



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

While there are many specific issues that I and other Ward 5 residents care about – from speeding cars to ballooning tax bills, I believe they can all be addressed by fixing fundamental problems with how our government works.

(1) **Lack of communication and inclusion.** As I door knock in the ward, many residents tell me that they've either never heard from their representatives or else that they've had to repeatedly call the city – over years – to get an issue addressed. We can do better. If elected, I will hold a community meeting at least once a year, with translators, in each of ward 5's precincts. When all of us communicate and collaborate, we can learn about issues as they arise and come up with possible solutions – together.

(2) **Lack of debate and independent votes.** While the first step to representing residents' interests is knowing what those interests are (see #1), the second step is being willing to represent them, even if they diverge from those of developers or the administration.

The current city council rarely discusses issues before them, and that is borne out in the votes they take. In 2024, council incumbents voted unanimously 99.4% of the time – even on issues that were deeply unpopular with residents, such as the 79% and 50% pay raises for the mayor and council.

That's bad for all of us. When the council fails to push back on city spending, our taxes go up, and more of our hard-earned money has to go to paying down debt instead of increasing city services.

- (3) **Conflicts of interest.** My research suggests that campaign contributions from developers may explain some otherwise perplexing (unanimous) council votes. To bring these relationships out into the open, I would push for councilors to declare any potential conflicts of interest before every vote they take and for rules to be developed on when councilors must recuse themselves from votes. There should be no question about who councilors are working for.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I believe we need city councilors who will seek residents' input on local issues, learn how other communities have addressed those issues, and then advocate for solutions centered on what works for the most people – not just a few deep-pocketed developers.

My years of work as a journalist researching complex topics, asking tough questions, and communicating my findings to the public give me the skills needed to not only critically analyze issues that would come before the council but also keep residents informed about those issues at every step along the way.

And my years as a community organizer – helping to found Quincy Votes!, the Quincy Tree Alliance, and A Just Quincy – prove I am dedicated to advocating for my neighbors and speaking truth to power. With no ties to city employees or local businesses, I would also be an independent voice whose only allegiance is to the people of Quincy.

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

This is a tough one! I've been excited to learn how other communities handle everything from housing (Cambridge does not allow developers to pay into a fund instead of building affordable units) to trash (Hamilton found that having pickups of food waste and recyclables every week and trash every OTHER week helped reduce waste by promoting recycling and composting).

But what I think is most needed in Quincy is opportunities for the public to weigh in on local issues. Several recent controversies have taken place without any opportunity for public comment, including the mayor and council giving themselves 79% and 50% raises, and the mayor commissioning million-dollar religious statues for the new police station.

In refusing to hold hearings on these issues, city officials have argued that our “strong mayor” (or “plan A”) type of government does not require public input and that residents have an opportunity to weigh in on issues every few years by voting for – or against – candidates who supported those issues.

But those arguments don’t hold up. Five other “plan A” cities that I contacted (Boston, Springfield, Fall River, Lynn, and Somerville) offer regular opportunities for public comment, and Quincy’s own council rules state that it is supposed to hold a public hearing every month.

In addition to offering residents an opportunity to be heard, I would like to empower the public to help shape city policies. At a rare public hearing at the council last year, I tried to suggest that Quincy follow Boston and allow residents to decide how to spend a portion of the city budget – but before I could make the point, I was cut off by the council president, who said I could weigh in only on the narrow question of the ratio of residential to commercial tax rates. Other residents who made the effort to attend the same meeting had their mics cut off when trying to discuss city spending. That type of silencing not only goes against the council’s own rules on public hearings but also leads to worse policies for residents, whose concerns are meant to be served by their elected representatives.

(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?**

Opportunities to raise revenue might include charging [minor fees of less than 2% for high-end real estate sales to help fund affordable housing](#), something that [other cities](#), including Boston, are interested in doing.

Generating revenue for services is especially important now, with looming cuts to federal funding and higher costs for materials due to tariffs.

But Quincy is already more than a billion dollars in debt, and our first priority should be to rein in our profligate spending and to stop giving sweetheart deals to political donors and developers.

The council holds the purse strings for the city's annual budget, property purchases, and borrowing, and it also sets the tax rate.

To begin to deal with our enormous debt, councilors must raise questions about every spending proposal and be willing to just say no to those that are unnecessary or ill-advised. That means no more rubber-stamping administration requests to buy properties "high" and sell them "low," to give billionaire developers tax breaks, to lease city land without requiring audits or competitive bidding, to fund new positions thought up by the mayor with particular people in mind, etc. No-questions-asked spending inhibits our ability to pay off the massive debt we already have, setting up what could become a self-reinforcing cycle.

Already, our debt has caused the S&P to downgrade both the city's long-term credit rating and its future outlook, which means it could cost the city more to borrow money in the future. To avoid further downgrades, the city will likely have to raise our taxes – meaning we will be paying more but not receiving more in services. Getting ourselves out of this hole will take time, but the first step is to stop digging.

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

The city's elected school committee sets school policies and decides how to allocate the school system's budget. But as a councilor, I would work to ensure that the schools were well funded overall, so that those who teach and support our kids receive fair pay and benefits.

I advocated for raises for teachers back in 2021, during a particularly fraught set of contract negotiations. At that time, I noted that teachers are not eligible for overtime pay, while police and firefighters had [made more than \\$10 million](#) in overtime the previous year. I also noted that most of the city's top earners were police and firefighters, while only *three* of the city's top 150 earners were women (most of Quincy's teachers are women).

As a city councilor, I would advocate for the equitable distribution of resources across departments so that all of our city employees feel valued and respected and so that departments could be staffed at the appropriate levels. I would

also work to rescind the mayor's and council's 79% and 50% pay raises, which feel like a slap in the face to educators who received raises of 0% in recent years.

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

This is such an important issue. Quincy has a very large immigrant community, and I have heard several heartbreaking reports of parents of young children being disappeared by ICE. I have asked the chief of police about the issue, and he told me that the department is following state protocol to not cooperate with federal immigration officials unless there is a criminal warrant. But combating the fear of immigrants will require changing hearts and minds.

More information could help change minds. When some residents of Quincy were upset about a family shelter for migrants operating at a local college in recent years, I wrote a letter to the editor pointing out that immigrants – especially undocumented ones – are less likely to commit violent crimes than people born in the US (<https://www.maggieforquincy.com/blog/enc>). And when masked neo-Nazis marched to the shelter one night and held flares that already-traumatized children saw through the shelter windows, I [organized a standout](#) the next day for neighbors to hold paper hearts and welcoming messages outside those same windows. I also cut out hundreds of hearts and handed them out to people attending a [heated public meeting](#) about the shelter, so they could hold them up to show support for the refugee families.

If I'm elected to the city council, I would love to help facilitate cross-cultural language or art classes so that we can talk with each other and build the relationships that make our streets feel like neighborhoods and all our neighbors feel safe and accepted.

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 was on the board of the volunteer-based Quincy Climate Action Network when an intern from Harvard wrote the city's greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation plan in 2019. The latter notes the following: "Quincy contributes to climate change by emitting greenhouse gases, the majority of which are generated from the City's **electricity and natural gas consumption, personal vehicle** transportation, and **landfill waste**. Substantially reducing these emissions will require a plethora of integrated climate action planning

measures, such as increasing the amount of **renewable energy** in the electrical grid, reducing the use of oil and natural gas for heating, enhancing **building energy efficiency, minimizing waste** sent to landfill, and mode-shifting to alternate methods of transport such as cycling, walking, and public transit.”

The city has taken some steps towards these goals. A few years ago it greened the grid by offering a “municipal aggregation” program to buy more of its electricity from renewable sources.

But it still has a ways to go on others. I would advocate for the city enacting the opt-in specialized stretch code to require new buildings and renovations to be more energy efficient. And as chair of a city task force on food waste diversion, I would love to see the city take further steps to get food out of the trash stream. (It is currently composting food waste at several local schools and has contracted with a “preferred provider” to pick up food waste from residents who pay for the service. But it could do so much more, from setting up drop-off sites for food waste to ultimately picking up food waste alongside trash and recycling, which could help reduce weight-based trash “tipping” fees.)

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?

I would love to have “citizen councils” focused on particular topics, including transportation, that could advise government officials on ways to promote walking, biking, and bus and train riding. These councils could be made up of local experts (I’ve met two traffic engineers while door knocking recently!) and advocacy groups, like Quincycles and the Quincy Climate Action Network. The Asian community in Quincy has also developed a van-based transportation system that I would love to learn more about – I think having vans that frequently shuttle people between residential buildings and T stations and grocery stores would help keep more cars off the roads. Taking advantage of our residents’ expertise on this issue would reduce traffic and pollution (at no cost to the city) while also building community and a deep bench of future city leaders!

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 would start a discussion around changing zoning rules to either limit or prohibit developers from being able to pay into a fund to avoid offering affordable units in their buildings.
- I would look into what is required to establish a community land trust so that land purchased by the trust could remain affordable forever.
- I would request that the city study the state's model zoning rules for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), so that residents could build a backyard cottage or renovate a garage or basement into living space. ADUs are a low-impact way to add more housing, and may be more affordable than other options because of their small size.
- I would advocate for a home rule petition to allow the city to charge [minor fees of less than 2% for high-end real estate sales to help fund affordable housing](#) (something I learned about from a Progressive Mass webinar!).
- I would advocate for a home rule petition to allow the city to stabilize rents, and would write a resolution in support of state bill S.1299, "An Act enabling cities and towns to stabilize rents and protect tenants."
- I would request a review of the implications of expanding and increasing homestead exemptions, which allow people living in their homes to pay less in taxes than they would if they were renting them out. Currently, [Quincy seniors qualify for up to \\$500 per year in this program](#), but that is not enough to allow some to stay in their homes, and the program is limited to a small subset of homeowners.

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

I support the MBTA Communities Act and will work to ensure it's implemented faithfully. I have seen many large developments being built or planned near T stations. I'm happy to see that expansion of much-needed housing, but most of it is unaffordable, and as a councilor I would work to remedy that.

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

I would advocate for the rights and interests of the people at every opportunity! And I would support lawsuits to fight unconstitutional actions taken by the federal government.

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

- I would hold annual meetings for each precinct, as well as regular office hours.
- I would push for the council to follow its own rules and hold a public hearing once a month, with the goal of having one before every single council meeting.
- I would create an online newsletter and send out postcard reminders about important events and meetings in residents' neighborhoods.
- I would work to provide translations in whatever languages were needed for meetings and written communications.
- In addition to community meetings and written communications, I would take advantage of Quincy Access TV to provide regular ward and city updates via on-demand video and podcasts.
- I would create "community councils" so that folks could help advise me on – and later hold me accountable for – my votes. These councils could be centered on specific issues, so that anyone in the city with expertise or interest in a topic could participate. They could also be geographically based, so that the ward would have a network of neighborhood representatives who could advocate for hyper-local issues. We should take more advantage of residents' talents and passion!

(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**