

2021 Boston Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

As the 55th Mayor of Boston my top priority is finishing the fight against COVID – ensuring the fast and equitable distribution of the vaccine and economic assistance for communities that were hardest hit. We all know that problems brought to light by the pandemic have been here all along. This recovery is our chance to build a more equitable city that prioritizes the life and health of every resident.

We need to not only get all our students and teachers back in the classroom safely -- but must also tackle the opportunity and achievement gaps that the pandemic has only exacerbated. And we must reimagine policing in Boston to bring safety, healing, and justice to all of our neighborhoods. As we recover from pandemic - which exposed and exacerbated so many existing racial and economic inequities "We can't go back to the "old normal", we must envision and fight for a new future: one that is more equitable, just, and resilient."

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

As the first woman and first Black Mayor of Boston, I bring to City Hall, and to this race, a life experience like none of my predecessors. As a daughter of Roxbury and the South End, I understand the challenges so many of our residents are facing – from structural racism, food and housing insecurity, failing schools, and faltering public transportation, hurdles to home ownership, and fear for our family's and neighbor's safety. I understand these challenges, because I have lived them.

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I have spent my entire career battling for racial equity -- including my work in education advocacy, as the first woman to represent District 7 on the City Council, and as City Council President. And now, as Mayor, I am leading through a lens of equity, justice, and love – for every resident of Boston.

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

[This question was left blank.]

4. Which of the following groups have you chosen to reject / would reject campaign contributions from: For-profit developers, Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers?

[This question was left blank.]

(B) Racial Equity & Community Engagement

1. Name three policy changes you've been able to accomplish to advance racial justice and/or equity in the city of Boston.

COVID - As Mayor, I have been laser-like focused on addressing the health care and COVID vaccine access disparities that affect communities of color, including funding a \$1.5 million vaccine equity grant.

City Contracting - As Mayor, I've appointed a new Chief of Equity and Inclusion and hired the City's first Director of Strategic Procurement. I've also beefed up the Supplier Diversity Team with five full-time staff. And I announced the creation of the Boston Contracting Opportunity Fund.

Reimagining policing - As Mayor, I am proud to have led investment in racial equity training, the appointment of Stephanie Everett to lead OPAT, and the releasing of Internal Affairs files that have been held onto for too long. I have proposed cutting overtime by a third while increasing funding for the new cadet class to ensure our streets are safe and that our police force is more diverse.

2. What steps would you take, if elected, to engage all the diverse communities of Boston in policymaking, and what past actions of yours should give voters confidence that you will follow through?

This is work I have already started. Before I took office, I brought together a Mayoral Transition Committee made up of over 150 dedicated community, civic, and business leaders from across the City and across sectors. As Mayor, I have asked Shumeane Benford, Boston's Chief of Emergency Management and Rev. Rahsaan Hall to

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assemble a committee to set the stage for the future of the Boston Police Department and realize our vision for safety, healing, and justice. The committee will be composed of community residents, public safety advocates, and law enforcement professionals who will lead a community engagement process to define what Boston residents seek from leadership within our police force. As Mayor, I will continue to make sure that we are hearing from diverse voices from across the City in every aspect of governing.

(C) Charter Reform & Balance of Power

- 1. What do you see as the role of the City Council in our strong-mayor system?**

[This question was left blank.]

- 2. The City Council currently has very little ability to influence the budgeting process. Would you support legislation to enable line-item budgetary changes? YES/ NO**

[This question was left blank.]

- 3. Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Boston? YES/ NO**

[This question was left blank.]

- 4. Would you support changing the city charter to impose term limits for the office of Mayor in Boston? YES/ NO**

[This question was left blank.]

- 5. What, if any, other changes to the City Charter would you like to see?**

[This question was left blank.]

(D) Revenue

- 1. Do you support the PILOT Action Group's [recommendations](#) for a standing PILOT commission with community representation? YES/ NO**

[This question was left blank.]

- 2. Given state law, Boston is limited in its taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue?**

[This question was left blank.]

(E) Education

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1. What are your top priorities for reducing persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in the Boston Public Schools?

I have dedicated my career to fighting for children and promoting equity and excellence in education -- working to eliminate opportunity gaps while at MAC, on the City Council, and now as Mayor.

We need to get all our students and teachers back in the classroom safely and tackle the opportunity gaps that the pandemic has only exacerbated. We need to focus on each child – their lives in and outside the classroom – so they have the support systems they need to learn and succeed.

We need to increase the diversity of BPS teachers and administrators. As Mayor, I have worked with BPS to make sure there is an office of Office of Recruitment, Cultivation, and Diversity Programs at Boston Public Schools.

2. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes.

3. Do you support a change in BPS governance to allow Boston voters the right to elect school committee members, like every other city in Massachusetts? YES/ NO If so, what would your ideal structure be? If not, why not?

Yes. However, this should be incorporated into a Hybrid model.

4. Do you support removing police from Boston public schools? YES/ NO

Yes.

5. Do you support making a permanent change to the admissions process for Boston's exam schools? YES/ NO And if so, what would your proposed alternative system be?

Yes. I support exam school admissions policies that expand opportunities for more Boston children and as Mayor I am committed to continuing to ensure such equality and diversity.

6. What steps would you take to make universal pre-K a reality in Boston?

Universal Pre-K a critical step in ensuring education equity and helping to close the opportunity and achievement gaps. We need to expand the availability of vouchers for early childhood education programs and daycare facilities. I pledged to work with our federal and state partners, our community stakeholders, and my partners on the City Council to identify the funding necessary to make this a reality.

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(F) Public Safety

- 1. Do you support requiring the police department and other city agencies to get City Council approval before acquiring new surveillance technologies or military equipment? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 2. Do you support the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office's do-not-prosecute list and expanded approach to dealing with such low-level offenses? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Do you support ending information sharing between the Boston Police Department and ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 4. Do you support closing the loopholes in Boston's Trust Act which allow BPD to inquire about immigration status or pass information along to ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 5. Do you support shuttering the Boston Police gang database? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 6. Would you support a hard cap on overtime for individual officers? If so, what percentage of an officer's salary? YES/ NO**

Yes. And in my first budget as Mayor, I cut overtime by 30 %.

- 7. What changes to the 2017 Boston Police Patrolman's Association (BPPA) contract would you advocate for in the latest round of contract negotiations?**

We need to ensure that there is increased transparency and accountability throughout the BPD. We need to end a culture of silence that currently exists and that shields police that do wrong. The contract should support good officers and hold bad officers to account. It should promote diversity and equality throughout the force.

- 8. What current functions of the Boston Police Department should be transferred to agencies under civilian control, and what governance would you propose for them?**

We need to change how we deal with mental health crises, and as Mayor I have funded a mental health response pilot to do just that.

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We also need to increase transparency and accountability at the BPD. As Mayor, I reversed 25 years of secrecy by previous administrations by making the IA files in the Rose case available to the public. I have appointed Stephanie Everett to head the new Office of Police Accountability and Transparency - which I funded in the budget. I am requiring vetting and background checks for all BPD leadership candidates, strengthening the Department's domestic violence policy, and for the first time I am proposing a sexual assault policy to govern our police force. And I am bringing together community residents, public safety advocates, and law enforcement professionals to lead a community engagement process to define what Boston residents seek from leadership within our police force.

9. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Boston Police Department budget to reinvestment in communities? YES/ NO If so, how much?

Yes. As Mayor I have already done this by reallocating funds to focus on mental health calls and investing additional funds in creating a more diverse force. Mental health is public safety.

Housing insecurity is public safety. My administration will be investing in these critical areas to support a need for less policing and a more compassionate city response.

10. Which of the following would you support banning the use of by the Boston Police Department: Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs?

Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs.

11. Do you believe that affiliation or sympathies with white supremacist organizations among officers is a problem with BPD? YES/ NO If so, what measures would you take as mayor to combat that issue?

Yes. As Mayor, I am proud to have led investment in racial equity training and my appointment of Stephanie Everett to lead OPAT. I have also budgeted for an increase in the new cadet class to ensure our streets are safe and that our police force is more diverse -- reflecting the communities our officers serve. In the first four weeks of being Mayor, I've put accountability and transparency in the police department front and center. I will continue to lead on accountability and transparency, call out racism when and wherever we see it - this is just the beginning

12. Do you support safe consumption sites? YES/ NO

[This question was left blank.]

(G) Environment & Transportation

- 1. Do you believe Boston needs to reduce its dependence on cars, and if so, how would you propose to do so?**

This is an issue near and dear to my heart. I do not own a car. Black people spend 64 more

hours per year on public transit than their fellow White passengers -- time taken away from their families and their jobs. As a single mother, I took those buses, struggling getting the stroller up and down the stairs -- day after day. While we need to keep the pressure on our State partners to fund and manage a public transit system that works for its riders, as Mayor I'm not standing pat. I am delivering a free bus pilot that will run through a major economic corridor in our city.

- 2. What are your top three policy priorities for making Boston a climate-resilient city, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?**

This is personal to me - I grew up -- and my grandkids are growing up -- in communities that have for too long been the industrial and environmental dumping grounds of our city. We must ensure that minority communities have a seat at the table and that we address economic displacement resulting from climate change. As Mayor, I am committed to ensuring that environmental justice guides us in the equitable distribution of environmental benefits to every neighborhood in Boston. My budget includes investments ensuring equitable access to high-quality open spaces for every resident of Boston and funds to implement the City's Climate Action Plan.

The budget also includes funding for new staff to work directly with Boston residents and small businesses to make renewable energy and other climate action resources more accessible and new funds for Zero Waste and Green Jobs Training that prepare residents for future careers in a growing field.

- 3. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 4. Do you support fare-free public transit? What steps would you take to achieve this goal? YES/ NO**

Yes. As Mayor, I have already started by delivering a free bus pilot that will run through a major economic corridor in our city.

- 5. Do you support the adoption of a curbside composting pickup program? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(H) Housing

- 1. How would you expand affordable housing in Boston and ensure development without displacement?**

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I have been a leader on affordable housing, speaking out against high priced developments which are unaffordable to the people who live in those same neighborhoods, and the consequences of gentrification which drive families out of their homes. As a young single mother, I would not have been able to afford an apartment for my daughter without Section 8 housing. Residents of all incomes must have access to quality, affordable safe housing options. That is why in my first week as mayor, I announced \$50 million in desperately needed rental relief to help families stay in their homes.

I support greater development of mixed-income housing, and I believe that the city can help promote these policies. I have also voted for calling for moratoriums on evictions during the pandemic, because during such a national crisis, the worst thing that communities can be doing is throwing struggling families on the street.

2. What opportunities do you see for leveraging city-owned land for expanding affordable housing?

[This question was left blank.]

3. Do you support a real estate transfer tax for commercial and residential sales, with the revenue going to an affordable housing trust? YES/ NO What exemption threshold, if any, would you advocate for?

[This question was left blank.]

4. Do you support rent control? YES/ NO If so, how would you structure such a policy? If not, why not?

[This question was left blank.]

5. Do you support the renewal of Boston's condo conversion law, which affords residents of covered properties a notice period, right of first refusal to purchase their unit, relocation assistance, just cause eviction, and relocation benefits if their unit is converted to a condominium? YES/ NO

Yes.

6. Would you support a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance, enabling tenants to purchase a building if the owner seeks to put it on the market? YES/ NO

Yes.

7. Boston's inclusionary development policy (IDP) requires that 13 percent of the units in a building need to be affordable. Do you support increasing this number? YES/ NO If so, to what? *Please List %*

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[This question was left blank.]

- 8. Do you support requiring that a majority of new affordable units be built on-site, in order to ensure communities are diverse and integrated? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 9. Do you support breaking up the BPDA and creating an independent public office of planning? YES/ NO If so, how will you make it happen?**

[This question was left blank.]

- 10. Do you support increasing the number of units that are ADA compliant in projects that receive City funds? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(I) Economic Opportunity

- 1. What steps would you propose to reduce Boston's income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap?**

How the city spends its money is a reflection of our values. And if we are serious about closing the racial wealth gap and eliminating barriers to economic opportunity, we need to be more intentional in using our power to close the gaps in city contracting. As Mayor, I've appointed a new Chief of Equity and Inclusion and hired the City's first Director of Strategic Procurement. I've also beefed up the Supplier Diversity Team with five full-time staff. And I announced the creation of the Boston Contracting Opportunity Fund.

I've also long advocated for additional funding and support for Madison Park High School, which provides crucial pathways for young Bostonians into the trades. I've long supported the Building Pathways program, located in Nubian Square, which helps low-income residents of color find opportunities in the trades. As Mayor, I have set a goal of 5000 summer jobs for Boston teens.

- 2. Do you support requiring city contractors to give their employees at least two weeks' notice before changing their schedules and to compensate workers for late schedule changes? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Do you support ending subminimum wages for tipped workers in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

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4. How would you **enforce** the hiring goals set forth in the Boston Jobs Residency Policy (which requires that least 50 percent of the total work hours in each trade must go to *Boston* residents, at least 25 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to people of color, and at least 10 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to women)?

[This question was left blank.]

5. What targets in city contracting would you commit to for minority-owned businesses as well as Black-owned businesses in particular, and what steps would you take to realize such targets?

[This question was left blank.]

- a. Will you commit to immediately directing all City departments and quasi-city agencies to unbundle large contracts that are set to become available in 2021 and beyond in order to facilitate this? YES/ NO

Yes.

- b. Will you commit to regular reporting to track progress toward and beyond this goal? YES/ NO

Yes.

6. The cannabis industry is expected to be a major source of growth in Boston in the coming years. What steps should the City take to make sure that it grows in an equitable way, in which the communities most impacted by the drug war are able to benefit?

I was proud to be a leader in making sure that this new industry benefits those most impacted by the war on drugs. The original process for applying for marijuana licensure in the city of Boston was opaque and favored well-connected corporate entities. That's why I championed the creation of the Boston Cannabis Board, which made the licensure process more transparent and accessible for minority applicants. The ordinance I passed also requires half of all cannabis licenses in the city of Boston to be awarded to minority-owned

7. Would you support the creation of a municipal broadband network? YES/ NO

Yes.

(J) Democracy

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- 1. Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 2. Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. In 2022, Boston will engage in redistricting on the municipal level. What would an equitable redistricting process look like to you?**

We need to review the data at hand to make sure districts are drawn fairly by race, gender, and ethnicity and give the community space to be active in this process. It is important that the city's elected representation looks like the residents. We have come a long way from 20 years ago, and even from 10 years ago. Now we need to look harder at Communities of Interest and ensure that we are empowering important voting blocks.

- 4. Would you support the redrawing of Boston's wards and precincts ("reprecincting"), which has not happened in more than 100 years -- and which happens decennially in other MA cities and towns? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(K) Additional Comments