2021 MAYORAL CANDIDATE SURVEY RESPONSES TO GREATER BOSTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST NETWORK’S 9-POINT POLICY PLATFORM

GBCLTN is hosted by Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. For more information, visit our webpages at dsni.org or contact mmcmahon@dsni.org
# 1. Establish a Community Land Trust Fund for preservation of affordable housing and community priorities in perpetuity: $5 million to be replenished annually to support CLTs to use creative community-controlled strategies to stabilize our communities.

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

**John Barros - YES**

As Executive Director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, I led the creation of the largest urban land trust in the country, leading to the creation of hundreds of affordable homes and protecting residents from eviction in Roxbury and Dorchester. Under my leadership, Dudley Neighbors, Inc (DNI) established itself as the largest urban community land trust in the country. DNI acquired over half of the 1,300 vacant lots in the neighborhood and converted 36 acres into 225 homes, gardens, parks, playgrounds, schools, a community center, and a greenhouse.

As Mayor, I will create a fund that supports the acquisition of land and creation of affordable housing by community land trusts. Land trusts are a great way to improve housing affordability for low-income families and people of color. They also give communities greater ownership stake over the future of their neighborhoods. But they don’t form overnight, and residents can’t do it alone. As Executive Director I organized residents to make sure we had a blueprint for the neighborhood we wanted to create. I worked closely with the City and BPDA to use tools like eminent domain and 121A. And then brought developers to the table who aligned with our vision and could help make this neighborhood a reality. As Mayor, I will create a fund to support the growing community land trust movement in Boston, and direct planning resources and technical assistance to help residents and organizations move this process along. We must take measurable steps to prevent displacement and create local ownership.

As the Chief of Economic Development, I spearheaded a pilot effort in Upham’s Corner in partnership with DSNI and the Dudley Neighbors Inc. and community leaders to acquire two former bank branches to build on the community vision for an Arts and Innovation District. The result was an ongoing effort to build affordable housing and commercial space, paired with the Strand Theatre and a new Upham's...
Corner Library. This ambitious vision can be replicated in neighborhoods across the city with an acquisition fund and partnership with community land trusts to acquire underutilized properties and create additional affordable housing opportunities without displacement.

**Andrea Campbell - YES**

We need to ensure that community priorities are the lens with which we do all of our development and CLTs are a big part of making that happen. I was proud that my first legislation on the Council was the Community Preservation Act, which generates millions of dollars annually for affordable housing, historic preservation, and greenspace. I will continue to lead as mayor to ensure our neighborhoods see the development that best fits the needs of residents and that every resident can afford to live in our city.

**Annissa Essaibi-George - YES**

YES. I believe that Community Land Trusts are an important tool to address the affordable housing crisis in Boston in partnership with community based organizations. I support increasing access to public funding for land acquisition to ensure CLTs have the resources to grow and expand affordable housing and stabilize neighborhoods. The future of our neighborhoods must be shaped by the voices of our residents.

**Michelle Wu - YES**

We need a strong social housing sector, including community land trusts, to bring the costs, management, and capital investments of housing under collective control and deliver greater stability, affordability, and climate resiliency. CLTs have a long history in Boston of creating greater social support and civic engagement, reducing our carbon footprint, and strengthening housing stability and safety.

Supporting CLTs is part of our Green New Deal and Just Recovery agenda for Boston, and as Mayor, I’ll direct DND to grow our social housing sector by providing direct financial support to CLTs, as well as seed grants, low-interest loans, technical and legal advice, and connection to building and sustainability experts. We can also support CLTs through tax incentives, zoning and permitting incentives, such as structuring city deed restrictions and ground leases to provide preferential options for conversion to cooperative or CLT structures.

Shifting ownership to permanent affordability and community control ensures shared prosperity and opportunity in interlinked ways, especially for children, and the City can be doing much more to support and grow our CLTs. I’m committed to expanding Boston’s financial support and other forms of assistance for CLTs as part of our Green New Deal.

When making budgetary decisions, I need to see all the information on Boston residents’ current needs and our future financial projections to ensure an integrated, intersectional approach, but will aim for this goal to recognize the centrality of community land trusts as part of our community stabilization efforts.
#2. Increase funds and per unit guidelines for the Acquisition Opportunity Program: Raise the allocation up to a maximum of $300,000 per unit, and index with market.

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

John Barros - YES
Yes, this initiatives would provide more available funding for developers to purchase occupied rental units, increasing the supply of affordable units for a longer period.

Andrea Campbell - YES
The acquisition piece is so important and I am fully committed to working with you and other community partners to expand AOP.

Annissa Essaibi-George - YES
YES. Supporting community-led development is critical to ensuring that Boston residents can continue to afford to live in our City and to preventing displacement of our residents. In order to truly support community-led development, we must address the barriers to accessing financial capital faced by community organizations and nonprofits. As Mayor, I support expanding our Acquisition Opportunity Program as part of the City’s efforts to address the housing crisis. By supporting and investing in community-led development, we can ensure our residents have a real seat at the table in the growth of our City.

Michelle Wu - YES
From my conversations with housing advocates and experts, particularly those in the social housing sector, it’s clear that the Acquisition Opportunity Program is not structured in such a way to meaningfully ease speculative pressure on our housing market. I support raising the per-unit allocation, and I also support updates to the program to incentivize permanent affordability, beyond the typical 30-year agreements and 20-year extensions. We also need to increase the number of affordable housing developers that participate in the program with a focus on securing the participation of community land trusts and minority-owned firms.
#3. Emphasize preservation in creating IDP Offsite Affordable Housing partnerships: In addition to CTAB demands to increase IDP resources and target deeper affordability, establish a priority for CLTs and acquisition of scattered site preservation using offsite IDP resources

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

John Barros - YES
As mayor, I will work with the Neighborhood Housing Trust and incorporate other innovative strategies that will increase the supply of affordable housing.

Andrea Campbell - YES
We need to increase IDP and strengthen the IDP transfer program for off-site development.

Annissa Essaibi-George – YES
YES. While on-site affordable housing is preferable, it is critical that we maximize the opportunity for community development and truly affordable housing for every off-site housing project.

Michelle Wu - YES
Preservation of affordable housing must be a central part of our city’s housing strategy, particularly given the accelerated speculative pressure and soaring home sales prices over the last couple of years. I’ve laid out a housing plan that includes a commitment to reform the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) to increase the required number of affordable units, put more emphasis on housing for residents at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI), and require that a majority of new affordable units be built on-site to ensure communities are diverse and integrated. When considering off-site units, we need a new strategy to ensure that affordable units are created and maintained in accordance with community needs.

Creating a preference for CLTs in IDP resource allocation will help stabilize communities, but I also believe that housing is too essential to be left solely to the private market while reforms to IDP are necessary to ensure Boston’s development benefits all our communities, we must also lean in with our capital budget and public resources to preserve and grow our social housing sector.
# 4. Pair affordable preservation projects with project-based vouchers for operating subsidy: Prioritize vouchers for CLT/non-profit owned and permanently affordable housing, and assign Project Based Vouchers to at least half of total unit count of CLT acquired properties.

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

**John Barros - YES**

Yes, I would commit to exploring how this can be done to provide more services for the most vulnerable residents, lower barriers to secure housing in a tight housing market, and create more mixed-income and affordable housing throughout Boston.

**Andrea Campbell - YES**

I am fully committed to prioritizing vouchers for CLT and non-profit owned affordable housing.

**Annissa Essaibi-George – YES**

YES. The Boston Housing Authority has a waitlist of approximately 48,000 while only housing 800 families a year, which demonstrates the urgent need to invest in alternative solutions to meet the rising demand for low-income housing. I support prioritizing project-based vouchers in preservation development projects as a means of increasing our supply of affordable housing and our voucher program for low income families.

**Michelle Wu - YES**

Without an ongoing operating subsidy, CLTs are limited in the amount and degree of truly affordable rental housing they can provide for Boston residents. Successful affordable preservation projects often cobble together financial resources from a diverse group of sources at City, state, federal level, as well as private sources. Making project based vouchers available to residents living in social housing can make these preservation projects more achievable, therefore scaling up the impact of CLTs across Boston.
# 5. Using PILOT, incentivize or mandate hospital endowments for affordable housing investment: Include priorities for deep affordability (30% AMI and lower) and permanent affordability through CLTs.

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

**John Barros – YES**

As Mayor, I will work with the community and PILOT institutions to set clear expectations and guidelines for fulfilling PILOT community benefit obligations, including prioritizing the creation and preservation of affordable housing through supporting CLTs and other means.

During my tenure as Chief of Economic Development, I was not just focused on attracting large businesses, I also partnered with existing businesses and organizations to identify engagement opportunities to partner on pursuing our shared goals, such as encouraging hospitals and educational institutions to embrace local and equitable procurement practices and directing funding towards workforce development to build local talent for jobs. As Mayor, I will build upon these conversations to ensure that pilot payments are directed to meet our city’s affordable housing needs.

**Andrea Campbell - YES**

We have many tools in our toolkit for generating new affordable housing and preserving affordability, and engaging our PILOT institutions in addressing our affordability crisis is essential.

**Annissa Essaibi-George – YES**

YES. One of my top priorities as Mayor is building more affordable housing in the city, so every family that wants to live here can afford to. Since arriving on the Council, I have been leading the charge to reconvene the PILOT Task Force, and I think a lot of that money should go towards building more housing. Today, our institutions are not living up to their requirements despite owning almost half of the land in Boston. On the Council, I have partnered with Councilor Edwards on PILOT reform to update the payment formula and community benefits requirements for our institutions and would continue that work as Mayor. In my first hundred days, I will reconvene the PILOT Task Force, update our PILOT agreements, and build an office dedicated to institutional compliance and transparency to ensure equity for the tax paying residents of Boston.

**Michelle Wu - YES**

I’ve laid out a housing plan that prioritizes community stability by building and preserving housing that is truly affordable to Boston residents. This requires reforming IDP to increase the affordable housing requirement, lower the square feet threshold, put more emphasis on housing for residents at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI), and require that a majority of new affordable units be built onsite to ensure communities are diverse and integrated, and I’m also committed to growing our social housing sector through our capital budget and federal and state funding allocations.
PILOT is another tool in our toolbox to stabilize communities and make housing truly affordable to Boston residents. As Mayor, I will work with the leaders of Boston’s tax-exempt institutions who have not met the PILOT request to better understand the financial footing they are on, particularly in light of the impact that the COVID pandemic has had on many of their institutions, and work together to ensure they are meeting their obligations while tailoring community benefits agreements to the particular strengths of the institution and the particular needs of Boston communities.

For hospitals in particular, directing PILOT payments to social housing holds great promise to accelerate progress towards Boston’s housing goals while also ensuring stronger healthcare delivery and better healthcare outcomes. Housing is a powerful social determinant of health, and as Mayor, I’ll bring all of Boston’s healthcare leaders to the table to maximize our investment in deeply affordable housing.

#6. Work toward a centralized system, common priorities and processes for disposition of all public land: (a) Formalize a priority for CLT involvement in the disposition of public parcels; (b) Create a centralized system to document/inventory all publicly owned land; (c) Establish a land bank with participatory community oversight

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

**John Barros – YES**

A centralized system will require close partnership with BPDA who owns much of the publicly owned land in the City. As the former Chief of Economic Development, I am the most qualified candidate to manage relationships and departments necessary to bring all publicly owned land under one system.

While centralizing the system increases transparency and access to opportunities, the City and BPDA must prioritize land disposition in a way that supports our collective values. As Chief of Economic Development, I pioneered the effort to include requirements for the inclusion of Diversity and Inclusion Plans in responses to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in the disposition of public land to increase participation from woman- and people of color- owned firms. As Mayor, I will continue to evaluate and look for opportunities to strengthen the alignment of disposition to our values.

**Andrea Campbell - YES**

We need to increase transparency and communication when it comes to our city’s vacant lots. I was proud to start a Vacant Lot initiative that is currently activating 30 City-owned vacant lots on Blue Hill Ave for housing and mixed-use development, that empowers residents to be part of the planning process with how these parcels are used. Building new housing that is truly affordable for our residents would be my top priority for these sites, including through CLT partnership.
Annissa Essaibi-George – YES

YES. The City of Boston should leverage public land for public good, whether that be building affordable housing, investing in public spaces, or creating facilities that can be accessed by all of our residents. As Mayor, my top priority is making sure our development process is conducted with full transparency and in partnership with the community. We must make it easier to identify vacant lots to ensure we are realizing existing opportunities to increase affordable housing and allow for community-led development of our neighborhoods. As Mayor, I am committed to increasing transparency in our data systems and improving the ability for residents to interface with all of our City departments. I also believe the City can do more to ensure vacant land doesn’t remain vacant for too long. We can do this by creating and implementing incentives to build and placing a timeline on permits given out by the City.

Michelle Wu - YES

Several years ago, I released a detailed framework for why and how we need to restructure the development process in Boston. Moving forward, we need a fully-resourced public planning department to work in partnership with community to shape our future. Any policies for public land must first consider a public use for the land, administered by the City or community organizations through a community land trust. In cases where the City disposes land to a private party, contracts should ensure that public needs are met, for example, by imposing significant affordability requirements on market rate residential construction, implementing standards for the provision of green spaces, or creating owner-occupied homeownership opportunities. Land disposition, leasing, and property management decisions should not be made in isolation, but with full assessment of the impacts on the surrounding community.

#7. Work with CLTs to turn more private homes into permanently affordable housing: (a) Support CLTs with resources to purchase land and deed restrictions from existing homeowners; (b) Create a pathway focused on seniors to end predatory offers; (c) facilitate transfer of property to CLTs, and provide in-home care services

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

John Barros – YES

As Mayor, I will create a fund that supports the acquisition of land and creation of affordable housing by community land trusts. I will also create a fund to support the growing community land trust movement in Boston, and direct planning resources and technical assistance to help residents and organizations move this process along.

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I will also work to strengthen the Social Safety Net for Boston Seniors. More than one in five Boston seniors live in poverty, and 28 percent receive public assistance of some kind. I will work to make sure that no Boston senior is retiring into poverty, and will build systems that connect them with all of the benefits to which they are entitled. I also know that for seniors who want to stay in their homes, caregiver support is essential. I will work toward solutions that will advance this, like paid leave for family members who are providing these services, and affordable and accessible home health care for those who don’t have family available. I will convene a cross-departmental task force including to explore all of the ways we can help our seniors age strong in Boston.

**Andrea Campbell - YES**

We need to ensure that our seniors can age in their homes with dignity, ensure that we create more homeownership opportunities for first time homebuyers, and that we create pathways for more families to stay in the neighborhood.

**Annissa Essaibi-George – YES**

YES. The City of Boston should leverage public land for public good, whether that be building affordable housing, investing in public spaces, or creating facilities that can be accessed by all of our residents. As Mayor, my top priority is making sure our development process is conducted with full transparency and in partnership with the community. We must make it easier to identify vacant lots to ensure we are realizing existing opportunities to increase affordable housing and allow for community-led development of our neighborhoods. As Mayor, I am committed to increasing transparency in our data systems and improving the ability for residents to interface with all of our City departments. I also believe the City can do more to ensure vacant land doesn’t remain vacant for too long. We can do this by creating and implementing incentives to build and placing a timeline on permits given out by the City.

**Michelle Wu - YES**

Nearly half of Boston’s seniors own their own home, but while the vast majority state a desire to remain in their own homes as they age, only 59% believed they would be able to do so due to rising housing costs. We must make it easier for Boston seniors and others living on fixed incomes to stay in their homes, while at the same time making it possible for younger and less-capitalized Boston residents to purchase a home or secure permanently affordable, energy-efficient housing through a CLT or a cooperative. My housing plan includes a commitment to use creative seller financing combined with a life estate to provide a mechanism for younger buyers to buy out senior homeowners while allowing them to remain in their own homes. I’ve also laid out a plan to finance the conversion of owner-occupied properties to social housing, including limited equity housing co-ops and community land trusts, which allow residents to build wealth while stemming the risk of displacement embedded in the speculative market. Finally, I believe we need to expand our existing housing assistance and education programs to include collective ownership and tenancy in common arrangements, which hold promise for multigenerational families and other non-traditional homes by allowing two or more households to divide the costs of ownership and keep monthly payments more affordable.
# 8. Support urban farms, affordable commercial and open space: (a) Double City funds for DND to support ecological agriculture and food forest development of open space; (b) Lead an initiative to develop 25 new urban farms by 2025; (c) Work with CLTs to stabilize and grow small businesses by providing property acquisition funding, low interest loans, and technical support.

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

John Barros – **YES**

To me, urban agriculture, open space, and affordable commercial space are critical components of thriving and vibrant neighborhoods and have long been part of my approach to sustainable economic development. As Executive Director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, our historic neighborhood revitalization effort supported the efforts by neighbors to create parks, community gardens, and urban agriculture, including the building of a 10,000 sq. ft. greenhouse at the center of an urban agriculture ecosystem right on Dudley Street. All of this ultimately ensures clean air and water and protects our community from climate impacts like extreme heat and power outages. As Executive Director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, I oversaw the creation of parks, community gardens, and urban agriculture.

As Executive Director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, I fought for small businesses in the neighborhood by making sure owners had access to resources needed to operate effectively. As Chief of Economic Development, I continued to advocate for small business owners by making sure they received help through millions of US HUD grant funded technical assistance, signage and facade improvement, and access to capital they needed to thrive in Boston. I also established the Economic Development Center to provide targeted access and approach for minority, women, and immigrant owned businesses. Finally, I worked to ensure employee-owned companies and worker cooperatives could access City programs. Last year I led the effort to help small businesses that had been impacted by COVID-19 with over $20 million in immediate relief. I have provided invaluable support by helping small businesses navigate the evolving financial assistance landscape.

In addition to residential displacement, commercial displacement also erodes our neighborhood fabric. As Chief of Economic Development, I worked with businesses, non-profits, and artists facing eviction after their buildings were acquired to find long term solutions. As Mayor, I will develop guidelines for affordable commercial spaces and advocate for State policies and resources to support local small businesses and the organizations that make our communities vibrant.

Andrea Campbell - **YES**

As mayor, I will work with community partners to identify underutilized parcels and vacant lots that the City could transform into parks, community gardens, and sites for urban farming, building on work I’ve already done with residents in my district creating new parks with CPA funding (on Norwell St in...
Dorchester) and supporting urban farms. I will also work with partners like you to think through how we can build more mixed use parcels for affordable housing and ground level retail to meet the needs of our residents.

**Annissa Essaibi-George – YES**

YES. I believe we must address access to green space and parks through a racial equity lens and recognize the persistent inequalities that exist within the quality of parks in different neighborhoods. As Mayor, I will continue to create new parks and open spaces, and invest in and improve the quality of existing ones, especially in our low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. I will work in partnership with community stakeholders to ensure our residents have equitable access to safe and high quality open space. As a small business owner, I know first-hand the importance of affordable commercial space, especially as we continue to recover from the devastating impact of the pandemic on our local economy.

**Michelle Wu - YES**

A healthy city requires not just affordable housing, but also connected neighborhoods with stimulating streetscapes, a diversity of businesses, and open and green space, including urban farms. Boston’s CLTs have a rich history of organizing for community control in the face of absentee landlords, successfully turning toxic empty lots into thriving urban farms, community spaces, and affordable housing.

I’ve laid out a food justice agenda to expand urban agriculture across Boston and ensure all residents have access to fresh, nutritious, locally grown, and culturally relevant food. We can use tax incentives or vacant lot registry fees to encourage private landowners to transfer non-buildable vacant lots to aspiring farmers, with a preference for CLTs and other cooperative structures, based on a successful program in Pittsburgh. In coordinating land transfers, the City should give preference to CLTs and other organizational structures that ensure the permanent community control of land, including by offering administrative and financial support to new and established CLTs.

Urban agriculture projects could be financed by green bonds, like in Washington DC, or through land value capture mechanisms, which recover a portion of the private property value increases that result from having a thriving urban farm nearby. We need concrete mechanisms for collaboration among public agencies to set meaningful goals for urban agriculture that maximize civic benefit, including climate resilience and food justice.

CLTs and other cooperative structures also have a meaningful role to play in preserving and growing our diverse local businesses. On the City Council, I’ve been leading the conversation around how the City can support worker-owned cooperatives, ESOPs and other democratically-run businesses, as well as traditional businesses seeking to convert to a cooperative structure, including through technical assistance and loan guarantees.
#9. Advocate for increased resources and anti-displacement policies at the state level: (a) Real Estate Transfer Fee (HD 1911 and SD 565); (b) Housing and Environment Revenue Opportunities (HD 1252, SD 611); (c) Tenants’ Option to Purchase Act (TOPA, HD2984 and SD 1672); (d) in addition, move vacant or misused state-owned land into community control through CLTs.

All candidates that filled out the survey support the above proposal. Comments are below.

John Barros – YES

I was part of the team that supported the Walsh Administration to advocate for strong anti-displacement policies at the State, including a real estate transfer fee, TOPA, The Jim Brooks Stabilization Act (Just Cause Eviction), and tenants’ right to counsel. As a senior Cabinet member, I was part of the team that created the Office of Housing Stability and I commit to increase funding.

Additionally, throughout my time as Chief of Economic Development, I partnered with community based organizations to further anti-displacement efforts. Through shared data and analysis we were better able to understand displacement risks in the community and examine how direct anti displacement housing efforts could be supported by City planning efforts, increased access to transportation like the Fairmount Line, and workforce development.

To effectively combat displacement, City and State partnership is critical. As Mayor, I will build upon the relationships I made with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to advocate for increased State resources and anti-displacement efforts and continue to work with community partners and advocates to amplify anti-displacement efforts for Boston.

Andrea Campbell - YES

We need to work with state leaders to get the funding our city needs to address the affordability crisis.

Annissa Essaibi-George – YES

YES. During my time on the Council, I have been proud to partner with my colleagues to advocate for the passage of these bills to address the housing crisis. Boston is in a housing affordability crisis and we need to take steps to reduce the amount of real estate speculation occurring in our neighborhoods. We need to incentivize investing in our city for the long term. We also desperately need funds for affordable housing in Boston. Raising revenue on large real estate transactions can be an initial step towards resolving some of the issues we face.

Michelle Wu - YES

As mayor I will organize for state action and advocate for the steps we must take to stem displacement, strengthen community ownership, and build the resources needed to invest in deeply affordable housing and neighborhood stabilization. I support the real estate transfer fee legislation previously advanced by the Boston City Council. Passage of HD.1911/SD.565 would enable the City of Boston to
enact this legislation and support the creation of affordable housing. The passage of SD.611/HD.1252 will create a significant boost in the resources that we need to invest in affordable, climate resilient housing.

Energy efficient homes can improve indoor air quality and safety, lower residents’ energy consumption and utility bills, and accelerate Boston’s progress towards our climate goals. Yet in Boston, lower-income communities lack access to the benefits of energy efficiency and the resulting cost reductions and health benefits. By aligning housing policies with our climate goals, we can meet the urgency of these overlapping crises while improving the quality of life for Boston residents.

I have supported the renewal of Boston’s condo conversion law, which affords residents of covered properties a notice period, right of first refusal to purchase their unit, relocation assistance, just cause eviction, and relocation benefits if their unit is converted to a condominium.

I would also support TOPA, HD.2984 and SD.1672. In my Housing Justice plan, we include reforms to the public land disposition process to produce better economies of scale and cost savings, which can then be passed on to ensure lower rents and home sales prices for residents. As mayor I will work to make this happen in Boston and am in full support of legislative efforts which would achieve similar aims in the context of property owned by the state.