

Candidate name (first and last):	Mary Tamer
Office the candidate is seeking:	District 6 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]	All three are tied to our environment, as well as public health, equity, & justice. And at a time of housing scarcity in Boston, we must prioritize transit-oriented development which will reduce reliance on cars, create more affordable units, and allow for greater density. We must push for collaboration among the city's Department of Neighborhood Development, the Environment Department, the BPDA, & the MBTA. Expanding access to quality & predictable public transit options, including fare-free buses, bus rapid transit, & accessible pedestrian & cycling infrastructure, is also a top priority.
1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Boston? (Check the top 3.)	Car, Walking, Carpool
1b. What types of housing have you lived in or owned throughout your life? (Check all that apply.)	Duplex/Triple-decker, 4-to-6-unit building, Over-six-unit apartment building, As a renter, Home ownership, Single-family home, Urban
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]	<p>It is a top priority of mine to expand access to quality and predictable public transit options, including fare-free buses, bus rapid transit, and safe and accessible pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. While the Boston City Council doesn't have direct jurisdiction over public transit, Boston elected officials can use the bully pulpit and the organizing power of the office to advocate for changing the current transit system. This includes the fact that the City of Boston controls the streets the buses operate on.</p> <p>We must begin by removing fares on MBTA buses as a pilot program and then explore further expansion. By utilizing bus rapid transit and better connecting cycling infrastructure, we can make intra-neighborhood transportation safer and easier. To truly reduce dependence on cars, we must give residents access to a clean, safe, and predictable public transit system, especially our MBTA trains, buses, and commuter rail. I'd like to see our MBTA buses as well as our Boston school buses move away from diesel fuel (which causes a multitude of health issues) toward a reasonable timeline for an electric fleet.</p>
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]	Yes, I will advocate for a new governance board, and I will specifically advocate for the City of Boston to have a seat on it. The "how" is by organizing, and I would work with constituents in District 6, my fellow Boston City Councilors, as well as members of the Boston delegation serving at the State House to collectively advocate for this representative seat for Boston. As the largest municipality in the state with a significant portion of residents reliant on public transportation, this representation is crucial to ensure the voices of commuters are heard and that their needs are met.

<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>One of the most important roles of a City Councilor is holding the Administration accountable for the implementation of policy. As City Councilor, I will ensure that the City is providing the funding required to implement these projects according to schedule and the oversight to ensure this.</p> <p>This would be part of my approach to the City’s annual budget process and I would also work closely with advocates and experts to gain an independent understanding of project status and efficacy of implementation.</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>I have heard from residents all over District 6 about the need for safer streets, more outdoor spaces (whether for restaurants or community events), safe biking infrastructure, as well as issues around parking. Through the pandemic, so many of our local restaurants have embraced outdoor dining & would like to retain the spaces that were initially created as temporary measures. Whether we are considering new development, park renovations, or reimagining our streets, residents want transparency and a voice in these processes. To this end, I would advocate for a robust community process, similar to what Boston Parks and Recreation facilitates as part of their ongoing renovation of the city’s parks and green spaces. I have taken part in several of these meetings, which start with a facilitated listening process, followed by a presentation of themes and options (based on previously collected feedback from 1st meeting), then a survey where stakeholders can weigh in on the various options, and then a final presentation of the design that garnered the greatest amount of support (while also addressing the priorities identified via the community process). This is a positive model to follow.</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>When it comes to housing, Boston’s challenge is two-fold: we have a scarcity of housing, and we have a scarcity of affordable housing. As I meet with more people across District 6, I have heard of a multitude of challenges faced by those who live in subsidized housing, as well as those who pay full-market rent or mortgages for condos or homes. In the scenario presented above, I would support a 60-unit building with 20% affordable units for two key reasons: first, it provides more needed units (of varying income levels) and second, it provides twice as many affordable units as the 12-unit proposal. Boston’s population has grown by nearly 13% since the 2010 census, and the need for affordable housing is profound. We must address the urgency of the need, and I fully support mixed-income housing models such as the recently approved proposal to renovate and expand the Mildred C. Hailey Apartments in Jamaica Plain -- and I was the only candidate in the District 6 race to testify in favor of this proposal (as supported by the existing residents) at the BPDA meeting prior to the board vote in April 2021.</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>One of the greatest barriers to creating needed housing is a convoluted permitting process. The City must create processes that give all stakeholders -- residents, community development corporations, builders, organized labor, and other community-based organizations -- both predictability and transparency.</p> <p>This has continued to be a challenge across all of our neighborhoods, and there are concrete steps I would take to streamline the process and to ensure proper staffing in place at Inspectional Services (ISD) for quicker turnaround times; for greater transparency in the permitting processes with clear guidelines on how to proceed; as well as the addition of permitting "troubleshooters" available in-person and by phone for those seeking assistance.</p> <p>The City must also encourage greater collaboration between entities to achieve housing goals that also meet pre-existing community 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>I support several key efforts that can be done with existing municipal powers to ease our housing shortage and promote affordability:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize transit-oriented development so housing affordability can also provide a cleaner, more mobile, and less-congested Boston. 2. Improve annual accountability for the affordable housing projects funded through the Inclusionary Development Policy Fund and Community Preservation Act (CPA) grants. 3. End the buyout option in the city's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP). 4. Expand city efforts (via grants) to support those facing hardship in paying rent and mortgages, and provide tax relief to seniors so they may remain in their homes and neighborhoods. 5. Expand first-time home buyer programs and access to lending. 6. We need an inventory on the location and status of available lots and underutilized buildings in the city's roster. There is absolutely an opportunity to look at underutilized buildings (or lots) owned by the city that could be converted to affordable housing. For any of these buildings or available lots, housing should be a top priority if the site is deemed appropriate.

<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>All proposed development must prioritize an open and transparent community process with input from residents and community stakeholders. As City Councilor, it will be important to work closely with all parties involved to ensure that development projects are mutually beneficial and enhance the community at large. I look forward to bringing people together and facilitating honest and respectful dialogue that will result in the best possible result.</p> <p>With any proposed development, I will advocate for open space, LEED certification, accessibility, and ability for community members to access housing. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to the considerations mentioned above (more units, parking, etc.), because of the diversity of the district (density of proposed site, access to public transportation, as well as other factors).</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>Neither Support nor Oppose</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>As City Councilor, I look forward to working with advocates and stakeholders to enact policy that is most effective in keeping residents safe. To that end, I would welcome conversations on the best path forward when it comes to the role of direct policing in street safety.</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>Neither Support nor Oppose</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Based on reporting from WBUR and others, the civilian flagger program in MA has not led to great cost savings as hoped for, as the prevailing wage law mandates that flaggers are paid \$40 per hour (on par with law enforcement). And Mass DOT cites a lack of available civilian flaggers for these roles.</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>Neither Support nor Oppose</p>

<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>I would want to learn more about the details of the proposed program, including how it would impact the civil liberties of residents, review case studies of other cities utilizing this technology, as well as look into issues around cost and implementation.</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>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Without question, the safety of our city residents is a top priority & we must address roadways where we know frequent problems occur. As stated in an earlier question, we must bring residents together with the city's traffic department and other relevant agencies to determine the best path forward.</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>Our city is changing rapidly, with a population growing at a significant pace. As a result, we must review all plans such as Go Boston 2030 on an annual basis, to ensure that the stated goals are in line with where we need to be & hold the city accountable on its efforts to mitigate climate change.</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>I fully support this goal, and we must ensure that the state does its part on addressing the myriad issues of our long neglected MBTA in order to get more drivers out of their cars and into public transportation, as well as on bikes or walking.</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>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>Yes, I support both of these projects and how they will be reimagined for future use. While neither project is in my district, they are both vital links to different parts of the city and will provide a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment while adding much needed green space.</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>A city-wide parking study is a logical way to determine the various uses of curb space and how those uses have changed over time.</p>
<p>9. Do you support charging an annual fee for residential parking permits?</p>	<p>Somewhat Oppose</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>I support charging a fee for more than two cars per household.</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>While the Boston City Council doesn't have direct jurisdiction over this, I support free bus service as well as a low-income fare option for other transit. At a time when we need to entice people back to using public transportation, this is a tangible way to do it.</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>Absolutely yes. This is an issue of accessibility and safety, and my policy platform is clear on my stance on these issues.</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>All projects of this magnitude must incorporate community voice and feedback as they will impact the surrounding neighborhoods for years to come.</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>Yes, with an increasing population which has grown 13% since the 2010 census, Boston must prioritize the need for housing for residents of all income levels, with a focus on affordable housing stock.</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>Somewhat Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	<p>I support the intent of this proposal, but I'm concerned that some developers might use this to the detriment of residents of affordable units. We have transportation deserts in Boston, including District 6, and seniors & residents unable to access public transit must be a consideration as well.</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>Certain sub-neighborhoods in Boston are public transportation deserts. Therefore, I think it is important to ensure each proposed development is done in a way that best meets the shared needs of each community.</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>Boston continues to have a high number of projects requiring variances to move forward, due to outdated zoning codes that have not been updated in decades. Clearly the housing needs of today vary significantly from the needs of 10 or 20 years ago, and our zoning must reflect our changing city.</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>	<p>It is well known that we have great need in Boston for housing, and we must address our high displacement rate as a result of our rising housing costs. The city’s economic growth is dependent on workers of all levels, and we must focus our efforts on providing vouchers to those in greatest need.</p>