

Union Square Neighborhood Council

2021 Elections Packet

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All candidates intending to run for a two year term on the USNC board must submit materials by 11:59 PM on Friday, April 30th, 2021. Materials can be submitted via email to elections@unionsquareneighborhoodcouncil.org, and hard copies can be delivered to CAAS, 66 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143 (in old police station building, Union Square plaza).

In-person voting will be held on Saturday, May 22th and Tuesday, May 25th at the Somerville Public Safety Building, 220 Washington Street.

Online voting may be available.

Election results will be announced as soon as possible after polls close.

Please direct all questions to the Neighborhood Council Elections Committee: elections@unionsquareneighborhoodcouncil.org

Full bylaws can be found at:

<http://unionsquareneighborhoodcouncil.org/bylaws>

Thank you for your interest in being a candidate for the Union Square Neighborhood Council board!

Union Square Neighborhood Council: Vision and Goals

What is the Union Square Neighborhood Council?

The Union Square Neighborhood Council emerged out of a three-year community process around the redevelopment of Union Square. It presents a unique opportunity for Union Square community members to influence the redevelopment process, negotiate with developers, educate themselves and their neighbors, and build community. Council Board members will also oversee and receive reports from the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) Monitoring Committee on conformity with the CBA agreement by the City-designated master developer, US2.

The Union Square Neighborhood Council is advocating and negotiating for:

- affordable housing and anti-displacement policies,
- employment opportunities within the neighborhood,
- environmental improvements and green space,
- improved transportation options,
- and many other important needs of the Union Square community.

The Union Square Neighborhood Council is the first of what we hope will be many neighborhood councils throughout Somerville. The first elected board attempted to create a model that other neighborhoods in Somerville can learn from, and subsequent boards have continued in that tradition, building community power and knowledge.

Our Vision for Union Square is a thriving, engaged, enjoyable, inclusive, sustainable, diverse urban neighborhood and vibrant commercial center.

Our Mission is to shape the future of Union Square as an increasingly inclusive and vibrant neighborhood and commercial center built around the aspirations of the people who live and work here.

Our Values are interdependence, inclusion, wellness, participation, equity, enjoyment, stewardship, transparency and civic engagement.

Our Goals are to build community, empower members of the community, minimize displacement and promote affordability, increase economic opportunity, and steward the public realm and built environment.

Board Structure & Candidate Eligibility

Description of USNC Board: The board is comprised of fifteen (15) members that serve and execute the responsibilities of the Neighborhood Council. All Neighborhood Council board members must be over 16 years of age and live, work, own property or a business in Union Square or present a letter from an organization for whom you volunteer a substantial portion of time to validate that claim). If a board member moves out of the Union Square area, he or she may serve out the duration of his or her term. Board members are elected by eligible members of USNC. Employees, representatives, and consultants of/for developers cannot serve on the board of the Neighborhood Council.

Board Structure & Candidate Eligibility (Continued)

The Union Square Neighborhood Council aspires to be representational of the demographics of the community in Union Square. We ask that all candidates for the board be committed to this goal and think creatively about how to achieve it.

Category	Number of Seats
Union Square Home Owner (owns primary residence in Union Square)	3
Union Square Renter (rents primary residence in Union Square)	5
Union Square Business Owner of a Brick & Mortar Business	1
Union Square worker in a Brick & Mortar Business	1
Immigrant (Union Square resident, business owner, or worker who was born outside the United States)	2
Open Seat (anyone who lives, works, owns property or a business or volunteers in Union Square)	3

To be on the ballot, candidates must:

- Prove eligibility for membership (see below).
- Select the categories (see above) in which they qualify with respect to which they want to run, including open seats.
- Provide a candidate statement with a recent photograph (See page 6.)
- Collect at least five (5) signatures on a nominating petition from eligible Neighborhood Council voters (See page 7). To avoid potentially dangerous personal contact during the corona virus period, endorsements can also be submitted by email to elections@unionsquareneighborhoodcouncil.org with the subject line: Neighborhood Council Board Endorsement, indicating the candidate(s) being endorsed and their own name and address.

Submit materials to the USNC Elections Committee by 11:59pm on Monday, April 26th, 2021.

**By e-mail: elections@unionsquareneighborhoodcouncil.org
OR bring a hard copy to CAAS at 66-70 Union Square, 2nd Floor**

There are six (6) categories with which board members can identify: resident renters, resident homeowners, owners of a brick and mortar business, workers in a brick and mortar business, immigrants, and open seats. Candidates will not be required to "represent" their constituencies; the goal of having different categories is to ensure a diversity of perspectives. All board members are expected to act on behalf of the broader neighborhood to the best of their abilities.

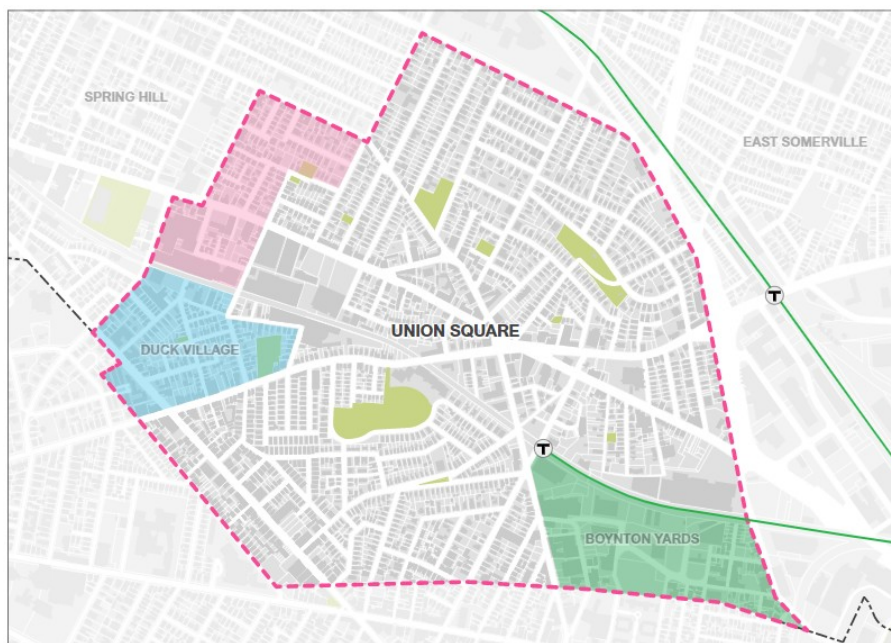
All board candidates are encouraged to identify themselves with respect to as many of the categories as apply, so as to maximize their chances of being elected. Many candidates will be eligible for multiple categories (e.g. renter, worker, immigrant, and open seat).

- If a candidate believes they cannot represent the perspective of a constituency in which they technically belong, they do not have to identify themselves as being in that category. For example, a prosperous property owner who was born in another country might not wish to select the "immigrant" category, due to a belief that the immigrant perspective would be better represented by more recent immigrants.
- Candidates who do not fit into either the renter or homeowner category (e.g. candidates with no fixed abode who reside in the neighborhood, and those who live with family and do not own property or pay rent), should identify themselves in the "renter" category.
- Candidates may express a preference to be recognized as primarily representing one of the categories, e.g. "immigrant," "homeowner," or "business owner" to attract support as an effective representative of this group. This stated preference will not affect the vote count algorithm. Those identifying themselves in this way should still include the other categories for which they qualify.
- All candidates will be eligible to be considered for an open seat unless they state otherwise on their candidate information form. (*Opting out of being designated as qualifying for an open seat may reduce the candidate's chances of being elected.*)

Please see the draft sample ballot on page 9.

Union Square Neighborhood Council Boundaries

Consistent with the Union Square Neighborhood Plan adopted by the Planning Board of the City of Somerville on May 5, 2016, the Union Square neighborhood is defined as the geographic area of Somerville, Massachusetts within the following boundaries: McGrath Highway, Medford Street, the Somerville/Cambridge city line, Park Street, Somerville Avenue, Laurel Street, Summer Street, School Street, and Highland Avenue. The boundary line is drawn down the middle of the boundary streets.



Source: Union Square Neighborhood Plan (page 17) adopted by the Planning Board of the City of Somerville.

Union Square Neighborhood Council

Candidate Information Form

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

*Check all that apply!

___ **I am 16 years of age or older**

___ **I live in Union Square**

___ **I volunteer in Union Square** *(include validating letter from organization)*

___ **I work, own property or own a business in Union Square**

(if yes to this question, please provide applicable information below)

work own business own property

Name of Employer or Business: _____

Job Title (if applicable): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Please indicate which Neighborhood Council Board Seats you are eligible for: *All board candidates are encouraged to identify themselves with as many of the categories that apply, to maximize their chances of election.*

Select <u>ALL</u> that apply	Description	Number of Seats
<input type="checkbox"/>	Union Square Home Owner (owns primary residence in Union Square)	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Union Square Renter (rents primary residence in Union Square)	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Union Square Business Owner of a Brick & Mortar Business	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Union Square Worker in a Brick & Mortar Business	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Immigrant (Union Square resident, business owner, or worker who was born outside the United States)	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open Seat (anyone who lives, works, owns property or a business or volunteers in Union Square)	3

My ***primary*** identification is _____ (Choose one of the above.)

Union Square Neighborhood Council

Nominating Petitions Form

**All candidates must collect a minimum of five (5) signatures on this page. Endorsers may also submit their endorsements via email to elections@unionsquareneighborhoodcouncil.org with the subject line: Neighborhood Council Board Endorsement by 11:59 on April 26th.*

Candidate Name: _____

We the undersigned certify that we either live, work, own property, operate a business or volunteer regularly in Union Square and nominate _____ as a candidate for a seat on the Union Square Neighborhood Council Board.

	NAME: Print/Sign	ADDRESS
1.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____

Union Square Neighborhood Council

Voting & Vote Counting

Voting

Voters will be allowed up to fifteen (15) votes, with not more than one vote per candidate.

You may vote for fewer than 15 candidates.

Ballots with votes for more than 15 candidates, or with more than one vote for any candidate, will be discarded.

The ballot forms indicate the categories for each of the candidates, including their primary identification if selected. (See draft sample ballot on the next page.)

Vote Counting

The fifteen candidates with the highest total number of tallied votes that support the required distribution of seats described in this packet will be appointed to the USNC board.

The Neighborhood Council has adopted a system for counting votes to ensure the fairness of this process:

If the top fifteen (15) vote-getters do not meet the distribution requirement among the categories, the candidates with the next highest number of votes will be considered to replace those with the lowest vote counts on the initial list of fifteen, with the requirement that the total number of votes cast for all selected candidates remains the highest possible.

An example from the sample ballot (next page): If “Peter” chose to identify primarily as a renter and won fewer votes than two others who identified themselves as renters, he could win one of the open seats if he received more votes than other candidates. As an open seat representative s/he would still be able to represent the interests of renters, in addition to issues of general interest to the community.

In the event that there are not sufficient candidates for any specific category, seats in that category will remain open until a subsequent regular election is held.

Union Square Neighborhood Council Draft Sample Ballot

Following is a draft sample ballot completed by an individual voter, with hypothetical candidates and votes indicated.

Candidate Name	Categories that describe how the candidate wishes to be considered. (Yes in bold font indicates the category that the candidate most strongly identifies where more than one categories are selected.)						Vote for Up to 15 Candidates in this Column
	Union Square Home Owner	Union Square Renter	Union Square Business Owner	Union Square Worker	Immigrant	“Open Seat”	
Peter		Yes				Yes	X
Paul	Yes					Yes	
Mary A.		Yes			Yes	Yes	X
Georgio			Yes			Yes	
Franz		Yes				Yes	
Antonia		Yes			Yes	Yes	X
Meryl			Yes			Yes	X
Marcia	Yes				Yes	Yes	
Eduardo		Yes				Yes	
Leo	Yes			Yes		Yes	X
Francesca		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Mona	Yes					Yes	
Lisa	Yes			Yes		Yes	X
Tomas		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Jess		Yes		Yes		Yes	
John		Yes				Yes	X
Louise		Yes				Yes	X
Jerry	Yes					Yes	
Joseph		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	X
Mary B.		Yes				Yes	
Oliver	Yes		Yes			Yes	X
Andy			Yes			Yes	X
Keisha			Yes			Yes	X
Jenna	Yes		Yes			Yes	X
Federico				Yes	Yes	Yes	X
Tim			Yes		Yes	Yes	X

The voting algorithm will select candidates with the most votes consistent with selecting a minimum of one candidate in each of the six categories and filling three open seats.