

Mary Cassesso Response

1. As mayor, how would you move to fully restore Davis Square and why should we trust what you say?

Working with stakeholders (community groups, small business owners, residents, etc) is the only way to work towards maintaining and enhancing spaces like Davis Square. My vision for governance is about inclusion, contribution, and collaboration. Consensus building has always been my management style and that will live through my administration.

2. We believe brick walks can be installed level and without accessibility issues (as at Kenney Park and the recently restored West Branch Library). What will you do to restore the brick walks and plazas of Davis Square?

Brick walkways are to me part and parcel of the look and feel of Davis Square. Maintaining the character of the square should be a priority for the city. Accessibility, safety, and cost are factors when it comes to surface grading but anything that can be reasonably done to preserve the uniqueness of the Square should be taken into account.

3. How would you make the city accountable to DavisNow and the Davis Square community for following through on agreed work to be done?

Groups like DavisNow and the wider community they speak for are the lifeblood of our city. It is key that these voices be heard in city government. Far too often democracy is only about vote and not voice. I will always seek input from stakeholders in my decision-making and encourage a more transparent consultation process for all city work.

4. What is your position on making Elm Street a pedestrian street?

I am all for transforming parts of our city to pedestrian ways. As challenging as this pandemic has been, the outdoor dining that has emerged is a boon that needs to be embraced and expanded. Consultation needs to be done with stakeholders to make sure that streets become more accessible for everyone, especially people with barriers to mobility. Reclaiming public streets from cars has been shown to be viable in some situations.

5. How would you fund the restoration of Davis Square?

There are federal and state funds available from the American Rescue Plan for infrastructure improvement. As well, the tax base in Somerville continues to expand and allows our city to invest in itself. Vibrant spaces like Davis Square are what make Somerville attractive to current and new residents. We need to properly fund the renewal of Davis Square to maintain its vibrancy for years to come.