

Cambridge Citizens Coalition

2023 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates

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I How strongly do you support these issues before the city? #1 is high (for); #2 is moderate; #3 is low (against)

A. **More Accountable City Government:** Your support for greater transparency/accountability in the city.

a. 1 2. 3 _Circle the number that most represents your views.

b. _____ How have you personally been involved in addressing this? Explain.

The issue that drew me into city politics was the Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO), an egregious example of the absence of transparency/accountability in the Cambridge city government. The AHO follows the same script. I organized a community crusade in Porter Square and surrounding areas to provide feedback and then, when we were ignored, stand up against our city government's destructive and dangerous CSO roadway designs.

The template looks as follows:

- Councillors align (e.g., sign a pledge) with a single-issue special interest, which takes precedence over the needs of Cambridge residents, taxpayers, and businesses.
- The ordinance (CSO/AHO/CO2) is wrapped in an admirable goal (e.g., cycling safety, affordable housing, environment) but fails miserably to address the stated problem and has no mechanism or desire to adjust to successfully meet the goal.
- The council does not recognize and/or ignores the collateral damage caused to the neighborhoods, businesses, environment, quality of life, and diversity.
- The ordinance lacks a clear budget, accounting, and transparency of spending taxpayer money.
- The ordinance is implemented based on special interest pressure and councillors' whims. The decisions are not fact-based, have no consideration for neighborhood and ignore business/community needs.

I've managed multimillion-dollar product developments from idea to market success. All had concrete metrics for success and looked very different from the original idea because we focused on the core goals not the original idea. We don't do that in Cambridge.

B. **Housing:** Your support for new AHO (Affordable Housing Overlay) up-zoning amendment

a. 1. 2. 3 _Circle the number that most represents your views.

b. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

Our city is among the leaders in the country with 15% of our homes designated as affordable housing with more under construction. I support a sensible strategy with clear goals and metrics, which should include workforce housing.

We must recognize that Cambridge cannot solve the housing crisis by itself. We must think regionally. The city must also set goals and measure our investment results to understand if we're making progress or could improve. I oppose the AHO because it relegates this critical responsibility to random developer whims, depends on failed urban renewal tall building strategies, reduces green space, and harms neighborhoods. Moving forward, we must consider the different requirements of homeless, low-income, and working-class housing within the city and region.

My involvement with opposing AHO is much less than the CSO. I have expressed my concerns to City Councilors in person and via email. I supported Dennis Carlone's ideas for smaller, more friendly housing that blends with the community. I have also endorsed Federico Muchnik's crusade to improve the new Walden 2 building designs by distributing his literature and video.

C. **Transportation:** Your support for re-evaluating city's bike lane/traffic/parking infrastructure and plans.

a. 1 2. 3 _Circle the number that most represents your views.

b. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

Induced auto congestion and parking removal is not a credible strategy when alternate transportation does not exist. This strategy decreases safety, harms quality of life, endangers pedestrians, and increases CO2 emissions. I will advocate for experienced traffic engineering for all modes of traffic and demand real data to propose changes and measure results to assure success. I believe bike lanes are important, but I will advocate changes to the Cycling Safe Ordinance (CSO). Its implementation does not solve our transportation challenges, removes parking, harms businesses, and makes roads less safe.

D. **Environment:** Your support for keeping our mature trees (in schools, housing, parks, & other contexts)?

a. 1 2. 3 _Circle the number that most represents your views.

b. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

Cambridge is a densely populated city with an acute shortage of green space. I see residents defending their flowers in 3'x9' plots next to the sidewalks against dogs and pedestrians just to nurture something green. My son grew up here with no yard, driveway for a basketball hoop or parks within walkable distance for children. The city needs green space and trees. Mature trees are precious. I have not had an active political role in this cause but would work for this on the City Council.

II. We are interested in how knowledgeable and active candidates are in city issues. (Short answer – 1-2 sentences)

A. What is the one key problem/issue you want to achieve in City Council next term?

The most critical issue/problem is that the City Council is actively at war with its citizens. The Councilors put their pet projects and special interests above the needs of the city's residents, taxpayers, and businesses. Cambridge citizens are informed, love diversity, have compassion for those who need our help, and do their part for global warming. Why does the city jam bad solutions down our throats?

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

I've been on the receiving end of this communication chasm and lack of accountability to citizens. We elected the City Council to represent us. Why do I have to diligently monitor their every meeting and action? This is not how community involvement should work.

B. What City Council decision over the last term are you most supportive of?

This is odd since I'm a very positive person. Sadly, the bad decisions have overshadowed any good work they have done. I'm sure there are many, but I cannot name one without some thought. I think this characterizes the situation well.

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

A dismayed resident and taxpayer.

C. What City Council decision were you most disappointed in the last Council term?

The CSO has been an unending source of disappointment. There were many opportunities to do the right thing, but they were lost. AHO has the same feel.

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

See part I.

D. What City Staff decision over the last Council term are you most supportive of?

I applaud the decision not to reveal the name of the officer who killed the troubled man a few months ago. I trust the city to prosecute the officer if he's guilty of a crime. If he's innocent, he should be able to live his life without stigma. Revealing his name just promotes vigilante actions. I don't think our city's police get the credit they deserve for their good work.

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

To their credit, the City Manager and many City Councillors did the right thing without my input.

E. What City Staff decision were you most disappointed in the last Council term?

I'm most aware of Traffic and Parking decisions. The most recent bad decisions were Garden Street and Brattle. The superficial bandaid fixes of more confusing traffic signs and prescribing weird traffic patterns show a lack of basic traffic engineering knowledge and a holistic strategy for all traffic. I'm quickly coming up to speed on affordable housing and parks/green space/trees but these suffer from a lack strategy, conflicting priorities, and no accountability that have affected many decisions.

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

See part I.

III. What Issues Help Define You? Highlight those core interests/goals for the 2024-6 Council and explain why.

More balance in commercial and residential needs

More budget accountability

More engagement by residents

- More equity in healthcare, environment, schooling, housing, and related issues
- More transparency in Council and City decision-making
- More prioritization of historic building reuse. **If this means opposing the destruction of historical buildings at the whim of developers of affordable housing.**
- More support for local businesses
- A more multi-dimensional and resident-engaged city planning
- A more inclusive environmental policy
- A more comprehensive transportation policy

____ Other (explain in 1-2 sentences)

IV. What incident or set of concerns got you interested in running for City Council?

- My number one concern is the City Council is out of touch with its citizens and taxpayers. I will work for a more sensible, fact-based and compassionate government that serves the people of Cambridge.
- As described in Part I, CSO got me fully engaged. The ordinance made it apparent that we have a broken city government.
- AHO has amplified these concerns.
- The annual request to evaluate the golf course for alternative uses (i.e., affordable housing) shows how little knowledge and respect many councillors have for the diverse interests and passions of the city. Next, they'll be considering alternate uses for the libraries.

Sensible, fact-based, compassionate city government,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John'.