



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Keith Linhares

Office Sought: Worcester City Council, District 1

Website: linharesforworcester.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/linharesforworcester>

Twitter: NONE

BlueSky: <https://bsky.app/profile/linhares4worcester.bsky.social>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/linhares_for_worcester_d1

(A) Your Candidacy

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

- 1) Housing & Affordability: updating zoning to create more homes in Worcester that regular folks can afford. Develop in a strategic way to ensure residents are the primary beneficiaries of Worcester's growth and hold developers and real estate speculators accountable.
- 2) Improving transparency & oversight of City Services, like DPW and WPD to drive greater walkability, infrastructure improvements, and resident participation in decision-making
- 3) Improve our public safety approach by investing in non-criminal responses to the parallel unhoused, mental health and substance abuse crises. Worcester should partner with the state and other municipalities to create more permanent supportive housing, shelters and other support services for folks in need. We should also ensure these services are distributed equitably throughout Worcester.

We need greater oversight of policing; I am an advocate for a Civilian Review Board with subpoena power as a start to changing policing in Worcester.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

Worcester has given me so much and made many of my dreams come true. I chose Worcester as my home, and my partner and I are raising our 3 daughters here. I care passionately about this city's future, and have a tremendous amount of privilege. I want to use this privilege to challenge our

current systems and advocate for better outcomes for the vast majority of our residents who feel they have no voice at City Hall.

My working-class upbringing, coupled with my educational experience and work as a Business Analyst, Project Manager, and Portfolio Manager in the corporate world give me a unique and varied perspective which I will bring to City Hall. My professional colleagues have praised my integrity, passion, collaboration, and ability to consistently challenge the status quo to foster a respectful, solution-focused environment.

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

Rent stabilization and eviction prevention programs would greatly help Worcester residents who are struggling to stay in their homes. This could be done through Just Cause Eviction Ordinances, Right to Counsel for tenants, Early Warning Systems for Evictions, etc. These would be challenging in a state that seems geared toward protecting landlords over tenants, but we need to start making greater efforts to directly help renters.

(B) Open-Ended Policy Questions

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

Creating a municipally run option for broadband in Worcester would be an opportunity to create good-paying jobs for Worcester residents AND generate revenue. Municipal broadband is more realistic than many people realize. Worcester has many miles of fiber optic cable that was placed in the 90s.

I have also been a proponent of a [Land Value Tax](#) to incentivize density and growth in areas that need it most. This would put a burden on land owners to use their land to generate more value by building “up” at greater density.

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

In the face of federal cuts, we need to ensure that we are properly investing in public education and that our city's schools are being treated equally. I would be an advocate for robust budget allocation for WPS. I would work to ensure we have clear transparency and accountability on how our budget is used.

I would partner with the teacher's union to understand their needs and how I can be a better advocate for them at City Hall.

I would propose updating our School Committee Districts to ensure we have more fair and equitable representation at City Hall.

I would do whatever I can to work for universal, full-day pre-K in Worcester.

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

Worcester can update the way it polices and rely less on police/criminal response and more on folks who are trained to de-escalate, like community groups or mental health professionals. On Eureka St on May 8, police appeared to escalate tensions with residents and threatened them with "unlawful assembly" for simply trying to protect their fellow residents.

Our City Manager has said that WPD will not collaborate with ICE, but this was clearly violated with the May 8, Eureka St incident. We need the police to change their approach to ensure that residents can feel confident that WPD are on *their* side, and NOT on the side of masked federal agents taking people away from their homes and families. WPD policies and training must be updated to codify this.

Worcester could also use a more robust "Know Your Rights" campaign to ensure residents know what is within their rights to protest and practice civil disobedience. Residents should also be aware of possible consequences within the confines of the law.

Worcester City Councilors should pass ordinances to strengthen our position on Worcester's sanctuary city status and ensure that our police are not collaborating or aiding ICE in any way.

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?

The city should incentivize density and mixed-use development, it should update zoning ordinances to mandate or strongly incentivize new buildings to be designed and oriented for optimal solar panel installation and to include infrastructure for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and should eliminate parking minimums on new construction. I would push to update zoning to incentivize mixed use development and

greater density. Sprawl and spread are making our city less climate-resilient and walkable.

I would push to update the WRTA to improve its quality of service to make riding the bus more popular and common in Worcester. I would also consider Worcester establishing its own services through public-private partnership or other means. Bus routes need to be more flexible to meet residents' needs. We should create new bus routes that don't necessarily start/end at the downtown hub. Investment must be made in our city buses to make the service more reliable in its on-time rates and available options.

Enhance the city's preparedness for extreme weather events (e.g., heatwaves, severe storms, winter blizzards) by establishing accessible cooling and warming centers, improving early warning systems, and developing robust communication plans. Worcester has struggled with opening up its community pools and splash pads during the hottest days of the summer and we need to ensure we are prepared for continued extreme heat. Worcester needs to add additional green spaces to combat flooding and support local biodiversity.

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?

Updating zoning is the way to address our walkability challenges head-on, but it will take time to enact and see the effects. In the short term, I will advocate for investment in our DPW, so that we can begin investing more in crosswalks, sidewalks, and traffic calming measures. We are short-staffed and an investment in DPW with an aim to make our city more pedestrian and bike friendly would be an ideal start.

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?

Worcester needs to do a multitude of things to make our city affordable for all residents, including, but not limited to:

- Rent stabilization
- Increase housing supply by strengthening inclusionary zoning and encouraging density and mixed-use development
- Ensure developers are creating an appropriate amount of housing that is below-market rate.
- Create tax-relief programs for seniors and other vulnerable folks
- Invest in and promote the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Invest in programs for first-time homebuyers
- Invest in and promote the Elder Home Repair Program

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

The area closest to our MBTA Commuter Rail stop already complies with the MBTA Communities Act.

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

Municipalities need to be willing to challenge the federal government's overreach, especially in Massachusetts, where we are a "donor state" and give more money to the federal government than we receive back. We should leverage our City Solicitor to challenge any actions of the federal government that violate our local laws.

On matters of immigration, we need to set local ordinances to stop local law enforcement from assisting ICE. This needs to be done explicitly.

In parallel, we need to be working toward "municipal resiliency" and finding ways to be less reliant on federal funding and more reliant on ourselves. We must prioritize state and local funding for critical services like housing, mental health, and substance abuse programs. This would prevent the city from being strong-armed by federal threats to withhold funding. Another example of building our municipal resiliency would be investing in municipal broadband and investing in our Department of Public Works.

We must build community and state coalitions. I would work to build strong, broad coalitions with local non-profits, legal aid organizations, and community groups to create a unified front against harmful federal policies. We should also advocate for state-level protections, as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is our most important partner and a powerful buffer against federal encroachment. The state can and should pass laws that protect residents and local autonomy.

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

I aim to communicate openly with residents of Worcester via neighborhood meetings, regularly scheduled office hours (in-person and online), and using my website or an app to inform voters about what I'm working on and to solicit their feedback.

(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? **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**

(D) Additional Comments

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