

Minka vanBeuzekom – Response to A Better Cambridge Candidate Questionnaire

1. DIVERSITY: ABC is committed to strengthening the social, cultural, and economic diversity of our neighborhoods.

If elected, what policies will you support or propose to help strengthen the diversity of our community through increased affordable housing and greater economic opportunity for all residents?

RESPONSE: My definition of diversity includes vibrant mix of ages, economic status, education level, ethnicity, gender, occupation, family status, culture, religion and sexual orientation. As prices for housing and goods climb, segments of this dynamic mix are no longer able to live in our neighborhoods. In my second term I will

1. Broaden the impact of the Affordable Housing Trust,
2. Expand the current inclusionary zoning language,
3. Provide incentives for MIT to build student & post-doc housing
4. Await the “Nexus Study” to support increase in developer payment & increase in % of units,
5. Incentivize through zoning, more mixed income housing units of various sizes,
6. advocate for increases to the minimum wage in Cambridge,
7. increase jobs training programs in the city,
8. develop incentives for affordable, small business
9. increase funding for the Arts through the Arts Council & East Cambridge Foundry Building

2. SUSTAINABILITY: ABC wants to build a strong and sustainable community where current and future residents will be able to work, shop, and play near their homes.

If elected, what policies or initiatives will you support to ensure that there is adequate housing near public transportation that supports sufficient retail to meet neighborhood needs, meets the needs of current and future residents, reduces auto usage and encourages energy efficiency?

RESPONSE: Creating a Sustainable Cambridge is clearly a goal shared by all candidates. As I did in my first term, I will:

Promote renewable energy via a) solar energy initiatives within the city and city-owned land, b) community aggregation of electricity and c) reduce regulatory and zoning barriers to solar adoption.

Encourage energy efficiency through city, state and utility programs and bring an energy label building ordinance into the city.

Promote safe biking infrastructure by a) enforcing travel laws for all, b) painting visible bike lanes, c) increase bike parking facilities, and d) promote bike-to-school routes.

Enforce the current Inclusionary Zoning laws and explore ways to expand it as we enter a housing boom in the city – in Kendall, Central and Alewife – all areas well served by public transit.

Reduce residential parking ratios

In parallel Cambridge business and universities must join to bring pressure at state level to fully fund a robust, public transit infrastructure.

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- 3. GROWTH: ABC is working to preserve and expand the diversity of our community by supporting sustainable growth and appropriate density.**

Do you agree that in order to support diversity and meet the housing needs of sustainable growth in Cambridge, increased density may be necessary? If elected, what specific policies or initiatives will you support to achieve sustainable urban growth and to increase low and moderate income housing for all populations, including families?

RESPONSE: A key to a healthy community is parity in the of housing:jobs ratio. Cambridge has maintained this balance over the recent decades but the balance is shifting towards more jobs . To reverse this trend we need to explore other avenues for home ownership including co-ops, co-housing and limited equity condominiums. We need to incentivize MIT to build housing for graduate students and post-docs. The Affordable Housing Trust has been traditionally geared towards low income despite having a mission to increase middle income units too. In order to maintain socioeconomics diversity, we clearly need to build more middle income units with greater number of bedrooms. We must also explore regulatory & permitting barriers to renovate when family want to stay but has outgrown home. I think we are on track to create a city of 115,000 by end of decade – I don't think we can sustain much more than that.

- 4. LIVABILITY: We want to reinforce the distinctive character of our neighborhoods, ensuring that new development builds upon and enhances their defining traits.**

What traits of Cambridge neighborhoods do you find most distinctive? If elected, what policies or initiatives will you support to help reinforce these characteristics through new development, public and open spaces and other means?

RESPONSE: It is hard to pick a single distinctive characteristic of Cambridge Neighborhoods – the mosaic is what appeals! The grand, single family homes of Brattle Street , the dense two family homes of Area Four, the quaint cottages of Cambridgeport, the historic brick row homes of East Cambridge, the ultra-sheik of Kendall/Northpoint or the home over shops in Inman Square – how can I pick? I take very seriously the Special Permit phrase which requires new development to fit into the existing neighborhood – if followed assiduously, that concept will keep neighborhood character intact.

Increasing adoption of zoning language which requires public accessibility for privately maintained open space is another way to keep the city livable. I believe we must work more closely with the DCR to better maintain and upgrade the Riverfront, a key component of livability in the city.

- 5. DIALOGUE: We want to support open and constructive engagement between all parties to the planning process, based on mutual respect for differing views.**

In your opinion, do public planning processes in Cambridge support open and constructive engagement between stakeholders? If elected, how will you help ensure transparent and mutually respectful planning for the future of Cambridge?

RESPONSE: The current process of planning is confusing, inside baseball and it doesn't foster public conversation and a fluid public process. The two long term public groups of the K2C2 Study now consists of citizens who understand the process and have had their ideas vetted. How we spread that knowledge and engagement to a broader constituency is not clear to me. Various strategies to help the public process have been suggested such as scale model creation, tutorials on the intricacies of zoning laws and dedicated Community Development websites. As the city continues to experience unprecedented growth we're running out of time to figure this public planning process out. I will work closely with my colleagues to solve this.

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6. **Earlier this year the Central Square and Kendall Square Advisory Committees (K2C2) proposed recommendations to guide the future development of these key residential and commercial districts in Cambridge.**

Which three K2C2 recommendations do you believe should be top priorities for the City of Cambridge over the next few years? What specific policies or initiatives recommended will you support to ensure these priorities are achieved during the next City Council term? Are there policies and recommendations that you oppose?

RESPONSE: Choosing from among the many great K2C2 suggestions was difficult.

1. Both Kendall and Central Square need more trees and publically accessible planted areas. This benefits the storm water infrastructure, reduces the health island affect and looks inviting for pedestrians. Keeping the setbacks away from the street is critical for good pedestrian experience.

2. Central Square will benefit from a BID & however, the businesses must come to that agreement on their own.

3. Overarching any Study suggestion will be the need for accountability and transparency for anything affecting the public realm.

If the municipal parking lots get developed, I think the city should retain ownership and enter into a long term lease with firm conditions for parking, 1st floor affordable retail and no market rate housing. I don't agree that Central Square/Osborne should be rezoned in its entirety. Additional density can be achieved through current zoning and limited variances.