

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?
My top three priorities would be expanded constituent services, with an emphasis on on-the-ground engagement, climate resilience and coastline protection measures, and the protection and ultimate expansion of our affordable housing stock.
2. What qualifies you to hold this office?
I am the former Chair of the Salem Democratic Committee(SDC), which I lead through the pandemic, providing organization, communication and engagement during a time of significant challenges. I currently serve as the Communications Officer for the Historic Derby St Neighborhood(HDSNA) where I help keep my neighbors informed and up to date on city projects and events in addition to my role as Vice Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board(AHTFB) where I put a specific focus on our role in helping the city's renters.
3. What do you see as the role of the City Council in Salem?
As a whole, the City Council has a responsibility to thoughtfully craft and vote on policy that will work for the best interests of their constituents as well as guide how our tax dollars are spent so taxpayers feel their investment in the city is providing them a solid return. On an individual level, the City Councillors,

much like any elected official, have a duty to stand up and speak out in regards to various issues that affect our community, particularly when there is an impact on the more marginalized members of our community. For Ward Councillors, the primary responsibility is to be *the* advocate for their Ward, maintaining consistent engagement within the community.

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

I am encouraged to see that even a small town such as Provincetown can engage in the creation of a meaningful rental assistance program for lower income renters and would like to develop a similar policy here of short term rental assistance paired with a financial literacy program to help educate and uplift our community in the short term while pursuing policies that can better stymy the ongoing affordable housing crisis in the long term.

5. What does community service mean to you?

For me, community service comes from a recognition that society, and the communities we live in within it, is a collaborative project we are all working to ensure the best outcome for. It involves a desire to give back to that community in a way the individual is able, whether that's time, effort or resources, without a desire to see something in return beyond a continued strengthening of the community.

(B) Civil Rights & Community Engagement

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

I am proud of the work I was able to complete with the city's Sustainability & Resiliency Department for the first stage of the Resilient Together: The Point project. As Outreach Coordinator, I led the effort to engage the city and Point neighborhood, specifically, about the project, utilizing connections I had made with the Salem Pantry and North Shore CDC to help spread awareness and increase project participation.

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 will continue work I have already done with the city in other roles of on-the-ground outreach in the various neighborhoods of Ward 1, one of the most diverse Wards in the city. It is work I already have experience participating in and can return to with relative ease. Much like I did as Chair of

the SDC, I will commit to a monthly emailed newsletter for residents giving continuous updates on projects and events occurring in the Ward and city at large to help ensure my constituents are informed and more able to engage.

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 would work with our school committee to create civic engagement events to help get voting-age youth excited about their civic duty as well as pushing for more consistent inclusion of civic education in our school curriculum starting at an early age to better reinforce its importance.

4. What do you think it means to be an ally of the LGBTQ+ community?
For starters, I believe it involves a recognition that one is not an “ally” because they describe themselves as one, but because others recognize their actions as allyship. It means relinquishing space that would otherwise by default be taken up by a cis straight person in favor of allowing more aspects of the diverse array of LGBTQ+ viewpoints to occupy that space.

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?

I absolutely would have voted in favor. Documented or not, these residents provide a value to our community and are active participants in our economy. Studies done around driver's licenses for Question 4 showed that the measure increases traffic safety and residents of the state, regardless of status, deserve the benefit of in-state tuition rates + aid.

(C) Budget & Revenue

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

I believe it could be worthwhile to consider the creation of a city-wide parking pass residents could purchase yearly to give them parking access across the city. Actual enforcement of traffic violations in the form of steep fines would also help

(D) Education

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

I intend to work closely with members of our School Committee and Superintendent to see how funds can be best allocated to our schools to address these concerns and make sure we are meeting our students' needs.

2. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Salem? **YES/ NO**
yes

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

This is another area where I would work closely with our School Committee members to offer any assistance I can with program development/execution as well as proper allocation of funds to target areas of concern.

(E) Public Safety

1. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Salem Police Department budget to be reinvested in communities? **YES**

- a. **If Yes, how would you “refund” the police and reallocate resources?**

I would expand our Community Impact Unit to include more social work and mental health services to help support and promote nonviolent intervention methods. Further funding could be directed into expanded youth programs to help engage Salem's youth in their city and create an active investment in its well-being.

2. Do you support the legalization of overdose prevention centers? **YES/ NO**
yes

3. What steps would you take to address homelessness in Salem?

I will continue to support the Community Impact Unit's efforts to provide check-ins for support and services to help our unhoused population get the resources they need. I will also continue to advocate for and work on policy that will protect and bolster our affordable housing stock and advocate for stronger tenant protections to help reduce the threat of more residents facing homelessness due to rising costs.

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

Enforcement is important here. Too many drivers, both residents and nonresidents, feel entitled to ignore our current traffic laws, whether it's proper stops at a stop sign, yielding to pedestrians at a crosswalk, speed limits in residential neighborhoods or even the occasional red light that gets ignored. Our city and police department need to make a more focused effort

on traffic enforcement, holding drivers in our city accountable for the laws we've designed to help protect pedestrians. In our downtown areas, particularly the denser neighborhoods with narrow roadways, more emphasis should be put on traffic calming measures to reduce drivers' ability to drive recklessly and put lives in danger.

5. (Did you) Would you have voted in favor of the sanctuary for peace ordinance?
YES/NO
yes

(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?
I am heavily invested in Salem pursuing ways to implement a more effective citywide public transit system. Both the offshore wind marshaling yard and Shetland Park redevelopment offer opportunities for the city to form partnerships for creating a transit system that can provide fast, efficient connections between the many neighborhoods of Salem. In Ward 1, specifically, I would like to pursue the possibility of a water taxi system that can help better connect Salem's coastal access points and give residents and tourists alike an alternate mode of transportation around our city.
2. What are your plans long term to address the city's aging water pipe infrastructure?
I will work closely with DPW to get a full understanding of what resources are needed and how we can update our infrastructure in a timely manner with as little resident disruption as possible. This will likely tie in to climate resiliency measures the city is actively pursuing and so will also make sure I stay involved with projects such as the iterations of Resilient Together.
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?
 - i. Most immediate for me is the continued and successful implementation of Resilient Together: The Point. Not only is this the first offshoot of the Resilient Together project with it's success setting the tone for future projects, it is also targeting an

environmental justice community, and one of the neighborhoods most significantly threatened by climate change.

- ii. Continued, and immediate expansion of the Resilient Together program to begin assessing initiatives along the rest of our coastline.
- iii. Banning new gas infrastructure and working the phase Salem out of gas completely

4. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Salem? **YES/ NO**
yes

5. Do you support the fare-free trolley program? **YES/ NO**
yes

6. Do you support the expansion of the City's curbside composting pickup program? **YES/ NO**
yes

7. Do you support the offshore wind project? **YES/NO**
yes

8. Do you support continuing the existing Blue Bikes program? **Maintain / Expand / Eliminate**
expand

9. Do you support the City's partnership with Boston Harbor Cruises offering ferry service to and from Boston? **YES / NO**
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 / NO**
yes

(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. Where we have the space and ability to build intelligently there is a value to the creation of both market rate and income-restricted. Although I would prefer the emphasis be on income-restricted units, there is a solid

argument to be made for the addition of market rate units helping to stabilize the prices of our existing housing stock. The city can encourage production by reassessing our outdated zoning laws to allow denser development in neighborhoods it has historically been blocked

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

I am significantly more in favor of unutilized city-owned land being repurposed for affordable housing opportunities over market rate housing. I would like to see the creation of a community land trust that could keep control of the land in the hands of Salem residents and assist in the creation of long-term, deed restricted affordable housing

3. Do you support rent stabilization? **YES/ NO** if yes how would you help stabilize it?

Yes - currently the city is in the development phase for a rental registry, I would continue to support this work and begin to utilize the data gained to help create effective rent stabilization policies, potentially using Boston as a guideline off of which we can adjust for our particular needs. That being more long-term, I also intend to push for the creation of a rental assistance program that can provide short-term rental assistance for low income tenants not currently covered by other rental assistance programs.

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

By continuing to advocate for not just an expansion of designated affordable housing in Salem, but an expansion of deeply affordable housing (30% AMI or less) to help address the issue of how our inclusion in the Greater Boston Area numbers misaligns with the reality of income levels in Salem.

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/ NO

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 % / Lower % / Not at all**

Higher % - I would absolutely prefer to see the number higher and believe our city's current rising popularity gives us leverage to require more from developers

7. Do you Support the ending of mandatory minimum parking requirements for new construction? **YES/NO**
Yes - this needs to be phased in to work concurrently with the development of a better public transit system to give residents more robust alternatives to car ownership

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/ NO**
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/ NO**
Yes - Lifebridge is a project that is still very early in planning so I would consider it premature to consider a supportive stance as “pushing forward” when there is still a significant amount of back and forth with the community that will be occurring.

(H) Economic Opportunity

1. What steps would you propose to reduce Salem’s income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap?
I am a strong believer in the benefit of universal basic income programs for low income communities. After a successful pilot we are seeing a more robust program being rolled out in Cambridge this year which is wonderful and an example I believe Salem should follow. As a Councillor I would advocate and seek funding for a UBI pilot program that can target our low-income neighbors and help enable financial security.

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/ NO**
yes

3. What steps can the Council take to achieve greater diversity in City contracting?
By creating (if not already created) and implementing quotas for the consideration of minority-owned businesses when awarding contracts

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? By ensuring that minority-owned status is a priority when approving licenses for the opening of new cannabis businesses.

(I) Democracy

1. How can Salem increase turnout in municipal elections?
I believe there is a lot more Salem can do to make election information easily accessible for the general public which would help to better inform voters who might have a harder time connecting with municipal elections. Beyond that I believe we need to invest in more long-term and consistent civic education within our schools which I will work with School Committee members to advocate for.
2. How can the council increase transparency?
Permanent adoption of hybrid meeting structure would go a long way to help as we've seen increased accessibility of all city meetings as a result
3. What are you personally doing to increase turnout in this upcoming election?
A significant part of my doorknocking strategy is to make sure that people know there is an election on the 19th and where it is they vote.
4. Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? **YES/ NO**
yes
5. Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? **YES/ NO**
yes
6. Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Salem? **YES/ NO**
yes
7. Do you support making hybrid access to public meetings permanent? **YES/ NO**
NO
yes

(J) Additional Comments

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