

2021 Boston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Nick Vance

Office Sought: Boston City Councilor At-Large

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

- 1) Workforce Development (Creating real pipelines for low income communities to good paying jobs through workforce training to direct hires)
- 2) Housing (Working on changing the AMI in the city to better reflect the current needs for affordable housing so people can have a better shot of home ownership)
- 3) BPS (Working on infrastructure and turning our schools into LEAD Certified schools that run green and create safer/ cleaner environments for our students to learn)

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I have worked tirelessly on key issues throughout this city that I love. I have served as Political Action Co-Chair under Michael Curry dealing with key issues like gang violence and BodyCams. I have also served on multiple educational/ youth boards like METCO Inc, Huntington YMCA and currently on the Dorchester YMCA Board. I am also currently a Governor Baker appointee on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee for the Commonwealth. I have worked to get youth off the streets and have a passion for engaging communities and helping find solutions to ongoing problems. I have partnered with age strong and the City of Boston on vaccinations for communities of color and elders and have successfully helped over 4000 people become vaccinated since February.

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

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I have seen other cities tackle the issue around addiction much better than us. We must make sure that we do not lose our humanity and treat people with respect.

Creating a bridge to put people out of sight out of mind is not the answer. We must find ways to help these individuals and find more resources other than just a safe space to do drugs. I am committed to helping find new alternatives that can help combat this issue while finding safe housing for all who need it.

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. I believe #4 to be unfair to say no to. There are good officers on the force and yes major educational programs around community policing need to be addressed, I do not think banning money from individuals who just so happen to be police is a good idea) I will always stand up to police brutality especially as a man of color but inclusion not exile is the best strategy to find ways for better policing.

(B) Racial Equity & Community Engagement

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

Created access to elders of color to the COVID-19 vaccine.

Created pipeline programs for communities of color for \$19/hr + jobs while at Encore Boston Harbor.

Created ways for youth to get off the streets and so NO to gangs while working for the Boys and Girls clubs.

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 am a strong believer in being a good listener and making sure to go and speak to communities and get a better understanding not only of their current situation but the past that has led to the issues they see. I plan to lead by listening and internalizing the people's needs, not what I believe the agenda should be. I am a believer that we must do better at hearing people's concerns and putting action plans behind them.

(C) Charter Reform & Balance of Power

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

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We first must be truthful about the fact that we do live in a strong mayor system. Many people continue to run for City Council and say that they will change everything when in reality you must first build consensus around a topic and show the council and the mayor why it is the right thing to do! I plan to be a megaphone on key issues and help have the mayor see why I am proposing the solutions that I bring up.

- 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. I support any proposal that offers more availability of affordable housing and an equal playing field for home ownership and lower taxes.

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

I believe as a city we are just scratching the surface of our tourism and I believe we can do more about hyping up the history and the legacy of Boston. This could bring in great revenue for the City and to already hurt small businesses and restaurants after this pandemic ends.

(E) Education

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

Step 1: hire more teachers of color that actual look like the students they are serving.
Step 2: Ensure the schools having adequate facilities that make it a safer and more inviting place to be. Also, create partnerships with our higher ed institutions to do more tutoring and engagement with our schools. We cannot call ourselves the educational seat of the country but then allow our schools to fail. We must ensure college campuses give back to our communities by helping our students as mentors and offer more scholarships so our young people can afford to attend school.

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. After studying this issue thoroughly. I would advocate for a fully elected school committee that best represents the will of the people in Boston.

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

Yes. I do support moving police out of schools but we need to fund new positions where we can have people who can help mediate issues when they arise and can be quality jobs filled by competent community members who can help ensure a safe space to learn.

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?

No. I believe our focus should be making BPS schools world class and ensuring no matter what type of school you go to that you are receiving a top notch education.

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

I think the first step is ensuring our schools are on stable ground first. Then we can use the universal pre-k initiative as a way to hire more teachers of color who are desperately trying to work for BPS but due to hiring concerns have been forced to work at private schools for a fraction of the wage they deserve. My mother used to be in charge of diversity recruitment and we have to continue that work and create more incentives for new teachers like accelerated accreditation/ masters programs.

(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**

No.

- 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**

No.

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

Yes. I believe this is a topic that requires more data but I believe that there have been many outrages issues due to not having a cap. However, I do want to be mindful of honest police officers who do deserve compensation for the overtime work they do.

- 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 like to lead with honesty. The first thing I would change is make their leadership more diverse. I do not see enough women or people of color controlling their advocacy group. We need to be intentional about pushing groups to look more like the people they are supposed to serve.

- 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 believe this question is a slippery slope. I believe that the Boston Police Department is fine as it sits but needs real reform and accountability. When we discuss turning parts of

the police to civilian control we need to be more specific in these kinds of questions so they do not come across loaded. I am in favor of reform and pushing for more access to data that the police use but I do not want to answer this form of a question without specific areas.

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. I believe this number could vary but we first should be strategic and know how much we need to fund the programs we want to see in our community, we also need to ensure we know whatever money we remove does not directly impact the day to day service the officers we trust provide.

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)

. We have seen too often that police are overrun while trying to keep people safe. I am actually for more oversight on the use of these tactics and it must be for extreme cases only.

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. I believe this is actually a small faction within the police force and I believe if there are findings of any police engaging in these organizations that they should be released from service immediately.

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

No.

(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?

I believe that cars would be used less if we work to make mass transit more reliable and safer for all passengers. Our infrastructure for our trains and buses is appalling and during winter seasons commuter rails and trains become very unreliable to help ensure people get to work on time. I also think the bike lanes are going to cause major congestion issues for commutes for buses and for cars once people start getting back to work. The data does not support a high level of bike riders especially in communities like Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan.

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?

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I believe we need to redo a lot of our infrastructure which will lead to more construction jobs that we can push for more hires from communities of color and women. I believe we should switch to solar and green energy solutions to run our HVAC systems and exhaust. We also should do new surveys on our shore lines and ensure we are keeping our ocean clean and we track beach erosion.

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

No.

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

No. But we must find new ways to make buses and trains more affordable for low income riders who rely on this form of transit.

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?

We need to not wait until the 2030 project and we need to first make the AMI match the cost of living for Boston residents and use the funds that have been created due to linkage to actual go to real housing that is all affordable units that are just as nice as the luxury housing being built around the city.

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

We need to use this land for the actual building of affordable units and stop letting it sit dormant. We have a real housing problem in this city and if we dont do something soon we will lose Millenials to surrounding towns due to lack of access. We need to make sure we do what is possible, immediately to keep Boston as an inclusive city.

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?

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Yes. We need to make sure that it is equitable with the community but make sure that landlords cant exploit residents by creating unreasonable rates.

- 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 %***

No.

- 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?**

No.

- 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 goes back to my pipeline idea so people in low income communities have direct access to job training that are linked to actual high paying liveable wages.

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)?

We must actually partner with these agencies and make sure they lead the training so that the women and people of color have the direct skills they are looking for. Also, I did this work when working for Encore. We must push to have new people applying to the programs and making sure hiring managers follow these policies. We must also stay proactive with this enforcement and not reactive.

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?

I would ensure we make sure there are contracts made specifically for communities of color and made sure we offer training to help people understand the contract process who want to open business but also ensure pathways for people to be able to get new contracts when they are already in business.

- 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

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equitable way, in which the communities most impacted by the drug war are able to benefit?

We need to ensure that there can be access for people of color to be able to get licenses and open cannabis shops.

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. If they have legal status they should be allowed to vote because they are paying taxes.

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

No.

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

Making sure this doesn't become a way to reconstitute redlining and having communities of color and then have non communities of color be separate districts.

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

No.

(K) Additional Comments

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