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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:

Boston is at a breaking point when it comes to housing affordability, and renters — especially low-income residents and communities of color—are being hit hardest. The Council can take bold action by streamlining permitting to enable more housing citywide, rewriting our outdated zoning code to allow more multi-family housing in every neighborhood, and expanding city investments in deeply affordable, income-restricted housing. But bringing rents down also means stabilizing those already here. I support right to counsel, just cause eviction protections, rent stabilization, and expanding tools like the Acquisition Opportunity Program and the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act to preserve affordability and give residents a real chance to stay. We need to build more, but we also need to keep people in their homes and shift who holds power in our housing system.



Q.2 A 2023 report commissioned by the Boston Planning Department found that the Boston Zoning Code is “bloated, outdated, inconsistent, and inequitable.”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:

I support a full, equity-focused rewrite of Boston’s zoning code. Right now, our code reinforces segregation, delays housing production, and leaves decisions vulnerable to backroom deals and endless approval processes that often favor those with the most time and resources. I will advocate for a modern, form-based code that makes it easier to build by right, especially in high-opportunity and transit-connected areas. We need consistent rules citywide, more pathways for missing middle housing, and planning processes that center historically excluded voices. A streamlined code can help us build more fairly and more affordably.

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

Answer:

Boston needs a housing strategy that meets the scale of the crisis and centers the people most impacted. As a City Councilor, I will prioritize zoning reform and permitting streamlining to accelerate housing production, especially near transit and in neighborhoods that have historically excluded multifamily development. I support legalizing ADUs by right citywide and expanding access to pre-approved designs and financing so that working families—not just wealthy homeowners—can benefit. I also support exploring other innovative housing and zoning solutions, including eliminating parking minimums that drive up costs and implementing a local transfer fee to fund affordable housing. But production alone won’t solve this crisis. I’ll work to scale up the Acquisition Opportunity Program and pass a strong Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), giving residents and nonprofits a real chance to buy and preserve housing before it’s lost to speculation. I’ll also fight for deeper investment in homes affordable to households at 0–30% AMI, and support community land trusts and social housing models that shift control to the people. I support rent stabilization as part of a broader effort to stop treating housing like a commodity and start treating it like a human right. Addressing this crisis requires us both to produce more housing and ensure the people most at risk have more power to shape what gets built, where, and for whom.



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 Square shows that it's possible to re-imagine neighborhood zoning in a way that encourages mixed-use development and greater walkability. It's a good first step, but the scale is still too modest—and the timeline too slow—for the moment we're in. We need to allow more height, deeper affordability, and faster implementation. The next Squares and Streets districts should include Nubian Square, Fields Corner, Mattapan Square, and The South End —areas with high transit access and unmet housing needs. These plans should be community-driven, but not community-delayed. Equity and urgency must move together.

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:

The new IDP rules reflect an important shift toward requiring more of the market to serve the public good. Lowering the unit threshold to 7 and raising the affordability requirement to 20% are positive steps. But we need strong enforcement, transparency around feasibility waivers, and vigilance around how off-site and cash-out options are used. I also think we should look at expanding IDP beyond zoning relief projects and consider stronger affordability tiers for high-cost areas. The policy is only as strong as its implementation, and we have to stay focused on outcomes, not just numbers.



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:

Yes, I support Austin-style zoning reforms and believe Boston must move boldly and systematically to unlock more housing. Eliminating parking mandates, allowing height bonuses for affordability, and streamlining the permitting process are all strategies I would champion. But we also need to go a step further by making sure affordability is deep and permanent, not just marginal. I believe we can take the best of what Austin has done and tailor it to a Boston context that includes racial justice, tenant protections, and long-term affordability as core principles.

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 across all of Boston. ADUs are a practical, low-impact way to create new homes, support multi-generational living, and help homeowners, especially seniors and families, stay rooted in their communities. While the state's zoning reform law excluded Boston due to existing home rule structures, we should move quickly to align with the 350+ other municipalities that have embraced this tool. I would support enabling legislation within the first six months of the next Council term, paired with pre-approved design templates, streamlined permitting, and financial assistance to ensure ADUs are accessible to low- and moderate-income homeowners, not just those with capital.



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 mandates to all residential development. We shouldn't be forcing builders to create costly, unnecessary parking, especially near transit, when those dollars could be used to create more homes or reduce rent. Let's trust developers and communities to decide what level of parking makes sense, and, instead, use policy to promote walkable, sustainable neighborhoods, not outdated formulas. Removing these mandates is good for housing, good for affordability, and good for the climate.

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 allowing residential construction up to 6 stories by right citywide. The current system – where you can build a three-decker in one neighborhood but need a variance for anything over two units in another – reproduces exclusion and drives up costs. Cambridge made the right call, and Boston should follow. This doesn't mean anything goes; it means creating clear, predictable rules that allow more neighbors to say yes to more neighbors. I'd pair this policy with affordability requirements, anti-displacement measures, and a strong equity lens to make sure we're growing inclusively.



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:

Yes, I support allowing up to 12 stories by right near high-frequency transit with the right affordability and community-oriented guardrails in place. This policy would significantly improve our ability to meet our housing and climate goals. We have entire neighborhoods with train stations or major bus routes where you can't build more than a two-family house without jumping through endless hoops. That's not sustainable. We need to legalize more housing near the infrastructure we've already built. Transit-oriented zoning and development, paired with affordability incentives and community benefits, can ensure our growth reflects the needs of surrounding residents. Bottom line: if we want a functioning transit system, we have to build near it.

