

The following is a list of Just Us Somerville demands, as of 5/3/2021. We expect this list to evolve over time.

Power and Participation

End all co-optation of black and brown people's narratives. Allyship is to stand with communities of color and to work on issues together. The current demand to end racial injustice needs to be centered around communities of color. Talk to your local community before deciding what is best for them.

Hiring of people of color to full time positions throughout the schools and city including executive positions and retaining these employees. Having people of color in key positions helps enhance city recommended policies. We call for more equitable and transparent hiring processes. We ask that hiring, retention, and salary information be published quarterly with a breakdown of seasonal, contractor, part-time and full-time positions (see [example](#)), along with a special breakdown of executive or key positions within the city along race demographics. This data must then be used to proactively improve representation.

City boards and commissions must reflect the diversity in our community. Most city boards and commissions are unpaid appointments. This limits the applicant pool to members of our community that have time to spare. This results in a board and commission population that is predominantly white and middle to upper middle class, which is not representative of our community at large. We demand that all boards and commissions be stipended.

Stop placing the burden of gentrification on residents of color and their businesses. Over the COVID-19 pandemic, the unprecedented federal, state and municipal response has shown us what is possible to prevent displacement. Understanding that these injustices in vulnerable communities existed long before the pandemic means that the resources and policy protections must be sustained in order to create a truly equitable and inclusive community. We demand that the city find additional streams of funding in order to fund municipally funded housing vouchers in order to help our most vulnerable residents, those who are undocumented and those who are living at or below 30% AMI.

Policing and Public Safety

Create Civilian Oversight and Review Committee composed of a diverse group of city residents and includes members of underrepresented communities that are statistically most vulnerable to excessive use of excessive force practices; ie, African descended, Latinx, immigrants and youth/young adults.

The functions of the Civilian Oversight and Review Committee shall be but not limited to:

- Work independently of police administration and police unions

- Examine Somerville Police Department policies and practices that have the potential to unnecessarily harm members of the community or are discriminatory in nature and make recommendations for change. This includes policies that allow excessive use of force.
- Develop a mechanism to receive community complaints
- Decide how complaints will be handled
- Monitor the establishment of a system for reporting, investigating and/or referring hate crimes
- Review, investigate and make recommendations to police chief in cases police misconduct
- Subpoena people and records when necessary
- Report findings and recommendations to a person or entity not under the authority or influence of any law enforcement agency

If this committee is to be effective at its functions, it must be provided with resources including but not limited to

- Reasonable budget
- Appropriate support staff
- Legal consultation
- Compensation
- Reasonable authority to carry out its tasks

End punitive practices that disproportionately impact low-income, black and brown children in our schools and replace them with restorative justice practices that have been proven to benefit *all* students. In a school district that talks so highly of its dedication to inclusion, data from 2019 Somerville High School shows that 12.7% of students are black, but they make up almost 28% of students disciplined. Meanwhile, almost 32% of the high school is white, but make up only 18% of students disciplined. Honoring the diversity of our schools means taking action when our systems continue to fail our students by funneling them into the school-to-prison pipeline.

End the STEPS and CADET programs within our schools On the 2020 budget Somerville Police listed “21 STEPS officers made 894 school visits in 2019” as an accomplishment. That is almost 5 visits a day. Imagine how disruptive it is to have to be around armed adults to children witnessing police brutality play out across the country and in their own lives. Additionally, that same FY20 budget budgets approx. \$115,000 to create a new Police Cadet program that will “prepare diverse” candidates including Somerville High School recruits for careers in public safety.” Why aren’t you giving us the opportunity to help our communities in different ways? \$115,000 could go towards programs that do not perpetuate cycles of trauma. Systemic racism does not end just because you have a few black and brown police officers enforcing the laws never meant to serve and protect their own communities in the first place.

Tracking and transparency of hate crimes and public safety in the city. Somerville currently has no formal tracking mechanism for hate crimes and hate-related incidents in the city. We have anecdotal evidence of incidents throughout the city, but no central repository. We demand

a formal tracking mechanism for hate crimes, a central repository that is located in a prominent location on the city's website, and avenues for reporting and addressing hate crimes that do not rely on the police.

Additionally, the Human Rights Commission, whose purpose includes providing oversight and guidance on human right's issues in the city and to specifically respond to complaints by persons in the city who believe their human or civil rights have been violated, has not had the ability to serve out its function for about half of its existence due to its inability to meet quorum because not enough members had been appointed by the mayor.

Health and Wellbeing

Our demands above are all intricately linked to our communities' health. We demand that the same urgency that has been applied to Covid-19 response is applied to the public health crises of policing, public safety, affordable housing and gentrification, which lead to poor physical and mental health and lower life expectancy.

We also demand that Somerville's COVID response and recovery focus around communities most affected by covid-19, including Latino and Black communities in Somerville.

Somerville's Covid data clearly shows that Latino and Black residents are disproportionately affected by Covid-19, which leads to poorer health, increased risk of death and economic losses.

We also see that Latino, Asian and Black residents' vaccination rates have lagged behind white residents' vaccination rates. It will be crucial to address the disparity in vaccination status in order to have equitable recovery. We demand that the city's vaccination efforts focus on reducing this disparity, and include working with community organizations and setting up mobile vaccination clinics that are accessible for all residents, with convenient days and times including evening and weekends. We demand transparency in these efforts and Just Us Somerville will hold the city accountable for reducing the racial disparities of vaccination rates within a one month time frame.

Given the racial disparity in vaccination status, we also demand that we make testing accessible to the communities that are least likely to have access to the vaccine. We were disappointed that the mobile testing site in East Somerville did not become a permanent site, with convenient evening and weekend hours, and we demand that the city provide more equitable access to testing.