



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Rani Eng

Office Sought: Newburyport City Council At Large

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

Affordable housing that truly meets the needs of families, seniors, and working people.

Encouraging active citizenship in the community and youth
Fiscal responsibility and transparency in city budgeting.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I bring 15+ years of leadership experience in professional services and government operations, where I've managed multimillion-dollar budgets, built scalable teams, and delivered measurable impact. As a military spouse and working mother, I also bring lived experience in resilience, empathy, and connecting across diverse communities.

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

Cambridge's use of community land trusts and inclusionary zoning to preserve affordability. A similar approach in Newburyport could help ensure housing remains accessible for generations.

(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?**

With limited taxing authority, Newburyport can expand creative revenue streams: pursuing state/federal grants, leveraging public-private partnerships, and considering home rule petitions for targeted measures like transfer fees on high-end real estate to fund affordable housing. We can also be mindful of the businesses that operate here to ensure they are bringing in local revenue.

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

Invest in teachers and classrooms by ensuring budget priorities align with student needs. For example, right now our children need more focus on soft skills and technology than ever before. Expand partnerships with cultural institutions and after-school programs, and prioritize equity so all children — regardless of background — have access to enrichment and opportunity.

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

No child should witness raids in their own neighborhood. I will support policies that limit local cooperation with ICE, invest in community-based safety programs, and ensure city services remain accessible without fear of deportation. I have already spoken with the mayor regarding this subject.

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?**

Expand green infrastructure (coastal buffers, rain gardens, tree canopy).

Reduce building and transportation emissions through efficiency standards and walkable/bikeable design.

Ensure equity by prioritizing vulnerable populations most impacted by flooding or heat. I have already suggested to the mayor directly that we should join the MA green community leader program!

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?**

Improve sidewalks, expand protected bike lanes, and explore a community bike-share program. Partner with regional transit to improve bus frequency and accessibility, making public transit a realistic option for working families.

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?**

Support ADUs and mixed-income housing, adopt fair rent stabilization tools, and incentivize housing for seniors and young families. Balance preservation with forward-looking planning so residents can stay in Newburyport throughout their lives.

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

Newburyport has made progress with rezoning for ADUs and MBTA-adjacent development. The city must continue compliance while ensuring affordability is real, not just theoretical, and that community character and sustainability are considered.

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

Protect local autonomy by advocating at the state level, securing grant funding, and ensuring that vulnerable communities are not penalized by federal cuts or directives. Build coalitions with other municipalities to share strategies.

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

I will publish clear summaries of council actions, host regular office hours, and prioritize plain-language communication so residents know what decisions mean for them. Transparency also means showing constituents why choices are made, not just the outcomes.

(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.)

I'm not running because I think something is broken — I'm running because I believe in Newburyport's strength and want to be part of continuing that greatness. My experience as a military spouse has given me a unique bond with families from all walks of life, and deep empathy for what unites us: the desire for our children to be safe, healthy, and supported.

I am not a townie, and I am not beholden to cliques or politics-as-usual. I am here to be objective, data-driven, and to amplify the voices of residents. My son inspires me to step up and be an example of civic engagement, and I would be honored to serve this community with transparency, integrity, and hope for the future.