

Candidate name (first and last):	David Halbert
Office the candidate is seeking:	At-large City Councilor
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]	Housing, transportation, & climate are intimately linked. This is why I advocate for “Smart Density” in addressing our housing crisis. Building larger, net-zero emissions construction housing options for both individuals & families - with a focus on siting them near major roadways & public transit hubs. The positive environmental impacts of this approach are amplified with parallel investments in streetscapes to provide accessible pedestrian pathways year-round, a citywide network of protected bike lanes, & true bus rapid transit options.
1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Boston? (Check the top 3.)	Car, Subway, Walking
1b. What types of housing have you lived in or owned throughout your life? (Check all that apply.)	Duplex/Triple-decker, As a renter, Home ownership, Single-family home, Urban, Suburban
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]	Boston must invest in true bus rapid transit (BRT) as a critical component of its transportation future. This means making the necessary investments in streetscape redesign in order to allow BRT to move along major transit corridors as seamlessly as possible. This also means providing BRT with signal priority at intersections, as well as creating passenger platforms that allow for longer, modern vehicles which will help reduce congestion and crowding. These efforts must be coupled with a robust, linguistically & culturally inclusive public education campaign to not only promote use, but also increase understanding of the transportation, environmental, and economic advantages of increased BRT. As work to expand BRT continue, priority should be given to environmental justice communities within Boston, which are historically underserved by options like these. In addition, regional long-term planning conversations with surrounding communities in Greater Boston must occur, so that such infrastructure and design initiatives can be aligned as closely as possible, thus extending the reach and viability of such projects.
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]	As a powerful quasi-public agency that has significant personal, economic, and environmental impact on millions each day I know that the MBTA must have robust, community centered oversight in order to operate at full capacity - and in a manner that is truly equitable. Because of this I would advocate for the establishment of a new MBTA governance board. Boston should have a voice at the table, as the largest single consumer municipality in the MBTA service area, but I also know that solely focusing on Boston to the exclusion of the over 170 other communities within the MBTA service area will only create resentment and, ultimately, obstacles to the decisions and investments the system needs in order to serve everyone. That is why I would work with other municipal leaders to create a group of community based seats - led by Boston - in order to provide the most comprehensive input and oversight possible. By approaching this issue from a collaborative starting point Boston will benefit by creating allies and breaking down the unfortunate stereotype that the city and its residents are distant from other communities and only concerned with self-interest. Partnership is power.

<p>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]</p>	<p>To achieve the bike related goals of Go Boston 2030 it is critical that appropriate funding be provided to these projects. By advocating for them within the annual operating and capital budgets we can substantially increase the odds that they will be completed within a three-year window for all short term projects, and meet the longer term systemic goals by 2030. As we continue in these efforts it will also be important to have regular ongoing review of efforts to date. I hope to utilize the Council's Post Audit and Oversight Committee as a vehicle to engage in these discussions, with a goal of identifying areas where adjustments need to be made early on, bringing public attention to them, and use these conversations as the necessary catalysts for any necessary interventions before small problems grow into ones that can threaten the overall viability of the project. I would also seek to ensure, through robust inquiry and advocacy, that communities that have often felt ignored by discussions of these types of transportation investments are prioritized for projects and given more agency in discussions of the long-term impacts of these efforts on their neighborhoods - pros and cons.</p>
<p>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]</p>	<p>As a Dorchester resident who routinely travels on American Legion & Cummins Highways, I deal with changes to roadway design aimed at creating safer passage for bicyclists regularly. I have heard from numerous friends and neighbors about their frustration with changes to their regular commutes. I believe that in order to make progress on expansion of projects like these we must first listen and respect the concerns of those who may be initially in opposition. Beginning from a place of active listening is crucial to allowing members of impacted communities feel seen in these discussions. We must also work to answer concerns that are adjacent to those about transportation, such as the worry that these types of changes are the heralds of displacement and gentrification. When we start in this manner those of us who advocate for more robust bike networks throughout Boston can better advocate for the health, safety, and long-term environmental benefits of this type of change. We must also ensure that our values based advocacy is backed by robust and complete empirical data, which speaks to and reflects the communities we are engaging. These are critical steps to building consensus.</p>

<p>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]</p>	<p>I support increase the IDP percentage to a minimum of 20% on-site for all projects, in line with major metropolitan areas around the country. I also believe that the off-site percentage should be substantially raised, in order to incentivize developers contributing to the establishment of truly inclusive, socio-economically diverse neighborhoods in Boston - rather than accelerating economic segregation. The ultimate goal in any conversation around affordable housing percentages should be to increase the access and availability of such housing options as broadly as possible. Because of that I would support the 60-unit, 20% affordable option in this specific instance. That should be set as a floor though, with efforts continuing in order to raise the percentage in similar sized buildings as much as possible. While the conversation around affordable housing within development is often focused on percentages, we must be equally focused on types of housing as well. It is just as important that we create affordable housing that is family-sized, with 2, 3, & 4 bedrooms, as it is that we have it in the first place. Growing a family should not mean you can't grow in the city you call home.</p>
<p>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]</p>	<p>A key element of increasing access to the housing the city needs, and decreasing the obstacles and red tape that are faced by many in trying to achieve that goal, lies in breaking up the Boston Planning and Development Agency into separate agencies; one focused on truly community based planning, and the other on economic development. Doing so will not only help streamline processes but it will also help elevate community input and voices in the process. This must be done in conjunction with making substantive changes to the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals and its processes. As a former City Council staffer I have watched frustration mount on numerous occasions as those seeking to bring reasonable forward thinking development proposals have been given delays by the ZBA that have significantly threatened the viability of worthy projects - if not outright ending them. While I do believe changes need to be made, we must also do so in ways that give communities a more robust voice in these processes. Not to give small groups the power to hold projects hostage, but rather the capacity and forum to be true partners in addressing Boston's development needs.</p>

<p>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]</p>	<p>Prevention of displacement is a critical obligation of city government. Within the existing scope of the city's powers there are steps that can be taken to support this goal. Through the mechanism of the budget the City Council has the ability to advocate for funding for specific policies & proposals targeted at supporting those who are most vulnerable to displacement. This may come in the form of increased access to rental assistance, more funding for first-time and low-income homeowners, and/or specialized tax incentives to promote the development of more affordable housing - to name some options. This is also why I support the Council having the ability to amend & create an independent budget for consideration, in order to bring their 13 perspectives to bear. The city can also be pro-active about designations of city owned parcels, creating more incentives and capacity for those who are attempting to add to needed housing stock. The city can push for changes in the zoning and building codes to enable responsible developers, who prioritize creating more affordable options, to have a more efficient experience and bypass many of the obstacles preventing being active in this space.</p>
<p>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]</p>	<p>In an instance where there were serious considerations on the impact of parking on the overall cost and viability of a development project I would try to work with the developer and the community to come to an accord surrounding mitigations and offsets. These could include working with the developer to provide greater incentives for buyers and/or renters who utilize public transit; helping to facilitate a more intentional and engaged visioning effort with community members in order to determine their greatest concerns and needs from such a project; and working with city departments, such as Neighborhood Development, Parks, and Transportation, to identify areas where such a project could have the greatest impact on quality of life. In the face of opposition from those in the community to a project that works to actively balance as many concerns as possible I would seek to bring community members and the developer(s) of the proposal together, with a goal of serving as an honest broker between the sides in order to try to build consensus on what the project could be, how it could move forward, and what it could bring to the community.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Introducing policing into achieving Vision Zero goals can have serious negative consequences in realizing desired outcomes. Given the potential impact of Vision Zero priorities on marginalized communities, and their often negative histories with law enforcement, removal from the process makes sense.</p>

<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>If we can achieve the same goals of project safety, while also realizing cost savings but with workers still making living wages, we should work to turn that into a reality.</p>
<p>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 & towns to opt-in to a speed or red light camera program, would you support your municipality using this tool?</p>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>While I am in support of the general goals and utility of automated enforcement tools for traffic management purposes I have concerns about particular neighborhoods and communities being noticeably more observed and impacted via higher levels of deployment of such technologies in their areas.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Increases in safety are a target that we should be working to achieve in all transportation policy decisions. While we make these efforts we must be intentional about preventing disparate deployment of such strategies so as not to further marginalize vulnerable communities.</p>
<p>5. The Go Boston 2030 plan was released in 2017. Do you support updating the plan and working to advance the plan's goals?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Regular updating of policies is critical to effective execution of government and is something we should engage in for all policy arenas.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>

<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Reduction of car trips by 50% would not only create more efficient transit patterns, but would also be a tremendous benefit to reducing Boston's carbon footprint and addressing the impacts of climate change.</p>
<p>7. Do you support reassessing the plans and viability of major capital projects, such as the Northern Avenue Bridge or the Rutherford Avenue redesign?</p>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>9. Do you support charging an annual fee for residential parking permits?</p>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>I support the concept of fees for residential parking permits, but would want to be intentional about understanding the impact on economically vulnerable communities and making efforts to hold them as harmless as possible.</p>
<p>10. Do you support free bus service on the MBTA and a low-income fare option for other public transit options?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>I support fare free transit and think that municipal leaders can be the best advocates for this work by operating in coalition with one another to create the needed critical mass to move such policy decisions on Beacon Hill with our state counterparts.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>13. Do you support prioritizing and advancing the housing production goals outlined in the 2018 update to Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	

<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>We should not allow parking minimums to stand in the way of creating the affordable housing we need in Boston, particularly for communities, like our age strong population, who may have significantly less need for personal vehicles and should be supported in easier access to mass transit options</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Somewhat Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>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)?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>When communities spend the time to make their voices heard in the creation of a comprehensive vision for their communities, only to see it disregard for a piecemeal approach, it undermines faith in the entire system. We should incorporate this work quickly and efficiently into city practices.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	