

Candidate name (first and last):	Charlotte Kelly
Office the candidate is seeking:	At-large 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]	Addressing the climate crisis is an issue of housing justice, racial justice, transit justice, economic justice, and requires intersectional analysis. We have to move with the sense of urgency that these issues require while still being intentional with any plans we put into place. Our residents do not live single issue lives, and consequently, we have to thoughtfully connect these issues through policy. Whether we are working to stop displacement, making the T free, or fighting for sound barriers around I-93, the council can put equity and justice at the core of its decision making.
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]	As an organizer, I have extensive experience bringing people together around an issue and trying to build consensus, even when people don't see eye to eye. The new mayor and council will have major mobility infrastructure plans to devise, which will require robust community engagement in order to build consensus around the future of our streets in Somerville. I am committed to building comprehensive infrastructure plans instead of piecemealing solutions. We have to repave our roads and build a citywide bike network to keep bikers and drivers safe, as well as expanding pedestrian and bike paths to connect East Somerville to West Somerville. We have to pilot fare-free buses and eventually free-at-point-of-service public transit across Somerville. We can work with the MBTA to expand bus routes and bus frequency. We have to work with small businesses to understand their clients' mobility, transit, and parking needs in order to equitably distribute parking here in the city. We have to explore solutions like microtransit to address problems like the lack of parking near the high school and the lack of transit connecting the north and south parts of the city.
1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Somerville? (Check the top 3.)	Subway, 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, 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 a cyclist, I know our streets need massive improvements in order to make bicyclists, pedestrians, drivers and everyone moving through our city safer. I will fight to add more bike lanes and bus lanes. I would work with the Bike Safety Committee to ensure the needs of bikers are centered in the implementation of SomerVision. We have to work on building an actual bike network instead of piecemealing together bike lanes across the city. Streets like Highland Avenue, Elm Street, Summer Street, the West Somerville end of Broadway, and Medford Street need to be assessed for putting in protected bike. However, this must be within a larger project of creating a bike network plan like our neighbors in Cambridge have built. I will use the Committee on Traffic and Safety and Committee on Public Safety to hold the city accountable to updating residents on the progress and implementation of the citywide bike network plan.
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]	We should start by ensuring the Commission for Persons with Disabilities has a seat at the table and the resources to help us develop solutions to improve accessibility to pedestrian infrastructure. The Commission and the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets have named how inaccessible our sidewalks are in Somerville. We have to bring our sidewalks, crosswalks, and streets up to ADA compliance and rapidly implement the ADA Title II Transition Plan. We have to increase funding to install ADA compliant curb cuts and accessible crossing signals. As SASS has outlined, we have to update our traffic signals in order for them to be accessible to both visually impaired, blind, and autistic people, and we need to implement accessibility guidelines for lighted signage, signaling, and stopped emergency vehicles. We have to fund DPW in order to create citywide municipal snow clearing services. We have to ensure our bus stops are accessible to people with mobility assistive devices and make public transit free at point of service across the city so people can move throughout the city.
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 a cyclist and frequent pedestrian, I know our streets need massive improvements in order to make bicyclists, pedestrians and everyone traversing through our city safer. It is critical that the city implements SomerVision with the type of urgency it requires. The Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets has created an amazing list of demands that are in line with much of the Vision Zero plan and expand beyond that proposal. I would work with the Bike Safety Committee to ensure the needs of bikers are centered in the implementation of SomerVision. The City Council can use its Committee on Public Utilities, Committee on Public Safety, and the Committee on Traffic and Safety to hold the city accountable to updating residents on the progress and implementation of Vision Zero. The City Council can also improve the current Complete Streets Ordinance, and use the budget process to advocate for the necessary resources to improve Complete Streets Ordinances and implement SomerVision. I would specifically work to ensure the proper resources are made available to invest in traffic calming measures like speed bumps and chicanes.
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]	McGrath Highway and Mystic Avenue have been commonly referred to as the 'Corridors of Death' and the fact that there has not been more progress towards addressing the deadly conditions along those stretches of road is a catastrophe. I will work with my colleagues on the council and use our collective platform to advocate unrelentingly for improvements in safety conditions. I will use my platform to ensure transparency and openness around safety improvements and the involvement of MassDOT and DCR. As an advocate, I know how important it is for people in power to hear the stories of people impacted and how inaccessible governance on all levels can be. I will work with my constituents to ensure elected officials on a state and federal level hear from them. I will work to hold our elected officials who have decision making authority accountable to address this issue with the urgency and dedication it requires.
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]	As more people move to Somerville without cars or decide to live car free, we have to build the kind of infrastructure that supports the needs of residents while addressing car congestion on our streets. We can use the Green Line Extension refund to pilot fare-free bus routes, which can incentivize ridership on the MBTA and help us advocate for increased frequency in routes. We can improve our bus lanes by expanding the number of lanes available at peak traffic hours and working to increase bus stops along dedicated bus lane routes so residents can have more convenient locations to get on buses. I will work with our state delegation to continue to advocate for increased service along our busiest routes.
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]	As an organizer, I know that listening to people's stories is the first step in getting people more involved in the political process. We have to start by acknowledging that working class residents, residents of color, renters, and young people are structurally excluded from our political processes. In order to get robust participation from people who have been structurally denied access to our political process, we have to reach out directly to them and listen to their input. We have to do intentional outreach that understands the barriers that working people face. There are ways we can lower the barriers to entry within the political process. We can make meetings more accessible by providing childcare, doing outreach in multiple languages and providing interpretation, and having food available for participants. We have to constantly push ourselves to make our spaces more accessible. We have to meet people where they are at and recognize that engagement and trust-building takes time. We have to be committed to doing the work necessary to thoughtfully, intentionally, and meaningfully bring people into the decision making process for building a more sustainable, healthy city.
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]	Looking at the world through an environmental justice lens shows us that building a sustainable and livable future for all of us requires interconnected solutions, especially for those who have been disproportionately impacted by systemic oppression. COVID-19 has demonstrated our city's ability to rapidly respond to public health needs. I would fight for a free public health clinic to be established and use our PILOT agreement with Partners Health as the vehicle to address the asthma and health crises facing working class, immigrant, and BIPOC neighborhoods. I will work with surrounding communities like Chelsea and Everett, who have won federal funds to set up cleaning air pollution hotspots. I will also work with local, state, and federal officials to ensure we have sound barriers put up around I-93 and McGrath, and ensure all neighbors have sound barriers around the entire Green Line Extension project. We have to improve safe pedestrian and bike commuting to prevent the types of tragic deaths that we have already seen in the area.
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]	I am committed to ensuring public control and ownership over the public good that is the T. Any governance board must be democratically controlled and be representative of the riders, workers, and community the MBTA serves. It will be critical that there are representatives from Boston Carmen's Union Local 589, T Riders Union, and other constituencies that are impacted by the MBTA, in order to ensure the body's legitimacy. I would work with elected officials in Boston, Cambridge, and other surrounding communities to coordinate our advocacy work directed at the board, specifically when it comes to expanding services, lowering fees across the system, and eventually working to make the T free. In addition, I would work with the board to advocate to state and federal officials to increase investments in the MBTA to improve and expand services.

<p>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]</p>	<p>We have an exciting opportunity to think big and be creative with the expected \$90 million dollars from the American Relief Plan Act. We should consider intentional processes that we could use to engage residents in how to spend these funds, like participatory budgeting. Right now, underfunded public goods and services end up placing the financial burden back on residents, like needing to pay for a rideshare service if public transit is inaccessible, paying out of pocket for childcare, overpaying for maintenance on cars and bikes because of poorly paved streets. We must make serious investments in our infrastructure in the city by improving public goods and services, whether that's improving roads and sidewalks, exploring municipal broadband, updating our water and sewer systems, or paying for free T passes for residents. We can create new public sector union jobs in tandem with offering robust mental health services, universal pre-K and afterschool, a youth jobs program, and a gas leak prevention team. We can address the housing crisis by expanding the office of housing stability, creating 'right to counsel' services for tenants, continuing the emergency housing fund, and improving our public housing developments in the city.</p>
<p>10. What do you propose Somerville should do with the \$30M community contribution for Green Line Extension that is being returned? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>The purpose of the GLX was to address the environmental racism that BIPOC and working class residents face, as well as to create more equitable access to public transit. With the GLX nearing completion, we see displacement happening. We should use the funds to provide rent stability for residents who are being pushed out and expand the Office of Housing Stability to ensure they have enough full time intake specialists to support tenants, attorneys to provide counsel to residents, resources to outreach to the community around tenant rights, and can have some funds to disperse directly to residents. We should provide financial support to local businesses to ensure they are not gentrified out of our community, and offer financial incentives for the creation of worker-owned cooperatives in any vacant business spaces. We should continue to address inequitable access to public transit by making the T free, exploring microtransit routes to connect the north and south parts of the city, and invest in our pedestrian and bike paths to connect east and west Somerville. We need to invest more money into addressing the rat problem that has been exacerbated by the GLX construction.</p>
<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>Displacement is happening due to the GLX. We have to use the GLX refund to ensure that communities most deeply impacted by environmental racism still benefit from the GLX and are prioritized with the refund allocations. We have to allow for construction of higher density properties to be built around the GLX. This must be done with an equity lens to ensure that higher density buildings are equitably dispersed along the GLX route. We can incentivize construction by allowing more units to be built and decreasing the square foot per unit requirements if there are a certain number of affordable units. We can increase density around public transit by evaluating what vacant properties could be taken by eminent domain to build social housing, provide residents with the opportunity to buy or rent first, and increase the affordable housing percentages in any new developments by the GLX from the 20% minimum to a higher percentage. We should work with the SCLT to understand the needs of low- and moderate-income people, and continue to financially expand resources for the SCLT so they can acquire land, buildings, homes, for the purpose of making public and social housing near the GLX.</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>Often when people talk about setting high standards for developers, they say that if the requirements are too high then people will not want to develop or we will scare off "good developers." I believe that is fundamentally a myth. Developers want to develop in our community and to me the question is: are we willing to make developers play by our rules? Union United showed us that we can hold our ground and fight for development without displacement. If elected, I would push for large projects like US2 to fulfill the demand from residents made for putting in underground parking. If the city decides to upgrade schools, I will work to make sure parking solutions are in the final proposals so we can avoid making the same mistake as we did with establishing off-street parking at the high school. We can work with neighborhood associations to support them as they bargain for open space in the form of rooftop parks and gardens. As stated before, developers want to build in Somerville and even with the 20% affordable housing, developers will be making massive profits. We will have to fight to put people's needs for housing, open space, and mobility infrastructure before profit.</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>Somerville needs more affordable housing units that provide good jobs to our residents and that are built with union labor. When making any decision around the construction of more housing in Somerville, I would have to consider what is being built, how it is being built, who is building it, and who is benefiting from it. We currently do not have enough public and affordable housing, I will always fight for more units of affordable housing to be built. That said, the pure number of units being built is not enough to determine how a neighborhood and our community will be impacted by a new development. As previously stated, we need developers to play by our rules and be good neighbors in our community. I would work to create a citywide CBA ordinance to ensure that neighbor councils and associations have strong policy backing them up when they negotiate with developers. We have to make sure everyone has a seat at the table as we continue to build up in our community.</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>Somerville is one of the 20 most dense cities in the United States. We experience this every day when we smell our neighbors' meals, hear families help their kids with homework, and inadvertently experience the high and lows of our neighbors' lives. Somerville has also been even more densely packed, with roughly around 100,000 residents living in our tiny four square-mile city from the 1930s-1960s. As previously stated, we have to allow for construction of higher density properties. We have to expand the housing stock beyond just double and triple decker homes. That said, this must be done with an equity lens to ensure that higher density buildings are not being concentrated in working class, immigrant and BIPOC neighborhoods. We have to work with the SCLT to make sure that if and when people decide to donate their homes to the SCLT that we can support them in updating those homes to accommodate more units. While we do need to create more housing, we also have to make sure we are not sacrificing our parks, paths, open and green spaces, and that we are negotiating with developers to find creative solutions to expanding our need for more green space.</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 previously stated, we should use the funds to provide rent stability for residents who are being pushed out due to gentrification, and expanding the Office of Housing Stability to ensure they have enough full time intake specialists to support tenants, attorneys to provide counsel to residents, resources to outreach to the community around tenant rights, and funds to disperse directly to residents. We should provide financial support to local businesses to ensure they are not gentrified out of our community, and provide financial incentives for the creation of worker-owned cooperatives in any vacant business spaces. We also need to support our unhoused community. I want to work with the Somerville Homeless Coalition, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, and neighboring community groups like Project Right to Housing and Material Aid and Advocacy Program. Any model of addressing homelessness must center 'housing first' which means giving people stable housing without requirements, programs, or restrictions. We must work with frontline community groups to create a local Homeless Bill of Rights and fight back against the criminalization of our unhoused neighbors.</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>BIPOC led Defund SPD has named that expanded responsibilities of the police department will not make our community safer. I believe that we should minimize the potential interactions that residents may have with the police, including removing police enforcement from the Vision Zero goals.</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>Nearly two decades ago, the city commissioned a management study of the Somerville Police department that stated we have far too many sworn officers performing jobs that unarmed civilians can be doing. We must ensure that civilian flaggers take over details for construction sites.</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?</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Neither Support nor Oppose</p> <p>While I am interested in minimizing the role of police in our community, I am concerned about replacing police with over-surveillance. In addition, there have been many cases of racial and skin-type biases in AI systems leading to unfair arrest, detention, and harm.</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.</p> <p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Somewhat Oppose</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?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<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>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<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>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<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>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<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>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<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>	<p>Strongly Support</p>