

<b>Candidate name (first and last):</b>	Michael F. Flaherty
<b>Office the candidate is seeking:</b>	At-large City Councilor
<b>Transportation, housing, and climate issues are currently siloed in City Hall. How do you see these issues connecting and how will you work to align them if elected? [600 character limit]</b>	We cannot sustainably plan for the future without aligning our transportation, housing and climate resiliency goals. I have long focused on their interconnectedness. I have repeatedly called for hearings on master traffic plans, advocated for more thorough transportation development review processes and better transportation access demand agreements (TAPAs,) and took a leadership role in shaping ordinances that prioritize climate resilient building. My record demonstrates that I can and will continue to work to remove bureaucratic barriers to make our city government effective.
<b>1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Boston? (Check the top 3.)</b>	Car, Subway, Walking
<b>1b. What types of housing have you lived in or owned throughout your life? (Check all that apply.)</b>	Duplex/Triple-decker, Over-six-unit apartment building, As a renter, As a landlord, Home ownership, Single-family home, Public housing / Section 8, Urban, Suburban
<b>1. While the MBTA controls bus service, the City of Boston controls the streets the buses operate on. How would you accelerate bus service and bus priority infrastructure? [1200 character limit]</b>	I will continue working to accelerate improvements to bus service and the creation of bus priority infrastructure, particularly in areas with the highest amount of ridership and the most delays. This can be achieved through the implementation of our complete streets programs; bus rapid transit lanes, where adequate planning and research demonstrates a need; and better transit signal prioritization; and transit signaling generally. I am supportive of pilot programs in this area. Pilot programs give us the opportunity to experiment with these changes in real time, collect data, and then assess whether a permanent change is warranted. We can additionally seek improvements through our transportation demand agreements (TAPAs) with large developments. These ensure that residential and commercial growth across Boston is met with the appropriate investments in public and mass transit. Lastly and most importantly, I will support accelerated budgetary investments in our City's first ever Transit Team that is devoted to installing priority interventions along our busiest corridors.
<b>The MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) makes important decisions regarding MBTA service, projects, and programs. The FMCB is sunseting in July and the MBTA will be without a dedicated governance board. Will you advocate for a new governance board and a seat on it for the City of Boston, and how? [1200 character limit]</b>	Yes, I will advocate for a new governance board and a seat on it for the City of Boston. One of the biggest barriers to improving the MBTA for Bostonians is that the City does not have a seat on the Fiscal Management and Control Board (FMCB). I have long advocated for the City of Boston to have a seat on the FMCB. I have led on this issue, calling for hearings to discuss our over \$86 million local assessment. More recently, I supported a City Council resolution in favor of S.2279 "An Act Relative to the Structure of the Fiscal Management and Control Board," which would give the city a FMCB seat. The current system, in which we pay, by far, the highest amount of any municipality, but do not have representation on the Board, effectively amounts to taxation without representation. I will continue to work with my colleagues in state government to make it clear that the citizens of Boston will not stand for it. I will continue to apply sustained political pressure through appropriate legislative action, such as hearings, resolutions, providing testimony on the issue at a state level, and bringing visibility to the issue across our neighborhoods.

<p><b>3. The City of Boston’s comprehensive transportation plan, Go Boston 2030, includes the implementation of 26 priority Better Bike Corridors and other bike projects. How will you ensure all short-term projects are implemented within three years, and long-term projects are implemented by or before 2030? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Our city’s planning goals need to be supported through strategic budgetary investments and I will continue to advocate for these important transit solutions. I have supported numerous increases in the Strategic Bike Network in the capital budget. Most recently, I voted to increase capital funding for the expansion of the bike network to \$7,850,000, alongside additional funding, to support complementary initiatives such as Vision Zero, Neighborhood Slow Streets and other critical transportation planning initiatives. Furthermore, I supported the Boston Bicyclists Union request for an additional 10 miles of bike lanes. I have, and will continue to, advocate for the Boston Transportation Department to have enough human capital to plan and execute these short-term projects. I will also continue to support adequate capital investment to fund the long-term implementation of projects. Lastly, I will work to ensure that BTD’s new Community Leaders Transportation Academy has a diverse membership and the support it needs to effectively champion the importance of multimodal transportation options.</p>
<p><b>4. Often street projects designed to improve safety involve removing on-street parking or reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes to make space for people walking and biking. How would you advance safety projects when there is active opposition to narrowing the roadway and removing parking? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I have successfully worked with BTD and community members on the implementation of many traffic calming measures and safety projects. I have also participated in many walkthroughs in high traffic areas with Walk Boston, Livable Streets and community members. One example is the “rightsizing” on Day Boulevard in South Boston and daylighting efforts on the surrounding street networks. These changes were implemented, despite opposition, and as a result of a thorough community process that was both data-informed and allowed residents to openly express their opinions. We know that all of our residents want and deserve safe streets. What works in one neighborhood may not work in another neighborhood. Therefore, in order to advance any safety projects, I will champion transparent, predictable processes that create trust among residents and stakeholders. I will continue to call on BTD and other relevant agencies to conduct data-driven, open, and thorough community processes that solicit input from stakeholders in the impacted neighborhoods. These should clearly delineate project timelines and ongoing opportunities for feedback.</p>
<p><b>5. Boston’s inclusionary development policy (IDP) program requires that new developments of 10 units or more include at least 13% of the new units be affordable and income-restricted. There is conversation about increasing the IDP percentage; however, experience and research around the country has shown that setting an IDP percentage too high can actually reduce the total number of new affordable units built. Would you support a new 12 unit building where 50% of the units are affordable over a 60 unit building where 20% of the units are affordable? Why? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I have long called for increasing the percentage of affordable units required by our IDP in a way that doesn’t jeopardize our ability to achieve gains. We need to urgently grow our affordable housing stock in ways that best meet our residents’ housing needs and don’t lead to displacement. As such, I would support both projects after ensuring that each project stands on its own merits and meets the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. For each development, I need to consider if the affordability levels are in line with the surrounding neighborhood’s AMI, if the units are sized with the average housing size and needs of the neighborhood, and if the units are striking the appropriate balance between rental and homeownership units. I also need to consider the permanency of the affordability, the ability of the surrounding area to absorb density, and the respective developments alignment with our city’s transit, open space and climate resiliency goals.</p>

<p><b>6. Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030 determined that Boston needed 69,000 new homes by 2030. The last public update (Q4 2019) indicated that the city is likely behind schedule. The current lengthy permitting process in Boston is a well-known barrier to meeting this challenge. How would you reduce timelines and unnecessary costs to create more homes for people in neighborhoods across the city? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>As a city wide City Councilor I have participated in and supported several neighborhoods' rezoning efforts. I believe that a comprehensive rezoning effort will add predictability, transparency and fairness to our development process. A modernized zoning process would reduce construction timelines and costs of housing. It is my belief that updating the zoning code would force the Zoning Board of Appeals to uphold local zoning and eliminate the extremely long delays in the permitting process.</p>
<p><b>7. What actions or policies that fall under existing municipal powers (i.e. do not require a home rule petition) do you support to help prevent displacement? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I have been a leader on the strengthening and expansion of resources for affordable housing, including our Linkage and Inclusionary Development Policy. Additionally, I supported a number of ordinances aimed at supporting housing affordability and stopping displacement, such as our short term rental ordinance and the affirmatively furthering fair housing zoning amendment. I have a track record of calling for a higher percentage of affordability from the IDP, changing the threshold that triggers a contribution, strengthening our enforcement mechanisms, and I have proposed incentives to provide on-site affordable housing to create more mixed-income developments. I also support expanding our investment in our city funded voucher program, our Acquisition Opportunity Program, our Boston ONE+ Mortgage program, our Neighborhood Homes Initiatives, strengthening our condominium conversion ordinance and protections for developments created with State's expiring use 13A programs, the creative use of land trusts, city-owned land and/or vacant parcels and other policies that are designed to stop displacement, such as the BPDA's Pilot Diversity Preference.</p>
<p><b>8. In a new housing development where space is limited, and parking adds substantially to the cost, how would you prioritize space/think about tradeoffs (between more units, parking, open space, etc.)? What would you do in the face of community opposition to developments that seek to balance these priorities? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>During my time as City Councilor At-Large, I have had a front row seat for community dialogues about the trade offs between more units and parking spaces. I have, and will continue to, balance the needs of each community by weighing a variety of factors-- proximity to transit, existing levels of density as well as community feedback. I have been supportive of doing an audit of curb space and/or available parking so that we can use data to inform these conversations. It's critical that we encourage a mode shift away from individual car ownership where possible, but that can only happen with serious investments in our complete streets program and public transportation. Developments should balance these priorities and seek to make investments in public transit or alternative modes of transportation for residents.</p>
<p><b>1. The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition supports the removal of direct policing from Vision Zero goals, citing issues of safety and equity and a lack of effectiveness in improving safety. You can read about these issues in the Boston Vision Zero Progress Report and the Coalition Statement on Gov. Baker Administration's Road Safety Legislation. Do you support removing police enforcement from Vision Zero?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Oppose</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>It will take a number of tools for us to achieve our shared Vision Zero goals. I don't believe that infrastructure and other methods alone are sufficient. Police play a valuable role in situations where drivers are recklessly endangering pedestrians, cyclists and others.</p>

<p><b>2. Police details are often required for construction projects and open streets events -- it would save money and create jobs if community members were allowed to do this work. Civilian flaggers were first authorized in 2008 to help fill these roles in Massachusetts; nevertheless, these projects and events are still primarily staffed by police on overtime, and detail requests often go unfilled entirely. Do you support reducing police involvement in streets-related projects and events?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Oppose</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Chapter 90 trained officers performing details provides another layer of traffic calming and public safety that help make our streets and public events safer.</p>
<p><b>3. One key strategy that has been proven to effectively reduce speeding, improve safety, and remove racial bias in traffic enforcement in other states and countries is automated enforcement (i.e. speed cameras and red light cameras). If the State House passes automated enforcement legislation that allows cities &amp; towns to opt-in to a speed or red light camera program, would you support your municipality using this tool?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I've advocated for each police district to have a traffic division focused on traffic enforcement due to the safety concerns. Any implementation of camera programs should include a review to ensure that our residents' civil liberties are protected along with proper notice and ability to appeal.</p>
<p><b>4. The Boston Transportation Department's Neighborhood Slow Streets program has been very popular when implemented on smaller neighborhood-level streets, but many injuries from traffic crashes happen on busier arterial roads. Do you support traffic calming for high-crash intersections and roadways of arterials to prevent crashes and save lives, even when it means taking away parking or travel lanes?</b></p>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>All of our residents want and deserve safe streets. I will champion transparent, data-driven, and open community processes that solicit input from all stakeholders to inform much needed traffic calming and road safety plans that fit each neighborhood and make our streets safer for everyone.</p>
<p><b>5. The Go Boston 2030 plan was released in 2017. Do you support updating the plan and working to advance the plan's goals?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	
<p><b>6. Mode shift occurs when people get out of their cars and choose other ways of getting around. Do you support the City's Go Boston 2030 goal of reducing car trips by 50% by 2030?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Given the city's ongoing congestion problems, it's crucial to encourage residents to use mass transit and other modes of travel when possible. I support investments in the MBTA, improving our street infrastructures for pedestrians and and continue to support multi-modal means of transportation.</p>

<p><b>7. Do you support reassessing the plans and viability of major capital projects, such as the Northern Avenue Bridge or the Rutherford Avenue redesign?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>It's critical that capital projects are in line with our vision for Boston and importantly, that they remain eligible for state and/or federal funding to help accelerate our investments, especially in light of additional money that may be available due to COVID relief funding.</p>
<p><b>8. How curb space is managed can impact many different city functions, including bus service, commercial delivery, and residential parking. When used effectively, curb space can speed up bus service with dedicated lanes, create safe biking infrastructure, and/or allow businesses to quickly and safely receive deliveries. Do you support conducting a city-wide parking study to evaluate how effectively curb space is being used?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I have long said that I would like to see a complete audit done of how effectively our curb space(s) are being used across Boston. An audit is essential to having accurate data guiding our planning decisions.</p>
<p><b>9. Do you support charging an annual fee for residential parking permits?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Oppose</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>At this time I don't support charging for residential parking permits. A audit should assess the amount and utilization of existing spaces before any policy is enacted. User fees are regressive and burden working class Bostonians who need access to a car and are not well served by public transit.</p>
<p><b>10. Do you support free bus service on the MBTA and a low-income fare option for other public transit options?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I support this because of the outsized share of MBTA operating funds that Boston contributes and the overall benefits of increased public transportation usage.</p>
<p><b>11. Boston has many traffic signals that do not work well for pedestrians. Do you support making signal timing safer and more convenient for people crossing at all speeds, including those walking and using mobility assistive devices?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Our roads must be designed with pedestrian access for all our residents in mind, including persons with disabilities. I have fought to make progress on this issue at a street-by-street level with my constituents while advocating for budgetary investments to make systemic changes.</p>
<p><b>12. Do you support ensuring large-scale developments (including Sullivan Square, the Allston I-90 Interchange, and Suffolk Downs) incorporate the community's desire for walkability, connectivity, open space, and resilience?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	

<p><b>13. Do you support prioritizing and advancing the housing production goals outlined in the 2018 update to Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	
<p><b>14. Lawsuits filed against two much needed, 100% affordable housing developments in Jamaica Plain have recently underscored how mandatory parking minimums can be weaponized within the legal system to significantly slow or prevent affordable housing. Do you support the proposal by Councilors Matt O'Malley and Kenzie Bok to update the zoning code to eliminate mandatory parking minimums for affordable housing?</b></p>	<p>Somewhat Oppose</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I've supported efforts to remove barriers for these developments while acknowledging not every neighborhood is equally served by public transit. Eliminating parking minimums may work in areas well served by public transit, but may not work in areas less served. I continue to assess the proposal.</p>
<p><b>15. Given the affordability crisis, many are critical of the perceived large amount of new "luxury" construction and would like to see more moderately priced housing options being built. Yet, the city's zoning code mandates strict parking minimums for any new housing development, and parking is expensive (a single structured parking space adds an average of \$50,000 in per-unit costs). This substantial cost often pushes otherwise moderately priced new housing into the "luxury" price range. In order to increase the amount of moderately priced homes in the city, would you support reducing mandatory parking minimums for all new development city-wide?</b></p>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Our parking minimums should be determined at a neighborhood level with consideration to the area's density and transportation networks. Reducing parking minimums in transit oriented developments in areas well served by public transit may work, but may not work effectively in areas less served.</p>
<p><b>16. The City of Boston has devoted significant resources and conducted extensive community processes to develop neighborhood-based plans (i.e. PLAN: JP/Rox, PLAN: South Boston Dorchester Ave). However, the city has failed to incorporate these plans into the zoning code, perpetuating a system of parcel-by-parcel discretion and diminishing public trust in the planning process. Do you support codifying these and future plans into the city's zoning code within a reasonable time frame (six months of a plan's release)?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>We should separate the planning and economic development functions of our Boston Planning and Development Agency. A standalone planning department would allow for a rezoning effort aligned with community feedback and the macro-planning goals outlined in many neighborhood based plans.</p>

<p><b>17. The City of Boston and Boston Housing Authority have recently launched a city project-based housing voucher program. Do you support continued funding for this program, and do you support expanding it to include additional funding and/or a mobile voucher program?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p><b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Yes, I support continued funding for this program and advocated for additional funding in the FY22 budget process. As the federal government continues to walk away from public housing, our City has an obligation to increase resources for public housing residents.</p>