

<b>Candidate name (first and last):</b>	Becca Miller
<b>Office the candidate is seeking:</b>	Ward 7 City Councilor
<b>1. How do you see transportation, housing, and climate issues connecting and how will you work to align them if elected? [600 character limit]</b>	Transportation, housing and climate are deeply connected and intertwined issues. As city councilor, I will bring an intersectional analysis to the position to build policy that addresses all of these issues. Spaces with dispersed housing, businesses, and services that require cars for the majority of trips are vastly less energy efficient than dense neighborhoods that can be navigated on foot, bicycle, or by public transportation. The GLX that is coming provides an opportunity to provide better public transportation, build denser housing around T stops, and reduce our emissions citywide.
<b>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]</b>	I support all expansions of people-focused mobility, including completing the bike lane network, safer ADA compliant sidewalks, and dedicated lanes for buses. I believe these approaches are not only necessary, but broadly popular. Transportation is the number 2 source of greenhouse gas emissions in Somerville, and we need to invest in non-car forms of transit to make it easier to get around without a car. We also need to treat parking as a scarce resource, and allocate parking to those who need it to age in place and for mobility reasons have access to it first, particularly around transit nodes, and equitably distribute parking for municipal workers, including teachers.
<b>1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Somerville? (Check the top 3.)</b>	Car, Bike (bike-share or personal bicycle), Walking
<b>1b. What types of housing have you lived in or owned throughout your life? (Check all that apply.)</b>	Duplex/Triple-decker, As a renter, Single-family home, Urban, Suburban
<b>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]</b>	As City Councilor, I will push to have protected bike lanes added on all streets that are wide enough, build traffic calming measures, and reduce the city's speed limit to 20 mph citywide. Overhauling Somerville's streets is a top priority for me as part of my plan for a Green New Deal for Somerville, and it represents an opportunity not only to build out the bike lane network but to bring sidewalks into ADA compliance and increase the tree canopy. On roads that have been recently resurfaced or not in need of work, I will work to ensure bike lanes are built quickly, and with as much protection from traffic as is possible for the given street.
<b>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]</b>	I support the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets' vision for our city, and reviewing the city's sidewalks to push for full ADA compliance, which benefits not only the mobility impaired but people with strollers, shopping carts, and cyclists. I support building covered bus shelters with benches at all city bus stops. These bus stations should also feature braille or auditory route signs and announcements. I support making changes to roadways to calm traffic and protect pedestrians at intersections like bump outs and road diets. I also will push for the Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the DPW to be fully resourced so that our city has the capacity to register and respond to complaints from residents about areas that are inaccessible and in need of repair.
<b>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]</b>	As a city councilor, I will plan on fighting for complete streets as part of my vision of a municipal Green New Deal. I will push for better pedestrian infrastructure and total ADA compliance, traffic calming, completing the bike lane network, dedicated bus lanes, making the T free and more reliable and desirable to residents, and improvements to bus stops.
<b>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]</b>	I fully support traffic calming on McGrath and Mystic, including road diets and improving pedestrian infrastructure at crossings. I know from walking in that area that the sidewalks are also badly in need of repair, and sound barriers are needed on the I-93 viaduct to protect locals from noise and fine particulate pollution. I will organize with the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets, Sunrise Somerville, Somerville bike safety to build power and force change at our state agencies.
<b>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]</b>	We need to prioritize bus lanes during rush hours, when there is increased traffic overall and increased service on bus lines, and to build more bus lanes across the city to better serve residents. I will work with our Somerville state house delegation to advocate for increasing bus frequency so they work better for residents. I will also work to pilot fare free buses at the minimum.
<b>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]</b>	As an organizer, I will work with the Council on Aging, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and work to form a Youth Council to perform outreach to collect feedback on changes to the network, through flyering, collecting answers on buses, phone banking, community meetings with translation services, and other means that allow peoples' voices to be heard without relying on computers. I support the continuation of virtual meetings, which are more accessible to many working people. I am open to hearing from constituents at any time about their transportation needs, or any other issue, and will work to connect my constituents to the MBTA's Redesign process.
<b>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]</b>	We need to discourage cars from using residential streets as cut throughs. This involves building traffic calming measures, complete streets designed for walkers, cyclists, and public transportation, and improving access to the MBTA. I will use my office to work with the Somerville delegation to fight for noise and pollution barriers on I-93, and increased trees and green space to filter the area. I will also fight for increasing the availability of municipal health services.
<b>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]</b>	I will organize with T riders and workers for increased MBTA funding for representation of both groups on the T board, and to protect the T from privatization. I would use these meetings to coordinate plans for regional networks of bus lanes that may be shared with Cambridge or Medford. I will also ally with Somerville's state legislators to ensure that the MBTA engages in ambitious programs to increase frequency, lower costs to commuters, and improve accessibility to bus lines, subways, and the commuter rail.
<b>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]</b>	I will prioritize spending funds to make serious investments in infrastructure including repaving roads, bringing sidewalks into ADA compliance, traffic calming measures including speed bumps, chicanes, and diverters, water and sewer system upgrades which the city needs, funding for the Somerville Community Land Trust, and to pay for residents' homes to receive home energy retrofits to lower our emissions. Ultimately, we need to make this a participatory budgeting process to truly represent the residents of Somerville, and bring more people into the rare opportunity to use federal funds to invest in our future in a meaningful way.  (space occupied here to reach the minimum character requirement)
<b>10. What do you propose Somerville should do with the \$30M community contribution for Green Line Extension that is being returned? [1200 character limit]</b>	I propose making the T fare free. \$30M could pay for a year of monthly T passes for roughly 28,000 Somerville residents. We could also use those funds to support the Somerville Community land trust in acquiring property that would be truly affordable for Somerville residents displaced by the GLX's impacts on rising rents and recent impact study that shows the white wealthier people will benefit the most from GLX.
<b>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]</b>	I will work to build dense affordable and social housing near transit stops, provide subsidized T passes, and provide assistance to small businesses affected by rising rents. We need to build a movement to pass policies like rent control to prevent the impact on working people and small businesses. We can also support the CommunityLand Trust to purchase land around T to take it off the market and make it permanently affordable.

<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>We need to balance the importance of creating open green spaces (especially given Somerville's lack of green space) with the importance of increasing the number of affordable units, by requiring developers to pay into a green space fund for new development, similar to the city's tree replacement fund. Parking should take a back seat, as we've seen during the pandemic business districts like Davis Square will thrive with increased access for pedestrians. We still need to ensure that members of our community who do need to drive still have the ability to do so by equitably distributing parking in the city to those who need it to age in place and for mobility reasons, and for municipal workers who commute like teachers.</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>How is affordable defined? We need more deeply (eg &lt;30% and 30-50% AMI) affordable units. We also need to consider the number of affordable units being replaced and ensure that developments claiming to increase the supply of affordable units. We need to reject the trickle down logic of housing supply increases absent rent stabilization and acknowledge the segmentation of the housing market.</p> <p>I support policies that maximize the number of affordable housing units built, but I also want to minimize displacement. Large building projects tend to lead to displacement and gentrification, and I oppose developments that lead to the people who built the Somerville community being pushed out of the place they call home.</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>Density is part of Somerville's culture and helps to create our vibrant neighborhoods. We need to focus on increasing density where the housing stock is still primarily single family homes across the city, which includes parts of my Ward, and we need to couple that density increase with a focus on deeply affordable housing, ADA accessible housing and compliant streets, improved transit access, and the creation of green space and tree cover.</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>I support extending our local eviction moratorium for the next twelve months, passing just cause eviction, funding tenants' right to counsel, passing a fair housing ordinance, and investing in the city's Office of Housing Stability, including the hundred homes program. I will also organize to pass rent control at the state level.</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>I fully agree that relying on direct policing often results in discrimination and seldom improves safety. I believe Somerville's inflated police budget should be reduced by at least ten percent, with that money being used to build complete streets, or fund transportation and housing initiatives.</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>I support the use of civilian flaggers, and a local hiring ordinance that would ensure that those jobs go to local residents with an eye toward racial and gender equity.</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 &amp; 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? Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p> <p>Car use is heavily subsidized, from road upkeep to the downstream effects of climate change and hospital visits that treat the effects of rampant air pollution. Increasing the fee would raise revenue that could be redirected to clean transportation. We should be mindful of inequitable impacts here.</p>
<p>8. Do you support free bus service on the MBTA, and a low-income fare option for other public transit options? Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p> <p>I support making public transportation free for all Somerville residents. Universal free public transportation would have an enormous benefit for residents who cannot afford cars, and encourage others to take public transit more often.</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>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</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>Somewhat Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Allowing Somerville to build more densely by reducing the area dedicated to parking also improves walkability and further reduces the need for car ownership, but we still need to recognize that parking is needed for seniors, people with disabilities, and some municipal workers.</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>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</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>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	