

CHAPA Housing and Community Development

General Information

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Please limit to 50 words or less.

1. What is your opinion on enacting the City's Inclusionary Development Policy as an official ordinance with a higher percentage of the units required to be affordable to Boston residents and a larger cash-out payment for developers who do not provide on-site units?

As Mayor, I would raise the inclusionary percentage to 15%, require developers to include more affordable units on-site, expand developers' pay-out obligations when not siting units on-site to pay for comparable number of units elsewhere, and move affordable housing policy from the BRA to the DND to create greater transparency.

2. Do you support increases in city resources for developing affordable housing, such as the City's Linkage Fee, maintaining a specific line item in the City Budget of at least \$10 million, and the Community Preservation Act? Please explain.

I support strong funding for developing affordable housing. It is also time to review the Linkage Fee policy to ensure it is best serving Boston's community development challenges, but the best way to expand affordable housing is to increasing inclusionary requirements as we grow the city with more housing development.

3. What will you do as Mayor to increase business opportunities for minority and women owned small businesses on housing development projects, including both professional services and construction work, as well as employment opportunities for Boston residents?

I would build on my record working with Ayanna Pressley on the Boston Residency Jobs Policy to strengthen that law, create pathways for women and minorities to enter trades careers, and implement specialized small business assistance programs focused on women and minority entrepreneurs.

4. How will you ensure that people of all incomes have housing options in neighborhoods throughout Boston?

By building more mixed housing across Boston with expanded on-site inclusionary units, encouraging more family sized units and transit oriented development, working with university partners to build house more students on-campus, and supporting elderly housing opportunities we can ensure that residents of all incomes have more housing options in Boston.

5. How would you use your leadership role to stand up for new affordable housing development in the face of opposition from a small, but vocal, number of local residents?

I have got things done by standing up for progress rather than just standing up to opponents. I brought together neighbors, developers, and large institutions to create new development, including housing with on-site affordable units to the Fenway and Mission Hill. As Mayor, I will do the same across Boston.

6. Do you support a Responsible Banking city ordinance that would mandate annual rankings of which banks are best serving Boston's neighborhoods with loans and services to first-time homebuyers, small businesses, and non-profits? Please explain.

Yes. Similar to my work publishing Boston Residency Jobs Policy data online, I believe that information about how companies doing business in - and with - Boston operate only benefits our residents. Additionally, I would encourage community-serving banks that invest in our people to replace check-cashing stores.

7. As Mayor, would you direct the Department of Neighborhood Development to link city-funded down payment assistance grants exclusively to lenders that offered ONE Mortgage Program, the state's most affordable product for first-time homebuyers, or other comparably affordable mortgage products? Please explain.

The ONE Mortgage Program is picking up where the soft-second left off: providing a trusted, affordable resource to first-time homebuyers. Any City-funded home lending assistance program should be directing participants to utilize the best and most affordable products available, including ONE Mortgage and comparable products.

8. As mayor of Boston, would you advocate for increased BRA funding for pilot green building and sustainability projects for multifamily affordable housing? Would you also support a health-based housing standard for all rehab investments made by the City that ensures the creation of healthier housing?

I will make Boston the national leader in green and healthy housing practices by codifying established practices and piloting innovative ones. Programs must approach housing as a public health issue, including mold abatement and other asthma-related conditions, fall prevention upgrades for seniors, as well as open space and walkable streets.

9. What tools and strategies would you implement to stabilize neighborhoods where owner occupants and long-term tenants are leaving due to a rising rents driven by more and more students living off campus?

For 14 years I have held institutions accountable for community impacts, working to preserve existing housing stock for working families. I would hold off signing institutional master plans until student housing goals were met. I also recently championed Boston's first privately financed dormitory, built by private developers for Northeastern students.

10. Do you support the allocation of Community Development Block Grant and other resources for comprehensive, cross-sector (housing, jobs, public safety, education) neighborhood development efforts? Please explain.

Urban community development must be an integrated web of smart strategies that compliment eachother. Utilizing CDBG funds for cross-sector solutions is an excellent use of limited funds. For instance, transit oriented mixed-use development with housing, retail space, and civic space can be a game changer in underserved neighborhoods.

11. The rental market in Boston is out of reach for low income families. How would you address this issue to assure that all Boston residents, including elders and people with disabilities, low wage workers, families, students, unaccompanied youth, and people who are homeless, can have a safe place to call home?

Increasing the supply of housing by growing our city, with more on-site affordability included, will significantly help lower rents. Increasing required inclusionary units also allows us to create deep discounts for very low income residents. We must also build more multi bedroom units to support families.

12. How will you help address the issue of foreclosures impacting our communities and help homeowners facing foreclosures stay in their homes?

Foreclosures create a destabilizing effect for the families displaced as well as surrounding neighborhoods. We must invest in programs and resources that help keep families in their homes, including individual counseling for immediate assistance and efforts like BCC's SUN Initiative that helps homeowners repurchase their homes with reduced payments.

13. What is your opinion on enacting an ordinance that enforces the upkeep and maintenance of vacant properties, including those owned by banks and mortgage companies.

I support an ordinance that enforces the upkeep of vacant properties owned by financial institutions. Blighted properties can have devastating impacts on neighboring home values and on neighborhood quality of life and banks should be held accountable for their properties and the community impacts of those properties.

14. How will your preserve affordable housing developments, whose affordabilities requirements are expiring, to maintain long term affordability to help existing tenants stay in their homes?

Boston can not afford to loose existing affordable housing to “expiring use,” and I have fought for such preservation in my own City Council district. I support the recommendations in the Tucker/Honan legislation as a means to preserve affordable housing units and protect impacted individuals, disproportionately elderly and disabled residents.

15. On May 1, 2013, the Boston Housing Authority eliminated the resident services program for over 2500 elderly and disabled residents, citing federal budget cuts. How can you ensure that residents have access to the services and supports they need and that the BHA is able to provide safe, well maintained housing to the 27,000 residents it serves?

Critical services for our elderly and disabled neighbors can not be held at the mercy of ever-dwindling federal funding. Linkage fees from new and expanded growth and housing development across Boston will support new resources for housing services. We must also build cross-sector partnerships to leverage services in our neighborhoods.

Additional Comments:

For 14 years I have used innovative ideas and a collaborative approach to revitalize neighborhoods in my City Council district, leading to new housing, small businesses, and community amenities in Mission Hill and the Fenway. Where once these neighborhoods were fraught with challenges, today they are thriving “come-back” neighborhoods. Working with neighbors, community leaders, insitutions, and the Fenway CDC, I have protected housing from expiring use, championed true community planning efforts, strengthend the Boston Residency Jobs Policy, encouraged greater on-site inclusionary units in new development, held univeristies accountable for their destabilizing impact on neighborhood housing stock, and spearheaded efforts to get Northeastern to house more students on campus. As Mayor, I would apply this extensive community and housing development experience to neighborhoods across the city. I believe that working together we can create strong, vibrant, and inclusive neighborhoods for all our neighbors in every community of Boston.