

Candidate name (first and last):	JT Scott
Office the candidate is seeking:	Ward 2 City Councilor
1. How do you see transportation, housing, and climate issues connecting and how will you work to align them if elected? [600 character limit]	Obviously these are interconnected, but one aspect many people miss is that only 15% of Somerville's residents have jobs within Somerville. This makes transportation to employment a critical path problem which exacerbates our congestion, safety, and environmental/climate problems. We must improve public transit in the short term and build employment opportunities within Somerville to address this, both of which are essential parts of a strategy to mitigate climate change effects.
2. Often street projects designed to improve safety and public transit involve removing on-street parking or reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes to make space for people walking, biking, and transit infrastructure. With a new mayoral administration taking over next year, how would you be a strong advocate and leader on the council on transportation issues, even amidst pushback? [1200 character limit]	I've already done this on Washington Street, demonstrating leadership by hosting local neighborhood meetings to understand the multimodal and hyperlocal use patterns on the street and developing - with community advocates - a pilot pattern proposal. That proposal was later taken up by the city's Mobility Dept in collaboration with the MBTA to create a pilot project, creating bus slip lanes, bike lanes, and proposing crosswalk protections and shortenings, which will inform the full-width redesign of Washington St in 2023. Similarly, on Laurel St I am working with the mobility department and local residents to create new curb extensions and traffic lane diversions to shorten pedestrian crossings and structurally reduce vehicular speeds on this problematic north-south connecting street, which will eliminate some parking spaces for the net benefit of all users of the street. With a new mayoral administration, I see no reason to stop now. I look forward to working with Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets and other advocates to continue to improve equitable and safe access and mobility for all users of our public realm - including our streets and sidewalks.
1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Somerville? (Check the top 3.)	Bus, Bike (bike-share or personal bicycle), Walking
1b. What types of housing have you lived in or owned throughout your life? (Check all that apply.)	Duplex/Triple-decker, Over-six-unit apartment building, As a renter, As a landlord, Home ownership, Housing insecure, Single-family home, Urban, Suburban, Rural
1. Somerville has just initiated a process to create a citywide bicycle network plan which will show how street space will be allocated to create bike infrastructure for people of all ages and abilities. How will you work to ensure that this network will be built in a timely manner? [1200 character limit]	As I've shown, I'm eager to put in the work above and beyond the city's customary public engagement process to enlist advocates and solicit input from residents who are not commonly present for those discussions. By creating those smaller engagement processes, we not only see increased engagement but also a greater willingness to engage openly and earnestly with the shared challenges and demands of businesses, residents, and all users of our street network. With that kind of engagement, we can find a path to the common goal that most of us have in common: a safer, shared public realm. I also think it's critical that we begin to approach these projects with a more local-hire focus as well, instead of outsourcing the work to contract firms, including out-of-state firms. We need to recognize that our infrastructure work will take decades and that maintenance is eternal - and that money and jobs should remain in our community for the betterment of all and the rebuilding of a robust working class who can afford to live in Somerville.
2. What strategies do you support to improve accessible pedestrian infrastructure, particularly for those with vision impairments or using mobility assistive devices? [1200 character limit]	In the 2021 budget I proposed specific positions for people with ADA expertise in the engineering and inspectional services departments to directly address our need to have in-house capacity for redesign work on existing infrastructure for disability access improvements. Those were disappointingly not filled, but going forward we should at least meet those minimum standards and continue to work with our Disabilities Commission and community advocates to create a more robust partnership that puts accessibility first in our pedestrian network design.
3. SomerVision 2040 mobility goals include reducing Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and prioritizing walking, biking, and transit access. How will you continue to implement the City's Complete Streets Ordinance for both short-term and long-term projects? [1200 character limit]	As said before, short-term I have worked with stakeholders in my ward (and will continue in the future) to inform the design process and advocate for Complete Streets elements which understand the context of existing street usage and push towards safer and more accessible streets for all users. In the medium-term we need to improve public transit access and safe bicycle infrastructure to make those modalities more suitable to serving more users' transportation needs. Long term, the goal of massively reducing VMT can only be achieved by building local employment opportunities for our residents here and improving access to essential neighborhood services (like food access and other residential amenities). By creating a truly local network of services and employment, rebuilding our working and middle class' ability to live and work in a neighborhood without reliance on personal automobiles, we can transform the experience of our streets.
4. Some of the more dangerous roads in Somerville are owned by state agencies, including McGrath Highway and Mystic Avenue. How will you work with and push state agencies, such as MassDOT and DCR, to make much needed changes to improve safety along busy corridors? [1200 character limit]	The recent example set forth by Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets shows how it will take a coalition of local, state, and federal elected officials working in tight alignment with community advocates to push these agencies to make essential changes. I was glad to support that effort, and will do everything I can to work with leaders like Rep Pressley, Rep Uytendaele, and Rep Connolly to apply pressure and get these changes made.
5. While the MBTA controls bus service, the City of Somerville controls the streets the buses operate on. How would you accelerate bus service and bus priority infrastructure? [1200 character limit]	I've already done this, in the Washington St pilot project detailed above, which added bus slip lanes and bicycle lanes to an important stretch of the route. That project in particular is improving trip speeds and reliability on the 86 bus, the most heavily used bus line in Somerville. I look forward to doing more of this to improve the 87, 91, and CT2 - 3 other critical lines that serve Somerville and the surrounding area.
6. Through the Bus Network Redesign process, how would you ensure those who need bus service are able to provide feedback and have their needs heard through the process? [1200 character limit]	I look forward to participating in the public comment processes coming out of the Better Bus Project to ensure that we have expanded frequency and modified routes, particularly improving north-south access in Somerville. While Ward 2 is blessed with better MBTA service than many areas in Somerville, there is absolutely room for improvement.
7. Living near high traffic roadways causes public health issues, such as increased rates of asthma, due to the pollution caused by vehicle traffic. In Somerville, environmental justice communities experience the burden of bordering I-93. How would you work to mitigate and address issues of health equity in these communities that result from car traffic? [1200 character limit]	Taking our cues from the residents in these areas and knowledgeable community advocates, we absolutely need barriers to mitigate particulate dispersal on those nearby I-93 in Somerville to improve health outcomes inside and outside homes. Beyond that, I've supported local legislation to require improved air filtration on new construction projects in the area within a quarter mile of I-93, a critical dispersal zone. In addition, we need to reckon with the damage already done to the health of those in these communities, improving support and health care in recognition of the struggles faced by young and old residents alike in these areas impacted by the reckless infrastructure choices of the past.
8. The MA state legislature is considering creating a new dedicated governance board for the MBTA, emulating the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB). Given this, how would you utilize the board meetings to advocate on important issues that might be outside the City's control? [1200 character limit]	As we've seen with the existing interface points for the MBTA, the existing avenues for public engagement are frequently inadequate. It's incumbent on those of us in public office to help gain access for community advocates to shape those decision making processes regardless of the existing formal methods for providing feedback, and continuing to develop relationships with state-level elected and appointed officials who shape policy at the MBTA (and future FMCB) will be an important role for every elected official in Somerville.
9. Somerville is expected to get tens of millions of stimulus dollars from the federal government. How would you prioritize spending those funds, and how would housing and transportation priorities fit into that plan? [1200 character limit]	I believe that we must leverage those ARPA funds to kickstart massive public works construction, using a local workforce, to improve our surface and subsurface infrastructure and build a stronger working class in Somerville. Part of this, specifically, must be the creation of new municipally-owned public housing, bypassing the restrictions of the Faircloth Amendment, and enabling the high-density construction of truly affordable housing for Somerville residents across the entire income spectrum, and taking a serious step towards guaranteeing housing as a human right. I'm already working with partners in organized labor who have proven success in building mixed-income, multi-generational, family-oriented public housing projects in the region. I'm exploring strategies for securing both the land and the funding to make this dream of stable, affordable housing a reality for more of our residents. The ARPA funds can and must be part of a sophisticated combination of federal assistance, local tax revenues, bonding strategies, and lending through private vehicles such as investments from organized labor pension funds to maximize the impact of this infusion. Improving Somerville's access to other funds, such as via the FRB's Municipal Lending Facility, could also be a powerful piece of this package.
10. What do you propose Somerville should do with the \$30M community contribution for Green Line Extension that is being returned? [1200 character limit]	See above - these windfalls are best not simply spent on one-time subsidies, but leveraged with other revenue sources to create long-term structural changes which support affordable housing, transit access, and working class housing and income stabilization through changing the way we approach infrastructure and public works projects here in Somerville.

<p>11. A recent report from the MBTA found that the Green Line Extension (GLX) project will largely benefit higher-income, white residents, after an initial study 10 years ago determined the project would benefit environmental justice communities slightly more. How would you ensure that lower-income residents continue to benefit from transportation improvements and have access to affordable housing near transportation? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>This is a massive question with many parts to the answer. We must build municipal public housing to address affordability needs and create mixed-income, multi-generational, family-oriented public housing owned by the City of Somerville that is dense and located close to the GLX. In addition, we must change the way we approach the construction of these projects to include training and employment opportunities for local residents in EJ communities.</p> <p>Finally, perhaps most subtly, we must work to address the cultural displacement factors which compound the gentrification effects already at work by continuing to improve zoning and economic development incentives for the creation of local businesses which serve as employment anchors and community touchstones, the backbone of a strong and diverse middle class. Focusing those efforts on enabling minority owned businesses is a critical and often overlooked aspect of mitigating cultural displacement.</p>
<p>12. In a new housing development where space is limited, and parking adds substantially to the cost, how would you prioritize space/think about tradeoffs (between more units, parking, open space, etc.)? What would you do in the face of community opposition to developments that seek to balance these priorities? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>I've already done this on multiple projects in Ward 2 - perhaps most visibly in a project on Somerville Ave which transformed from a 4-story project with surface parking to a taller 6-story project with more units, zero vehicular parking, and created a nearly 10k sqft public park on a third of the lot area on the most residential lot facing. Our legislative amendments restricting residential parking permit access in proximal transit areas has been a powerful tool to overcoming community concerns regarding street parking utilization, and the result of intensive community process at the hyperlocal level have been projects that include more green space, more units, and less parking.</p>
<p>13. Somerville's inclusionary housing program requires that new developments of over 18 units include at least 20% of the new units be affordable and income-restricted. There is conversation about increasing the program's percentage; however, experience and research around the country has shown that setting the percentage too high can actually reduce the total number of new affordable units built. Would you support a new 12 unit building where 50% of the units are affordable over a 60 unit building where 20% of the units are affordable? Why? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>This question demands a bit more nuance than a simple mathematical analysis. As frustrating an answer as it can be, "it depends" is appropriate here. How close is this development to transit? What is the state of the existing bicycle and pedestrian transit network nearby, and how could it be improved in the scope of the project? Are there important displacement knock-on effects from the impact of this particular project? Four years of conducting hyperlocal neighborhood meetings about development and transportation projects has taught me that the demands and support capacity of these networks can vary dramatically even in the space of a few blocks, and we need to be conscious of these variations as we consider the shape of any individual project.</p> <p>In the broad aggregate, I support increased density for projects with more affordable housing, and my track record supporting zoning ordinance and map changes as well as support for our Affordable Housing Overlay demonstrate that. In the individual analysis, the Lake St/Somerville Ave project mentioned above shows how that can translate to increased density, unit counts, and green space.</p>
<p>14. Increasing density is one of the goals of SomerVision to advance the housing stock and affordability, but Somerville's zoning code restricts how dense housing can be built. There's also pushback because Somerville is already "the densest city in New England" with ~80% of the city made up of two and three family houses. How would you address pushback and ensure that Somerville can meet its density goals set goals in SomerVision 2040? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>Important to note that the City Council has not yet voted to endorse the conclusions of the SomerVision 2040 proposal. With that said, opening all 2-fams up to raw market rate expansion WITHOUT first putting into place extensive tenant protections is declaring "Open Season" on speculative real estate development to increase acquisition costs, gentrify rapidly, and displace current residents in a tsunami of capital seeking investment returns. Our current zoning is holding the line in the neighborhoods and reducing displacement pressures while still allowing for increased density near transit nodes as we plan for future development without displacement.</p> <p>Cultural displacement is a real factor: fundamentally, people look around and say "this isn't my neighborhood anymore." The feeling that this city isn't a welcoming place for you any more, that you aren't cared for and supported, is one of the visceral experiences of gentrification. "Development without displacement" also means preserving a sense that the people who live here now still belong here in the future, and having neighborhood processes that shape development to include tangible benefits to the existing residents.</p>
<p>15. What actions or policies that fall under existing municipal powers (i.e., do not require a home rule petition) do you support to help prevent displacement? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>As stated above, we can do more with economic development policies and incentives to encourage locally- and minority-owned small businesses embedded in our residential neighborhoods to mitigate cultural displacement factors. We must continue to balance protecting existing residents from the impacts of construction and development while continuing to encourage density near transit nodes by including local activists in the planning processes and leaving space for Neighborhood Councils to negotiate Community Benefits Agreements with major projects. We can, and must, also build locally-controlled public housing. None of the above measures will require HRP approval, and all of them should be citywide priorities in the coming year.</p>
<p>1. The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition supports the removal of direct policing from Vision Zero goals, citing issues of equity and a lack of effectiveness in improving safety. You can read about these issues in the Vision Zero Somerville 2020 Report Card and the Coalition Statement on Gov. Baker Administration's Road Safety Legislation. Do you support removing police enforcement from Vision Zero? Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>2. Police details are often required for construction projects and open streets events -- it would save money and create jobs if community members were allowed to do this work. Civilian flaggers were first authorized in 2008 to help fill these roles in Massachusetts; nevertheless, these projects and events are still primarily staffed by police on overtime, and detail requests often go unfilled entirely. Do you support reducing police involvement in streets-related projects and events? Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>3. One key strategy that has been proven to effectively reduce speeding, improve safety, and remove racial bias in traffic enforcement in other states and countries is automated enforcement (i.e., speed cameras and red-light cameras). The MA Vision Zero Coalition is specifically supportive of the following bills due to their strong protections around equity and data privacy, H.2426, H.2532, S.1545. If the State House passes this automated enforcement legislation and allows cities & towns to opt-in to a speed or red-light camera program, would you support your municipality using this tool? Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>4. Do you support filing a home rule petition for the City of Somerville to implement automated enforcement within the municipality if legislation is not passed at the state level? If you are supportive, please describe how you would ensure the crucial equity and data provisions are included in the petition. Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>5. Many injuries from traffic crashes happen on busier arterial roads. Do you support traffic calming for high-crash intersections and roadways of arterials to prevent crashes and save lives, even when it means taking away parking or travel lanes? Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>6. Mode shift occurs when people get out of their cars and choose other ways of getting around. Do you support the City's SomerVision 2040 goal of reducing vehicular traffic so that 75% of work commutes are made via non-car mode by 2040? Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>

<p>7. To achieve many of Somerville's stated goals in Vision Zero and Somervision 2040, additional curb space will need to be reallocated from parking to create safe bike infrastructure, bus lanes, and pedestrian improvements. The current price for residential parking permits in Somerville is approximately \$3.33 a month, while the market rate for off street parking is much higher. Do you support raising the annual fee for residential parking permits?</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	Strongly Support
<p>8. Do you support free bus service on the MBTA, and a low-income fare option for other public transit options?</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	Strongly Support
<p>9. Are you supportive of an ordinance similar to Cambridge's Cycling Safety Ordinance which would require protected bike lanes designated in the upcoming bike plan to be built on city streets when they are being reconstructed?</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	Strongly Support
<p>Adding parking to housing developments is expensive and increases the cost of housing. Mandatory parking minimums for new developments near MBTA train stops have been eliminated. Do you support eliminating parking minimums city-wide?</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	Somewhat Support
<p>11. Improvements to affordable housing in Somerville requires not only increasing production and allocation, but also increasing the amount of housing that will maintain its affordable status in perpetuity. Do you support the goal of making 20% of Somerville's housing stock affordable in perpetuity by 2040?</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	This one will require a bit more sequencing; balancing the anticipated demand on the limited supply of street parking spaces will require moving in concert with changing on-street parking costs and availability of same due to other infrastructure changes, such as widening sidewalks and bike lanes.
<p>12. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) adds a 1.5% surcharge on net property taxes and qualifies the city to receive matching funds from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund to help support affordable housing in Somerville. It received a 76% approval as a ballot question in 2015. Do you support increasing this surcharge to further support affordable housing as part of CPA?</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	Strongly Support