

2023 Salem City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Progressive Salem

Name: **Christopher Fuccione**

Office Sought: **Ward 2 City Councilor**

Website: **n/a**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100095425905183>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/chrisfuccione>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/chrisfuccione1?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>

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? **Working with the homeless community, making sure all segments of the population are represented, to get people to be active in the community and that their voices are being heard.**
2. What qualifies you to hold this office? **I have been working with various organizations and causes and I have been very active in the Salem community. I formed and ran an animal rights group. I have been the Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator for the Salem Democratic Committee and have been working with Witch City Action to make sure the homeless population has a voice and their needs met. I've been working with my neighborhood association to make sure they have a voice in a development project that would directly affect them.**
3. What do you see as the role of the City Council in Salem? **They're the voice of the city residents and represent our neighborhoods and the whole city. They choose projects that are meaningful to them and follow through on making them happen. They advocate for the people these projects represent.**

4. What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to see Salem adopt? **I would love to see a tax rebate for the elderly homeowners put in place for Salem so that these hard-working people can stay in their homes and communities.**
5. What does community service mean to you? **Community service is a commitment to your community. It means being active in your community and taking action on issues that mean a lot to you and to the residents.**

(B) Civil Rights & Community Engagement

1. Name an accomplishment you're particularly proud of that helped to achieve and advance racial justice or equity. **When I was the Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator for the Salem Democrats, I set up a voter registration table throughout the city and I tried to get diverse people, including racially diverse people, registered to vote and involved in the voting process.**
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 work with a group of housed and unhoused community members to make sure that the basic needs of the homeless (that are not provided under the current social service structure) are being met. We also make sure their voices are heard and that they are able to participate in the voting process and their community in general. For example, we held a Mayoral Forum during the last mayoral election at the flagpoles across from the Post Office (Riley Plaza) where we invited the mayoral candidates to speak about issues that affect the homeless community.**
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. **When I was doing the voter registration tables, if I saw youth around the ages of 16-17, I let them know about early voter registration so that when they turned 18 they would be all set. It was a great way to get them involved in the voting process.**
4. What do you think it means to be an ally of the LGBTQ+ community? **I will work with many organizations in town to make sure the LGBTQ+**

community has a proper voice and representation, would attend Pride events, and would have an open door policy where I would speak to any resident of the community including members of the LGBTQ+ community at any time.

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? **1) I think letting undocumented residents have access to driver's licenses is a great idea and I would vote yes because if they were licensed it means they would need to register their car and have it insured and if they got into an accident that was their fault, the other driver would not be left in the dust. 2) If the undocumented residents lived in the state for a certain amount of time I would see no problem with giving them in-state tuition; for me it would be the same as if someone moved from another state to Massachusetts. 3) Of course! That is the humane thing to do. Providing people with basic services to live, thrive, and grow is so important.**

(C) Budget & Revenue

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

(D) Education

1. What are your top priorities for reducing persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in the Salem Public Schools? **I feel like this is more of a question for the school committee candidates to answer. I would not want to step on their feet.**
2. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Salem? **YES/ NO**
Recently there was a ballot question about charter schools and I voted in favor of it because our school systems are not the best in comparison to other countries. Why don't we try expanding them and see how it works?
3. What steps would you take to raise the school rating for the Salem Public School System as a whole? **I feel like this is more of a question for the school committee candidates to answer. I would not want to step on their feet.**

4.

(E) Public Safety

1. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Salem Police Department budget to be reinvested in communities? **YES/ NO**
 - a. **If Yes, how would you “refund” the police and reallocate resources?**
I would set up a program where there are mental health workers from a community mental health center that would be available 24/7 and they would go on calls where their services might be needed. This would be paid through the police budget.
2. Do you support the legalization of overdose prevention centers? **YES/ NO**
We have an opioid crisis currently going on and have too many people on the streets overdosing and dying. Having a safe injection center where they could get services to get clean and other needed services would be really important in saving lives. This “war on drugs” is a losing proposition. If we stop criminalizing addicts and people that use and instead treat them like people that have an addiction and need services, you will see a lot more people willing to ask for help.
3. What steps would you take to address homelessness in Salem? **I take many steps to address homelessness in the community group I’m involved in, Witch City Action. We work directly with the homeless population in downtown Salem and provide basic everyday needs through donations as well as some assistance with hotels and housing applications. We also work together on many different projects such as an upcoming “free fridge” and previous and future warming shelters. We advocate for respectful treatment of the unhoused such as when our group was able to get the dehumanizing anti-panhandling signs taken down., We strive to advocate for this on a day-to-day basis as well. I would love to continue to do mutual aid work with the homeless because I feel that meeting people where they’re at is the key to positive change.**
4. What steps can the city take to address pedestrian safety? **I would look at the state law to turn right on red law to see if we could change that locally to not allow people to turn right on red. I walk everywhere I go and there have been many times where the walk sign goes on and**

someone tries to make a right turn and almost hits me. The other issue I would work on is property owners not salting and shoveling their sidewalks after storms. There have been many times I've had to choose between walking on ice and walking on the street. I would increase the fines for property owners who do not shovel or salt in front of their properties.

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

I thought it was the best way to help our undocumented neighbors from unjust and unfair policies of the federal government.

(OT: this is just me ranting) Speaking of the sanctuary for peace ordinance it got me thinking about abortion rights issues. I would love it if we could set up a program where if anyone comes to the city for an abortion from another state that does not allow abortions we will direct the police department to not give out any information about the service that provided the abortion and the person receiving the abortion. This would be something like a sanctuary for peace ordinance, except it would be for abortions.

(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? **1) Work with the MBTA to get the South Salem commuter rail stop up and running. 2) The MBTA just made an announcement that they are cutting back on the 455 bus. I would show them how important that route is to the low income part of our community. That route allows them to take the bus to needed activities, like going food shopping and getting to appointments. 3) The city had a plan for an inter-circle bus route that would go all around the city and I would love to see that looked at. 4) Work with other cities and towns that are next to Salem about expanding the Salem Skipper into their town.**

2. What are your plans long term to address the city's aging water pipe infrastructure? **There are numerous water main breaks throughout the city. I would look into a way to increase maintenance and upkeep.**
3. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Salem? **YES/ NO**
- 4.
5. 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? **Any new construction would have to be green and have solar panels. We'd work with other cities and make sure any new environmental policy doesn't adversely harm the community/neighborhood the projects are in. I would still make sure there are enough charging stations to meet future demands.**
6. Do you support the fare-free trolley program? **YES/ NO**
Increasing the gas tax could help pay for this, free MBTA, and free Skipper.
7. Do you support the expansion of the City's curbside composting pickup program? **YES/ NO** **People in town also really like this. I would also be open to having the city teach residents how to compost at home.**
8. Do you support the offshore wind project? **YES/NO** **As long as they take neighborhood concerns into consideration and they work with the city to prevent flooding.**
9. Do you support continuing the existing Blue Bikes program? **Maintain / Expand / Eliminate**
10. Do you support the City's partnership with Boston Harbor Cruises offering ferry service to and from Boston? **YES / NO**
11. 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**

(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 if it's done in a smart way; for example, if the housing units don't overtake the character and soul of a neighborhood it's put in and if it doesn't adversely affect traffic in the neighborhood.**
2. What opportunities do you see for leveraging city-owned land for expanding market rate and Affordable housing? **I would like us to do an inventory of all city properties and see which ones are not being used and are**

available to be converted into affordable housing. I'd also like to look into any abandoned buildings and see if the city can take them over to convert into affordable housing.

3. Do you support rent stabilization? **YES/ NO** if yes how would you help stabilize it? **I would like to see a program where landlords could not increase rent by more than 10% per year.**
4. How do you plan to address the intersection of homelessness and soaring housing prices? **I'm a firm believer in the federal program called Housing First, where the federal government will work with cities and towns to purchase buildings where homeless people can live. It's important to get homeless people into housing first and foremost and then help in any other way with more services.**
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**
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**
7. Do you Support the ending of mandatory minimum parking requirements for new construction? **YES/NO**
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**
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 I am not that familiar with the Lee Fort Terrace project but I am highly familiar with the Lifebridge project. It's not good for the neighborhood or the homeless community because they are going to be displaced during construction, at least to some extent. Where will they be receiving their meals? Currently, Lifebridge has a ban policy where they will ban residents for the smallest of infractions. If this project goes through, more homeless people will be coming TO Salem for services and many more will be banned, which will just cause the same problems all over again - even**

more homeless people in the streets, which doesn't help the homeless people or the people in the neighborhood.

There are many issues with having all the homeless services in one neighborhood. There should be housing for the homeless THROUGHOUT the community, as well as in other communities. This allows access to services and has been proven to create more stability in the homeless person's life. Has anyone thought to ask the homeless community how they feel about this project?

(H) Economic Opportunity

1. What steps would you propose to reduce Salem's income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap? **Affordable housing. Make it so that every company that has a contract with Salem provides a living wage for their employees.**
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**
3. What steps can the Council take to achieve greater diversity in City contracting? **Require a percentage of contracts to be issued to minority and women owners.**
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? **So that the market does not get over-saturated, we shouldn't allow more shops to come into town until we know that the current shops are able to survive. I would try to get funds from the cannabis stores distributed to the lower income areas of Salem, like The Point, for example.**

(I) Democracy

1. How can Salem increase turnout in municipal elections? **Move the voting day to Saturdays and work with the League of Women Voters and other organizations to set up multiple voting tables at events so that people who might otherwise not vote would get the chance to register.**

2. How can the council increase transparency? **Having all the meetings be virtual, in addition to being in person, is a good first step and also making it so that trying to find meeting minutes and agendas are not so hard to find on the city website and make the agendas available on social media.**
3. What are you personally doing to increase turnout in this upcoming election? **Up until recently, I was the Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator for the Salem Democratic Committee. I held many voter registration tables throughout the city. Now, when door knocking, I have voter registration paperwork on hand and will deliver it for them. Also, if I meet any 16/17 year olds, I explain to them how they're able to pre-register.**
4. Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? **YES/ NO**
5. Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? **YES/ NO**
6. Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Salem? **YES/ NO**
7. Do you support making hybrid access to public meetings permanent? **YES/ NO**