

Boston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Please submit completed questionnaires by Saturday, May 4.

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PUBLIC SECTION

The public part of the questionnaire contains a mix of yes/no and open-ended questions. Please keep all answers to open-ended questions to no more than 150 words.

(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?
Family Stabilization through education, housing and transportation policy.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?
I'm a neighborhood activist that has worked on reforming our social and political institutions to make them work for working families. I fought for 10 years to incorporate the LGBTQ community into the St. Patrick's Day Parade, and to get LGBTQ+ history taught in the public school system. Additionally, I worked on issues like access to healthy affordably food access and lowering the bond rate so that small businesses in Boston could contract with the city. I experienced systemic inequities as a kid that grew up in a single parent household since my mom worked as a waitress for \$2.17 an hour. Wage equality and fighting wage theft is important to me.
3. What do you see as the role of the City Council in our strong-mayor system? The city council can shine a light on issues and work to move conversations forward around ballot access and improving our democracy, and should work to provide access to city services to all residents; this includes constituent services. The role of a city councilor should be to work to create consensus on the council with other councilors as well as the mayor to achieve results on behalf of neighborhoods.

(B) The Budget

1. What programs would you focus your budget advocacy on? I have been involved with advocacy at city council hearings to increase the number of school nurses as well as more counseling services for children in the BPS system. I believe we need to increase funding for bicycle safety and look for revenue streams such as assessments on Uber and Lyft ride originations, at least during peak times, to generate revenue after school programs and wrap around services for students.
2. The City Council currently has very little ability to influence the budgeting process. Would you support legislation to enable line-item budgetary changes? Are there other measures you would propose to give the City Council more influence over the budget? I support line item budget changes and withholding my vote on the budget to fund programs important to my constituents.
3. More than \$60 MILLION of the requested Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) contributions have been left unpaid. What would you do to improve Boston's tax base regarding PILOT fees? Non-profits are currently not required to pay property taxes and their participation in PILOT is discretionary and under federal law they cannot be taxed. I support shining a light on these institutions to encourage them to contribute more. I support the creation of a definition for community benefits. Land holdings that are vacant or used for commercial retail and not directly serving the federally exempt purpose should be taxed and that the valuations of these holdings should be reassessed to bring their estimated value in line with current property values.

(C) Education

1. What would be your top three priorities for improving the equity and quality of education in the Boston Public Schools? I support reassessing the weight of progress versus achievement when considering teacher and school performance. MCAS testing is racially biased and exam school procedures are not admitting a class that reflects the city demographics. We must have equity and fairness in access to public education. Additionally, economic justice is a priority since economically disadvantaged schools in Boston need more resources for trauma counseling and support, school nursing and wraparound services for ESL and children with learning disabilities or to support disabled students.
2. BuildBPS could significantly change the footprint and configuration of BPS, and possibly trigger the sale of BPS real estate assets. As a City Councilor, what will you do to make sure this process is transparent and driven by improving school quality and equity as the primary outcome? I would hold hearings on this process and make sure that residents have access to recorded hearings and can access information regarding the city's decision making process as well as encourage community dialogue prior to disposition of city assets.
3. Do you support changes to the current structure of the school committee? If so, what would be your ideal structure? If not, why not? I am open to considering new ideas, but there was a time when it was progressive to have an appointed school committee. An elected school committee will politicize the process more than it is already and we run the risk of polarizing the school committee and top candidates for school superintendent will be discouraged from coming to Boston.
4. What would your priorities be for youth development efforts outside of school time? Students need a safe place to study, whether that be the library or a community center or home with support for learning. I also hear parents that would like to see more opportunities for art, music and sports as well as early learning centers in Boston.

(D) Public Safety

1. Do you support requiring the police department and other city agencies to get City Council approval before acquiring new surveillance technologies? Yes but our hands are tied in some cases by state and federal law. Since the city approves the budget and the contract for the police department, there is some process in place and federal grants for technology are handled and applied for at the city level. This should be part of the ask from the community in the process of any new police commissioner search.

2. Do you support District Attorney Rachael Rollins's do-not-prosecute list and expanded approach to dealing with those low-level offenses? Yes. I impressed upon DA Rollins and other candidates in a public forum to pledge to use the legislative arm of the DA's office to not create more categories of offenders, but to create diversionary programs for low-level offenses and non-violent crimes arising from addiction. Addiction should be treated as a disease and not a crime.
3. Do you support ending information sharing between the Boston Police Department and ICE? What steps would you take to address the comingling of data? During the Deval administration I supported the movement to encourage the state to opt out of the Secured Communities program at the federal level, although Deval opted out, it became a mandatory federal program. During the Menino Administration, I worked with groups including Centro Presente to begin discussions with that administration to opt out of secured communities that the Mayor had already signed on to. The former Mayor pledged, that if as a result of the program resulted in the arrest of non-violent offenders he would opt out of the program. No such cases were found in the two year monitoring study that was conducted. At that time, the President, based on administration official meetings with the Mayor started closing and shelving deportation cases, and as a result millions of deportations were halted. I support opting out to the extent not preempted by federal law. We may want to consider a community dialogue to explore the concerns on all sides.
4. Do you support shuttering the Boston Police gang database, which tracks the associations and activities of thousands of Boston residents, 98 percent of them Black or Brown? I don't support any racial profiling program or any program that disproportionately targets and persecutes Black or Brown. I vehemently reject Trump's characterizations of Mexican and El Salvadoran citizens. No other candidate has worked as closely with youth exposed to or trying to escape gang related initiation rituals, human trafficking or violence.
5. What are your ideas for addressing the opioid crisis, and what would you plan to do to build support for such ideas? Addiction must be treated as a disease and not a crime. I support extended detox treatment and the idea that suboxone is more widely available as a treatment option as well as separating progressing populations from relapsing populations as well as transitional housing and workforce training and development programs and day workers programs to help those in recovery find housing, food and job stability.

(E) Transportation

1. What are your top priorities for advancing efficient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable transportation in the city? It is no secret that Boston faces a broad series of challenges with regards to transportation: a struggling MBTA; rideshare opportunities; bicycle access; pedestrian and overall safety; growing traffic. But Boston is also home to

an incredible professional community of designers, planners, developers and policymakers, with a plethora of talent to create and advance a vision for Boston's transport future. Creative dialogue about transportation options became a tangential benefit of the discussion of Boston hosting the Olympics, and despite the failure of the overall effort, these alternative ideas deserve some level of consideration – such as a gondola from South Boston to South Station, an extension of the Emerald Necklace, or a Boston-Quincy ferry service. We can ensure that all of our neighborhoods have access to safe, active modes of transportation and I will champion increased investments in synthesized network hubs, including subways, walking and biking infrastructure, and gold standard bus rapid transit (e.g. dedicated right of way, busway alignment, off-board fare collection, intersection treatments, and platform-level boarding).

2. Do you support the goal of fare-free public transit? Yes, and if we are able to assess ride originations on the state side and use that revenue to pay of the MBTA debt, we can afford fare free MBTA.
3. Do you support bringing back late-night T service? Yes.
4. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. What steps would you advocate to help Boston to achieve this goal? Please see answer to question 1.

(F) Environment

1. What are your top three priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city? Buildings contribute to over half of greenhouse gas emissions in Boston, and addressing the energy efficiency in development is a significant first step to combatting climate change. Boston's climate resilience is a very real concern and we must take every step possible towards preparation and mitigation. Beyond development, we must also look at transportation efficiencies in Boston, including support for green solutions on carbon neutrality such as expanded EV charging stations, and evaluation of environmental degradation across Boston resulting from the impacts of transportation.
2. Climate change will have a disproportionate impact on communities of color in Boston. What steps would you propose to make sure that equity is prioritized in Boston's climate mitigation and adaptation planning? Those same communities often already are located among environmental hazards like trash incinerators, fuel storage tanks and the toxic remains that come with them. I lived on Allerton Street in the New Market area, so I have experienced the effects of these hazards and environmental justice is one of those issue areas that we must have conversations around racism and classism.
3. Do you support a municipal commitment to power all publicly owned or operated facilities with 100% renewable energy by 2025? Yes, strongly.
4. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Boston? Yes, strongly.
5. Do you support the adoption of a curbside composting pickup program? Yes, strongly.

(G) Housing

1. What are the most important changes you would support to make Boston a place where people can afford to live -- and thrive -- at any stage of their life? I support the formulation of neighborhood based affordability guidelines and reject AMI, and expanding the work of Compass working capital to create access to economic justice and financial empowerment, as well as home ownership and wealth creation opportunities.
2. Do you support the creation of a city-funded housing voucher program to provide rental assistance for homeless families and individuals in Boston in the face of continued funding cuts and long wait lists? We have over 800 vacant units of affordable housing in the city we can do a better job connecting residents to resources. I support a voucher program and the centralization of the application process because too many agencies and participants must be involved to complete a housing voucher and application and placement process right down to the funding of providing furniture. I have worked with homeless populations and the process is too complicated for folks that don't have access to resources and transportation to complete a process within the timeline allowed by a housing voucher approval.
3. Boston's inclusionary development policy (IDP) requires that 13 percent of the units in a building need to be affordable. (a) Do you support increasing this number? If so, to what? (b) Do you support requiring that a majority of new affordable units be built on-site, in order to ensure communities are diverse and integrated? Yes, I support increasing this number. We must be realistic and consider the cost of construction and the level at which investment will be discouraged or financially impossible. With that said, there are ways to increase the IDP if we re-write linkage legislation to subsidize the increase in the IDP percentages to encourage this policy.
4. Would you support the City of Boston building a database that tracks what is being built, where it is being built, and who can afford it in order to ensure that housing policies enacted yield their intended results, and that tracks demographic data on the beneficiaries of housing programs to ensure equity in program design? We have fair housing laws that regulate access to affordable housing programs and ensure equity in access. We have all sorts of measuring devices such as psychological evaluation in the school systems and if we do not de-aggregate these statistics and deliver services locally, spending resources on measuring can result in lack of actual addressing of a problem.
5. By the 1970s, many cities separated the functions of development and planning/zoning into separate offices. Boston remains a notable exception. (a) What concerns do you

have about the current operation of the Boston Planning and Development Agency? (b) Do you support breaking up the BPDA and creating an independent public office of planning? I support a democratic process as well as community involvement in planning and development. Residents are at times overwhelmed by the number of meetings in the planning and development process and I don't support creating barriers to access to this process if it means more meetings. We must consider which populations have access to participating in this process as it stands and economically disadvantaged populations are already challenged by the current process.

(H) Economic Opportunity

1. Boston routinely ranks as one of the most unequal cities in the US. What steps would you propose to reduce our steep income and wealth inequality? We can create economic empowerment by access to financial literacy, access to community capital, more job creating businesses in some communities versus non-profits which pay less and making our public education system work so children have access to more opportunity.
2. Do you support requiring city contractors to give their employees at least two weeks' notice before changing their schedules and to compensate workers for late schedule changes? Yes.
3. The cannabis industry is expected to be a major source of growth in Boston in the coming years. Do you support giving licensing preference to city residents and individuals from communities that have been most impacted by the war on drugs over large companies from outside the city? Yes.
4. According to a November 2018 report, only 0.72% of over 14,000 city contracts were awarded to minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) (approximately \$4.3 million of \$646 million spent). What strategies would you use to hold the city accountable and dramatically increase the city's investment in MBEs? Yes.
5. What steps would you take to support artists and the creative economy as a driver of culture and opportunity in Boston? I support creation of more artist housing and connecting artists to city certification and therefore eligibility for this type of housing. I have highlighted local artists at campaign events connecting residents to artists. Creative industries create jobs and income, contribute to government revenue, encourage tourism and, among other things, promote tolerance and diversity.
6. Boston has 13 designated "opportunity zones," where investors can get significant tax breaks for developing property. What steps would you propose to ensure that such development yields shared prosperity, rather than displacement? I have been a long time advocate as chair of my ward committee for shared prosperity. I believe residents

should have the opportunity to invest collectively in development. We must find a way to create an economy that creates shared prosperity.

(I) Democracy

1. What steps would you take to increase participation in city government, particularly among voices not currently engaged? I speak four languages and language is a barrier to participation on city government.
2. Do you support requiring landlords to provide voter registration forms in the packets provided to new tenants? Yes, but this idea is better targeted to rental agents that often are the first point of contact for new residents and their new homes.
3. Cities across Massachusetts and the US have taken steps to engage new constituencies in municipal elections. (a) Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? (b) Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? Yes. Allowing non-citizens to vote in municipal elections may create confusion and permanent unwaivable bars to naturalization of they mistakenly vote in other elections.
4. Sixteen of the twenty-five largest cities in the United States have term limits for the office of the mayor. Term limits for executive office help deter the over-centralization of power. Would you support changing the city charter to impose term limits for the office in Boston? No. I don't believe in circumventing the will of the voting population. If residents want to change Mayors, then vote her out.
5. Elections are a central component of democratic accountability. Do you support keeping the City Council's current two-year terms instead of shifting to four-year terms? Yes. Four year terms create barriers to access for new candidates.

(J) Additional Comments

I hope we can start a conversation around banning styrofoam products in Boston, figure out a way to eliminate microplastics from our environment and educate residents about the recyclable contamination limit to increase recyclability of products intended for recycling.

