



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Andrew Fitch

Office Sought: North Adams City Council

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

Responsible Growth

I believe North Adams deserves housing options for everyone - families, young professionals, seniors, and newcomers - at every price point. My vision is to help create a city where everyone can find a safe, welcoming place to call home.

Community Engagement

A thriving North Adams is built on active participation. I am committed to empowering residents to get involved, fill open seats on city boards and commissions, and support local groups that make a difference.

Resilient Vibrancy

North Adams is already a vibrant city, but true vibrancy must be sustainable, efficient, and inclusive, especially in challenging times. With state and federal funding cuts impacting our schools, services, and infrastructure, North Adams must act boldly to protect what matters. By investing in our downtown, supporting local businesses, and encouraging community celebration opportunities, I will help create lasting energy that benefits everyone and builds a city that thrives, no matter the challenge.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I am deeply passionate about North Adams and the Northern Berkshires. I want to use my second term on the North Adams City Council to continue to make a positive impact by developing responsible and inclusive policies, bringing people together, and helping to build a vibrant city. Born and raised in Massachusetts, I studied International Relations, Business, and Political Science in Virginia, Europe, and Asia throughout my undergraduate and graduate degrees. My career has varied from directing an acting school to managing local and national marketing partnerships to producing inclusion programs at major Tech companies and nonprofits to starting my own business in North Adams. This diverse career has taken me across industries and the world, with the common thread being a focus on community development and advocacy.

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

I would like to complement the Community Preservation Act. About 57% of mass communities have adopted and passed this Act, representing about 70% of the total population. This would help provide North Adams with increased funding for the preservation and creation of open public land, historical sites, affordable housing and outdoor recreation.

(B) Open-Ended Policy Questions

1. Given state law, municipalities in Massachusetts are limited in their taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue to support essential city services?

I will strengthen partnerships with MASS MoCA, Clark Art Institute, Natural Bridge State Park, and other regional attractions to boost tourism and economic activity. The efficient use of resources is equally as important as I will encourage shared services and resource pooling with neighboring communities to maximize impact and reduce costs.

I will continue investing in downtown revitalization, beautification, and cultural events that unite people and support local businesses.

I will seek new grants, public-private partnerships, and regional collaborations

to fill funding gaps. I will explore responsible economic development and innovative funding models.

2. What are your top priorities for ensuring that all students in your city can receive a high-quality public education?

My first priority is advocating for better pay for our educators. The more we can take care of our existing educators and recruit high-quality educators, the better the result for our student populations, of all ages.

Last year, I was a key advocate for the building of a new elementary school in NA. To build the school, the city implemented a debt exclusion, which required public advocacy and a public referendum. Although this project has been approved, there are several other phases for the development of this project, and I will champion each and every one along the way.

3. What can your city do to help protect immigrant communities under attack from ICE and ensure genuine community safety?

Three other city councilors and I implemented sanctuary city status for trans and nonbinary people early this year. Whereas this status does not specifically protect immigrants, it sets the tone and culture for the protection of marginalized peoples within the city.

Communicate and collaborate with local human support programs and organizations that aid in providing services and resources for immigrant communities.

Communicate with local law enforcement agencies to ensure their policies are as inclusive and supportive as possible, as well as provide.

4. What are your top three policy priorities for making your city climate-resilient, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?

I have started the conversation about forming a sustainability commission and/or working group in our city. In doing so, I have met with city council community development committee, which I chair, as well as our city administration's head of community development, to brainstorm this topic.

I am working to create a sustainability archive where metrics can be reported,

stored, and studied. In a follow-up council meeting, I achieved a unanimous vote to request a presentation about the sustainable status of our city for early 2026.

Require equitable climate resiliency plans for all major infrastructure projects. Our city's largest project will be flood chute repair and reconstruction. Because our flood shoots run through several distressed communities within city limits, sustainability must be a top priority.

Advocate for preservation, conservation, and restoration of our Natural Bridge State Park, Heritage State Park. Both of these parks have slipped into neglect and require council advocacy to help our state with their prioritization.

5. What steps would you take to reduce dependence on cars and better facilitate the ability of city residents to safely get around by walking, biking, or public transit?

Advocate for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Restoration Project, which would reconnect North Adams to Boston by Passenger Rail for the first time since 1958. Not only would this project reduce reliance on auto transportation, but it would also provide an economic boom for the region, increasing opportunities for all residents.

Advocate for the North Adams Adventure Trail, which would connect bike and walking paths from neighboring Williamstown into North Adams, Adams, Cheshire, and Lanesborough, ending in Pittsfield. This will better connect the region and allow for realistic bicycle infrastructure for students and the workforce to commute.

Collaborating with the state and Berkshire Regional Transit Authority to keep their rates free or low-cost for as long as possible. And to better connect their transportation routes with the Na Adventure Trail and northern tier passenger rail projects to better serve the community.

Advocate to continue the use of community development block grant funds for sidewalk maintenance and upkeep in order to maximize safe walking /commuting capabilities and connections to public transportation.

6. What policies will you advocate for to ensure that your city can be a place that is affordable for residents to live at any stage of life?

I believe North Adams deserves housing options for everyone - families, young professionals, seniors, and newcomers - at every price point. My vision is to help create a city where everyone can find a safe, welcoming place to call home.

I have worked to launch a dedicated housing trust to provide financial support for the creation and preservation of homes for all resident income levels. I want to fund this trust with fees and taxes we collect from short-term rentals as well as other funding streams, so that tourism growth directly benefits local residents. This trust has passed its initial vote and was passed to a second reading, which requires another vote that will occur on Tuesday, 14th October.

I will encourage new construction and the rehabilitation of vacant and underutilized buildings to create a mix of homes - affordable, workforce, and market-rate.

I will advocate for zoning and tax reforms that make it easier to build and maintain quality housing, while supporting homeowners and responsible landlords.

7. [If relevant] How would you assess your city's MBTA Communities Act rezoning efforts so far?

This is not relevant to North Adams at this time.

8. What strategies would you employ to resist federal overreach from the Trump Administration while protecting critical services and funding for residents?

Strengthening collaborations and partnerships within our community, between surrounding communities, the Commonwealth as a whole, and our federal delegation. This will enable us to identify areas of need, discover avenues of resource sharing and work with the state to provide equity and inclusion for all our residents.

9. How would you model transparency and accountability if elected?

I will continue to deliver and request presentations on matters of public interest regularly.

I would utilize my community development meetings, which I chair, to bring attention to important infrastructure and development projects affecting our

community. I will continue to allot adequate amounts of time for the public to comment and contribute to our discussions

I will continue to host several constituent conversations each week, providing accessibility to residents to share their concerns and opinions in the hope of brainstorming community solutions to various issues.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES**
2. Do you support the creation of an unarmed, community-based emergency response program, separate from the Police Department, to respond to mental and behavioral health crises? **YES**
3. If your community has not already, do you support adopting the new specialized stretch code, which would require new construction and major renovations to be built to a very high-efficiency standard with all-electric (as opposed to fossil fuel) heating and cooling systems? **YES**
4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES**
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES**
6. Would you support a home rule petition to establish a small transfer fee on high-end real estate transactions to create dedicated funding for affordable housing production and preservation? **YES**
7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **NO**
8. According to the American Library Association, in 2022 there were at least 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA schools, disproportionately books that speak to the experiences of LGBTQ students and students of color. Would you oppose such book-banning efforts if they occurred in your city? **YES**

(D) Additional Comments

(Use this space to make any final comments you deem important for progressive voters assessing your candidacy.)

Through my first term as a city councilor, I have participated in and fought for most of the aforementioned initiatives and advocacy platforms. As the most progressive serving councilor, I would love to continue my work encouraging and proposing progressive policies, culture and candidates for the future.