot be overstated that only 15% of Somerville's residents have jobs in Somerville. We must create jobs locally in both the private and public sector so that residents can live and work in walkable, transit served community and are not exclusively reliant upon private transportation to get to their places of work, grocery stores, and city services.

Comments:

Policing and Public Safety

45. What is your vision for public safety & policing in our community, including schools?

Public Safety is achieved when all members of our community have the resources to meet their needs: housing, food, child care, education, transportation, health care. Harms are addressed when we can correct the harm and the treat the underlying causes with counseling and restorative justice processes rather than incarceration.

Street violence can be more effectively prevented by community intervention and interruption models rooted in distributed local agencies rather than continuing to concentrate resources in a policing structure that was never designed to do that.

Police departments in this country have always been designed to protect property rather than people, to more-or-less-politely manage and maintain our systems of inequality.

Calling the police currently feels like *something*, and something is everything when your alternative is nothing. We need to create alternatives locally that make the police a last resort, a sad and final alternative which interacts by legal necessity with the larger carceral state which surrounds us now. I have proposed Intercept Mapping projects rooted in BIPOC-led reform and abolition work, automated traffic enforcement measures, civilian (unarmed) code enforcement services, and civilian community mediation and intervention teams. I will continue to advocate for reducing our investment in a broken system as we invest in this new vision for Public Safety.

46. Do you support (Y/N):

- a. redirecting SPD funding to prioritize community policing? **Yes**
- b. redirecting SPD funding to prioritize de-escalation training? **Yes**
- c. redirecting SPD funding to prioritize mental health and substance abuse programs? **Yes**
- d. opening safe injection sites in the city of Somerville, including in your ward? **Yes**
- e. the decriminalization of drugs? **Yes**
- f. legislation banning Somerville from involvement with the 1033 program, which transfers military arms and equipment to civilian police departments? **Yes**
- g. cutting the police budget by at least 10% in each year of the next term? **Yes**
- h. legislation banning the use and storage of teargas by Somerville police? **Yes**
- i. allowing non-police to take over traffic-work? **Yes**
- j. capping overtime earnings of police and correctional officers at 10% of their salary? **Yes**
- k. a [CAHOOTS](#)-style program to enable unarmed response to mental-health-emergencies? **Yes**
- l. the welfare of sex workers, including but not limited to full decriminalization? **Yes**
- m. legislation banning law enforcement and schools from cooperating with and sharing information with ICE? **Yes**
- n. the abolition of private prisons, cash bail, and the prison-industrial complex? **Yes**
- o. divesting your city's pension funds from defense contractors, fossil fuel companies, and prison-related industries? **Yes**
- p. banning any exchanges of the Somerville Police Department with foreign militaries or police? **Yes**
- q. the police abolitionist movement? **Yes**

Comments: **In the above questions, I'd only support the enhancement of "community policing" and "mental health and substance abuse programs" in conjunction with their removal from the Police Department, placing those functions within other organizations and departments and reducing funding for "Gang" or "Vice" units. As for "de-escalation training", I believe that to be an essential piece of training for any person engaged in high-stress interpersonal situations, but it is not a solution to our current national and local issue of overpolicing.**

BDS

47. Do you support the BDS (Boycott Divestment Sanctions) movement?

Yes

48. Do you support ending Somerville's contracts with corporations that are complicit in the Israeli occupation of Palestine?

Yes

Comments:

Climate Justice

49. What do you consider to be the most urgent environmental justice issues in Somerville? What actions will you take as an elected official to address these issues?

We have significant environmental justice issues including a lack of noise barriers near I-93, air quality near major arteries, and dramatic Urban Heat Island effects which disproportionately impact our most vulnerable - the elderly, young, and low-income - as well as those who live nearest them, which are very commonly disproportionately our BIPOC residents. I support efforts in zoning to require additional filtration systems near vehicle arteries and increase green space (including street tree canopy and green roofs) to mitigate heat island effects, and believe that any artificial turf installations should be both domed to ensure safety and year-round access, as well as sited on currently paved areas rather than replacing our scarce natural green spaces.

50. By what year will the city of Somerville be carbon neutral? How will you ensure that the city is carbon neutral within this timeframe? Specifically, describe how you will approach retrofitting affordable and rental housing to zero greenhouse emissions standards within this timeframe.

Realistically, I think a goal of 2040 might be achievable - though it will require a massive investment in materials and labor to retrofit city buildings and current affordable housing stock. That kind of investment will require new and more flexible funding sources obtained in conjunction with the state and federal government, something that the Biden administration and our representatives at every level have expressed an appetite for. In particular, I'd seek to expand the MLF (Municipal Lending Facility) currently established by the Federal Reserve Bank to enable Somerville to leverage that funding source, or even to have our next Massachusetts Governor use the MLF to establish a Massachusetts Reserve Bank which could facilitate monetary policy funding to municipalities for dramatic, transformational infrastructure projects such as public housing construction and existing structure refits for environmental sustainability.

51. SOMERVISION2040 set a goal of 100 new acres of open space. What would you do to achieve this? How would you ensure access is equitable and that nature and greenspace are available to all?

The current price of land in Somerville is nearing \$9M/acre, rising up to \$19M near proposed transit stations. The cost to achieve this goal has doubled since the first SomerVision proposal 10 years ago, with precious little action taken by the city to advance that goal. Indeed, the land I secured for public parks through eminent domain on Somerville Ave, and developer givebacks on Lake St and Boynton Yards are among the largest gains we've made in a decade on creating green space.

Given that this is a Billion Dollar Problem, we need to partner with our federal representatives to secure funding for massive public works efforts that repair our neglected and failing sewer and road work infrastructure (each of which are Billion Dollar Problems), create public housing, and pair that housing with requirements for Green Space creation. Establishing stronger requirements for green space creation in transformational development - both private and public - will ensure that as Somerville reshapes itself for the next 100 years we will leave behind a more sustainable and green city than we inherited.

52. How do you propose to equitably increase the amount of renewable energy in the city's Community Choice Energy program?

I think we need to both engage more broadly with non-english speaking outreach on that program to enable broader participation, as well as work with cities like Boston and Cambridge to push the DPU to allow cities to create a separate ratepayer class which allows us to reduce costs for low-income families who enroll in the CCE.

53. What topic areas or recommended policies within the Somerville Climate Forward plan will you prioritize? Explain what strategies you will use and specific actions you will take. What do you feel is missing from the SCF plan?

Reduced vehicle trips of all kinds reduce emissions and restrictions on heavy trucking preserve our roads and increase safety for all users; both need to be pursued. I'd immediately move to make MBTA transport (especially bus service) free for Somerville residents and fund it through increased fees to operate vehicles in the city; the resultant increase in transit usage would provide a strong argument to expanding MBTA service rather than seeing it reduced as we currently see the Baker administration pursuing. I'd like to pursue a restriction on large (>20') vehicles for deliveries in the city, encouraging more bicycle and "small lorry" delivery networks that are safer for residents and less strain on our infrastructure.

An often overlooked piece of this is the near inevitability of climate change dramatically impacting many of our "transformational" areas currently being targeted for the most growth, including Union Square, Boynton Yards, and Assembly Row. On a 50 year horizon, we may see a need to rehouse many residents due to flooding displacement and relocate critical infrastructure and public resources; we should be looking today at what we'd do in an emergency 50 years from now, and planning towards that solution before it becomes an overnight emergency. Continuing to invest in stormwater management and flood preparedness, funded by a Stormwater

Management Fee based on the burden presented by property owners with large impermeable surface ratios and poor stormwater management, will be an important short-term measure to pursue.

54. Do you support a ban on new natural gas infrastructure in the city? How would you address the impact on local labor?

I think this conversation needs to be had in the context of the ruling that Brookline's ban was unconstitutional, as well as the recognizing that the labor unions that rely on natural gas infrastructure construction and maintenance will need to be involved in ensuring their members have a role in the transition and installation of new, more climate friendly modes of construction. This work is already underway and I would support efforts to democratize and transform our privately-owned "public utilities" into greener, more equitable government-owned institutions in partnership with labor.

55. Describe what you see as the values and goals of a Green New Deal. How will you implement these values and goals in concrete public policy?

Thanks to Ed Markey and AOC and others, the Green New Deal is fairly well publicized - but here in Somerville it needs to be expressed through expanded public works projects using local hiring (not consultants and contractors) that include road repair, utility upgrades, building refits, and public housing construction; a fare-free MBTA by 2023; and expanding our tree canopy and green spaces.

56. Do you support bringing the energy grid under public and democratic control through municipal and state buyouts? (Y/N)

Yes

57. How do you plan to vote, or how would you vote, on [Somerville's Native Planting Ordinance](#)?

Yes

Comments: