



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CITY COUNCIL

JUDY PINEDA NEUFELD
WARD SEVEN CITY COUNCILOR

March 24, 2025

To: Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
Re: FY 2026 Budget Priorities

Mayor Ballantyne,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my budget priorities for FY 2026. In addition to the uncertain economic environment we are experiencing, I am especially concerned about the ARPA-funded positions and programs that may be lost within the next year. That concern is reflected in these budget priorities for the next fiscal year. Please reach out if you have any questions about any of these priorities.

Economic and Community Development:

That the FY 2026 budget include increased funding for community non-profits facing the potential for lost federal funding that are providing housing assistance, food, shelter, mental health services, and other critical services for Somerville residents.

That the FY 2026 budget include continued funding for small business technical assistance and workshops that are currently ARPA-funded.

That the FY 2026 budget include increased funding for programs aimed at addressing displacement of small businesses.

Environment and Sustainability:

That the FY 2026 budget include funding for a municipal composting program,

building off of the pilot program.

That the FY 2026 budget include funding for regular neighborhood community cleanups.

Housing Stability:

That the FY 2026 budget preserves the capacity and funding for the the Office of Housing Stability to provide critical legal services to residents facing eviction.

That the FY 2026 budget prioritizes the use of general funds for rental assistance and the municipal voucher program.

That the FY 2026 budget ensures the two part-time ARPA-funded positions in the Office of Housing Stability that provide critical language capacity in the department become permanent positions.

Immigrant Services:

That the FY 2026 budget include continued funding for the immigrant services legal defense fund.

That the FY 2026 budget include funding for continued implementation of the language justice work.

Mobility and Safe Streets

That the FY 2026 budget include increased funding for safe streets infrastructure and the resources to ensure compliance with our Safe Streets Ordinance.

Public Health:

That the FY 2026 budget include increased funding for the Taxi to Health program for our seniors to have access to transportation to medical appointments and the grocery store.

That the FY 2026 budget include a dedicated staff person to coordinate services, logistical needs, and city policies to support our unhoused neighbors.

Youth and Schools:

That the FY 2026 budget included increased funding for after school care to increase availability and accessibility for families.

That the FY 2026 budget reflect permanent funding for the ARPA-funded Child Care Access and Affordability Program.

That the FY 2026 budget include increased funding for the youth summer jobs program.

That the FY 2026 budget include funding for a comprehensive workforce development program for our high school students to connect them to employment opportunities in our city after graduation.

That the FY 2026 budget include funding to develop a swing space plan for our schools.

That the FY 2026 budget include additional funding to cover basic maintenance requests, like the ability to fix broken playground equipment, furniture, and technology upgrades.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share these with you and your team.

Sincerely,



Judy Pineda Neufeld
President, Somerville City Council