

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?
 - a. Boston is a rapidly developing and changing city. While new innovation has enhanced the skyline, unexpected development has also displaced families and rendered many homeless. Development in itself should not be viewed as a negative force in society, but it is imperative that lawmakers manage it and help mitigate the changes in communities brought as a byproduct. Minimizing displacement and expanding affordable housing are among my top priorities.
 - b. An unfortunate consequence of recent development in Boston is that income inequality has been greatly exacerbated. While Boston is a ripe city for opportunities, the benefits haven't been equally enjoyed by everyone. I'm focussed on strengthening and supporting small businesses and protecting jobs, especially those of our youth and seniors. Better access to quality education and transportation are among the other barriers I'm looking to break down in order to ensure everyone in our community has a fair shot.

- c. Safety is vital to every neighborhood and will always be my top priority as the City Councilor for District 5. Keeping our youth healthy, physically and mentally, is crucial and I will work hard to expand opportunities for our youth. Moreover, we must expand our mental health services, and make sure they're affordable and accessible to everyone. Counteracting gang violence, confronting the opioid epidemic, and promoting gun violence prevention are all lofty challenges to be sure, but I am committed to making the changes necessary to keep not just District 5 but all of Boston safe.
2. What qualifies you to hold this office?
 - a. While working in the Mayor's Office of Fair Housing and Equity, I saw how the lack of accessible housing impacted the lives of many people in the Boston area, including my own. As a single mom, I was forced out of my own home because I could no longer afford rent. We need people in office who don't just understand the issues, but know them first-hand. As the Engagement Specialist, I've worked to develop programs aimed at helping vulnerable populations, especially those with limited English proficiency. I currently serve as the Neighborhood Business Manager for the City of Boston, where I help support small businesses. My professional and personal experience uniquely qualifies me to serve the people of District 5 as an accessible and effective City Councilor.
3. What do you see as the role of the City Council in our strong-mayor system?
 - a. The role of the city council is to provide a direct link between the people of Boston and the city's leadership. It is vital to serve as a link for constituents to get access to resources, services, and city departments. They also should be a check on the mayor's influence, specifically during budgeting. Approving the budget should be done thoughtfully and deliberately, and should always take into consideration the specific needs of constituents.

(B) The Budget

1. What programs would you focus your budget advocacy on?
 - a. I will focus my budget advocacy on programs that support the most vulnerable populations in our community. We need to be investing in our community through supporting small businesses, affordable housing, and public transportation. We need to investing in the next generation by providing quality education to our children and affordable child care services. I also believe that we can invest in our youth providing access to mental health supports to counteract gang violence and the opioid epidemic.
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?

- a. The City Council represents the districts it serves and is held accountable to the community. Because of the role of the City Council it is vital that they have a hand in influencing the budgeting process. I support enacting changes that give the City Council a hand in making sure that their community has the resources that they need.
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?
 - a. We need to be investing in our communities, and we can only do this when we have the resources to do so. Programs like PILOT leave money on the table that we could be investing in our schools, transportation, health services, and more. I support actions to insure that Boston's tax base is robust so that we can continue to support our community.

(C) Education

1. What would be your top three priorities for improving the equity and quality of education in the Boston Public Schools?
 - a. Making high-quality early education universal and affordable is of paramount importance to developing the next generation here in Boston. In addition to ensuring our youth is receiving the best education in school, we need to take steps to expand non-traditional routes, like trade school and 2-year community college. Promoting mental and physical health in schools, and making counseling services and healthy meals available to all students, must also be on our radars as lawmakers.
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?
 - a. BuildBPS is a long overdue initiative to address our decaying public school system. As a direct consequence of our neglect in the past, schools are crumbling despite the tireless efforts of our remarkable teachers and support staff. It's time that we change that and bring real investment into our schools, and I will be pushing for transparency through this process so that we can get this right.
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?
 - a. While it's clear that the current appointed structure of the school committee is working far better than the old elected one, the concerns shared by teachers and parents, and the calls for transparency and engagement, are entirely valid. What

we do know is that this current structure allows for more stability and long-term planning, and it has indeed brought diverse voices to the table. But it is equally important that the most crucial stakeholders in the process, our teachers and parents, are consulted throughout the decision-making process and are able to help shape the decisions ultimately made by the committee.

4. What would your priorities be for youth development efforts outside of school time?
 - a. Communities like District 5 really rely on youth development programs to keep our kids out of harm's way and stimulate their passions. We need to ensure that we have robust after-school programs that focus on involving our youth in the arts, sciences, sports, etc, and giving them mentorship opportunities to learn and grow from peers that were in their shoes not too long ago. Our vast network of college students is a great tool to help facilitate this.

(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?
 - a. I fully support the City Council ensuring the safety and representation of constituents by serving as a check on the police department and other city agencies. Specifically, surveillance technology has a history of disproportionately being used against people of color, and it is vital to ensure that new technology is used for the improvement of our community.
2. Do you support District Attorney Rachael Rollins's do-not-prosecute list and expanded approach to dealing with those low-level offenses?
 - a. I support Rachel Rollins' bold vision for criminal justice reform, and her dedication to ensuring that the justice system is transparent and accountable for all community members. I support her do-not-prosecute list as a progressive means of addressing non-violent crimes that frequently cause the mass incarceration of people of color.
3. Do you support ending information sharing between the Boston Police Department and ICE? What steps would you take to address the commingling of data?
 - a. Our community is safer when everyone can trust the criminal justice system, including our immigrant neighbors. I do not support the sharing of data between Boston Police Department and ICE, as it is not a worthwhile use of our resources and harms the safety of our community. I will work diligently to ensure that ICE access to our police databases is ended.
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?

- a. I do not support actions that unfairly target members of the community, and in turn make everyone less safe. Precautions and insurances should be taken to make sure that the Boston Police is working for all members of the community, and that biases are not codified into policies.
5. What are your ideas for addressing the opioid crisis, and what would you plan to do to build support for such ideas?
- a. The opioid epidemic is a public health crisis that is one of my top priorities. I support increasing funding for on addiction treatment, harm reduction services, and prevention programs, in order to support those who are currently affected by the epidemic. I also support proactive preventative measures such as following data driven prescriber guidelines, providing accessible prescriber education, and public education that both addresses the potential risks and the current public health issues.

(E) Transportation

1. What are your top priorities for advancing efficient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable transportation in the city?
 - a. Creating a safe, connected, and accessible transportation network is vital for Boston residents' personal and economic well being. Public transportation in the city needs to be available and efficient to all residents in the city, to minimize personal vehicles on the roads that contribute to congestion and environmental issues. Actions such as parking management, building an electric vehicle infrastructure, and having a safe bike lane network are some of the first steps I hope to take in ensuring transportation in Boston is sustainable and equitable.
2. Do you support the goal of fare-free public transit?
 - a. Public transportation is essential for our community, and we should be investing in transit, not creating barriers. By investing in our public transportation we reduce traffic, creating economic opportunity, improving air quality, and protecting our planet. I support measures to make our public-transit safe, effective, and accessible for all residents.
3. Do you support bringing back late-night T service?
 - a. Boston functions on a 24/7 basis, and the need for transportation is constant. We need to respond to the economic realities of late night and early morning workers who help keep our city functioning, by providing them the transportation they need. Giving workers an affordable way to get home not only reduces economic disparity, it also guarantees a safe and environmentally sustainable option.

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?
 - a. I believe that we have the power to reduce traffic fatalities, and that for too long we have accepted them as an inevitable product of modern life. The tragic toll of this loss of life is not only personal, it has a deep impact on the community as economic and emergency resources are exerted with every accident. I believe that we need to take proactive steps to eliminate these tragedies. I believe that we should take steps to integrate human failure in our approach to road development. We need a variety of voices at the table when discussing road safety such as local traffic planners and engineers, policymakers, and public health professionals.

(F) Environment

1. What are your top three priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?
 - a. We need to be investing in our future by moving towards 100% renewable energy and reducing our carbon footprint. We need to be diminishing the impact of heat islands in Boston by utilizing technologies such as cool paving, green reflective roofs, and maintaining our city's urban canopy. We also need to be investing in public transportation that reduces emissions, traffic congestion, and the need for personal vehicles.
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?
 - a. We need to be taking every possible step to transition to 100% renewable energy as quickly as possible. With every year, the effects of climate change become more disastrous, especially in communities of color and low income communities. For the health and safety of our future generations and residents, we have to commit to diligently and efficiently reducing the impacts of climate change. Bold policy changes need to be made such as moving away from investing in fossil fuels, especially in our public transportation. By addressing the issue of transportation in a holistic manner that incorporates renewable energy and addresses the accessibility of our public transportation routes, we can ensure that our efforts to combat climate change incorporate the people who are most affected.
3. Do you support a municipal commitment to power all publicly owned or operated facilities with 100% renewable energy by 2025?
 - a. I believe that we should be taking every possible step towards 100% renewable energy. Powering public facilities with 100% renewable energy is a good start in the fight against climate change, and a way to lead by progressive example.
4. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Boston?

- a. Renewable energy is not only a means to reduce our emissions and ensure our planet is safe for generations to come, it is also a competitive economic field. Boston can be at the forefront of this emerging field by investing in renewable energy, instead of creating new fossil fuel infrastructure.
5. Do you support the adoption of a curbside composting pickup program?
 - a. Nearly 100 cities have adopted a form of curbside composting, and it is time that Boston not only keep up with the growing concerns of climate change, but lead the way for effective and innovative solutions to climate change. I believe that curbside composting is one way we can work towards combating climate change.

(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?
 - a. People in Boston deserve safe, accessible, and affordable housing, but recently this is not the reality for the majority of Bostonians. We need to close commercial loopholes in the short term rental market to protect against displacement, public safety issues, and the rising cost of housing. We also need to invest in affordable housing near transit hubs and policies like density bonuses for workforce housing. Minimizing displacement, access to affordable housing, and the impact of development on a neighborhood's development are issues that I am committed to working on and care deeply about.
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?
 - a. Housing is a right, and all people of the community deserve to live in safe housing. I support policies that help our most vulnerable people, such as homeless families and individuals, and I am committed to investing in opportunities for members of the community.
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?
 - a. I support policy that ensures that a majority of housing is affordable so that Boston can continue to be a vibrant and diverse city. Having affordable housing for our residents is one of my top priorities and I support measures that encourage thi goal.

- b. Boston is a great city because of its diverse residents who I hope to fight for in office. In order to make sure Boston continues to be diverse and lively, I support building new affordable housing.
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?
- a. I support data driven solutions, and building databases are one way to ensure that developers and policy makers alike are held accountable for creating affordable housing. We also need to ensure that housing programs are creating equity, not disproportionately impacting one group. Policies should always be created with measures in place to ensure that the intended goals are met, so that we can use an analytical approach to problem solving.
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?
- a. Zoning is vital to multiple aspects of our city: environmental protections, green space, affordable housing, and public transportation. Zoning needs to be incorporated in a well thought out manner that considers the future of our city as well as the current issues facing our residents. This department needs to have the capacity to undertake robust planning and zoning actions without having the added responsibility of development.
 - b. I support ensuring that our zoning is done thoughtfully with the best interests of our residents at the forefront. AN independent public office of planning has the capacity to better serve our residents by making planning decisions that aren't affected by the development agency.

(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?
- a. We need to take steps to ensure that working families have access to well paying jobs and resources that make their work-life balance possible. We also should be paying our workers a living wage, by raising our minimum wage to \$15. We also should invest in our small businesses, as they are the cornerstone of our communities. We should require community input into potential expansion of chain stores. Also, we need to invest in the coming generation with high quality education and training for people at any age.

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?
 - a. Being able to plan for the future is a necessity that affords workers the ability to schedule other vital resources such as child care and appointments. City contractors need to be able to plan for these events by having advanced notice of their schedules. We also need to incentivize employers to post schedules in advance by compensating workers for late schedule changes.
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?
 - a. People of color have historically been targeted and harmed by the marijuana laws within Massachusetts- with legalization comes a chance to undo some of the harm, and provide opportunity for business and growth.
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?
 - a. We need to find data driven solutions to our issues. By creating a comprehensive database of potential MBE city contractors, we could use information to drive our decision making process. We also need to make awarding MBE city contracts a priority, by creating a process that encourages them to be utilized.
5. What steps would you take to support artists and the creative economy as a driver of culture and opportunity in Boston?
 - a. The character of Boston is enriched by our deep cultural and creative roots. We need to invest in programs that support artists, from students in the classroom to full time artists. We need to continue to support art and music in our schools, as too often the first thing to be cut for school funding is these programs. By investing in the next generation of artists and creatives we can ensure that Boston maintains its rich cultural tapestry.
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?
 - a. We need to center the experience of current residents when drafting policy concerning development. We also need to be investing in affordable housing and development that fits the needs of our community members, not the developers.

(I) Democracy

1. What steps would you take to increase participation in city government, particularly among voices not currently engaged?
 - a. My goal with this campaign is to engage with every resident in District 5 and to make sure they feel like they have an advocate in me who will voice their concerns and fight for them. Unfortunately, over many years, people have been left behind by our petty, partisan politics and now feel voiceless and unrepresented. The confusing bureaucracy of government compounds this problem, making it unnecessarily difficult for them to get the help they need. That's why we are so focussed in this campaign on talking to everyone, without preconceived notions about their voting choices. Our campaign will be accessible to everyone, and it's something that we hope to take to the corridors of City Hall should I be elected in November.

2. Do you support requiring landlords to provide voter registration forms in the packets provided to new tenants?
 - a. A healthy democracy demands robust voter participation. It's no secret that we struggle to turn out voters and therefore, it's incumbent on us - governments on every level, but especially local and city government - to step up and find ways to make registering to vote as easy as possible. I was pleased that we became the sixth state to pass an automatic voter registration law last year, which will bring millions of new voters into our democratic process.

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?
 - a. For far too long, we have left behind far too many people out of our politics. Reform is long overdue, and I support sensible ways to include as much of our population as we can. Voting is the most fundamental of rights and we should be making it easier to vote, not harder. Part of that is improving the mechanisms by which we vote, but the other part is including more people.

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?
 - a. Elected officials should work for the people, and when an elected official no longer strives for this goal, they need to be held accountable. Term limits are one way to ensure that mayors don't become complacent in their role, and remember that they are there to fight for the people of the city. I support measures that hold elected officials accountable, and put power in the hands of the people.

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?
 - a. The current two-year term limit for City Council members ensures that our lawmakers are staying closely engaged with their constituents and being responsive to changing concerns. One of the reasons local politics often works for people more than national politics does is because we are held more accountable to our communities. There is no time for complacency and that is ultimately a good thing.

(J) Additional Comments

(Use this space to make any final comments you deem important for progressive voters assessing your candidacy.)