

A Vision for Boston: Questions for the 2009 Mayoral Candidates

DAY 15: JOBS

What would you do to ensure that Boston's economy is growing and that jobs are being created and maintained?

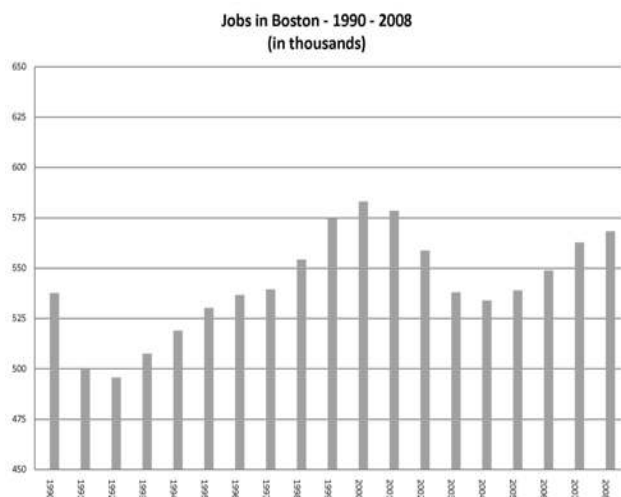
One of the keys to maintaining a diverse and thriving economy is jobs. Since 1990, Boston has experienced job growth of over 30,000, according to the Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development.

Facing a recession, creating more jobs in Boston and for Boston residents will be a difficult challenge.

Befitting a diverse city of varied neighborhoods, Boston's economy has a number of facets that a Mayor must prioritize and address. Among them are:



- Retaining and attracting corporate headquarters — Corporate headquarters provide good-paying jobs and tend to take a more active role in civic and charitable life than branch offices.
- Holding onto financial services firms — In Suffolk County, financial services jobs are concentrated at a rate almost 3 times higher than the rest of the country, accounting for almost 15% of total employment. Yet, several large Boston-based financial services firms have chosen to site thousands of jobs elsewhere.
- Addressing the loss of manufacturing jobs — Between 1970 and 2006, manufacturing jobs in Boston fell from 12% to 2% as a share of total city employment. (That represents a decrease of nearly 42,000 manufacturing jobs.)
- Increasing the reach of the Main Streets program — Some of the Main Street's programs have been quite successful while other business districts still lag.
- Enabling development of underused areas — The Seaport District and the South Station/Post Office locations are in stages of transition for major development initiatives. Bringing them to maturity has the potential to create thousands of new jobs.
- Retaining jobs — Protecting land use to retain jobs in industries, such as seafood processing, that employ more Boston residents.



As Mayor, there are a number of tools at your disposal that have direct and indirect impact on job growth. These include:

- Increasing workforce skills through educational attainment — In 2007 just over 17% of Boston's residents 25 and older had not completed high school. Only approximately 40% have bachelor's degrees or higher.
- Using incentive programs to spur expansion, relocation, and new development — Programs such as E-ZBonds, I-Cubed, TIFs, DIFs and Depreciation Tax Incentives can be used to make Boston a more attractive location for businesses. Use of these initiatives would have to be balanced with the city's ability to temporarily forgo property tax revenue for operations.
- Setting tax policy with commercial growth in mind — The division of the tax burden between residential and commercial property owners is a challenge facing every Mayor. Lower commercial tax rates can serve to encourage growth.
- Providing a supportive regulatory climate — Regulations, permitting restrictions and licensing issues can either hamper or facilitate new business creation.

What would you do to ensure that Boston's economy is growing and that jobs are being created and maintained? Of the development tools available to the City, which would you emphasize to create and retain jobs in Boston? What would you do to enable Boston's residents to participate in the region's economy?

Contact: Elaine Beattie at 617-227-1900 or ebeattie@bmr.org – www.bmr.org

Liam Day at 617-723-2277 ext. 203, 617-721-1341 or lday@pioneerinstitute.org