



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Marianne LaBarge, City Councilor

Office Sought: Re-elect City Councilor Ward 6

Website: citycouncilormariannelabarge.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mariannelabargeward6

Twitter: N/A

BlueSky: N/A

Instagram: N/A

(A) Your Candidacy

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

1. Budget
2. Public Safety
3. Human Rights

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I was first elected in 1998, and I was sworn in as Ward 6 City Councilor in 1999. I have served Ward 6 for 26 years as an elected City Councilor. I was Ward 6 Chair of the Democratic City Committee for many years. I am an experienced City Councilor with a record of getting things done. I have served on many City Council Committees during my terms as a City Councilor. I was a member of the Northampton Disability Committee for several years. During that time we successfully brought Braille and large print menus to Northampton and Florence restaurants.

For many years I have voiced concerns about City roads and sidewalks. They are unsafe for bikers, pedestrians, runners, the disabled and vehicles are affected by potholes and road deterioration. I have successfully made many safer roads and sidewalks in Ward 6. I have successfully advocated for bike lanes and stop signs at intersections having flashing lights.

Affordable Housing is another huge priority for me. The number of affordable housing units has greatly increased in Ward 6. On Westhampton Road 6 units of Condos were built through Habitat for Humanity. On Glendale Road four unit Condos were completed in 2020 and one single family house, through Habitat for Humanity. In 2021 three small energy-efficient homes were built by Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity on Burts Pit Road. These homes are 800sf, 900sf and 1,000sf with one, two and three bedrooms respectively. In 2025, on Woodland Drive, one energy-efficient home is complete and occupied. The plan also addresses recommendations contained in the Sustainable Northampton comprehensive plan and/or the Northampton Open Space, Recreation and Mixed Use Trail Plan 2011-2018. The total City owned open acreage from 1990 to 2025 is 1,586 acres.

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

I've heard about other Cities that don't allow smoking in City Parks

(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?

Researching many uses of grants. Sharing resources with other cities so expenses are shared.

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

Northampton faces challenges with Chapter 70 funding, particularly in the context of rising education costs and periods of high inflation. While the state has increased Chapter 70 funding in recent years, including a 6.7% increase for FY2026 under the Student Opportunity Act (SOA), concerns persist regarding whether the funding adequately keeps pace with actual costs and addresses the specific needs of all students. There have been great concerns of Charter Schools taking our students and we end up paying for them. They are pitting public schools against Charter Schools and that language for Charter Schools needs to be changed.

We need to keep all our elementary schools open and functioning. We all need to work together to support our educators and school staff because we

value them deeply for the roles they play in the lives of our City's children. Their salaries should be raised to make them equal with other Cities.

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

Northampton is a Sanctuary City and they will be protected in our Community.

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?

Northampton's Department of Climate Action and Project Administration (CAPA) is responsible for setting strategic goals for climate response and to procure for and manage projects with a focus on energy and sustainability. The department will work to achieve goals laid out in the city's 2021 Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan - Resilience and Regeneration Plan to meet a 2030 target for carbon neutrality for city operations and a 2050 target for net zero carbon emissions citywide. The department brings project management principles with a sustainability lens to all city projects to improve municipal efficiency and climate outcomes. CAPA consolidates existing efforts in the Office of Planning and Sustainability to set strategic goals for climate response, in the Central Services Department to manage projects with an environmental focus through the Energy and Sustainability Officer, and in the Office of the Auditor with the efforts to insert and prioritize sustainability in the city's procurement activities by the Chief Procurement Officer. CAPA staff works in partnership with cross-functional departments to form cohesive teams to achieve project objectives.

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?

Better walking sidewalks that are ADA Compliant, accessibility of biking and walking trails for use by everybody. Public transit is extremely valuable. In Ward 6 I would like to see an extension of PVT, thereby reducing car usage.

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?

We need to build more affordable housing. Housing that is accessible and walking distance to both trails and PVT. Housing that is close to the City, grocery stores, medical facilities and public transportation.

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

Northampton is not affected by 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?

We would be protesting and approaching our Governor, Maura Healey, asking for her aid and assistance, if anything threatened our critical services and funding for residents. Law suits would be another possible strategy, along with other cities in Massachusetts. to protect against the Trump Administration.

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

By having residents attend public hearings on subjects for items that are very detrimental to their lives, for example: Taxes, Overrides or Storm Water Fee increases, zoning changes, or increasing water fees.

(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? **NO**
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.)

I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to answer these questions.

Sincerely,

City Councilor Marianne LaBarge