

Luc Schuster

May 26, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am excited to write this letter in application to become a member of the Somerville Planning Board. I hope that my professional experience in policy research and my personal experience living in the “Camberville” community for vast majority of my life combine to make me a strong candidate.

For my day job I lead Boston Indicators, an action-oriented research center housed at The Boston Foundation. In partnership with local researchers and advocates across Greater Boston, we work in two primary lanes: 1) conducting descriptive research on the big challenges facing our region; and 2) producing policy research that analyzes promising policy reforms for advancing racial and economic justice. A large share of our work focuses on the intersections of housing, transportation, local economic development, and the environment. Recent examples, all of which are available on our website www.bostonindicators.org, include:

- [*MBTA Communities Upzoning, Explained \(Plus Some Discussion and Commentary\)*](#), which provided description and analysis of the new state law requiring all “MBTA Communities” (including Somerville) to adopt at least one zoning district near transit that legalizes multi-family housing production as-of-right.
- [*Zoned Out: Why Massachusetts Needs to Legalize Apartments Near Transit*](#). We produced this report in 2020 with Jenny Schuetz of the Brookings Institution to design and model one approach for transit-oriented upzoning in Massachusetts.
- [*15-Minute Neighborhoods: Repairing Regional Harms and Building Vibrant Neighborhoods for All*](#), which argued that Greater Boston is well-positioned to create a more interconnected network of walkable downtowns. The paper analyzes where we fall short of this vision and outlines a range of housing, urban design, and economic development strategies that could help move us in this direction. The paper also includes discussion of Assembly Row in Somerville as one example of a newly created neighborhood moving in this direction.

On a personal level, I grew up in a Porter Square apartment that straddled the Cambridge/Somerville line. But since it was four-fifths in Cambridge, I attended Cambridge Public Schols. I went off to Pomona College in Los Angeles and then returned to Camberville for the rest of my adult life. After a stint living in Somerville with friends, I moved back to Cambridge and was elected to two terms on the Cambridge School Committee. Serving on the school committee was among the most rewarding experiences of my life. Through it I learned that I loved the policy and governance side of the role much more than the politics side (which required campaigning every other year for re-election). So, during my final term on the school committee I went back to graduate school for a Master in Public Policy degree at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. At HKS I focused on state and local governance and have worked in public policy research ever since.

[REDACTED] we bought a home in Magoun Square. We love this community and plan to remain in this home as our sons grow up in Somerville schools.

Ultimately, I hope these experiences give me a unique understanding of land use issues in Somerville and how they intersect with broader regional dynamics. Plus, as a former school committee member, I’m experienced with Robert’s Rules of Order! I’m excited about this opportunity to serve the community that my family loves so much. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Luc Schuster

Luc Schuster

Education	Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government <i>Master in Public Policy</i> (2010) with focus on state and local policy	Cambridge, MA
	Pomona College <i>Bachelor of Arts</i> (2002) Major: Politics. Minor: Religion.	Claremont, CA
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Experience	Boston Indicators	Boston, MA
2017- Present	<i>Senior Director</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead four-person team, producing public-facing research in two primary lanes: 1) descriptive research on the big challenges facing our region and state; and 2) policy research analyzing and modeling promising policy reforms for advancing racial and economic justice.• Recent research projects include: <i>MBTA Communities Upzoning, Explained; Zoned Out: Why Massachusetts Needs to Legalize Apartments Near Transit; 15-Minute Neighborhoods: Repairing Regional Harms and Building Vibrant Neighborhoods for All</i>• Serve as public spokesperson, engaging with local media and giving presentations and briefings to a range of audiences.	
2017	Schuster Strategies <i>Independent Research Consultant.</i> Projects included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office of Workforce Development, City of Boston<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost-out Mayor Walsh's Tuition-Free Community College program and advise on eligibility criteria.• Southbridge Public Schools<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support implementation of district Turnaround Plan, with focus on teacher contract reform and design of new data system to facilitate regular use of data by teachers.	Cambridge, MA
2010 – 2016	Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center <i>Deputy Director</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoted into new Deputy Director role after three years with organization.• Partnered with President to lead media and communications work.• Organized public forums, briefings and presentations for a wide range of audiences including elected officials, staff, advocates, and the media.• Supervised and directed public policy research of five policy analysts, covering state tax policy, economic development, education, transportation, and human services. <i>Policy Analyst/Senior Policy Analyst</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Led MassBudget's K12 education, public higher ed, transportation, and local aid research.	Boston, MA
2015	Foundation Budget Review Commission <i>Appointed Member representing MassBudget</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended options to the legislature for updating the state's K-12 education funding formula.	Boston, MA
2012	Governor Patrick's Zero-Based Budget Commission <i>Appointed Member representing MassBudget</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended options to the legislature for reforming traditional line item budgeting.	Boston, MA
2006 – 2010	Cambridge School Committee <i>Elected School Committee Member</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chaired Budget, School Lottery, and Superintendent Search Subcommittees.	Cambridge, MA
Summer 2009	Oregon Metro <i>Graduate Fellow focused on land use and planning</i>	Portland, OR

2006 – 2007	Cambridge Kids' Council <i>Mayor's Appointee</i>	Cambridge, MA
2007 – 2008	Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education <i>Public Policy Organizer</i>	Boston, MA
2004 – 2007	GED Plus <i>Lead Teacher</i>	Boston, MA

Personal

2016 Friend of MASBO (MA Association of School Business Officials) Award recipient

2013 Public Citizen Award recipient from the MA Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration for *Cutting Class: Underfunding the Foundation Budget's Core Education Program* research project

Earned **highest honor (*Distinguished*)** for work on HKS **2009 Spring Exercise** project on global food crisis

2006 Cambridge GLBT Pride Breakfast Award recipient for championing Project 10 East funding increase

1989 Union Fair Blueberry Bubblegum Bubble Blowing Champion
