

2023 Salem City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Progressive Salem

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PUBLIC SECTION

The public part of the questionnaire contains a mix of yes/no and open-ended questions. Please keep all answers to open-ended questions to no more than 150 words. A non-response to a yes/no question will be treated as a no.

(A) Your Candidacy

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

Affordable Housing

Climate Crisis

Public Health/Safety

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

With my extensive volunteer work in our Salem communities for affordable housing, addressing food insecurity, and advocacy for equality and public health, I have the pleasure of engaging with hundreds of our community members every week. I bring an in-touch voice and lived experiences to this position that allows me to effectively advocate for the safety and well-being of all our residents.

3. What do you see as the role of the City Council in Salem?

To take a leadership role in addressing the challenges we face including the climate crisis, affordable housing crisis, and racial and economic inequities to name a few. We also need to be responsive to our residents in regards to the day to day issues they face, such as pedestrian and bike safety.

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

Lynn has a Wage Theft ordinance, and two of our City Councillors have brought a draft ordinance into our Council. I'm hoping and will push for its adoption.

5. What does community service mean to you?

For me, it means working at our Salem Pantry, harvesting at our Mack Park Food Farm, my work providing affordable housing with the Woman's Friend Society, Helping our older adults at our Council on Aging, and participating in neighborhood clean ups. In summary, it means directly supporting all our community members in living healthy, positive lives and feeling safe and valued.

(B) Civil Rights & Community Engagement

1. Name an accomplishment you're particularly proud of that helped to achieve and advance racial justice or equity.

My work supporting and volunteering for Salem United, which has included for the past few years their Negro Election Day events, exhibits and other activities to educate people on Black history and advocate for social and racial justice.

2. What steps would you take, if elected, to engage all the diverse communities of Salem in policymaking, and what past actions of yours should give voters confidence that you will follow through?

I have focused on engaging our underserved community members by supporting organizations such as the North Shore CDC and their YouthBuild program. I have also used my ability to engage with residents through my volunteer work to keep them informed about assistance that's available to them and opportunities for involvement in their community and city government. I was a volunteer in 2017 for Salem's Yes on One Campaign supporting a City Council ordinance to protect our immigrant community members.

3. The future of democracy depends on robust youth engagement. Describe how you engage youth formally in your work as city councilor, or would plan to do so if elected.

I have so enjoyed engaging with our youth here in Salem! Before I was a City Councillor, I worked with the Salem LWV on voter registration efforts at Salem High School. I have presented on local government and civic engagement to

LEAP for Education students, Salem Academy Charter School, and the Girl Scouts. I have also engaged with our Salem High School CTE program. I look

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forward to continuing opportunities to educate and involve youth in civic engagement and their local government.

4. What do you think it means to be an ally of the LGBTQ+ community? In response to the increase in hate and violence towards the LGBTQ+ community at the national level,, we passed a resolution in City Council clearly stating city support for our LGBTQ+ community members. Whether it's crosswalk painting, flag raising, events, it's critical we stand in solidarity. I have a long history of advocating for the LGBTQ+ community, and the work I'm most proud of is my work on the MA Yes on 3 Campaign in 2018. I was a volunteer and speaker for the campaign to uphold protections for our transgender community, including hosting a forum at SSU and speaking at several city/town Democratic committees.

5. If a resolution had come before the council to support access to driver's licenses and extending in-state tuition rates & aid to undocumented residents how would you have voted and why?

My vote would have been yes. Simply put, it's the right thing to do and would have had my full support.

(C) Budget & Revenue

1. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue?

I think there are opportunities to secure more funds through grants at the state and national level. In particular there are opportunities for environmental initiatives involving funds for commitments to green development and other efforts to mitigate the climate crisis. There are also funds available for affordable housing initiatives which is critical with the current affordable housing crisis.

(D) Education

1. What are your top priorities for reducing persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in the Salem Public Schools?

We need to continue our efforts to diversify our school educators and staff so it is more representative of our student body. We also need to continue support

for our Salem High School Career and Technical Education program, which has been very successful.

2. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Salem? **YES**

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3. What steps would you take to raise the school rating for the Salem Public School System as a whole?

The City Council's role in our Salem Public Schools is to approve the overall budget; the School Committee makes all other decisions. We as a Council can make sure we pass a budget that is sufficient in providing our SPSs with the resources they need to support our educators and school staff, and create an environment in which all students feel safe and have the opportunity to thrive. What we also need to focus on as a city is addressing food and housing insecurity which creates incredible stress that affects a student's ability to focus on school.

(E) Public Safety

1. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Salem Police Department budget to be reinvested in communities? **NO**

a. If Yes, how would you "refund" the police and reallocate resources?

2. Do you support the legalization of overdose prevention centers? **YES**

3. What steps would you take to address homelessness in Salem? I support the efforts and expansion of Lifebridge, which provides shelter and services for our unhoused community members. We also have a proposal for permanent housing for people transitioning out of homelessness which I support. Our Salem Police Department Community Impact Unit works with Lifebridge in assisting unhoused folks and we need to continue supporting their efforts which includes services for people dealing with addiction and mental health issues.

4. What steps can the city take to address pedestrian safety?

We have traffic calming initiatives that include speed humps, enhanced crosswalks, and other safety protocols, and we need to continue pursuing new ideas to enhance pedestrian safety. We have also added "protected bike lanes" on one street which has resulted in curbing the speeding and fewer crashes. In addition, the Council has requested data on "right turn on red" incidents, and I'm looking forward to further discussion on this.

5. (Did you) Would you have voted in favor of the sanctuary for peace ordinance?
YES

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(F) Environment & Transportation

1. What steps would you take to reduce dependence on cars and better facilitate the ability of Salemites to get around by walking, biking, or using public transit?
We need to continue supporting and improving the Skipper shuttle service here in Salem and other public transportation initiatives to reduce the dependence on cars. We also need safer bike paths and possibly add additional “protected bike lanes”. Our traffic calming measures need to continue so people feel safe walking. I use an electric scooter for my transportation and it is much better than trying to get around Salem in a car!
2. What are your plans long term to address the city's aging water pipe infrastructure?
We need to make sure our Engineering Department and DPS have the resources and staff to maintain and address our aging water infrastructure.
3. What are your top three policy priorities for making Salem a climate-resilient city, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?
Require green building standards such as our municipal green building ordinance, enforce our Wetlands Ordinance, and continue enhancing our Flood ordinance. Also when we have a large project such as our Offshore Wind proposal, we need to have a Community Benefits Agreement to insure equitable hiring practices that include union workers.
4. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Salem? **YES**
5. Do you support the fare-free trolley program? **YES**
6. Do you support the expansion of the City's curbside composting pickup program? **YES**
7. Do you support the offshore wind project? **YES**
8. Do you support continuing the existing Blue Bikes program? **Maintain / Expand / Eliminate YES**
9. Do you support the City's partnership with Boston Harbor Cruises offering ferry service to and from Boston? **YES**
10. Do you support Salem adopting Vision Zero, which guides our transportation policy towards eliminating all traffic fatalities and making our roads safer for all

users? **YES**

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(G) Housing

1. Do you agree or disagree that Salem should do more to encourage housing production of all types, including both market rate and income-restricted? If so, how can the City encourage housing production?

I agree, with a focus on a high percentage of affordable housing. We can encourage this with easing zoning requirements such as parking space requirements and density. We can also offer tax break incentives, and if all affordable the use of public land. We have organizations such as the North Shore CDC that creates affordable housing which we need to continue to support as well.

2. What opportunities do you see for leveraging city-owned land for expanding market rate and Affordable housing?

I would follow the lead of our Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board on this.

3. Do you support rent stabilization?

YES if yes how would you help stabilize it? I'm watching the efforts in Boston on this to see how it plays out to see if there would be a path forward for us as well.

4. How do you plan to address the intersection of homelessness and soaring housing prices?

That is the enormous challenge we face. As I mentioned above, we have a proposal which includes Lifebridge and Harborlight to increase services and create permanent housing for people transitioning out of homelessness which we need to support. We also need to recognize the urgent need to create affordable housing to help stabilize the housing market, and increase efforts to protect renters and our rental stock. We now have a Neighborhood Stability Coordinator which assists people facing unstable housing. We need to make sure this position continues and has the resources needed to be successful.

5. Do you support a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance, enabling tenants to purchase a building if the owner seeks to put it on the market? **YES**

6. Do you support implementing an inclusionary development policy (IDP) in Salem at 10% as has been discussed to date? **Yes at 10% / Higher % I'd like to see 15%**

7. Do you Support the ending of mandatory minimum parking requirements for new construction? **YES or at least a reduction**
8. Do you support requiring that a majority of new affordable units be built on-site, in order to ensure communities are diverse and integrated? **YES**
9. Across the city, there are projects for large-scale supportive housing that are being fought by local communities, such as Lee Fort Terrace, Lifebridge, etc. Do you support pushing forward with these specific projects and others like them? **YES**

(H) Economic Opportunity

1. What steps would you propose to reduce Salem's income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap?
Increasing and improving education opportunities would be helpful, especially for youth. Supporting programs I mentioned above such as the NSCDC YouthBuild and the Salem High School CTE programs creates opportunities for our underserved communities. Also making sure projects like the Offshore Wind have equitable employment opportunities that benefit lower income residents. Our Wage Theft Ordinance being considered in the Council will focus on not only wage theft, but fair hiring and employment practices for city projects.
2. Do you support requiring city contractors to give their employees at least two weeks' notice before changing their schedules and to compensate workers for late schedule changes? **YES**
3. What steps can the Council take to achieve greater diversity in City contracting?
I'm looking forward to addressing this in our conversations for our wage theft ordinance.
4. The cannabis industry is expected to grow in Salem in the coming years. What steps should the City take to make sure that it grows in an equitable way, in which the communities most impacted by the drug war are able to benefit? I would defer to people more knowledgeable than me for guidance on this. We recently had a resolution go through the council lowering the priority for illegal

possession of psilocybin mushrooms for law enforcement. This was to help the efforts at the state level to legalize it. We had experts come to council and educate us on the therapeutic benefits of psilocybin mushrooms. It was

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really interesting and I learned so much, and now I hope they will be legalized. I'm always open to educating myself about issues I'm not very knowledgeable about.

(I) Democracy

1. How can Salem increase turnout in municipal elections?

I am pleased we have increased early voting and vote by mail here in Salem which I think will help. We also reached a certain threshold here in Salem to require the city to offer election ballots in Spanish which is terrific. I have worked with the Salem LWV to host voter registration at our high school and at our food pantries so we increase voter turnout in our underserved communities. We need to continue these efforts. I also support Rank Choice Voting which is before the Council.

2. How can the council increase transparency?

I think we do pretty well in this department. When we were returning back to in-person meetings, we did not return until we had a hybrid option to offer. Having the zoom option has increased accessibility to our meeting and has given people who cannot get to meetings to offer public comment and have their voices heard.

3. What are you personally doing to increase turnout in this upcoming election?

Door knocking! It's a great way to not only let people know an election is coming up and answer questions, but get people excited to vote!

4. Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? **YES**

5. Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? **YES**

6. Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Salem? **YES**

7. Do you support making hybrid access to public meetings permanent? **YES**

(J) Additional Comments

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

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