



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

In addressing the critical decisions facing Northampton, my top three priorities if elected as Mayor would be:

- **Strengthening Public Education:** My commitment is to ensure continued strategic investment in our Northampton Public Schools (NPS). This involves advocating for the resources needed to provide a high-quality education for all students, sustaining and expanding vital investments from the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, leveraging technology for efficiency, and proactively engaging with the community on educational needs. I will vigorously pursue initiatives that free up general operating budget funds for the NPS, such as shifting capital expenses to free cash and maximizing the reprogramming of unspent mid-year appropriation monies to cover non-personnel expenses, thereby freeing up funds for critical personnel needs.
- **Fiscally Responsible Governance:** I believe in strategic financial management to effectively balance the various needs of our city. This means ensuring transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making in all financial matters, guaranteeing that taxpayer money is used wisely and for the greatest benefit of all residents.
- **Community Well-being and Safety:** This priority encompasses ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, educators, and all residents. It also involves fostering proactive community engagement and collaborative

governance to address various needs across the city, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in the governance of Northampton.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

My qualifications to hold this office stem from my commitment to these priorities and my approach to governance. My emphasis on strategic financial management, proactive community engagement, and collaborative governance demonstrates a balanced perspective crucial for leading the city. My commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making ensures that I will effectively balance the various needs of our city and deliver positive outcomes for all residents.

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

Regarding a policy pioneered in another city that I would most like to adopt locally, I am particularly interested in "**participatory budgeting.**" This policy, successfully implemented in cities like New York and Chicago, allows residents to directly decide how to spend a portion of a public budget. I believe this fosters greater civic engagement, increases transparency in local government spending, and ensures that community needs are directly reflected in budgetary allocations. It aligns perfectly with my commitment to inclusive decision-making and empowering residents in the governance of Northampton.

(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 recognize the constraints imposed by state law on municipal taxing power. However, I see several opportunities for Northampton to strategically raise revenue to support essential city services without overburdening residents:

- **Maximizing State and Federal Grants:** I would prioritize a dedicated and aggressive pursuit of state and federal grants. Many grant programs are available for education, infrastructure, public safety, and environmental

initiatives. By having a robust grant writing and application process, we can secure significant external funding.

- **Strategic Economic Development and Business Growth:** Fostering a supportive environment for local businesses and attracting new, compatible businesses can increase the commercial tax base. This involves streamlining permitting processes, offering incentives for job creation, and promoting Northampton as an attractive place for businesses to thrive, particularly those that align with our community values and goals.
- **Exploring Non-Tax Revenue Streams:** We should examine potential non-tax revenue sources, such as fees for services (where appropriate and equitably applied), partnerships with local institutions, or exploring the possibility of short-term rental taxes, if legally permissible and structured to benefit the community.
- **Optimizing Existing Assets:** This involves thoroughly reviewing existing city-owned assets and resources to identify opportunities for greater efficiency, cost recovery, or even revenue generation through strategic management or partnerships.
- **Advocacy for Local Aid:** While we must be proactive locally, I will also vigorously advocate at the state level for increased unrestricted local aid and other forms of state support that directly benefit Northampton. Collaboration with other municipalities facing similar challenges can strengthen this advocacy.

My approach will be to explore these avenues comprehensively, always with an eye towards fiscal responsibility, transparency, and ensuring that any new revenue streams are fair and contribute positively to the overall well-being of the city.

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

My top priorities for ensuring all students in Northampton receive a high-quality public education are embedded within my broader commitment to strengthening public education:

- **Strategic Investment and Resource Advocacy:** I will continue to advocate for and ensure sustained strategic investment in our Northampton Public Schools (NPS). This includes leveraging the significant commitments already reflected in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget and working tirelessly to secure additional resources at both local and state levels to meet the evolving needs of our students and educators.

- **Fiscal Prudence to Benefit Classrooms:** A key priority is to implement innovative financial strategies that directly free up general operating budget funds for the NPS. This includes shifting capital expenses to free cash and maximizing the reprogramming of unspent mid-year appropriation monies to cover non-personnel expenses. By doing so, we can allocate more funds directly to critical personnel needs and classroom resources, ultimately improving the learning environment.
- **Leveraging Technology for Enhanced Learning:** I am committed to exploring and implementing technology solutions that enhance educational efficiency and effectiveness. This means investing in modern learning tools, improving digital literacy, and ensuring equitable access to technology for all students, which can open new avenues for personalized learning and engagement.
- **Proactive Community Engagement:** High-quality education is a collective responsibility. I will foster proactive and consistent engagement with parents, educators, students, and the wider community to understand their educational needs and priorities. This collaborative approach will ensure that our educational policies and investments are truly responsive to the community's vision for its schools.
- **Student and Educator Well-being and Safety:** Beyond academics, ensuring a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment is paramount. This includes addressing mental health needs, fostering inclusive school cultures, and providing resources that promote the overall well-being of both students and the dedicated educators who serve them.

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

Protecting immigrant communities from the actions of ICE and ensuring genuine community safety requires a multi-faceted approach. Here's what Northampton can do:

- **Fund Legal Aid and Know Your Rights Initiatives:** Allocate municipal funds to support legal defense services for immigrants facing deportation and to educate the community about their rights when interacting with law enforcement and immigration agents. This empowers individuals and reduces the likelihood of rights violations.
- **Support Community-Led Safety Initiatives:** Invest in community-based programs that focus on addressing root causes of crime and promoting well-being, rather than relying solely on traditional policing that can

disproportionately impact immigrant communities. This includes funding for mental health services, affordable housing, youth programs, and job training.

- **Training for City Employees:** Provide training to all city employees, especially law enforcement and those in public-facing roles, on immigrant rights, cultural sensitivity, and the city's sanctuary policies to ensure consistent and respectful interactions.

By implementing these measures, Northampton can not only protect its immigrant residents from undue harm but also build a stronger, safer, and more cohesive community for everyone.

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?

My top three policy priorities for making Northampton climate-resilient, with equity as a central guiding principle, are:

1. Investing in Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions:

- **Policy Focus:** This includes expanding urban tree canopy, restoring wetlands, creating green spaces, and implementing permeable surfaces to manage stormwater, reduce urban heat island effects, and improve air quality. These solutions are cost-effective and provide multiple co-benefits.
- **Equity Integration:** We will prioritize neighborhoods that have historically lacked green spaces and are most vulnerable to climate impacts (e.g., areas with higher percentages of low-income residents, communities of color). We will engage these communities directly in the planning and implementation process, ensuring that the benefits of green infrastructure are equitably distributed, and that local jobs are created for residents in these areas.

2. Transitioning to Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency:

- **Policy Focus:** Accelerating the transition to 100% renewable energy for municipal operations and supporting similar transitions for residential and commercial sectors. This also involves promoting and incentivizing energy efficiency upgrades in homes and businesses across the city.
- **Equity Integration:** We will establish programs that make renewable energy and energy efficiency accessible and affordable for all residents, especially low-income households and renters. This includes offering subsidies, low-interest loans, and technical assistance. We will also prioritize job training and employment opportunities in the green

energy sector for underrepresented groups, ensuring that the economic benefits of this transition are shared broadly.

3. **Developing Robust Emergency Preparedness and Adaptation Plans:**

- **Policy Focus:** Creating comprehensive emergency response plans that account for climate-related events such as extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms. This involves improving early warning systems, establishing cooling centers, and developing accessible evacuation routes and shelters.
- **Equity Integration:** Our preparedness plans will specifically identify and address the unique vulnerabilities of marginalized communities. This means ensuring that emergency communications are multilingual and culturally appropriate, that cooling and charging centers are located in accessible community hubs, and that transportation assistance is provided for those without vehicles. We will also empower community leaders in these areas to be part of the planning and dissemination of critical information.

By integrating equity directly into each of these priorities, we ensure that our climate resilience efforts not only protect our city from environmental threats but also create a more just, healthy, and prosperous Northampton for everyone.

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?**

To reduce dependence on cars and better facilitate safe, active, and public transit-oriented mobility for Northampton residents, I would take the following steps:

1. **Expanding and Enhancing Pedestrian Infrastructure:**

- **Policy Focus:** Invest in expanding and maintaining sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian-friendly zones. This includes ensuring accessibility for all, improving lighting, and implementing traffic calming measures in residential areas and near schools.
- **Implementation:** Conduct a city-wide audit of pedestrian infrastructure to identify gaps and areas needing improvement. Prioritize funding for projects that connect key destinations, such as residential areas to schools, commercial centers, and public parks. Implement "complete streets" policies that prioritize pedestrian safety in all new road construction and redesign projects.

2. **Developing a Comprehensive and Safe Bicycle Network:**

- **Policy Focus:** Create a cohesive and safe network of bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, and bike-friendly routes throughout the city. This involves protected bike lanes on arterial roads, designated bike routes on quieter streets, and secure bike parking facilities at public destinations.
 - **Implementation:** Work with local cycling advocacy groups and residents to develop a master plan for bicycle infrastructure. Seek state and federal grants for bicycle network development. Integrate bike-sharing programs and promote cycling as a viable transportation option for commuting and recreation.
3. **Strengthening and Expanding Public Transit Services:**
- **Policy Focus:** Enhance the accessibility, frequency, and coverage of public transit services to make them a more attractive alternative to car travel. This includes optimizing existing routes, exploring new routes to underserved areas, and improving transit stop amenities.
 - **Implementation:** Collaborate with the local transit authority to conduct a comprehensive review of current routes and ridership patterns. Explore options for increased frequency, especially during peak hours, and consider on-demand micro-transit solutions for less dense areas. Invest in modernizing bus stops with shelters, real-time information displays, and enhanced accessibility features. Promote transit use through public awareness campaigns and partnerships with major employers and educational institutions.
4. **Implementing Disincentives for Car Dependence and Incentives for Sustainable Modes:**
- **Policy Focus:** Strategically implement policies that subtly discourage excessive car use while simultaneously incentivizing walking, biking, and public transit. This could include reviewing parking policies, promoting carpooling, and supporting electric vehicle infrastructure.
 - **Implementation:** Evaluate existing parking minimums and explore options for demand-based parking pricing in high-traffic areas. Develop incentives for businesses to offer transit passes to employees. Create programs that reward residents for choosing active transportation or public transit, such as local business discounts for those who commute sustainably.

By taking these steps, Northampton can systematically reduce its reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, create a safer and more enjoyable environment for all residents, and contribute to a healthier and more sustainable community.

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?

To ensure Northampton remains an affordable place for residents at every stage of life, I will advocate for the following key policies:

1. **Expanding and Protecting Affordable Housing Options:**
 - **Policy Focus:** Increase the supply of diverse affordable housing units, including options for families, seniors, and young professionals. This involves supporting the creation of new affordable housing developments, preserving existing affordable units, and exploring innovative housing models.
 - **Implementation:** Advocate for zoning reforms that encourage mixed-income developments and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Pursue state and federal funding opportunities for affordable housing initiatives. Establish a dedicated affordable housing trust fund to support development and preservation efforts. Implement robust tenant protection policies to prevent displacement and ensure fair rental practices.
2. **Supporting Local Economic Opportunity and Living Wages:**
 - **Policy Focus:** Foster a vibrant local economy that provides diverse job opportunities with living wages. This includes supporting local businesses, attracting businesses that offer quality employment, and investing in workforce development programs.
 - **Implementation:** Work with local businesses to understand their needs and provide resources for growth, including access to capital and technical assistance. Promote job training programs that align with in-demand skills in Northampton. Advocate for policies that support fair wages and benefits for all workers.
3. **Reducing the Cost of Essential Services and Utilities:**
 - **Policy Focus:** Explore strategies to mitigate the rising costs of essential services like energy, water, and broadband internet. This aims to lessen the financial burden on residents, particularly those on fixed incomes or facing economic hardship.
 - **Implementation:** Invest in energy efficiency programs that provide financial assistance for home upgrades, reducing utility bills for residents. Explore community-based renewable energy projects that can offer more affordable energy rates. Advocate for competitive broadband access to ensure affordable and reliable internet services. Implement programs to assist low-income residents with utility costs.

4. **Investing in Accessible and Affordable Public Transportation and Infrastructure:**
 - **Policy Focus:** Reduce transportation costs for residents by expanding and improving accessible public transit options, and ensuring well-maintained and safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
 - **Implementation:** (As detailed in question 5 above) Continue to enhance public transit frequency and coverage, develop safe bicycle networks, and improve pedestrian infrastructure to make non-car commuting viable and affordable. This reduces the need for car ownership and associated expenses (gas, insurance, maintenance).
5. **Strengthening Support for Seniors and Vulnerable Populations:**
 - **Policy Focus:** Implement targeted programs and resources that address the unique affordability challenges faced by seniors, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations.
 - **Implementation:** Expand access to senior services, including affordable transportation, nutrition programs, and social activities. Advocate for property tax relief programs for eligible seniors and low-income residents. Partner with local nonprofits and community organizations to provide comprehensive support services.

By implementing these comprehensive policies, Northampton can create a more equitable and affordable city where residents can thrive at every stage of their lives, from childhood through retirement.

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

Northampton's efforts regarding the MBTA Communities Act rezoning present both commendable progress and areas requiring further strategic attention.

- **Progress and Strengths:** The city has demonstrated a commitment to complying with the Act's requirements, understanding the necessity of increasing housing opportunities, particularly near transit hubs. Initial steps toward identifying eligible areas and engaging with planning processes are positive indicators. The emphasis on creating more diverse housing options aligns with the broader goal of affordability and accessibility within the city.
- **Challenges and Areas for Improvement:**
 - **Community Engagement Depth:** While engagement has begun, ensuring truly widespread and representative community input, especially from historically underserved populations, is crucial. Concerns

about neighborhood character, infrastructure capacity, and potential displacement must be genuinely heard and addressed.

- **Infrastructure Planning:** Rezoning for increased density necessitates concurrent, robust planning for infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, transportation, schools). A comprehensive, integrated approach is vital to prevent strain on existing systems and ensure new developments are sustainable.
- **Affordability Safeguards:** Simply increasing density doesn't automatically guarantee affordability. Proactive measures, such as inclusionary zoning, affordable housing trust fund allocations, and partnerships with non-profit developers, are essential to ensure that new housing units genuinely contribute to the city's affordable housing stock and benefit a diverse range of incomes.
- **Timelines and Efficiency:** Navigating the complexities of rezoning can be time-consuming. Streamlining processes while maintaining thoroughness will be important to meet compliance deadlines and realize the benefits of the Act more efficiently.
- **Balancing Growth with Local Character:** Finding the right balance between accommodating growth and preserving the unique character and scale of Northampton's neighborhoods will be an ongoing challenge that requires thoughtful design guidelines and careful consideration of community feedback.
- **Future Focus:** Moving forward, Northampton should prioritize:
 - Deepening equitable community engagement.
 - Integrating infrastructure planning seamlessly with rezoning efforts.
 - Implementing strong affordable housing provisions within new zoning.
 - Developing clear, actionable timelines for implementation.
 - Ensuring that growth is managed sustainably and enhances, rather than detracts from, the city's livability.

My administration would commit to a transparent, inclusive, and fiscally responsible approach to MBTA Communities Act implementation, ensuring that it serves to create a more vibrant, equitable, and sustainable Northampton for all residents.

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

This question addresses the challenge of local governments navigating and potentially mitigating the impact of federal policies they disagree with. This is a complex area, often involving legal, political, and community-based strategies.

Here's a breakdown of how a local government can respond to perceived federal overreach, structured as a comprehensive answer:

Resisting Federal Overreach While Protecting Critical Services and Funding

To effectively resist federal overreach while simultaneously protecting critical services and funding for residents, a multi-faceted approach is necessary, combining legal, political, and community-based strategies. The goal is to assert local autonomy and safeguard the well-being of residents without jeopardizing essential resources.

1. Legal and Policy Defenses

- **Strategic Litigation:** When federal actions directly infringe upon local authority or resident rights, the city can explore legal challenges. This involves collaborating with city attorneys to assess the legal grounds for lawsuits, potentially joining amicus curiae briefs in cases relevant to the city's interests, or initiating direct legal action. This strategy is particularly effective when federal actions are deemed unconstitutional or exceed statutory authority.
- **"Sanctuary" Policies and Non-Cooperation:** For issues like immigration, the city can enact local ordinances and policies that limit local law enforcement's cooperation with federal agencies (e.g., ICE) on non-criminal matters. This establishes a clear local stance and protects vulnerable populations, as exemplified by "sanctuary city" movements. Such policies must be carefully crafted to avoid legal conflicts and ensure compliance with local and state laws.
- **Leveraging State Partnerships:** Work closely with the state government, including the Governor's office, state legislature, and state associations of municipalities. States often serve as a buffer between federal and local governments and can provide legal support, legislative action, or unified opposition to federal policies. Advocating for state laws that protect local interests can be a powerful deterrent to federal overreach.
- **Reviewing and Adjusting Local Ordinances:** Proactively review existing local ordinances and policies to ensure they align with local values and protect residents from potential negative impacts of federal actions. This might involve strengthening local protections in areas where federal protections are weakening.

2. Political Advocacy and Coalition Building

- **Direct Lobbying and Advocacy:** Engage directly with federal elected officials (e.g., Congressional representatives, Senators) to express local concerns and

advocate for policies that support the city's interests. This includes providing clear data and case studies on the local impact of federal actions.

- **Inter-City Coalitions:** Form or join alliances with other cities and towns facing similar challenges. A unified voice from a coalition of municipalities carries more weight in federal advocacy than individual city efforts. Organizations like the U.S. Conference of Mayors or the National League of Cities can be valuable platforms for this.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educate residents about the potential impacts of federal policies and how the city is working to mitigate them. Transparent communication builds public support for local efforts and can mobilize community action. This includes holding public forums, utilizing city communication channels, and engaging local media.
- **Engaging Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Groups:** Partner with local and national NGOs, advocacy groups, and community organizations that share common goals. These partnerships can provide additional resources, expertise, and a broader base of support for resisting federal overreach.

3. Financial and Resource Protection

- **Diversifying Revenue Streams:** Reduce over-reliance on federal funding by exploring and developing innovative local revenue streams (as discussed in the "Opportunities for the city to raise revenue" section of this document). This provides greater financial independence and resilience against federal funding cuts or conditional grants tied to undesirable policies.
- **Prudent Reserve Management:** Maintain healthy financial reserves (as detailed in the "Fair \$\$ amount for prudent reserve management" section) to act as a buffer against unexpected federal funding reductions or to fund essential services temporarily if federal funds are withheld due to non-compliance with federal mandates.
- **Prioritizing Core Services:** In budget allocation, prioritize critical services that directly impact resident well-being (e.g., public safety, education, public health) to ensure they are shielded as much as possible from external pressures.
- **Seeking Alternative Funding:** Actively pursue grants and funding from non-federal sources, such as state programs, private foundations, and philanthropic organizations, to supplement or replace potentially vulnerable federal funds.

By combining these strategies, a city can create a robust defense against federal overreach, protecting its autonomy and ensuring the continued provision of essential services and the well-being of its residents, even in a challenging political climate.

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

To model transparency and accountability as Mayor of Northampton, I would implement the following:

- **Open Data Portal Expansion:** Expand and regularly update the city's open data portal to include more comprehensive financial information, performance metrics for city departments, and progress on key initiatives. This would allow residents to easily track how their tax dollars are being spent and the effectiveness of city programs.
- **Regular "Town Hall" Meetings and Public Forums:** Host frequent and accessible town hall meetings across different neighborhoods, providing direct opportunities for residents to ask questions, voice concerns, and receive updates on city matters. These would be supplemented by specialized public forums on significant policy decisions.
- **Proactive Communication on Key Decisions:** Ensure timely and clear communication about major city decisions, upcoming policy changes, and important developments. This includes utilizing multiple channels such as the city website, social media, and local news outlets to reach a broad audience.
- **Citizen Advisory Boards and Committees:** Strengthen and empower citizen advisory boards and committees to play a more active role in policy development and oversight. This ensures diverse perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes and provides an additional layer of accountability.
- **Performance-Based Budgeting and Reporting:** Implement a system where city budgets are tied to specific performance goals and outcomes, with regular public reporting on whether these goals are being met. This shifts the focus from simply spending money to achieving measurable results.
- **Enhanced Public Records Access:** Streamline the process for public records requests and ensure prompt and comprehensive responses, adhering strictly to state public records laws.
- **Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies:** Uphold and, if necessary, strengthen the city's ethics policies and conflict of interest guidelines for all elected officials and city employees, with clear mechanisms for reporting and addressing violations.
- **Post-Implementation Reviews:** Conduct and publicly share post-implementation reviews of major projects and policy changes to assess their effectiveness, identify lessons learned, and ensure accountability for results.

By embedding these practices into the fabric of my administration, Northampton will become a model for open, accountable, and citizen-centric governance.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES/ NO**
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**
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**
4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES / NO**
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES / NO**
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**
7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES / 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. Would you oppose such book-banning efforts if they occurred in your city? **YES / NO**

(D) Additional Comments

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