

Thomas Menino

Affordable Housing

We need to continue the effort to create more housing for people of all incomes. Since the first “Leading The Way” initiative in 2000, the City of Boston has overseen the creation of more than 18,000 new units of housing — 5,000 of which have been affordable, and nearly 9,500 affordable units have been preserved. Over this ten-year period, Boston has benefited from upwards of \$5 billion in private and public investment. This year’s Leading The Way III strategy approaches Boston’s housing needs by:

1. Addressing the Foreclosure Crisis through targeted initiatives focusing on intervention.
2. Reversing the Rise in Homelessness through prevention, placement, and production of permanent housing designed to reduce long-term and family homelessness by 50% by 2012.
3. Preserving & Stabilizing Boston’s Rental Housing by preventing the loss of publically assisted affordable units.
4. Housing Boston’s Workforce by meeting the diverse housing needs of the City.

We will continue to support mixed income housing development through inclusionary zoning, disposition of city-owned properties and priority projects such as Jackson Square

Development

I am pleased to see that we’ve made some progress on Jackson Square, with Governor Patrick partnering with the City on the project. We would like to see more interest in productive development in the Forest Hills area, including housing and local shopping opportunities. We also want to keep the small business sector vital, through our Main Streets districts, as many of the jobs in JP are in these enterprises.

Environment and Energy

I’m proud that the Natural Resources Defense Council just named Boston as the top “green” city on the East Coast in its “Smarter Cities” survey. This goes along with Popular Science’s ranking of Boston as third in the nation, after Seattle and San Francisco. We were the first city in the nation to implement tough LEED standards for new building construction, we’re implementing single stream recycling throughout our neighborhoods, and we’ve enlisted numerous businesses in “Boston Buying Power”, an effort to lower energy costs through shared purchasing. We have also issued the first “green jobs” training grants, with more to come.

As we look ahead, we hope to find more appropriate locations for wind power, we will utilize more solar options, and we are now looking for the best proposals for the new Energy and Environment Block Grant from Washington.

Youth Violence

The City is working around the clock to curb youth violence in Boston. While crime is at its lowest level in some time, there is still much work to be done. Police officers, ministers and youth workers have been active in reaching out to at-risk young people in an effort to resolve any outstanding feuds and be proactive in detecting trouble. We’ve worked with private sector companies like John Hancock to give some of these youths real jobs this summer so they have an alternative to the streets. We also support the Boston Foundation’s efforts to augment city resources in these tough times with the Street Safe effort. All of us need to work together to make a difference.

The vast majority of young people in our city want to be productive citizens, so we have an obligation to give them a range of options to succeed. Boston is one of the few cities that provides summer jobs funds from its line budget, we have a number of computer literacy initiatives to reduce the gap between technology “haves” and “have nots”. We created Camp Harborview to give young people another safe place for recreation and fun while exposing them to our great harbor areas. We have also begun a partnership with local colleges to help keep more of our young people enrolled.

During my tenure, we have also created a range of new schools in Boston — including Boston Arts Academy and Tech Boston High School, which seek to give our young people more learning possibilities. We will continue to push for breakthroughs in education success through my proposal for “in-district” charter schools.

Accountability, Transparency

We need to continue our efforts to make Boston city government more accessible to city residents, not only through new technologies such as our iPhone application for calling in service requests, but also by moving government agencies closer to our constituents, as we will do by relocating the School Department and Neighborhood Development to Dudley Square. We are implementing a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system through which every call is assigned a case number and should be able eventually to track their request online.

But most important, I’m in the neighborhoods and I ask my department heads to do the same. Technology is important, but government also needs the personal touch.

Education

We have to change the transportation plan in Boston and the School Department has proposed a plan for considera-

tion. We need to work with parents to ensure that as we free up resources for the classrooms, we don't leave any student without quality options for their education.

The Boston schools have students for a limited number of hours, and we have to ensure that they are productive ones. Early education experiences are critical to a young person's success and we are expanding pre-school programming for the very young. We are also looking to improve nutrition so that students stay alert and active. And we are demanding higher teaching and learning standards to challenges our youth to succeed. We will provide remedial help in this effort, in spite of major cuts in state aid.

As noted earlier, I have proposed a system of "in-district" charter schools to revamp failing schools in Boston. We will work with the Patrick and Obama Administrations to secure approvals and funding for targeting the schools in the greatest need and finding the best educators to turn these schools around.

Human Services

We are benefitting from some federal stimulus money in these areas for expanding nutrition programs and reducing obesity. We could also expand our efforts to knock on doors in our neighborhoods and make people aware of their eligibility for a range of programs, from Food Stamps and SSI, to Mass Health. We've begun this effort, and could use more help in this regard to leverage more federal and state dollars for our residents. Funding to such critical areas as Domestic Violence, elderly services and mental health and substance abuse have been drastically cut in this State budget. If money was to become available, I would look to restore funding to programs in these areas so critical to the public health of our communities.

Transportation

For a number of years, I have advocated for the upgrade of the "Indigo" Line through Hyde Park, Mattapan, and Dorchester and I am glad that this project is moving forward, in cooperation with the City and a number of community-based organizations planning development around the new stops. The T also needs to take another look at late night hours for people who work night shifts in manufacturing or the service industry. We should also continue our support for the Urban Ring as a means of bringing people to jobs.

Jobs and Labor

We need to continue to focus on education and the key to economic success, and while we received an award from the Broad Foundation recently as the most improved school system in the country, that improvement needs to move faster. We also need to see some of the federal stimulus money and future programs used to jump start our economy. We should revive the federal "Empowerment Zone" program that brought new investment to the Newmarket area, and focus

it around areas such as Dudley Square, where there are "ready to go" projects.

Race and Diversity

The City has worked diligently for a number of years since challenges were first brought to affirmative action programs in the Richmond case, the key factor being the documentation of information as to the need for such programs. We will continue to stay in top of these developments and stay ahead of the curve on this.

The City has a more diverse workforce than ever, reflecting the changing population of our community. The McCormack Institute at UMass-Boston recently documented that Boston is one of the few cities in the country that can say this. But we will not rest, and we will continue to reach out to ensure that the city workforce "looks like Boston".

Budget Policy

While we have finally secured a meals tax from the State (still lower than most major cities), more work needs to be done. I have worked to eliminate the telecom equipment property tax exemption and successfully lobbied the Governor and Legislature for residential property tax relief through classification. Early on in my Administration, we secured legislation exempting smaller businesses from the personal property tax. So we are constantly working, not just to raise revenue, but to raise it fairly. In the future, we need to look at the biggest owner of property in the city — the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and work out a better structure for in lieu of tax payments. I did that with Massport and we have a very good arrangement with them.

I'd like to see us reduce school transportation costs and health insurance costs. As a member of the Metro Mayors Caucus (Greater Boston area mayors), we've worked for years for the right to work together to lower health insurance costs. Governor Patrick agrees with us and hopefully soon, the Legislature will too.

I've always increased the budget for education and youth in our city and would love to do more. Nothing is more important to the future of Boston.

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 — I already have.**

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**