

2025 Boston Mayoral Candidates Share Their Vision for the City's Built Environment



Photo courtesy Phyliss St-Hubert.

Incumbent Mayoral Candidate Michelle Wu



Photo courtesy Brandon Schuetz.

Mayoral Candidate Josh Kraft



As part of our ongoing commitment to a more equitable, sustainable, and well-designed Boston, the Boston Society for Architecture (BSA) invited all candidates in the 2025 Boston mayoral race to respond to some key questions about the city's built environment.

At the BSA, we believe architecture and design are powerful tools for improving quality of life. Our work is rooted in the core values of equity, environmental responsibility, and the advancement of architecture. From affordable housing and climate resilience to public space and infrastructure, decisions about the built environment directly shape the daily experiences of Boston residents.

The goal of this survey is to better understand how each candidate plans to address the city's most pressing challenges through the lens of the built environment.

We urge all eligible voters to participate in the upcoming election, both the primary in September and the general election in November. Your voice helps shape the future of Boston.

What's in this guide?



Voter Information

4

Registration

Key Dates

Meet the Mayoral Candidates

5

Michelle Wu

Josh Kraft

Questionnaire Responses

6

Question 1. Consider a recently built project or public space. How does it reflect your vision for a city that is accessible, inclusive, and safe for all residents? How will your administration address historic inequities in the public realm? 6

Question 2. How will your administration prioritize and fund resilience efforts, particularly in frontline neighborhoods like East Boston, Dorchester, and the Fort Point Channel? 7

Question 3. How will you ensure climate adaptation investments also advance racial and economic equity? 8

Question 4. How will your administration address Boston's housing affordability crisis through zoning and land use reform? What specific tools will you use to expand housing options at a range of income levels? 9

Question 5. What lessons from these projects will guide your administration's approach to balancing long-term public benefit and affordability? How will you apply those lessons when navigating the often competing interests of private property owners and communities historically excluded from development decisions? 10

Question 6. How will you ensure that the City's procurement processes for large-scale development projects allow equitable access for firms of all sizes, especially minority- and women-owned practices? 11

Question 7. How will your administration ensure that residents, particularly those most affected by displacement pressures and environmental injustice, have a real voice in shaping Boston's built environment? What models of civic engagement do you plan to strengthen or adopt? 12

Question 8. How would you work with the BSA and the broader architecture and design community to ensure that future development reflects the public interest, advances equity, and promotes long-term sustainability? 13

Voter Information



Registration



Automatic registration

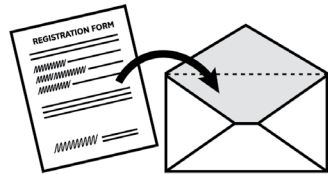
You may already be [registered](#) if you opted in when signing up for health care through the state, applied for or renewed a driver's license, state ID, or learner's permit with the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Check your registration status

Check your voter status before trying to register to save yourself a little time. You can do that online [here](#).

Register online

The Massachusetts secretary of state's website gives you the option to register online. [Click here](#) to register or update your details.



Mail-in forms

If you're more comfortable with filling out a form, you can download one [here](#) in multiple languages, fill it out and mail it in.



Key Dates

September 9, 2025: Preliminary Municipal Election (7 AM – 8 PM)

Voter Registration Deadline is **August 30**. [More information here](#).

Early Voting **August 30, 31, September 2-5**. [More information here](#).

November 4, 2025: Municipal Election (7 AM – 8 PM)

Voter Registration Deadline is **October 25**. [More information here](#).

Early Voting **October 25-31** (sites, times to be determined). [More information here](#).

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Meet the Mayoral Candidates



Who is running for office?

A complete list of candidates for mayor in the preliminary municipal election is available online: www.boston.gov/election



Michelle Wu

District 5

Mayor Michelle Wu is working to make Boston a home for everyone.

Since taking office, she has invested more in making housing affordable than any other administration in Boston's history. In her first full year as mayor, gun violence fell to the lowest level on record—and has continued to fall every year since. She promised a summer job to every BPS student who wanted one—and delivered, and has expanded Universal Pre-K to serve more children and families than ever before.

As a Boston Public Schools mom, a daughter of immigrants, and an MBTA commuter, Mayor Wu is investing in building community for Boston's brightest future.

Official campaign website: michelleforboston.com



Josh Kraft

District 1

Josh Kraft has spent 35 years working in the communities of Boston. Most recently, Josh was President of the New England Patriots Foundation, and for three decades before that worked with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, including 12 years as its President and CEO. In 1993, he founded the Boys & Girls Club in Chelsea when the city and its schools were in state receivership. Unanimously selected to serve as the Boys & Girls Club of Boston's President and CEO in 2008. Josh also co-chairs the Hate Crimes Task Force for Massachusetts.

Official campaign website: joshforboston.com

On the following pages, you'll find the full unabridged responses from each candidate.

Please note: We did not receive responses from two of the running candidates, Robert Cappucci and Domingos DaRosa.



Question 1

Questionnaire Responses

Consider a recently built project or public space. How does it reflect your vision for a city that is accessible, inclusive, and safe for all residents? How will your administration address historic inequities in the public realm?



Michelle Wu

Four years ago, I wrote about the special role Franklin Park plays in Boston—a place where everyone feels welcome, where residents come together to enjoy nature, celebrate community, and take part in everything from walking trails and picnics to golf, tennis, and cultural events. Today, at the close of my first term as Mayor, I'm proud to say we have delivered an unprecedented level of investment in Franklin Park—the crown jewel of Boston's Emerald Necklace—after more than 60 years of underinvestment.

At the center of this transformation is the revitalization of White Stadium. For decades, BPS student-athletes and residents had to make do with a facility that was outdated and inaccessible—open only from 8 AM to 4 PM on weekdays, leaving evenings and weekends closed off. With a new lease with the Boston Legacy women's professional soccer team, that changes fundamentally. White Stadium will now serve as a state-of-the-art hub for BPS athletics and community use, with a guarantee of at least 15 hours of access every day, seven days a week, year-round. This more than triples the time available to students and residents, creating reliable opportunities for practice, games, and recreation that never existed before. For the first time, the stadium's new indoor and outdoor amenities—including public restrooms, water fountains, improved pathways, and upgraded lighting—will also remain open to park users every day, not just during games.

This agreement sets a new benchmark for public-private partnerships. It embeds legal commitments for ongoing maintenance, establishes a dedicated Franklin Park Preservation Fund to implement the Franklin Park Action Plan, and provides a \$500,000 annual investment for community organizations in surrounding neighborhoods, growing 3% each year. On top of this, we secured historic workforce and supplier diversity commitments—50% MWBE participation across design, construction, and operations—while generating up to 500 construction jobs and 300 permanent jobs for Boston residents.

All of this builds on the Franklin Park Action Plan, released in 2022 after three years of extensive community feedback. That plan now serves as our guiding light, ensuring that every investment honors the vision shaped by residents while building a park that is equitable, inclusive, and accessible. We are already putting resources behind implementation: expanding the Shattuck tennis courts, launching community-led design for the Overlook and the Elma Lewis Playhouse, making the Bear Dens safer and more accessible, and studying improvements along Circuit Drive to strengthen safety and connectivity throughout the park.

To steward this generational investment, we appointed Boston's first-ever Executive Director of Franklin Park, Luis Perez Demorizi, to coordinate long-term care and

programming. We have also expanded a new crew of six dedicated maintenance staff—including a natural areas team that manages invasive species, restores wilderness, and educates local residents about ecological stewardship. These efforts represent the most significant reinvestment in Franklin Park in more than half a century.

At the same time, we are elevating Franklin Park's cultural identity. In partnership with the Boston Society of Landscape Architects, we launched the park's first-ever poster contest—submissions due September 1—modeled after traditions in other major U.S. parks that highlight cultural icons and bring renewed attention to these beloved spaces. Alongside partners like the Franklin Park Coalition and city agencies, we are developing new ways to celebrate the park's role as a cultural landmark and ensure long-term investment aligns with the values of the Franklin Park Action Plan.

Franklin Park is the heart and lungs of Boston. Our work here reflects a larger vision: building a city that is accessible, inclusive, and safe for all residents by addressing long-standing inequities in the public realm. By pairing community-driven design with historic levels of capital investment, we are advancing public health and sustainability, strengthening neighborhood vibrancy, and creating new opportunities for residents, workers, and students to enjoy Franklin Park year-round. Franklin Park is both a model and a promise—proof that we can honor Boston's history while building the inclusive, public realm our future demands.



Josh Kraft

Martin's Park on the Fort Point Channel is a powerful example of what it looks like to create a public space that is accessible, inclusive, and safe for all residents. Built during the Walsh administration, it was designed with universal access in mind, ensuring that children and families of all abilities could enjoy the waterfront together. The park shows how thoughtful design can both honor community values and provide resilience against climate impacts like flooding. At the same time, it highlights the need to extend this level of investment to neighborhoods that have historically been overlooked. My administration will take the lessons of Martin's Park, accessibility, resilience, and community-centered design, and make them the foundation of how we reimagine public spaces across Boston.



Question 2

Questionnaire Responses

How will your administration prioritize and fund resilience efforts, particularly in frontline neighborhoods like East Boston, Dorchester, and the Fort Point Channel?



Michelle Wu

Boston's waterfront belongs to everyone, and we have more work to do for the harbor, waterways, and 47 miles of coastline to be clean and resilient, beautiful and welcoming, and connected to the economic and community needs they can uniquely serve.

Boston is especially vulnerable to climate change, and our administration will continue to use every possible tool to protect Boston residents, homes, and businesses from sea level rise and storm surge. Our administration created Boston's first Office of Climate Resilience to provide a centralized leadership structure and elevate the urgency of climate action across City government. This team is acting urgently to advance projects outlined in Climate Ready Boston to mitigate flood risk and protect residents. Boston is an international engine of science and innovation, and Boston researchers and entrepreneurs are leading the fight to develop the new tools and technologies that will power our city's sustainable future—from innovation led by Stone Living Lab and SeaAhead and New England Aquarium's BlueSwell program.

But Boston's waterfront is so much more than a climate issue—our city was built on 395 years and counting of history as a safe harbor fueled by maritime uses and our coastal ecosystem. Tapping into the recreation, transportation, and economic potential of our waterfront will help build thriving, connected communities anchored in good-paying jobs and treasured coastal connection for generations to come.

We are one of the few major American cities with a comprehensive plan, developed with our residents, to address coastal flood risk citywide. We are now shifting our focus from planning to implementation. Earlier this summer, we released a draft Climate Action Plan to lay out specific strategies to defend our communities against coastal flooding and protect our residents, homes and businesses from cross-hazard climate risks.

To help increase community preparedness, we hosted the Boston's first-ever Deployables Day in 2024, and I'll continue to grow our emergency response infrastructure to make sure our residents can support themselves and the neighbors before, during, and after extreme flooding or other climate shocks. To lower near term flood risk, the City has invested more funding in its capital budget than any other point in its history to advance projects that have a coastal resilience component. And, to address long term coastal flood risk, we'll complete a comprehensive study with the Army Corps of Engineers study to close long-term flood pathways. We're also expanding our network of sensors collecting climate data to support real time monitoring, modeling, and project evaluation. To help further reduce the flood risk to renters and homeowners across our city, we're deploying resources to retrofit coastal residential units. And we're exploring updates to our Coastal

Flood Resilience Overlay District zoning to ensure that large new construction and major redevelopments are designed with our long-term flood risk in mind, particularly in our most at-risk neighborhoods.

The loss of federal funding will be a major challenge over the next few years. I'm proud of the work we did to secure more than \$174 million during the Biden administration to jumpstart key climate resilience projects. And we'll continue working closely with our hospitals and universities and philanthropic partners to ensure our climate action doesn't slow down.



Josh Kraft

Our administration will treat resilience as both a climate and equity imperative, mandating that investments are directed first to frontline neighborhoods like East Boston, Dorchester, and the Fort Point Channel. These communities face the greatest risks from rising sea levels, and they

deserve infrastructure investments that protect homes and businesses. We will prioritize environmental justice by embedding community voices in planning, guaranteeing that resilience projects do not trigger displacement or unaffordable development. By tying resilience to housing stability, we will safeguard both the physical and social fabric of our neighborhoods. Our goal is a citywide resilience strategy that leaves no community behind, and, as Mayor, I will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that this comes to fruition.



Question 3

How will you ensure climate adaptation investments also advance racial and economic equity?



Michelle Wu

I am deeply committed to supporting Boston's workers and cultivating a 21st century climate workforce. Our Climate Action Plan lays out clear strategies to create new high-quality jobs protecting Boston's climate and coastal resilience and ensure Boston residents from all backgrounds have the skills and training they need to find meaningful, stable employment in these emerging sectors. Through a \$10 million NOAA grant, we will train at least 650 people and place 500 residents in more than 1,200 jobs committed by 13 employers in family-sustaining, coastal, and climate resilience occupations by 2028. For example, in partnership with BWSC, we're creating new registered apprenticeship programs for Boston residents to be employed in the water utility sector.

Boston is the economic engine of New England, and the national leader in education, healthcare and biotechnology. To continue being the best home for innovators and working families, we need to invest in building the pipeline of highly skilled workers ready to fill the good paying jobs it'll take to protect our communities from higher tides and stronger storms.



Josh Kraft

We will ensure that every climate adaptation investment is designed to advance racial and economic equity by prioritizing the concerns of the residents most affected. As Mayor, I will ensure that our planning process is rooted in authentic community engagement, with residents shaping priorities rather than reacting to decisions made behind closed doors. Projects will be evaluated not just on environmental outcomes but also on accessibility, affordability, and how they reduce barriers for historically marginalized communities. As Mayor, my administration will maintain full transparency around funding, timelines, and decision-making so residents can hold the city accountable. By embedding this level of clear accessibility into every step, we can build resilience that protects all of Boston.



Question 4

Questionnaire Responses

How will your administration address Boston's housing affordability crisis through zoning and land use reform? What specific tools will you use to expand housing options at a range of income levels?



Michelle Wu

Housing affordability is the foundation for families to thrive, and we need to use every tool available to make progress. I'll continue to focus on building and preserving affordable housing; creating new public housing units; investing in housing production at a time when the private market is not delivering the homes we need; fighting for rent stabilization and tenant protections; implementing City planning and zoning that prioritizes affordability, equity, and resiliency; and expanding opportunities for first-time home buyers.

Our administration has been taking an all-of-the-above approach to housing affordability, which is the greatest challenge facing families across Boston. We put the most ARPA funding into affordable housing of any city in the country, including huge investments in the Acquisition Opportunity Program, expanding affordable homeownership, new affordable housing development on public land, expanded rental relief, and a once in a generation investment into renovating Boston public housing, and more.

Our administration has produced more units of affordable housing than Boston has seen in a generation, and we have an enormous pipeline of approved affordable housing projects that are ready to go if only we can get more resources. That is why I'm pushing for an expansion of Low Income Housing Tax Credits and housing vouchers at the federal level, and for a transfer fee at the state level that would help us fund this pipeline of projects. In January 2024, I announced the BHA's plan to build the 3000 net new public housing units for which it is eligible under the Faircloth Amendment over the next decade. I have also established an innovative \$110 million Housing Accelerator Fund to revolve low-cost capital into mixed-income housing development in Boston, at a time when interest rates and tariffs are making it almost impossible for the private market to deliver the homes our residents need. To prevent displacement, I updated our Inclusionary Development Policy, codified it for the first time into zoning, and signed an Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Executive Order, which is all the more necessary now that the Trump administration is abandoning the cause of fair housing and settled civil rights law. This spring, we also published our Anti-Displacement Action Plan to highlight strategies that we are using to help protect residents from displacement amid rising costs.



Josh Kraft

Over the course of my campaign, residents across Boston have told me that they are struggling to pay their rent. Residents who have been here for decades are gearing up to move out, pointing to the high housing costs as the precipitating factor. The current crisis has evolved over decades and has been exacerbated by the Wu administration's misguided approach. As Mayor, there are a variety of options available to bring down rent prices for subsidized and market rate housing, but the most simple solution is to build more housing. Availability equals affordability. To accomplish this goal, I would reduce the current IDP to the former standards set by the Walsh administration, reduce burdensome requirements for office-to-residential conversions, and capitalize upon underutilized parcels of public-owned land. Additionally, I have proposed an "Opt-In Rent Control" program for landlords that would offer a tax rebate if they limit rent increases over a ten year period. In conjunction, these policy proposals would not just provide a more seamless environment to build housing, but unleash capital to provide community benefits and allow folks to stay in Boston. This is an existential crisis for our city and solving the housing emergency requires decisive and immediate action from City Hall. Additionally, from a lack of multi-language translations to arbitrary rules to overcomplicated instructions and inequitable practices, the number of issues plaguing the city's code is seemingly innumerable. These problems appear to be unreparable, but if City Hall could muster the political courage and determination, serious progress could be made. As Mayor, I would collaborate with all stakeholders to create a more accessible, fair process for residents, small businesses, developers, and other community members. In terms of accessibility, it starts with clarity. The contrast between the excessive length of Boston's code versus that of peer cities, as well as the "unwritten rules" littered throughout, are barriers to entry for many folks. If elected, I would streamline the code, reducing the overhead and redundancy that permeates throughout the municipal zoning code. I would also ban the use of "unwritten rules" that benefit certain residents over others. Likewise, I would strive to create a more fair system, so residents and developers alike know what to expect. If folks understand the steps, the timeline, and the costs associated with a new project, they will be more likely to engage in the process and city officials will be better prepared to assist in a comprehensive fashion. When effective solutions and community input are prioritized, real change can be enacted to help make Boston affordable for all of our residents.



Question 5

Questionnaire Responses

What lessons from these projects will guide your administration’s approach to balancing long-term public benefit and affordability? How will you apply those lessons when navigating the often competing interests of private property owners and communities historically excluded from development decisions?



Michelle Wu

In April 2024, I signed an ordinance to create the City’s first Planning Department for the first time in 70 years, restoring planning as a core function of City government. The formal transfer of BPDA staff to the Planning Department went into effect on July 1, 2024, and the new Planning Department is responsible for planning, zoning, development review, urban design, and real estate. Our Planning Advisory Council guides a shared vision for a green, growing, family-friendly Boston and coordinates investments in the built environment to realize that vision—learning from past large-scale projects like the Seaport and Suffolk Downs, and leveraging new projects to advance our City’s goals—with more affordable housing produced under our administration than Boston has seen in a generation.

With planning for the public realm and public benefit part of its core mission, the Planning Department’s Squares + Streets process aligns with the strategies identified in our first-ever anti-displacement plan to ensure that we are appropriately mitigating against residential, commercial and cultural displacement. Our teams hold regular focus groups in neighborhoods to ensure input from all our residents informs how we plan, design and build for Boston’s growth.

We also have to make it easier for residents to move around the city. To create more multimodal options, we have added e-bikes and one hundred new stations to the nation-leading bikeshare program, Blue Bikes, offered \$5 a year subsidized Blue Bikes passes to low-income residents, and strengthened the city’s bike network. For pedestrians, we have redone miles of sidewalks across all of our neighborhoods, and Squares and Streets is improving walkability and vibrancy in our major neighborhood corridors. For drivers, we have pioneered the use of artificial intelligence to optimize our traffic signals and reduce congestion – leading to a 50% reduction in traffic in some of our initial intersections.

One of the first steps our administration took was to institute a two-year pilot program to make the MBTA bus routes 23, 28, and 29 free for passengers. We subsequently extended that two-year pilot program through March 2026 through negotiations with the MBTA. This program resulted in 12 million fare-free trips that saved riders approximately \$6 million or \$35 a month. I have joined partners across the Commonwealth to advocate for a low-income MBTA fare, now in effect thanks to Governor Healey’s leadership.

I successfully advocated for a Boston seat on the MBTA board, and appointed Jamaica Plain resident and 39 bus rider Mary Skelton Roberts to advocate for Boston’s interests – from careful mitigation and multilingual communication during temporary shutdowns, to expanded and electrified commuter rail service. I look forward to exploring ways to continue

and expand this work. Under our administration, Boston’s Transportation Department has also added staff focused on coordinating with the MBTA on public transportation, such as managing shuttle transportation on Boston roads so that the subways could be shut down for faster track fixes and designing dedicated bus lanes.



Josh Kraft

The biggest lesson from these large-scale projects is that genuine community engagement and accessibility must be at the root of every development. Frequently, projects have moved forward without fully incorporating the voices of those who will feel the greatest impact, particularly historically excluded communities. My administration will approach development with the understanding that long-term public benefit cannot be achieved without trust, transparency, and meaningful participation, something the current administration has failed to accomplish. We will ensure that every project creates pathways for residents to engage early and often, and that their concerns are reflected in final outcomes. By putting community voices at the center, we can balance growth with affordability, access, and equity in a way that strengthens Boston for everyone.



Question 6

How will you ensure that the City's procurement processes for large-scale development projects allow equitable access for firms of all sizes, especially minority- and women-owned practices?



Michelle Wu

Equity in procurement is central to my administration's vision of economic justice. Our supplier diversity team is dedicated to ensuring that minority-owned, women-owned, small, and local businesses can not only compete for City contracts but also grow their capacity to succeed in Boston's economy.

We host Opportunity Fairs that connect businesses directly to City departments and provide access to resources to help them navigate the contracting process. We also run targeted programs to build the long-term capacity of small and minority- and women-owned firms to successfully bid for City and other government contracts.

One key example is the SCALE program, which helps businesses strengthen their ability to pursue government contracts in industry categories that represent a large share of the City's purchasing. SCALE, run in collaboration with the BDC Community Capital Corporation, provides grantees with 3–6 months of technical assistance from expert providers to operationalize business plans and address challenges that often prevent small and MWBE firms from securing larger institutional contracts. The program's goal is to help these businesses scale up and become competitive for major procurement opportunities.

We are also applying these commitments directly to Boston's largest capital projects. For example, through the White Stadium Advisory Group, the City and Boston Legacy FC set a goal that 50% of all contracting dollars for design, construction, and ongoing operations of the White Stadium renovation go to minority- and women-owned business enterprises. The design phase has already surpassed this target, as shown on our public White Stadium Supplier Diversity Dashboard.

By combining capacity-building programs like SCALE with enforceable commitments on large-scale development projects, we are ensuring that Boston's procurement processes open doors for businesses of all sizes—and particularly for those that have been excluded for far too long.



Josh Kraft

The City's procurement practices are an integral part of developing an equitable, fair community. With the City's significant budget, these substantial resources can be crucial to support projects, small businesses, and owners. As Mayor, I would prioritize equity and transparency when it comes to the city's procurement practices.



Question 7

How will your administration ensure that residents, particularly those most affected by displacement pressures and environmental injustice, have a real voice in shaping Boston’s built environment? What models of civic engagement do you plan to strengthen or adopt?



Michelle Wu

Throughout my life in Boston – as a resident, City Councilor, and now Mayor – I have learned that what makes our city special is the deep commitment people have to improving their neighborhoods. Prior to major and minor policy-making decisions, the City seeks resident and stakeholder input through public meetings, but we know from experience that attending these meetings can be a challenge for many residents. To ensure that we hear from as many people as possible, Senior Leadership in the Mayor’s office started meeting frequently with constituency stakeholders and resident leaders to get input on issues ranging from quality of life improvements to speed hump installation and zoning reform. Our Community Engagement team seeks to broaden engagement and direct outreach across every neighborhood, from canvassing for feedback on street design, to hosting regular coffee hours.



Josh Kraft

Boston’s communities and neighborhoods most at risk of displacement and environmental hazards must be those most protected in the city’s plans. These folks should not just be told about the plan, they should be at the forefront of creating the plan. Not only is access to resources necessary, but tangible pathways to foster growth and protection are needed for these communities. The notion of “civic engagement” should not just be an ideal, but something that we live by when navigating the complexities that arise when it comes to climate change. In terms of “strengthening” certain forms of this engagement, I believe that the most effective way to engage with folks is through honest conversations. Whether it is frequent town hall meetings, accessible neighborhood services, or a clear reporting structure, there are a litany of pathways I would have my administration undertake as mayor.



Question 8

Questionnaire Responses

How would you work with the BSA and the broader architecture and design community to ensure that future development reflects the public interest, advances equity, and promotes long-term sustainability?



Michelle Wu

Boston's history reminds us that bold action can shape a better future, with high-quality public services for all residents of our city—and today, we're once again lighting the way. I'm proud to invest in our public libraries, parks and playgrounds, civic spaces, schools, and community centers, and to open up Boston's world class institutions through our Boston Family Days program – to make it just a little bit easier for working families to show their children all that Boston has to offer. I've been so grateful to work alongside BSA and Boston's pioneering community of architects and designers over my decade in public service, and I deeply value the BSA's commitment to building stronger, more connected communities. I look forward to continuing our partnership in my second term.

One of my favorite projects was the partnership between the BSA and BPS Kindergartners to help design the ideal city. I learned so much from what our littlest learners dreamed for our city through all they learned from the program, and I continue to follow their guidance in our work to make Boston a home for everyone.



Josh Kraft

Boston's distinct aesthetics are a hallmark of our great city. The historic elements fused with newer designs produce a unique look that has no comparison throughout the country. We must maintain our commitment to Boston's notable architectural intricacies, while also forging development that will benefit our community members. While this is not an easy challenge to tackle, through close collaboration with residents, a clear vision, and dynamic adaptability, I believe we can enhance Boston's charm while simultaneously fostering long-term sustainability.

Please note: Mayor Wu, as incumbent Mayor, has had an active ongoing relationship with the BSA during her time in office.

Credits



All responses were provided by the candidates and their campaign team.

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Photo courtesy Phyliss St-Hubert.

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Photo courtesy Brandon Schuetz.

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