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General Questions

Q1. Every candidate is talking about the housing affordability crisis. Housing costs are increasing for everyone, but renters in particular are bearing the brunt of this crisis, with many frequently spending 30, 40, and even 50% of their income on rent. What is your plan to bring down rent prices for both subsidized and market rate housing?

Answer:

The Broker' fee is gone - Yea! Allow multiple years on a lease. Rent stabilization - no more that 5% annually. Enforce the short term rental ordinance (some developers are still doing short term rentals) We have two rental markets - high end luxury housing and middle and low income housing. Build workforce housing on city owned land.

Q2. A 2023 report commissioned by the Boston Planning Department found that the Boston Zoning Code is “bloated, outdated, inconsistent, and inequitable.” At over 4,000 pages, it is layered with districts, sub-districts, and other confusing variations that make most new development, from the smallest additions to large multi-family projects, more expensive and time-consuming than they need to be. What efforts do you support to simplify the zoning code and create consistent standards across the City?

Answer:

Much of our older housing stock was out of compliance with zoning code from the beginning which meant any additions etc required approval for variances. This clogs up the system and it takes years to get approval for a new porch or dormer.



Q3. What specific housing policy initiatives will you prioritize as an elected official?

Answer:

AFFH to ensure that protected classes such as families have access to housing that is affordable and family friendly. We are looking at single stair design and will hold a hearing on this in near future. As we take older school buildings off line they should be repurposed as work force housing. Put pressure on Universities to house more students on campus.

Current City Policy

Q4. Since the Squares and Streets initiative was launched in Q3 of 2023, one new district has been approved in Roslindale Square. What does it do well and how should it be improved? Which neighborhoods should be after Roslindale and why?

Answer:

Roslindale Sq seems to be doing a good job retaining its small “mom and pop” businesses. One of my big concerns re Squares and Street is displacement of residents who have had affordable housing but also the displacement of small businesses and non-profit organizations that have had affordable rent. Will they have the right of return at a rent they can afford? Where do they do business in the interim while the building is being redeveloped?

Q5. Boston’s new Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), which went into effect in October 2024, raised the affordability requirements for new residential buildings requiring zoning relief and changed the structures of the cashout and off-site options. What do you think the impact of the new IDP policy has been?

Answer:

I stand by the decision to raise the affordability requirements for new buildings- but it is a very tough time to build - tariffs , increased interest rates and economic uncertainty make financing difficult. Federal government subsidies are equally unpredictable. If nothing is being built it doesn’t matter what the IDP % is. The Accelerator fund is a way to jump start some construction.



Q6. This past December, the Boston City Council hosted members of the Austin City Council for a two-day visit, during which the Austin City Councilors presented recent zoning changes they enacted that resulted in increased housing production and lowered rents. Austin has made national headlines as one of the few cities in the US to see rents decrease over the past year. After a building boom resulting from these reforms, rents fell by more than 20% year over year from August 2023 to August 2024. Do you support Austin-style zoning reforms as a strategy for bringing down home prices?

Answer:

Austin does not have an inclusionary policy they drive down prices by increasing supply. In Boston we are constrained by the availability of land for development. The way to address that is to add density and build up. Austin has a very rapid review process that results in decreased costs. It remains to be seen if housing prices in Austin will remain low over time as demand increases. In Boston we see certainly have opportunities for more transit oriented development in neighborhoods that have a preponderance of one and two family homes.

AHMA's Vision for Boston

Q7. The Affordable Homes Act signed by Governor Healey last summer legalized Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) everywhere in the state except Boston. ADUs have frequently been cited as a “win/win/win” way to create much needed new homes, while providing rental income and/or multigenerational housing opportunities for homeowners. Do you support or oppose legalizing ADUs by right citywide? If so, what should the timeline be for implementation?

Answer:

Yes.



Q8. There is a large body of research showing that parking minimums add significantly to the cost of development, which leads to higher rents and home prices. In 2021, the City eliminated parking mandates for affordable housing citing the cost of such requirements and because it gave the homebuilder the ability to provide parking that matches the needs of the residents, rather than an outdated and arbitrary city formula. Do you support or oppose expanding the elimination of costly parking mandates to all new residential development?

Answer:

I support the elimination of parking minimums for new residential development. But we also need to ensure that the need for cars is reduced by planning neighborhoods in which amenities and services are readily available close by.

Q.9 The City of Boston's population has been growing steadily for the past three decades. As this trend continues, we will need to build a lot more homes to ensure that current and future residents can afford to live here. To that end, do you support or oppose allowing residential construction up to 6 stories by-right citywide?

Answer:

Yes- but housing needs to be planned and designed for a diverse population- Elders, families, inter generational families. People with disabilities. Neighborhoods need to be walkable and have local amenities and good public transportation. We don't do a good job thinking holistically about what is needed to build a sustainable, equitable and resilient community. Developers have dictated how neighborhoods are developed and often civic spaces and other amenities are and after thought.



Q10. A recent study from Boston Indicators and Transit Matters found that Boston does not build enough housing around public transportation to support a high-functioning system. Given the reliance of Boston residents on public transportation, do you support or oppose permitting residential construction up to 12 stories by right citywide within 1/2 rapid transit, commuter rail, and bus stations?

Answer:

Not necessarily- as I mentioned above we need to design and build more than just housing- we need amenities to support more density - civic spaces, grocery stores, health centers, child care , schools , parks and green space arts and cultural spaces...

