

2021 Boston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

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(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

I will champion on all the issues that matter to the residents of District 4. I will however bring specific attention to issues of police reform and criminal justice reform; economic empowerment, including pushing for the City to do business with minority owned businesses, job training, affordable housing, and guaranteed minimum income. I will also focus youth violence prevention and civic engagement as well and health inequities.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

Boston made me and I love the people of Boston. I've spent most of my adult life serving the people of Boston: Currently I am Executive Director of the Boston Human Rights Commission. Over the last decade I've served our community as a State Representative and as an assistant district attorney. I've also served on the board of Teen Empowerment and volunteered for the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA). More importantly, I am home owner and I have been raising my two beautiful girls in Dorchester with my wife Ashley.

3. What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to see Boston adopt?

Universal Basic Income or a version Minimum Guaranteed Income where residents with the most needs would get a basic minimum income from the government. This would certainly benefit a substantial number of residents in District 4, which also happens to cover one of the highest needs areas of the City of Boston.

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- 4. Which of the following groups have you chosen to reject / would reject campaign contributions from? (For-profit developers, Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers)**

Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists.

(B) Racial Equity & Community Engagement

- 1. Name three accomplishments you've been able to achieve to advance racial justice or equity.**

As a State Rep, all the work I did was with the goal of what I used to call "Economic Social Justice" to advance racial justice, equity, and inclusion. The criminal justice system has been one of the key systems of racial injustice in America as black and brown people are severely over-represented in stops, arrests, prosecutions, and prison sentences. I was one of the leaders pushing for criminal justice and police reform in Massachusetts. Working with colleagues, advocates, and communities across the State. We passed the largest criminal justice reform laws in the history of the State. I specifically sponsored the bill to achieve juvenile justice by raising the age of criminal responsibility from seven to 12 and including 17 year olds in the juvenile system. It also pushed for diversion programs and allowed young people to not only seal but also erase their records. I also led the bill that in the end eliminated at least 10 drug related "mandatory minimums" that disproportionately sent black and brown people to long prison sentences.

I also pushed the Mass Dot and the Baker Administration to begin a rapid transit pilot on the "Fairmount Line" to better serve residents of Hyde Park, Mattapan, and Dorchester who only had access to bus lines.

Finally, I saved bus riders on the MBTA at least 3 million dollars when I pushed against the Baker Administration's plan to increase fares that were disproportionately impacting the community because the highest fare increases were for the bus riders.

- 2. What steps would you take, if elected, to engage all the diverse communities of Boston in policymaking, and what past actions of yours should give voters confidence that you will follow through?**

I have a proven track record of working with diverse communities across Boston to make Boston a more equitable and inclusive city. In the examples above, I worked with faith communities across the state to push for the reforms. I also worked with the

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“fairmount/indigo line coalition” to push for improvements on that line. I also worked with housing advocates to push against housing evictions throughout Boston.

If elected I will continue to have an open door policy to work with and for all people of Boston.

(C) Charter Reform & Balance of Power

1. What do you see as the role of the City Council in our strong-mayor system?

The City Council is the legislative arm of our City government. Its role is to serve as a check and balance on the Mayor. It should work with the Mayor when possible to advance policy, budget priorities, and City services. As the elected official most close to the people, the City Counselor should serve as the voice of the people in City Government.

2. The City Council currently has very little ability to influence the budgeting process. Would you support legislation to enable line-item budgetary changes? YES/ NO

Yes.

3. Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes.

4. Would you support changing the city charter to impose term limits for the office of Mayor in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes.

5. What, if any, other changes to the City Charter would you like to see?

[This question was left blank]

(D) Revenue

1. Do you support the PILOT Action Group's [recommendations](#) for a standing PILOT commission with community representation? YES/ NO

Yes.

- 2. Given state law, Boston is limited in its taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue?**

The City can get more revenue by making a hard push to make sure the institutions are that are exempt from property taxes, such as colleges and universities, and hospitals and other major cultural to pay into the Pilot program and give less "community credits" but instead focusing on cash payments.

(E) Education

- 1. What are your top priorities for reducing persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in the Boston Public Schools?**

Boston Public Schools is critical towards Boston achieving a more equitable and inclusive community. The large majority of the students are brown and black and giving them adequate training and skills for them to leave BPS and be able to get a good paying job is a critical step. I went to Madison Park Tech Voc. High School and later on to Umass Amherst and then Howard Univ. School of Law. I strongly believe in higher education. But that's not the only option. My mothers and best friends growing up are both successful electricians today and they did not attend college. I bought my apple computer and iphone from a friend who attended MP with me who owns an electronic store in the neighborhood. I know body shop owners who went to Madison. Boston is home to the top industries that our students would be trained in. We should give students the option to enter into a path of job training as early as 5th Grade.

- 2. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Do you support a change in BPS governance to allow Boston voters the right to elect school committee members, like every other city in Massachusetts? YES/ NO If so, what would your ideal structure be? If not, why not?**

Yes.

- 4. Do you support removing police from Boston public schools? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 5. Do you support making a permanent change to the admissions process for Boston's exam schools? YES/ NO And if so, what would your proposed alternative system be?**

Yes. I support looking at ways to make the exams schools more equitable and inclusive. The exams school task force over the last year since the Covid-19 pandemic has been

dealing with this exact issue. As the recent study showed, exams are not the only ways to determine the best students to attend these schools. Grades and geographical (zip codes?) areas that are underrepresented in those schools and areas with the poorest residents are also important factors to include going forward.

6. What steps would you take to make universal pre-K a reality in Boston?

Along with pushing the Mayor to keep investing in Pre-K, we need to lift up and support the neighborhood's so-called "home based day care." With the proper financial support and technical assistance, these programs can help the City achieve universal pre-k and close the achievement gap.

(F) Public Safety

1. Do you support requiring the police department and other city agencies to get City Council approval before acquiring new surveillance technologies or military equipment? YES/ NO

Yes.

2. Do you support the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office's do-not-prosecute list and expanded approach to dealing with such low-level offenses? YES/ NO

Yes.

3. Do you support ending information sharing between the Boston Police Department and ICE? YES/ NO

Yes.

4. Do you support closing the loopholes in Boston's Trust Act which allow BPD to inquire about immigration status or pass information along to ICE? YES/ NO

Yes.

5. Do you support shuttering the Boston Police gang database? YES/ NO

Yes.

6. Would you support a hard cap on overtime for individual officers? If so, what percentage of an officer's salary? YES/ NO

Yes.

- 7. What changes to the 2017 Boston Police Patrolman's Association (BPPA) contract would you advocate for in the latest round of contract negotiations?**

[This question was left blank]

- 8. What current functions of the Boston Police Department should be transferred to agencies under civilian control, and what governance would you propose for them?**

Critical changes to the BPPA Contracts need to include terms that give the City the power to enforce the important recommendations the Police Reform Task for of 2020 made. Without those changes, the new Office of Police Accountability & Transparency, along with the Civilian Review Board would have little to no authority in holding the Boston Police Department accountable and transparent.

- 9. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Boston Police Department budget to reinvestment in communities? YES/ NO *If so, how much?***

Yes.

- 10. Which of the following would you support banning the use of by the Boston Police Department? (Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs)**

Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs.

- 11. Do you believe that affiliation or sympathies with white supremacist organizations among officers is a problem with BPD? YES/ NO *If so, what measures would you take as mayor to combat that issue?***

Yes. There is no place in our society and certainly in Boston for any public employee to belong to and or affiliate with the white supremacy organizations. We must push the BPD and the new office of police accountability to have zero tolerance for this sort of behavior.

- 12. Do you support safe consumption sites? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(G) Environment & Transportation

- 1. Do you believe Boston needs to reduce its dependence on cars, and if so, how would you propose to do so?**

We should continue to push for make the MBTA more accessible to people by pushing for free rideship for at least the neighborhoods and residents that need it most. The city can continue to provide incentives for its employees and businesses to encourage

people to take the T to work or even bike to work. In this space, the city must continue to make it safer for people to ride their bikes, by continuing to make bike lanes in the roads. Limiting Parking and fees is also a good way to continue to incentive to people to leave their cars at home.

2. What are your top three policy priorities for making Boston a climate-resilient city, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?

Along with eliminating our Carbon foot print and building on renewable energy, some more direct steps we can take now to make our city a more climate friendly space is to provide more incentives to help homeowners make their homes more efficient and with the newest technology. In District 4 particularly, pushing for standard "green spaces" in the many many lots that are currently empty and will likely be developed in the years to come. Urban or community farming is also another way for a better and cleaner boston and it also helps with solving the food insecurities that exist across boston specially after the Covid-19 Pandemic.

3. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes.

4. Do you support fare-free public transit? What steps would you take to achieve this goal? YES/ NO

Yes.

5. Do you support the adoption of a curbside composting pickup program? YES/ NO

Yes.

(H) Housing

1. How would you expand affordable housing in Boston and ensure development without displacement?

1. Raising the percentages of Inclusionary Development Program (IDP) for what % of units in market rate developments have to be affordable (the developer can also make a per unit payment into an affordable housing fund instead of providing affordable units into their market rate developmental....currently at 13% while Somerville and Cambridge are doing 20% of units.

2. Supporting MA Affordable Housing Alliance's STASH program to enable more African-Americans to be homeowners by double matching what the aspiring homeowners saves for the downpayment.

3. Support legislation for protecting tenants from evictions during COVID

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4. Supporting state legislation of the HERO Coalition to raise the Deeds Excise Tax, that has not been raised in 50 years and give proceeds to affordable housing construction and rent subsidies for low income tenants and for environmental climate change work on building resiliency

2. What opportunities do you see for leveraging city-owned land for expanding affordable housing?

Creating more land trusts and cooperative ownership opportunities;

Push for higher percentage of onsite affordable housing for city owned lots.

3. Do you support a real estate transfer tax for commercial and residential sales, with the revenue going to an affordable housing trust? YES/ NO What exemption threshold, if any, would you advocate for?

Yes.

4. Do you support rent control? YES/ NO If so, how would you structure such a policy? If not, why not?

Yes.

5. Do you support the renewal of Boston's condo conversion law, which affords residents of covered properties a notice period, right of first refusal to purchase their unit, relocation assistance, just cause eviction, and relocation benefits if their unit is converted to a condominium? YES/ NO

Yes.

6. Would you support a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance, enabling tenants to purchase a building if the owner seeks to put it on the market? YES/ NO

Yes.

7. Boston's inclusionary development policy (IDP) requires that 13 percent of the units in a building need to be affordable. Do you support increasing this number? YES/ NO If so, to what? *Please List %*

Yes. 20%.

8. 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/ NO

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Yes.

- 9. Do you support breaking up the BPDA and creating an independent public office of planning? YES/ NO If so, how will you make it happen?**

Yes.

- 10. Do you support increasing the number of units that are ADA compliant in projects that receive City funds? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(I) Economic Opportunity

- 1. What steps would you propose to reduce Boston's income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap?**

This is perhaps one of the most important questions for all of us right now. It's also a complex issue that is rooted in centuries of racism, discrimination, and other road blocks for the advancement of black and brown people in our city and in our country. I promise however to lead this conversation to engage the community, non profit leaders like the Black Economic Council, the academia, and the business community in coming up with solutions to the wealth gap in the City. We must start with creating pathways to homeownership to black and brown people. This is one of the main reasons I have volunteered and continue to support MAHA. Just like redline kept black people from buying homes, we must now continue to come up with pathways into ownership.

There is simply no excuse or good reason for the City of Boston to have spent 2 billions of dollars in 5 years, and very little, not even a percent to go to black business. This must change. This is perhaps the most important thing that I will keep pushing the City to do better and do a lot better.

Unemployment is another space with need to work on. Right now the unemployment rates in the city for black and brown people are 2-3 times as high as white people. We must have specific job training programs that target these "essential employees" that have lost their job during the pandemic. This is a good area to priority the investments from the linkage fund that commercial developers pay into.

Finally, an area in which the City already does a lot of good work currently is in financial literacy. The office of financial empowerment does a pretty good job teaching people about credit, taxes, savings etc. We must continue to make investments in this space, and target the poorest neighborhoods, specially in District 4.

- 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/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Do you support ending subminimum wages for tipped workers in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 4. How would you *enforce* the hiring goals set forth in the Boston Jobs Residency Policy (which requires that least 50 percent of the total work hours in each trade must go to *Boston* residents, at least 25 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to people of color, and at least 10 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to women)?**

The new goals are 51 boston, 40 minorities and 12 women.

We need to push for more accountability and enforcement of the sanctions. T

I believe right now there may be 5 job sites monitors for the whole City. This is not enough monitors to adequately oversee all the construction going on.

We also must push for violators to be severely punished. Finally, it's not uncommon for companies to just accept small fines (\$300/fine per day) instead of complying with the ordinance.

- 5. What targets in city contracting would you commit to for minority-owned businesses as well as Black-owned businesses in particular, and what steps would you take to realize such targets?**

A business disparate study earlier this year indicated that for the past 5 years, the City spent over 2 billion dollars in contracts for constructs, service, and goods and less than 1 percent went to black and brown businesses. Mayor Walsh proposed a new target rate of 25% for contracts to go to women owned businesses and minority owned businesses. The further breakdown is 10% for MBEs and 15% for WBEs. We should target even higher than this, with at least 30-40% being pushed towards mbe and wbe with at least 20% going to mbes. We can achieve this goal by breaking down big contracts, but also putting "race conscious" factors in our decision that will encourage white owned businesses to partner with MBEs. We also need to continue to streamline our business certification and business

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- a. **Will you commit to immediately directing all City departments and quasi-city agencies to unbundle large contracts that are set to become available in 2021 and beyond in order to facilitate this? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- b. **Will you commit to regular reporting to track progress toward and beyond this goal? YES/ NO**

Yes.

6. **The cannabis industry is expected to be a major source of growth in Boston in the coming years. What steps should the City take to make sure that it grows in an equitable way, in which the communities most impacted by the drug war are able to benefit?**

The creation of the Boston Cannabis Board was a critical step to ensure equitable participation of the hardest hit communities in the marijuana industry. Communities in District 4 were some of the hardest hit areas by the war on drug policies for decades. We must ensure that individuals from these communities have proper representation on the Board. We must also continue to push for community involvement and transparency in where the pot shops are and finally push the industry to ensure equitable representation of minorities in all sector and level of the industry.

7. **Would you support the creation of a municipal broadband network? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(J) Democracy

1. **Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

Yes.

2. **Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

Yes.

3. **In 2022, Boston will engage in redistricting on the municipal level. What would an equitable redistricting process look like to you?**

4. **Would you support the redrawing of Boston's wards and precincts ("reprecincting"), which has not happened in more than 100 years -- and which happens decennially in other MA cities and towns? YES/ NO**

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Yes.

(K) Additional Comments

I am an experienced legislator and progressive champion with a proven track record of working with progressive activist and organizations for a better and more equitable and inclusive society! With your support we can make a better Boston for all of us!