BUSINESS & THE ECONOMY CATEGORY

2 QUESTIONS
Proactively including the Boston business community in discussions about new initiatives allows for constructive dialogue and collaborative endeavors. **If elected, what do you see as the role of the business community and how will you engage with it?**
CANDIDATE BARROS

My administration will directly engage the business community as a partner in creating a more equitable Boston, and ensuring strong economic growth in every one of Boston’s neighborhoods is essential to that vision. Together, we will increase economic opportunities, business resources and access to capital, especially for underserved entrepreneurs and businesses owned by people of color and women. Boston’s strength is in our diversity, including our diversity of talent. As mayor, I will look to the business community for advice, collaboration, and partnership.
CANDIDATE CAMPBELL

We know that business leaders want to play a substantial role in our City’s work to address systemic inequities in our economy, housing, schools, transit and more for many reasons including because our business community has a vested interest in closing these gaps to ensure they have and can attract a diverse, local, and talented workforce. As Mayor, I will continually convene and partner with the business community on a range of issues including workforce development opportunities for residents especially for those unemployed, expanding access to childcare, housing, transportation and the City’s climate resiliency efforts. I will also work in partnership to ensure that as the City diversifies its business contacts and removes barriers of entry through a combination of transparency, tools, and accountability, that we partner with the business community to create more access to capital, mentorship, technical assistance for small businesses especially for businesses run by historically under-represented groups.
CANDIDATE ESSAIBI-GEORGE

As a small business owner, I know firsthand that having a strong business community is essential to our success as a City, especially following the devastating economic impact of the pandemic over the last year. I believe our economy is what is going to ultimately support the things our residents depend on: our schools, housing, basic city services, and public health. As Mayor, one of my top priorities will be the revival of our local economy and a successful financial recovery requires representation from a cross-sector of business owners directly impacted by COVID19. I will ensure that our business community has a voice in City Hall and that future reopening policies reflect the realities and challenges faced by local business owners. This includes rebuilding the public’s trust of doing business in-person and improving city services to create business friendly systems. I will also create a New Business Liaison for each neighborhood to meet with business owners in person to efficiently set up shop by serving as the point person to the City’s resources. The New Business Liaison will help BIPOC business owners by facilitating knowledge and resource sharing for residents that have been historically left behind and left out.

All and all, now is the time to take our businesses from just surviving to thriving—and our next steps must focus on not just getting them back on their feet, but providing them the landscape, the resources, tools and support from the City to grow.
MAYOR JANNEY

In order to make our city stronger than ever before, we need to work with our community in order to create a plan for Boston which will enable everyone to thrive. I want to partner with the business community to move forward together on how we can build an inclusive economy which will work for everyone. As city councilor, I worked with multiple community members to reform our cannabis licensing rules, so that those from communities which were targeted by the war on drugs will have the opportunity to establish businesses and reintroduce wealth into those areas.

I want to see Boston come back from the pandemic better than ever before. Our city has struggled in the past with the issue of inequality, and as Mayor, I am fighting to confront this problem right now. I have introduced a fund which would help enable women and minority owned contractors to bid on city contracts. We also need to be aware that some parts of our working lives have changed. We need to ensure that Boston remains an attractive destination regardless of work habits. I’m engaging with my workforce, connecting with other municipalities in the greater Boston region, as well as listening to Boston’s business leader for the best practices for the future of the workplace.
CANDIDATE SANTIAGO

I believe the role of the business community is to drive prosperity and promote racial and economic justice.

I envision a business community that drives our recovery and leads Boston to more economic opportunity. I will remove barriers for our business community and reform antiquated processes to provide business relief. That includes making city hall more accessible by automating processes, investing in the Office of Economic Development, and doubling down on our Main Streets organizations. I also believe that we need the transportation infrastructure to increase the capacity of our business districts and get our office space filled up again. I do not believe that remote work will be permanent and we must plan to return to pre-pandemic levels at a minimum. As mayor, I will listen to our business owners and Main Streets about improving our business environment. I believe that we must leverage our industries to actively recruit and promote employees of color. I envision a business community that is led by our Black and Brown neighbors that provides economic opportunities to our historically underserved communities.

I will also work with business to continue outdoor dining, allowing to-go cocktails, and will work to lift the liquor license cap.
CANDIDATE WU

In this time of economic uncertainty emerging from the pandemic, Boston’s recovery depends on coordinated leadership across all sectors to ground our recovery in a vision to deliver long-term growth, equity and resilience. With vacancies in the commercial real estate market and continued precariousness in our tourism and hospitality industries, this is a critical moment for proactive partnership across the public and private sectors to rebuild and reinvest. In a global competition for talent and capital, we must align efforts to make housing and childcare affordable, address traffic and invest in public transportation, transform our public schools, and take bold action for climate resiliency. As Mayor, I will lead with a proactive vision to close disparities in our city while fueling our growth, with a focus on creating the civic infrastructure for all sectors to shape and be aligned on policy-making and community-building. I’ll ensure regular convenings and transparent metrics to deliver on our shared goals, with dedicated resources to follow up on action steps. From building world-class vocational education pathways, to closing the gap for childcare and early education, to tackling housing and transportation access, we will work collaboratively with the business community to deliver urgent progress.
CHAMBER QUESTION

What is your vision for returning Boston to its pre-pandemic vitality and making it an attractive place for employers and employees? Please speak specifically to the changing dynamics of childcare, work habits, office space demand, and commuting patterns.
CANDIDATE BARROS

The business interruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic displayed the importance of flexibility by all businesses. As public transit begins running at full capacity again, we must be ready to partner with the Federal government’s infrastructure program in order to expand equitable transit access to all neighborhoods in Boston. And as parents return to offices, we must create a birth-to-higher education universal child care program, opening up better job opportunities for Boston’s youth and ensuring women can stay in the workforce. Additionally, we must help kickstart our restaurants, bars, and businesses that make coming back to the office worth it. Investing in our amenities is critical to making sure our urban core is a place worth coming to again.
COVID-19 exposed to us all the existing inequities our city faces, especially when it comes to our workers' access to childcare and transit. However, we have an opportunity to solve these issues while continuing to invest in the people and ecosystems that attract businesses to the City of Boston. We need to prioritize access to affordable, high quality childcare and ensure it’s accessible for all as a way to give residents the opportunity to earn a decent wage without sacrificing raising a family in the city. We should also be creative in how we utilize our office spaces and ensure it’s easy for businesses to acquire and rent spaces in the city while also being mindful of the commute for their employees. The city was recently infused with federal funding that we can invest in meaningful changes to how we approach housing, child care, and transit to ensure every resident has access to a quality and affordable life here in the City of Boston.
CANDIDATE ESSAIBI-GEORGE

During this period of recovery from the COVID19 pandemic, my top priority is making sure our City is fully open for business and investing in our local economy. As Mayor, I will ensure that economic resiliency and long-term growth is at the forefront of our fiscal planning. Expanding from my advocacy during the current Council’s budget review process, I will dedicate half of the incoming federal ARP money to small business relief to ensure our micro economies have the resources they need to survive and reopen. In order to have a strong recovery, I also believe we must use the lessons of the pandemic to make it easier to operate a business and work in the City of Boston. COVID-19 serves as concrete evidence of the importance of a strong child care infrastructure for our economy and for our working families.

On the Council, I have pushed the interim administration to establish hybrid options for families to secure stable childcare during this transitional period. I will continue this advocacy as Mayor to ensure our workforce is prepared and supported throughout our financial recovery. I will also work to support the growth and expansion of existing businesses by increasing opportunities for affordable commercial space and streamlining city services.
MAYOR JANNEY

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To remain a global leader in talent and opportunity, Boston must lead the way in transforming livability and affordability for everyone making a home here: bringing down the cost of living for our workforce and boosting civic infrastructure for quality of life. The pandemic triggered changes to the commercial and residential real estate markets that will last long after COVID-19, and it has deepened and exposed racial disparities and the systemic fragility of so many necessary supports, such as the care economy. Many employers are downsizing in-person office space as employees prefer to maintain some remote work, so we need a new value proposition to draw residents, companies, and visitors back to the city. I’ve released plans to close the gap for early education and childcare to support working families and transform our public schools. Let’s align downtown vacancies for onsite childcare, supercharge our arts and culture sector, and integrate affordable housing into the redevelopment of municipal assets. We can recognize the centrality of our restaurants and food businesses to bringing back foot traffic across our downtown and neighborhood business districts. And we must plan for the housing, transportation, and climate future that keeps families in our city.