

Imagine Boston 2030



Mayor Walsh (center) joins in the ribbon cutting of new innovation lab, Sabre Labs, in the Seaport

An Interview with The Honorable Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston

EDITORS' NOTE *Marty Walsh is the City of Boston's 54th mayor. His vision is of a thriving, healthy, and innovative Boston – a City with equality and opportunity for all, where a revolutionary history inspires creative solutions to the challenges of the 21st century. Mayor Walsh made his mark as a labor leader. After following his father into Laborers Local 223 in Boston, he rose to head the Building and Construction Trades Council from 2011 to 2013. Born and raised in the neighborhood of Dorchester by immigrant parents, Mayor Walsh survived a serious bout of Burkitt lymphoma, thanks to the extraordinary care he received at Boston Children's Hospital and Dana Farber Cancer Institute. While working full-time as a legislator, he returned to school to earn a degree in Political Science at Boston College.*



The Hon. Martin J. Walsh

What attracted you to public service?

Public service has been at the forefront of my life. My father, an immigrant from Ireland to Dorchester, was involved in the Laborers Local 223 in Boston. The ability for anyone to overcome challenges and fulfill their dreams has been my goal for Boston residents for as long as I can remember. I was elected to the state House of Representatives, was the head of the Building and Construction Trades Council from 2011 to 2013, and eventually elected Mayor.

You have placed a major focus on strengthening Boston's public schools. Will you highlight the impact of these efforts?

A quality education is essential to a child's growth and success, and the city's prosperity. There is no better investment the city can make than in a strong foundation of learning for our students. That's why earlier this year I announced a \$15 million investment towards free and high-quality pre-kindergarten for all four-year-olds in Boston; \$14 million in extending learning time of added instruction and enrichment; ensured tuition-free community college for eligible BPS graduates; piloted the future-oriented Boston Saves program granting incoming kindergartens with savings accounts accompanied by a seed funding amount of \$50; piloted a program to supply grades six through twelve with free menstrual products; and

continued the BPS Arts Expansion program. Strengthening Boston's public schools is necessary for the community's, students', and city's future.

Another priority for your administration has been to lead Boston to the forefront of the global innovation economy. Will you discuss this effort and its importance to Boston's future growth and success?

It's no question that Boston is a hub of technology and research, and this continues to expand through our targeted investments and opportunities in this sector. Together with the input of thousands of residents in the City of Boston, we launched Imagine Boston 2030, a citywide plan that in part aims to inspire innovation jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in all neighborhoods, focus on STEM in our school system, and further develop the city's digital infrastructure. It's imperative that the entire city – both private and public sectors – remain up to speed with the global innovation economy.

Will you provide an overview of the "learn and earn" job apprenticeship program and its impact on low-income workers?

In Boston, we prioritize apprenticeship programs that invest in our residents' futures, and equip them with the education, skills and tools they need for good, lasting careers. We recently announced a citywide movement, called Boston Hires, that aims to place 20,000 residents in good jobs by 2022. Most importantly, we're inviting employers, small businesses, and community-based organizations to join us in this effort.

Boston has had a tremendous need for housing. How critical has it been to create new affordable and middle-class homes?

Creating quality affordable housing has been a top priority of my administration since I first took office, and it's an issue that we work very hard at every single day. At a time when the federal government is stepping back from investments in affordable housing, Boston and its partners are stepping up. In 2014, we created a housing plan that aimed to build 53,000 units of housing by 2030. A few years in, we recognized that we were on track to surpass that number well before 2030, so we updated the city's overall housing goal to 69,000 new

units by 2030 to meet Boston's faster than expected population growth. These 69,000 new units include 15,820 new income-restricted units, which would elevate Boston's income-restricted inventory total to 70,000, or one in five of all housing units. In addition, our plan sets a goal to preserve 85 percent of Boston's most at-risk privately-owned affordable units, and to purchase 1,000 units of rental housing stock from the speculative market and income-restrict them for perpetuity.

Public safety and crime prevention is a major priority for your administration. What have been the keys to driving results in this regard?

Boston is a model city in our nation for having strong police-community relations, and our goal is to continue building trust and positive relationships between law enforcement officers and community members. We've seen a lot of success in our public safety strategy by working directly with residents in our communities to build trust and respect. This starts with an emphasis on daily interactions on the streets and in school classrooms, and includes proactive prevention and diversion for at-risk youth and their families. We further bolstered our efforts last year by creating the Bureau of Community Engagement at the Boston Police Department that focuses on ways to build relationships and trust between law enforcement and residents, create new and innovative partnerships, and promote inclusion and diversity within the department. Our success in community policing has made Boston one of the safest cities in America, with the crime rate falling about 25 percent in the past 5 years.

Will you elaborate on Imagine Boston 2030 and the importance of engaging the people of Boston in helping to build this blueprint for the city's future?

We want residents to be excited about Boston's future, which is why we sought their input over the course of two years in creating a plan made by Bostonians for Bostonians. The plan, Imagine Boston 2030, is Boston's first citywide plan in 50 years shaped by the input of over 16,000 residents. It puts forth a comprehensive vision to boost quality of life, equity and resilience in every neighborhood across the city. We're continuing to conduct neighborhood-based planning efforts in several neighborhoods involving community members and all stakeholders. ●