



A Vision for Boston: Questions for the 2009 Mayoral Candidates

DAY 13: CITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

How would you organize planning and development in the City?



Michael F. Flaherty Jr.

“Failing to plan is planning to fail.” Unfortunately, the BRA has proven this true, consistently allowing its development agenda to steamroll over its responsibility to develop a citywide vision and neighborhood plans. As Mayor, I will dismantle the BRA and create two distinct city departments accountable to the public - one for planning; one for economic and workforce development.

The new planning office will create comprehensive planning documents that will guide responsible and sustainable development. City planners will represent a broad range of policy areas, including transportation, public safety, public health, education and the green and creative sectors. By widening the city’s planning lens, we will grow our city in a way that makes Boston more livable, healthier, safer, and more accessible.

Our development office’s functions will be driven by planning priorities. Its staff will renew our city’s efforts to recruit world-class companies and emerging-industry professionals, jumpstart new start-up companies, better support the long-term viability of existing businesses, promote sustainable development and enliven neighborhoods. Our development priorities will include fostering the growth of the green and creative economies. And we will comply with the Boston Residents Jobs Policy to make sure local jobs go to local residents.

Thomas M. Menino

We have built strong neighborhoods, a vibrant downtown, and one of the country’s most livable, sustainable cities. Much of the credit goes to the people of Boston, who have guided this city’s growth through their participation in community planning sessions, design charrettes, and development reviews.

Overseeing much of this public process is the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). With both a planning and development role, the BRA creates plans that have purpose and ensures that development follows a vision, engages the community and supports job growth.

While the BRA is always working to improve, it has a long record of creating jobs for Boston residents, improving our neighborhoods, and growing the tax base. In recent years, the BRA has:

- Implemented some of the country’s most progressive zoning and development policies, making Boston the first major City with green building standards in its zoning code and enacting an inclusionary zoning policy that is heralded by affordable housing advocates.
- Drafted, with extensive community input, many neighborhood plans including the reconstruction of Dorchester Avenue and the re-zoning of the Fenway, Roslindale and, soon, Hyde Park.
- Invested nearly \$7.0 million in job training funds for Boston residents.