

2021 Boston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Domingos DaRosa

Office Sought: City Councilor At Large

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

The top 3 priorities if elected are:

COVID is number one and affects all other issues, however,
Education
Economy
Public Health and Safety

While COVID has exacerbated these areas of concern, these issues have been a concern and priority of mine before the pandemic, as well as several others. Visit our website for more information.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

My qualifications include the following: 23 years of community service as a city employee, 15 years as a union member, 12 years as an SEIU 888 chapter President, 25 years as a youth coach, 23 years as a city employee at BCYF, 6 years as a business owner, graduate of BPS's Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Husband and Father for 17 years, Executive Member of the union board for 3 years, Committee On Political Education (COPA) Board Member for 10 years, Orchard Gardens United Parent Committee member, President, Boston Bengals Pop Warner Football and Cheer Program for 10 years, Co-Founder South End Roxbury Community Partnership, and 29 years as a community activist on various issues. I also filed and initiated legislation on the union's behalf, served as Vice President of the Madison Park Alumni Association, 4

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years on the Cape Verdean Community Task Force, and an active member of the Bobby Mendes Peace Legacy.

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

In cities comparable in size to Boston there are policies that have been adopted that may or may not apply to Boston. While a \$15 minimum wage is still being debated on a federal level and has been adopted and instituted in Seattle, I believe that is one policy that would bode well in Boston considering the wealth gap between Black and White families and cost of housing. In addition, another policy that has been adopted but not fully enforced is the Boston Resident Jobs Policy.

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)

For-profit developers, Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers. My campaign would reject all of the above.

(B) Racial Equity & Community Engagement

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

I negotiated contracts for 1,500 union city employees for fair wages, benefits, better work conditions, and equal opportunities in managerial positions. I also organized the Orchard Gardens Parent Group to bring equity and quality of education and public safety to school grounds in an area ridden with crime and drug paraphernalia. I was a Board Member of the Cape Verdean Community Task Force that developed and instituted violence prevention programs for the Cape Verdean Community. I also co-founded the South End Roxbury Community Partnership advocating for equity and justice regarding the opioid crisis on "Methadone Mile".

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 would ensure that all city residents were made aware of policies and legislation that affected them in addition to holding community listening sessions prior to the city council voting. I will also advocate for translation services in all major languages to ensure language equity at every city council meeting/hearing and encourage all communities to

participate in public testimony. The advocacy stance I took where I organized the community regarding the lack of public safety regarding the opioid crisis on Melnea Cass Blvd and Mass Avenue from the area near Boston Medical Center resulted in needle drop boxes, services for drug users (i.e. food and safe injection sites, medical sites, non-profit distribution of PPE, clothing, etc.) and a more focused effort on providing services by the City of Boston and Governor Baker demonstrated my ability to see a problem, mobilize the community and then affect change on a city and state level.

(C) Charter Reform & Balance of Power

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

The role of the City Council is to serve as a check and balance for all of the neighborhoods of Boston in our strong mayoral system regarding budget, city ordinances and policy.

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?

I would like the zoning laws changed to decentralize recovery services in areas that have been heavily saturated with crime and drugs.

(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?

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I believe each participant in the PILOT program (institutions from the educational, medical, and cultural sectors that own property valued in excess of \$15 million) should pay their full share into our city coffers to help offset the burden placed on Boston taxpayers. PILOT fees should be mandatory and enforceable. I would advocate to stop issuing building permits for new facilities construction, attend each institute board meeting to highlight the importance of paying their full share and penalize any institutions that are lax in payment of PILOT obligations. These institutions should be held accountable to their agreements with the city. According to Fiscal Year 2020 Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) City of Boston website, as of April 9, 2020 only 79 % of the promised PILOT fee obligations were met overall. This same report notes that the same percentage of PILOT fees (79%) was also owed in 2019 while 66% were reportedly owed in 2018. If each institution paid its full obligation of PILOT fees the shortage of funding for public school education, as well as, other city services would be reduced. As an At-Large City Councilor I would file and support legislation to enforce the collection of all PILOT fees, continue to inform the public about which institutions are not fulfilling their obligations and use the public forum to support change.

I would also like to see a tourism tax. States such as Florida (i.e. Disneyland, Universal Studios, etc.) have taxes in tourist areas on meals and hotels based on their state IDs. These taxes would not apply to Mass. state residents but would raise needed funds.

(E) Education

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

I consider several priorities to be at the top of the list for reducing persistent racial and economic gaps in the Boston Public Schools. Eliminating the exam requirement in the exam schools is one of the priorities, as well as, the elimination of the Advanced Work Classes, removing police from all schools, revising curriculums to represent a socially conscious, racially diverse anti-racist pedagogy. Hiring, recruiting and retaining more BIPOC teachers and administrators throughout the District for a start would help. The lack of Black and Brown teachers, lack of student support, need to increase Parent involvement, diversity and need for a culturally competent curriculum (i.e. arts, music, civics, vocational/technical education, multicultural classes, etc) needs to be addressed as well. I will engage parents by empowering them, take their concerns, recommendations and ideas into consideration and act upon them with their support and inclusion in the decision-making process through community listening sessions. I will work with the Boston Public School Department, BTU, colleges and universities to recruit more Black and Brown educators from every avenue and place their applications as an administrative priority in accordance with Judge Garrity's Desegregation mandate regarding African American Teachers employment, recruitment and retention. I will also utilize city agencies, community organizations and private partners to help fund enrichment programs. In addition, I will advocate for the city of Boston enforcement of

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the Boston Residents Jobs Policy in selecting vendors, BPS staff, educators, maintenance workers and other BPS employees.

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. While there is a rising concern regarding the structure of the Boston School Committee (elected, appointed, hybrid) I support an Elected School Committee because as yet there is no successful model of a hybrid school committee in comparably sized school districts in same size municipalities.

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 making a permanent change to the admissions process for Boston's Exam schools and Judge Young's court decision affirms the NAACP and Boston School Department's right to affirm its current admissions process.

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

Universal Pre-K is already a reality in Boston. "Universal Pre-K is funded by \$15 million from the City of Boston and the Mayor's Office. The Boston School Committee approved the UPK Community-Based/Boston Public Schools Connector System in September 2020 after a 2017 pilot." <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/UPK>

(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

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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. An officer should not be able to make more than 25% of their base salary in overtime.

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

I would advocate making wearing body cams mandatory and automatically activated upon engagement. In addition a civilian review board especially concerning hate crimes and police shootings should be mandatory.

- 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?**

I would like to see more civilians perform traffic control and construction duties. In addition school police should be replaced by councilors, mental health professionals and mediation experts who can de-escalate potentially violent school related incidents and mental health or trauma related issues within the school settings and families.

- 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. In 2020, the Boston Police Department had \$72.5 million in overtime. I believe these funds would be better spent in reinvesting in school services, direct services to the community, developing greenspaces, mental health services and resources, family support and jobs.

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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. Pending the outcome of recent allegations that several BPD officers participated in the January 6th insurrection at the White House, the FBI has collected, documented and reported evidence that white supremacist and extremist organizations have been a danger in law enforcement across the country including Boston for years.

In light of cases like George Floyd, Sandra Bland, Breonna Taylor and countless others, immediate disciplinary measures up to and including termination should be taken upon completion of an investigation by an independent community review board, department leadership, the FBI and in some cases the courts. There should be a zero tolerance for racial hatred, bigotry, sexual harassment, unwarranted and unjustified deadly use of firearms, excessive use of force or violence within law enforcement. As an At Large City Councilor I will support state and local government policies, ordinances and initiatives to achieve those goals however I can only advise whoever is mayor and not act in that capacity.

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

No. The data and research does not prove the efficacy or deterring effects of supporting safe consumption sites. The numbers of infectious diseases and crime have also been reportedly on the rise due to the establishment of the “comfort stations” in the Boston medical area.

(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?

Yes, I believe that by utilizing a high speed rail system, increasing bike lanes, upgrading the mass transit system with new vehicles, trains and buses, expanding service hours and routes of all forms of transportation, as well as, the expansion of train routes, Boston residents can reduce its dependence on cars.

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?

As part of my involvement in the ongoing fight for our planet, our only home, I was part of the successful movement to save the trees on Mass Ave and Melnea Cass Blvd. I am

also a member of the Sunflower Project in Roxbury and have been for the last 4 years making young people aware of the importance of renewable energy, the environment and sunflowers beautifying the community. I also excavated, maintained, remodeled and landscaped the lower Roxbury Community Garden which is the last green space in lower Roxbury. While environmental racism is a reality there are initiatives in the City of Boston that involve pursuing inclusive hiring and living wages for resilience projects, prioritizing the use of minority-and-women-owned businesses for resilience projects, (“Mayor Walsh issued a 2016 Executive Order to ensure that minority and women entrepreneurs are afforded fair and equitable opportunities when competing for City contracts”.) and conducted an outreach campaign to facilities that serve vulnerable populations to support preparedness and adaptation. My top 3 priorities include these initiatives in addition to other local, state and federal climate resiliency and equity policies.
<https://www.boston.gov/departments/environment/climate-ready-boston-progress>

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. As an At-Large City Councilor I would support previously submitted legislation by the City Council to provide free public transit funded by federal subsidies and initiatives along with a tourism tax and fees paid by commuters who are non Boston residents until the mass transit system becomes fully self sufficient and energy cost effective and sustainable.

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?

I would advocate and file ordinances that the city uses several methods to expand affordable housing by offering subsidies to homeowners, developers and home buyers and give tax breaks and incentives to build and maintain at least a 60% affordability in the number of units within any housing development or new construction.

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

The under-utilized, vacant land in the city accruing taxes should be sold, or offered to the nearest abutters prior to selling to a developer. Abutting land not able to be acquired by the abutters should be offered to a small business or local developer within Boston.

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CDC's should be consulted about possible collaboration with local neighborhood associations or other Boston residents in order to buy and/or develop these properties. Finally, the city of Boston can partner with businesses, associations, colleges, universities, and the trades to develop pipelines to train and educate more Boston residents in becoming small businesses, developers, and work in the construction trades to expand the workforce. The last option should be properties sold to larger or outside developers in order to slow down gentrification and displacement.

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. I do support the exemption threshold, however, people are still being displaced because affordable still does not address the income and wealth gap between Black and Brown Boston residents. People who were born in Boston can no longer afford to live or raise their families in the city in which they grew up. The exemption threshold I would advocate for is 75-85%. According to the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust Fund Guidelines, "Targeted Affordability: All AHTF units in the project must be affordable to households at or below 110% of Area Median Income." Every year new AMI guidelines are instituted by the federal government, however what the federal government deems affordable is often not reality when it concerns low income Boston residents whose income and housing costs do not reflect the wages or cost of living of the average Black or Brown Bostonian.

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

Yes. The Rent Control Policy should be structured to consider the length of residency, good standing of the tenant, cost of maintenance, property tax, cost of renovation and green innovation or insurance costs. Any increases in rent should be a reasonable and appropriate progressive increase that does not foster the exploitation and unregulated profiteering of the landlord or homeowner over the rights of the tenant or market rate of comparable housing in the surrounding area.

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. While I support the basics of Boston's Condo Conversion law, I believe there needs to be an amendment to this law because the large portion of houses in Boston are 3 families and not 4 families and needs to be expanded to further protect tenants and stem gentrification and exploitation by developers and non-Boston residents.

(<https://www.boston.gov/departments/neighborhood-development/summary-condominium-cooperative-ordinance>)

- 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. I would like to increase the IDP to 15% for 4-50 units, 18% increase for 51-100 units, any development over 150 should increase 25% and continue to increase in 3% increments in a graduated manner determined by the number of units.

- 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**

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. I support an independent public office of planning and would commission various individuals from the construction trades, city planning and development professionals, business owners, local developers, CDC's, Boston Residents and other interested parties to form a non-partisan review board that has the power to review, approve, penalize or stop future developments or construction that does not operate in the interest of the community, its residents or the city of Boston as a whole.

- 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?**

I am a firm believer that this country does not have the political will or social conscience to even tackle slavery nevermind the remedies for the wealth gap which established the

wealth for this country and the impoverishment and oppression of Black Americans. Boston is merely a microcosm and state representation of a national disgrace and need for racial reconciliation and equity in order to truly address Boston's income, wealth inequality and racial wealth gap. House Bill H.R. 40 is attempting to address this wealth gap by establishing a commission to study Reparations for African Americans.

"Why are high- and middle-income white families so much wealthier than Black families with the same incomes? We note a few reasons. White families receive much larger inheritances on average than Black families. Economists Darrick Hamilton and Sandy Darity conclude that inheritances and other intergenerational transfers "account for more of the racial wealth gap than any other demographic and socioeconomic indicators." In addition, the income groups in figure 2 are based on a snapshot of family income, which does not fully capture lifetime income. Black families who make it to the top of the income distribution in a particular year are more likely than white families to drop out of the top in subsequent years, and their respective wealth levels reflect this difference. Likely less important, but still notable, high- and middle-income Black families are more likely than their white counterparts to be called upon to assist family members and neighbors."

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/> (Examining the Black-white wealth gap, Brookings Institute, Kriston McIntosh, Emily Moss, Ryan Nunn, and Jay Shambaugh Thursday, February 27, 2020)

"Texas Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, the lead sponsor of the bill, H.R. 40, has said that bringing it to a vote on the House floor would be "cleansing" for the country, and she challenged Republicans who argued that such a commission was unnecessary. The bill would create a 13-member commission that would study the effects of slavery and racial discrimination, hold hearings and recommend "appropriate remedies" to Congress. That commission would also consider what form a national apology could take for the harm caused by slavery. (House Lawmakers Advance Historic Bill To Form Reparations Commission Updated April 15, 2021 11:43 AM ET Heard on All Things Considered)

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/14/986853285/house-lawmakers-advance-historic-bill-to-form-reparations-commission>

- 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.

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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)?

I would increase the above stated numbers to more accurately reflect what the actual Boston Residents Jobs Policy states which is 51% Bostonians, 40% People of Color, 12% Women. I support increasing the numbers of the Oversight Committee, increase the site visits for compliance and hold city and private developers and construction companies accountable by cancelling or not issuing permits along with issuing fines for violations in increasing amounts for the number of violations committed. In addition an increase in the number of compliance officers would facilitate this process.

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/economic-development/boston-residents-jobs-policy-construction-projects>

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?

In light of the pending lawsuit by BECMA and Amplify Latinx regarding the .04% procurement of federal monies to Black and Brown vendors and companies, drastic measures must be taken to increase the percentages of monies spent and invested in Boston's Black, Brown, Women and minority owned businesses. The Office of Economic Development and Workforce Development must be held accountable to reflect federal and state guidelines regarding contracting and procurement of all federal, state and city funds.

- 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?

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Firstly, I believe anyone who was incarcerated as a result of marijuana/cannabis use or low level drug dealing should be freed. Why should individuals who were disproportionately imprisoned as a result of this country's war on drugs in Black and Brown communities continue to be incarcerated while others become millionaires for the same actions. According to the Boston Globe Spotlight Article (Mass. marijuana industry is mostly corporate and white. Inside one Boston battle to change that , April 12, 2019)" "The Cannabis Control Commission, which sets marijuana policy for the state, is now pondering changes that would give more benefits to disenfranchised groups, including reserving delivery and pot cafe licenses for them. They are also considering changing the application process so the state approves preliminary applications before they are required to win local approval or even offering interest-free loans funded by state marijuana taxes". "Congress is also considering several bills that could allow banks to lend to cannabis operators. "The city's criteria aren't well articulated, but officials say they weigh a number of factors — including community input — when they decide whom to give preliminary approval. The city could also deviate from its past practices and allow more than one applicant to move on to the final stage — the state licensing process" The City should take every step to ensure the licensing, funding, franchising and revenue and taxes of these operations are fair and equitable throughout the process of expansion of these marijuana dispensaries and operations across the state and local municipalities. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/marijuana/2019/04/13/mass-marijuana-industry-most-ly-corporate-and-white-inside-one-boston-battle-change-that/5CWvaqgcRPxzDbRysiHToL/story.html>

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

No.

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

Yes. Because the average 16 and 17 year old if educated in civics and allowed opportunities to engage and be trained in community organizing, community service and civic engagement are mature enough and aware of the issues to make an intelligent decision regarding city government.

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

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“Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 mandates that electoral district lines cannot be drawn in such a manner as to "improperly dilute minorities' voting power." “No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.”

An equitable redistricting process will represent residents in a way that will not use “packing” or “cracking” to dilute or consolidate a minority-majority district towards the end of minimizing the power of a minority-majority district in any way.

https://ballotpedia.org/Redistricting_in_Massachusetts#Issues

- 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**

Yes.

(K) Additional Comments