**2021 Cambridge City Council Questionnaire**

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1. Housing is an important issue for the City of Cambridge.
   1. How would you describe our housing challenges?

Our housing challenges in Cambridge are complex. In searching for a solution, we need to remember to keep people in the forefront – and to work towards providing residents stable and affordable housing.

* 1. What do you think are the major factors causing our housing challenges?

Rent prices in Cambridge are rising due to increasing demand for a limited supply of housing. Factors contributing to this include an influx of high-tech jobs in Kendall Square – which are located next to one of the lowest income neighborhoods in Cambridge driving gentrification. Harvard, MIT and many other area universities do not supply sufficient residence halls for their student populations which means students are competing with residents for rental units in the city.

* 1. What do you think is stopping us from addressing those challenges?

Lack of collaboration between all the parties involved in trying to solve this affordable housing crisis.

* 1. Describe concerns you might have about existing and needed infrastructure to serve our present and future housing stock, for example: aging sewer lines, electrical grid and most importantly water.

Infrastructure is one of my key concerns and addressing infrastructure insufficiencies before they occur should be a priority of the City Council. In particular, proactive infrastructure repair in lower income areas of the city should be an urgent priority. Ongoing routine maintenance of city infrastructure should be a commitment on an ongoing basis so that emergency repairs, and the cost they incur, can be minimized.

1. Climate Change is real. What changes would you like to see the city undertake to address these concerns locally? How do your views address environmental equity? How do you reconcile the issue of tree conservation and the environment when discussing development?

Environmental justice should be discussed from a more holistic point of view. Addressing environmental justice is a discussion that should include more than just planting trees and should focus on people first. Building affordable housing clearly should include planning for green spaces and planting trees. But solving for the human impact of environmental injustice, such as increased rates of asthma, high blood pressure and diabetes, should also be part of the conversation.

1. “Development” is a commonly used term of public policy. Notions of economic development evolve over time. In the current moment, ideas about development must address concerns about climate change, global capital flows and rapidly growing economic inequality.
   1. The City for decades developed commercial property to increase taxable income that allows residential tax rates to remain low compared to many other cities. Has that strategy reached its limit? If so, what should replace it?
   2. What is your view on economic development for the City of Cambridge in 2021? What kind of economic development do we need or not need?

We should continue to tax businesses in Cambridge to offset residential tax rates – but we should also take it a step further and ask businesses to partner with the community on affordable housing solutions and investment in training youth and young adults in Cambridge.

1. In recent months the Cambridge Historical Commission, Conservation Districts and Neighborhood Organizations have been criticized as obstacles to more affordable housing as well as to racial and economic diversity. Do you agree with this criticism? Please explain why.

Maintaining historical buildings in Cambridge is important but it is never ok to use NCD rules to actively avoid conforming with Affordable Housing rulings.

1. In recent months there has been an upsurge in citizen petitions (including the Donovan petition supported by the CCC and the Missing Middle Housing (MMH) petition supported by ABC) that attempt to formulate zoning, housing and related public policy. Developer upzoning - also known as contract zoning - has also been in regular use. Please describe your opinion about governing through the use of citizen petitions and contract zoning. Are there changes to the petition process that should be introduced?
2. Members of the Cambridge Planning Board have expressed frustration with existing constraints on their ability to plan. As volunteers meeting several times a month to process individual cases, members have little time and resources to engage in planning. The absence of planning guidance from this committee is likely related to the increased use of citizen petitions. How should this problem be addressed?
3. Cambridge has long been celebrated as a city that promotes racial and economic diversity. Do you believe this reputation is currently well deserved? If not, what measures would you take to promote genuine racial and economic diversity? How would you address recent issues of youth gun violence?

Cambridge continues to be “a tale of two cities”. To truly address the issue, it is important to talk directly to groups who are being marginalized. I would coordinate representatives from several groups (e.g. neighborhood leaders, CCC, ABC, CRA, Black Response, My Brothers’ Keeper, Margaret Fuller House) to discuss the issues of racial and economic diversity in Cambridge and to propose new ideas.

1. How would you increase transparency both by the City Manager and departments that report to her/him? How would you increase transparency by City Councilors?

Transparency should be part of the job description for the City Manager. Increasing transparency should include describing policy debates in laymen’s terms to people who are being impacted. I would sponsor monthly town halls to discuss important issues in such a manner.

1. Cambridge is about to hire a new City Manager. Describe your ideal City Manager for this time in Cambridge history. What qualities will you look for?

I would look for a person who is open to hearing the concerns of elected officials as well as the residents of Cambridge.

1. Recent estimates declare that over 60% of Cambridge residents are renters. How should Cambridge government address the needs of renters?

Cambridge government needs to improve tenant protections such as rent control, tenant rights to lawyers for eviction proceedings and access overall to resources for renters in distress. In addition, Cambridge needs to focus more on helping renters become owners – one example, lowering the barrier of entry to home ownership via rent-to-own programs so that renters can build equity.

1. There is always room for improvement however senior citizens in public housing receive reasonable public support. What is your plan to enable and support seniors living independent of public senior housing settings?

I support the initiation of programs for seniors to supplement independent living in their own homes. Cambridge should also look at programs to enhance food insecurity for independent seniors.

1. What question do you wish we had asked you but did not? How would you answer it?

N/A