

# Tomás Gonzalez

## Affordable Housing

Future housing development efforts must be prioritized for individuals and families on the BHA waiting list with a greater emphasis on single room occupancies for men 18-50 and for affordable rental units for single mothers in transition.

## Development

There are three development projects in Jamaica Plain that I believe require additional attention and financial support. They are as follows: Jackson Square, Forest Hills T yard, and Blessed Sacrament.

## Environment and Energy

The City should set the example by aggressively replacing an aging fleet with hybrid, bio-fuel and/or electric vehicles. Furthermore, the green cab program needs to be expanded to the greater Boston area to all Taxi companies that operate within the Boston Area. Finally, the stimulus money projected for the City of Boston for the weatherization of municipal building and public housing developments need to be implemented in earnest. On the consumer side, we need to introduce Renewable Energy Payments (REP), like the ones newly in use in Gainesville Florida. REPs would allow consumers to put solar panels on their homes or install windmills on their properties, which would feed the energy back into the grid. Consumers would get paid for the energy produced.

## Youth Violence

Communication, prevention, and opportunity are biggest allies in this struggle. I would work to establish better working relationships between pre-existing partnerships, Boston school police, local law enforcement, neighborhood crime watches, community groups, parents and youth groups in order to develop real strategies for three focus areas youth employment, truancy, and neighborhood turf wars emanating from drug money. Finally, I would work with our local universities to recruit mentors for our youth in Boston public High School.

I believe every child in the Boston should graduate from high school and can succeed in whatever career path they choose, as long as, they are guided and mentored correctly; they will attain their goals. Additionally, I want to see an end to street memorials. Our children's lives are too precious to lose them to senseless violence. We need parents to act as such and take a serious role in the growth and development

of their children. Adults should not fear children but that's where we are today and that needs to change.

## Accountability, Transparency

I would publish the city budget on-line and force the BRA to adhere to community-based principles that guarantee community input and compliance in all future development projects, especially those that directly impact the quality of life of a given neighborhood. Finally, I would make sure all calls to the Mayor's constituent service line are tracked, so residents can know the status of a request and when it will be completed.

## Education

Ensuring bus routes are more efficient and make sure parents make an early determination as to whether or not their child will be using transportation on a regular and consistent basis. I would also make sure that children with special needs are transported to their schools without any disruption to their lives.

Literacy and varying learning styles are possible impediments to us closing the achievement gap. Yet nothing is more imperative than parent involvement. There is a serious lack of parent involvement not only in the schools, but also in the socio-emotional development of their children. Parents need to take an active part in nurturing the uniqueness of their children and placing them in a school environment that nurtures their unique learning styles. They need to read to their children and expose them to good learning habits as early as possible.

I would assign the school a pilot school status, hire new administrators that will work with the teachers and parents to strengthen the overall school community and raise the student expectations to one of excellence. I would also engage in an extensive and aggressive outreach strategy to the families of struggling students in the hopes of providing assistance and support for the betterment of the family and child.

## Human Services

I would fully support the "Thrive in Five" Initiative. This public/private partnership seeks to address the needs of children 0-5 ensuring their success in school. It would also provide young families with much needed support and resources, so they can raise their children in a nurturing and healthy environment.

## Transportation

1. I would demand a safer commute for riders by ridding the buses and trains of unruly and disrespectful behavior. I would also look to expand the surveillance of buses and trains.
2. I would also advocate for the increase of evening services such as the "Night Owl".

## **Jobs and Labor**

I would seek greater enforcement of the residency requirement law for Boston's building projects, so the money being invested in a given community stays there and circulates.

## **Race and Diversity**

The City of Boston should develop a new employment program for BPS juniors and seniors. This would take the form of a Mayor's Youth Council, which would devise a clear career path for these students from entry-level jobs such as administrative work to more sophisticated employment opportunities in information technology and research. These would be ideal places for students to learn and gain real work experience but more importantly provide them with career options and the city with an integrated and diverse workforce.

## **Budget Policy**

Interestingly enough, the city now has the ability to levy local taxes on hotels and restaurants as well as charging a property tax for telecommunication poles. The local options tax would allow the city to generate roughly 100 millions dollars in revenue to be used to offset the cuts to local aid received from the state. Moreover, realizing that property tax accounts for the majority of the taxes raised in the city, I would also look at larger nonprofits paying their fair share of property tax to the city for infrastructure and public safety cost.

If you were given the power to substantially reduce the budget of two city departments and increase the budget of two others by that same amount, what departments would you cut from, and which would you add to?

If given the power to reduce the budgets of two city departments, I would consider limiting the Mayor's Office from hiring special assistants and consultants and use those discretionary dollars towards strengthening the Mayor's Youth Council and creating new employment opportunities for high school students. I would also consider merging the city's recreation program and community centers into the Boston Public Schools. This would increase the presence of community centers throughout the entire city and enable the schools to provide recreational opportunities and more structured after-school time for BPS students.

## **Lightning Round (Yes or No)**

*Many workers in Boston are organizing to form unions, especially in the hospitals. Will you publicly support their efforts to organize?* **Yes**

*Do you support the death penalty?* **No**

*Do you support same sex marriage?* **Yes**

*Do you support anti-discrimination laws that protect someone from being fired, or denied housing, education, or access to public facilities (including bathrooms) based on their gender identity?* **Yes**

*Are you pro-choice?* **Yes**

*Would you support a state constitutional amendment implementing a progressive income tax?* **Yes**