



Neighborhoods for Climate Accountability

*An alliance of neighborhoods advocating for climate action in Boston,
represented by:*

Alternatives for Community and Environment,
Boston Climate Action Network, Green Dorchester, GreeningRozzie,
Planet Southie, and West Roxbury Saves Energy

Questions Posed to Boston Mayoral Candidates

August 2013

Candidates: Please return your completed responses by August 17, 2013, to
Boston@hoods4climate.org.

1. Increasing Accountability and Transparency

A) Many of Boston's neighborhoods already feel the effects of climate change, are extremely vulnerable to further effects, and have few options for participating in the City's climate-policy planning. For example, East Boston residents face widespread flooding from storms such as Hurricane Sandy and have no formal voice in developing ways to make their community more resilient.

What specific measures would you pursue to improve public engagement with climate-action and resiliency planning in East Boston?

B) One of the shortcomings of the City's 2010 Climate Action Plan is a lack of implementation metrics and public accountability measures.

What types of implementation metrics do you envision to make the City's Climate Action Plan accountable to public review?

2. Enhancing Public Health and Equity

A) Climate change produces severe health impacts, with disparities in correlation to neighborhood, income, and race. Currently the planning and response to climate-change health impacts are somewhat siloed among public-health, emergency-response, emergency-shelter, mental-health, and resident services.

How will you work toward cross-sector, interagency collaboration to increase the chances that Boston will be able to effectively coordinate prompt short-term and long-term responses to health impacts of climate change, offered in an equitable manner across all neighborhoods?

B) Asthma disproportionately affects African American and Latino populations, with North Dorchester having the highest adult rate of asthma in Boston.

To mitigate the potential of increased asthma rates resulting from climate change, how will you work to ensure that effective and equitable asthma prevention and treatment services reach residents of North Dorchester?

3. Reducing Greenhouse Gases from Solid Waste

A) A recent *Boston Globe* article about recycling in Boston highlighted our low 30-percent solid-waste diversion rate and noted that there is the belief that Boston lags behind other major cities

due to "a matter of political will." By comparison, San Francisco currently recycles or composts 80 percent and plans to achieve "zero waste" by 2020.

What do you think is a reasonable goal for Boston's recycling/composting percentage, and what specific timeline would you establish to reach that goal?

B) Certain neighborhoods such as West Roxbury generate a great deal of yard waste, far more than what the City picks up a few weeks out of the year to compost in community gardens.

What would you do to redirect yard waste and food waste that currently goes into solid-waste facilities?

4. Expanding Energy Efficiency and Renewables

A) Boston is known for its older housing stock, and only about one-third of its residential units are owner occupied. Because of the split incentive between nonresident property owners and their tenants who pay for heating costs, a large number of apartments in Boston remain underinsulated.

How do you plan to dramatically increase the number of Boston rental properties and condominiums that are well insulated?

B) Boston's solar-power generation falls far behind that of cities in California and across Europe. Every neighborhood would benefit from renewable-energy generation in all public buildings— every school, firehouse, library, etc.

What would you do as mayor to move this specific effort forward?

5. Adapting to Higher Food Costs, Hotter Summers, and Increasingly Severe Weather

A) Many Boston residents already have limited access to good-quality food markets, and climate change is reducing crop yields in the nation's breadbasket and driving up food prices.

How will you use the revised zoning for urban agriculture to enhance food security in Boston's neighborhoods?

B) South and East Boston have some of the least green space in the City. Dorchester, Boston's largest neighborhood by far, has a great diversity in access to green space. And trees in Franklin Park, Boston's largest park, are suffering greatly from climate change.

How would you improve the green space in these neighborhoods—increasing tree canopy and open space in Southie and Eastie and making sure all of Dorchester's residents have equal access to safe, clean recreational opportunities outdoors—and overall maintain Boston's existing tree canopy?

6. Shrinking Our Transportation Footprint

A) Transportation accounts for more than 30 percent of Boston's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It connects the City's residents to one another, to the things we need such as food and health care, and to opportunities including education and jobs. It is an especially critical issue for the nearly 35 percent of households that do not own a vehicle.

What will you do to advocate for an equitable MBTA fare structure that includes a UPass for all young people ages 12 to 21 and a tiered RIDE paratransit fare for riders with disabilities?

B) Large sections of Mattapan are currently underserved by train service and will remain so even once the proposed Fairmount stations become complete. Commuter rail service to Roslindale and West Roxbury was recently eliminated on Saturdays, resulting in these neighborhoods now having no weekend train service. Similar cuts in service throughout the City have resulted in more people having no option except private car or shuttle services.

What do you plan to do as mayor to advocate for a stronger financial foundation for expanded public transit, Hubway, and Complete Streets, so we don't go backward on low-and no-carbon-footprint alternatives to private vehicles?

7. Developing Jobs for Sustainability

A) Previously, the City of Boston had a dedicated staff person working on green workforce development and green innovation.

How will you reinvigorate green-job development in Boston and ensure a clear pathway for City residents to attain a green job in Boston?

B) The Innovation District in South Boston receives ample support and recognition for fostering new economic opportunity, yet entrepreneurs in other neighborhoods of Boston often lack the same level of financial support, technical assistance, and public recognition.

How would your administration ensure that the benefits of innovation and green jobs are available to residents of all neighborhoods of the City, and how will you incorporate green innovation into an economic development plan for the City?

8. Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies

Boston police and firefighters spend their careers ensuring that Boston remains a safe community. In contradiction to this clear commitment to public good, the pension funds of these public servants, and other City funds, are too often invested in corporations that are harming public health and destabilizing our climate through promotion of fossil fuel exploitation. Seattle, San Francisco, and other cities have made commitments to divesting from the top 200 fossil fuel companies.

What steps, if any, would your administration take to shift the City's investments away from climate-destructive profiteering?