



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Brandon Ward

Office Sought: Framingham City Council, District 2

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

- a. Supporting our public schools and ensuring a continued emphasis on equity, inclusivity, and belonging for all students.
- b. Making Framingham more affordable for young families, new residents, and seniors hoping to age in place. This includes investing in affordable housing infrastructure, such as the establishment of an affordable housing trust.
- c. Investing in quality of life improvements, such as parks, bike paths, and trails. Adding amenities to the Cochituate Rail Trail, finishing the rebuild the Carol Getchell Nature Trail, and advocating for recreational upgrades to Winch Park, Danforth Park, and Reardon Park. Making McGrath Square and central Saxonville more pedestrian and bike friendly. Fixing the Danforth Street intersection, increasing public parking options, and ensuring safe crosswalks.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

- a. My past municipal and volunteer experience, including serving as the current District 2 City Councilor; School Committee Member, South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School (Keefe Tech); Board President, Friends of Saxonville; Board Member, Downtown Framingham, Inc.; Mentor, Mazie Mentoring Program at Framingham High School; Advisory Board, MetroWest Economic Research Center at

Framingham State University. I also bring strong professional experience from my current role with Family Promise Metrowest, an affordable housing and homelessness prevention nonprofit, as well as my past work as the Executive Director of Leadership MetroWest, a Framingham based nonprofit dedicated to providing leadership training and networking to community leaders coming primarily from local nonprofits and municipal government.

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

- a. I'm very interested in exploring the adoption of the Residential Tax Exemption to shift the tax burden from low and medium value properties to higher value properties, as well as enacting a Real Estate Transfer Fee on the sale of high value properties, which would be used to directly fund Affordable Housing projects in the city.

(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?

- a. I think a Real Estate Transfer Fee (assuming the state legislation gets passed) is the largest opportunity to raise revenue.

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

- a. Access to on-time and reliable busing for all students who want it.
- b. Access to educational programs that minimize achievement gaps (such as universal pre-k) and uplift our community's multicultural composition as a strength (such as the continued growth of our dual-language programs in Spanish and Portuguese).
- c. Teacher retention, especially for BIPOC educators.

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

- a. I am proud that Framingham's welcoming ordinance prevents City employees from asking about immigration status and from supporting ICE in immigration enforcement. It's imperative that this ordinance is

not just a document, but remains the practice of our police department and all city staff going forward.

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?

- a. Passing the Specialized Stretch energy code
- b. Funding solar panels on new roofs
- c. Preserving green space and parks, especially in South Framingham where heat islands and limited tree cover are an environmental justice issue.

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?

- a. Continued funding of bike lanes and rail trails such as the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Chris Walsh Trail, Cochituate Rail Trail upgrades, etc.
- b. Collaborate with the MWRTA on the routes and frequency of their local services, as well as the expansion in size of the MWRTA CATCH Connect program.

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?

- a. I mentioned this previously, but I think housing costs are the biggest barrier to affordability at this time, so prioritizing the adoption of the Residential Tax Exemption to shift the tax burden from low and medium value properties to higher value properties, as well as enacting a Real Estate Transfer Fee, which would be used to directly fund Affordable Housing projects in the city, would be two key steps towards making the city more affordable.

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

- a. Disjointed and lacking a long-term vision for the city's growth.

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

- a. Strong collaboration and advocacy with our federal legislative delegation.

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

- a. Continuing to make myself available to the community for feedback and dialogue via office hours, canvassing, email, and community events. Residents can find my cell phone (508-314-2449) and email (wardforframingham@gmail.com) on my website, and I value the role of helping residents navigate city hall and get the information they need.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES/ NO**
 - a. No, not fully. In some select communities, I think they play an important role in providing alternative educational opportunities for families in need.
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/ NO**
 - a. 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/ NO**
 - a. Yes
4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES / NO**
 - a. Yes
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES / NO**
 - a. 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 / NO**

a. Yes

7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES / NO**

a. Yes

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 / NO**

a. Yes

(D) Additional Comments

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