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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:

Housing is a human right, and the City Council must take bold action to keep families in their homes. I support restoring Boston's authority to enact rent stabilization, expanding the right-to-counsel for tenants, and requiring truly affordable units in all new developments. We should use public land for 100% affordable housing, invest in community land trusts to preserve existing units, and give tax incentives to landlords who keep rents below market. By partnering with state leaders, tenant unions, and housing advocates, we can protect our neighborhoods from displacement and make Boston a city where working families can afford to stay and thrive.

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 A 2023 report commissioned by the Boston Planning Department found that the Boston Zoning Code is “bloated, outdated, inconsistent, and inequitable.”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:

Boston's zoning code is long overdue for a full rewrite. At over 4,000 pages, it's confusing, inequitable, and drives up the cost and timeline for building the housing and community spaces we need. I support a comprehensive overhaul that creates clear, consistent, and equitable standards citywide—removing unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles while ensuring strong community input. Simplifying the code will make it easier to create affordable housing, invest in our neighborhoods, and ensure development benefits all residents, not just a select few.



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

Answer:

I've dedicated my life to fighting for fair and affordable housing—spending three decades at HUD working to expose discrimination, protect tenants, and expand access to safe, affordable homes. On the City Council, I'll prioritize policies that put that experience to work: restoring Boston's authority for rent stabilization, expanding the right-to-counsel for tenants, using public land for 100% affordable housing, and supporting community land trusts to keep homes permanently affordable. I'll also push for zoning reforms that speed up affordable housing production and ensure those homes are truly within reach for working families. For me, this isn't just policy—it's a lifelong mission to make sure every Boston resident has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Current City Policy

Q4. Since the Squares andStreets 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:

The Squares and Streets initiative is a good step toward creating walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with more housing near transit. Roslindale Square shows how this can strengthen local business districts, increase housing options, and cut down on car dependence. But we need to ensure these rezonings include strong affordability requirements, protect existing residents from displacement, and preserve neighborhood character. After Roslindale, we should focus on areas like Nubian Square, Mattapan Square, and Fields Corner—places with strong community identities, transit access, and urgent housing needs—while centering resident voices in every step of the process.



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:

Boston's updated Inclusionary Development Policy is a positive step—raising affordability requirements means more homes within reach for working families. The changes to cashout and off-site options should keep more affordable units in the neighborhoods where they're built, strengthening community stability. That said, we must monitor the policy's impact closely to ensure developers are meeting their commitments, that affordability matches the incomes of local residents, and that the policy doesn't unintentionally slow housing production. Strong enforcement and community oversight will be key to making the IDP deliver on its promise.

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's experience shows that bold zoning reforms—like reducing parking mandates, offering height bonuses for affordable units, streamlining reviews, and focusing on transit-oriented development—can boost housing supply and bring rents down. I support exploring similar strategies in Boston, but with a commitment to deep affordability, strong tenant protections, and community input to prevent displacement. If done right, we can increase housing production, lower costs, and ensure that growth benefits the people who live here now.



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:

I strongly support legalizing ADUs by right citywide. They're a smart, flexible way to create more housing, support multigenerational living, and give homeowners additional income—without drastically changing neighborhood character. Boston shouldn't be left behind while the rest of the state moves forward. We should implement legalization within the next year, paired with clear design standards, affordability incentives, and safeguards to prevent speculative misuse. Done right, ADUs can be a win for homeowners, renters, and our city's housing supply.

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 expanding the elimination of parking minimums to all new residential development. Mandatory parking drives up construction costs, which in turn raises rents and home prices. Developers should have the flexibility to provide parking based on actual resident needs, not outdated formulas—especially in neighborhoods with strong transit access. Removing these mandates citywide will lower housing costs, support sustainable transportation, and free up more space for homes instead of car storage.



Q9. 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:

I support a Boston version of this reform: allow 4–6 stories by-right on transit corridors and main streets across all neighborhoods, with clear design standards, strong inclusionary affordability, and anti-displacement safeguards. Predictable, by-right rules cut delays and costs, help end exclusionary zoning, and create more homes at lower prices. This shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all blanket—use height transitions and step-backs on side streets and respect historic areas—while pairing reforms with right-to-counsel, anti-eviction protections, funds for community land trusts to acquire buildings, and investments in transit, trees, and infrastructure. The goal is simple: more homes where they make sense, at prices families in District 7 can actually afford—without pushing out the neighbors who are here now.

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:

I support allowing taller, denser housing—up to 12 stories—by right near transit, as long as it comes with strong affordability requirements, tenant protections, and meaningful community engagement. Building more homes near public transportation reduces reliance on cars, supports a stronger transit system, and helps lower housing costs by increasing supply where demand is highest. We can grow sustainably while ensuring that long-time residents benefit from, and aren't displaced by, this kind of development.

