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Affordable Housing

Future housing developments would have a mixed-use (residential and commercial) and multi-generational approach, be in proximity of public transportation, and be energy efficient.

Developments would be used not only to provide housing for residents but also to foster the growth of local businesses. In addition, residential developments would integrate people of all ages.

There is a need for housing at all income levels. Residents would be encouraged not to be content with low-income housing, but to develop and grow. By positioning the housing developments close to public transportation, residents would have easier commute to job opportunities, and thus would be able to improve to a better situation. Many families, including my own, were able to make this transition.

To be energy efficient, developments would include various approaches such as utilization of green materials, installation of solar panels for all public buildings — administrative and housing — where the structures permit, planting trees and other vegetation on flat roofs and other spaces, and other energy saving practices.

The goal is to move our city towards a community with shared values and a shared purpose.

Development

Jamaica Plain is a diverse community with many good businesses, its housing stock is well-balanced, and its residents care about each other and their neighborhood.

Therefore, future developments in JP would simultaneously preserve the distinctive quality that JP has to offer while encouraging mix-generational housing, support and improve local businesses, and incorporate green practices.

I would seek feedback of residents to determine what is best for JP neighborhood.

Environment and Energy

Everyone — the city, residents, and businesses - must strive to be more energy efficient, reduce carbon emissions, and improve the local environment. If elected, I will work to ensure that:

- All new municipal buildings are developed and constructed with green practices in mind.
- City employees are encouraged to utilize public transportation to commute to and from work.
- The Boston Public Schools kitchens would use locally-grown foods instead of foods transported from far away

locations. This would assist in the reduction of carbon emission while at the same time support the local farms/gardens.

- More bike paths would be developed and linked to all sections of our city.
- A vehicle sharing plan for city employees would be implemented.
- More energy-efficient systems (auto shut-off) would be installed in city buildings.

All efforts mentioned above would require the collaboration of everyone on all levels in our city.

Youth Violence

To ensure the safety of our youth, our city must offer programs to keep our youth engaged. We can accomplish this by:

- Extending school time and offering more after school programs such as athletics, arts and other programs through partnerships with local sports teams and other professional organizations.
- Allocating funds not only to summer jobs, but also to jobs during the school year. Additionally, we would partner with various private and public organizations to provide job opportunities and mentorship.
- Creating more neighborhood crime watch and street worker groups throughout our city.
- Forming a “pen-pal” program connecting the youth to the senior residents within our communities.

We already have the resources to implement the above recommendations. We need to re-examine the existing resources such as our schools, community centers, libraries, and other support groups. With the collaboration of the city, the parents, and our youth, these programs will be successful.

Our youth are among the most technologically-savvy and innovative group. They have the potential to be future business and world leaders. We need to cultivate this talent as our city positions itself to be the premier city of the world.

Accountability, Transparency

City government needs to be accountable and transparent. As city councilor, I would implement the following recommendations:

- **Annual performance reviews** — the performance of city department heads would be reviewed annually. Salary increases, promotions, and other incentives would be based on these reviews. The reviews would include a “360” approach — which entails feedback from their managers, peers, staff, and the residents of their area.
- **Budget line-by-line** — All expenses over a certain threshold and deemed to be material would need to be documented and be made available online to the public.
- **Open door meetings** — all city council meetings would be recorded and made available for viewing upon residents’ request.

Education

Every child in Boston has the right to a quality education. Our city needs to fund programs that would achieve this shared purpose.

When it comes to the school's transportation plan, the purpose is to lower, not eliminate, transportation costs. There are various approaches we can implement to lower transportation costs. One option would be the development of neighborhood schools. The benefits of neighborhood schools are three-fold: (1) schools close to homes would reduce transportation needs; (2) neighborhood schools will increase parental involvement; (3) savings from lower transportation costs can be used to improve underperforming schools.

While neighborhood schools offer certain benefits, we would still need to provide parents and students with different school choices to properly meet each student's educational needs.

The primary causes of the achievement gap have been shown to be attributed to major factors including inadequate parental involvement and insufficient counseling and support resources. We can close the achievement gap by improving communications among the schools, parents, and students. Additionally, we would invest more in programs that have demonstrated to work in assisting our students in dealing with academic and personal developmental issues.

One example of a program to help with students' academic obstacles would be to offer online supplemental tutorial classes.

All schools — public, charter, private, parochial — are important to our city. Rather than closing underperforming schools, we would focus on identifying areas for improvement by reviewing the existing curricula, faculty performance, students' demographics and make necessary adjustments. We would replicate the curricula that have shown to be successful. If replication is not feasible, we would explore other options. One option would be to partner with the private sector - the goal would be to build long-term relationships between the schools and the businesses to cultivate shared interests.

Human Services

Our city needs to invest more on programs for youth, women, and the elderly. The youth are an important asset to our city and therefore we must not only provide them with the basic tools such as a quality education but also the necessary developmental support to succeed. We must also invest in programs that promote the importance of women in our city; programs such as professional career mentoring and other women's advocacy programs. Lastly, we need to invest in programs for our senior residents that would keep them engaged in our communities such as a "pen-pal" program and other recreational activities.

While these three areas would be my focus, I would meet with various department heads and talk to residents to find out what other programs would require attention.

Transportation

An efficient public transportation system is essential to our city because it provides an easy commuting method for our residents and assists our city in its mission to be environmentally friendly by reducing carbon emission.

As city councilor, I would also talk to the residents and other industry experts for feedback on ways to increase efficiency and identify cost-saving methods for our public transportation system. I would be an advocate on behalf of our city to voice these concerns to the appropriate state transportation authorities.

Jobs and Labor

To reduce the unemployment and job disparities would require long-term thinking and investment. Tackling these disparities in Boston requires a two-prong comprehensive approach that includes both prevention and intervention. First, our city would focus on initiatives at the early stage. We would instill in every child the importance of having a quality education. Second, our city would provide more support programs to the adult residents to prepare them for job opportunities. These programs would include computer training, ESL assistance, and other career-related training.

Race and Diversity

City government agencies should be made up of residents with varied views, backgrounds, and experiences so that decisions would reflect the needs of all. To promote and retain diversity within its workforce, our city would focus recruiting efforts of city employees from areas with diverse demographics. Our city would make the job application process more open, inviting, and user-friendly. In addition, our city would invest more in training programs to prepare residents for different job opportunities.

Budget Policy

As city councilor, I would not be opposed to raising taxes such as the meals tax if it meant that critical city services would be continued. However, in this tough economic environment where working families and local businesses across our city are struggling, imposing a tax increase (no matter how small) would put an additional burden on them.

The ideal approach in this current situation would be to identify areas where cost savings can be effectively achieved. As city councilor, I would ensure that internal audits would be performed to identify areas to reduce unnecessary expenditures. For example, any duplication of efforts would be eliminated.

If necessary, I would explore other avenues to attain additional revenues. I would negotiate with the tax-exempt

organizations so that they would make additional contributions to share in the costs of running our city, while respecting the contractual obligations that may already exist.

After the above options have been taken, rather than eliminating any particular department, I would proportionately reduce the budgets of all departments.

Cost savings and revenues raised from implementing the above recommendations would be used to assist our schools, public safety programs, and youth programs.

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**