

Candidate name (first and last):	Ruthzee Louijuene
Office the candidate is seeking:	At-large City Councilor
Transportation, housing, and climate issues are currently siloed in City Hall. How do you see these issues connecting and how will you work to align them if elected? [600 character limit]	Transportation, housing, and climate are all inextricably linked and tied to who has access to resources. Affordable housing is essential, but is insufficient if individuals don't have access to reliable transit. Public transit is a public good, and it must be funded as such. Transit justice is a racial justice issue, as fares are regressive for low-income and essential workers who rely on the T. We need to make the T more accessible and work towards a reliable, fare-free T. We must redesign our streets to be more inclusive of different transportation modes, but we must do so equitably.
1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Boston? (Check the top 3.)	Commuter rail, Bike (bike-share or personal bicycle), Carpool
1b. What types of housing have you lived in or owned throughout your life? (Check all that apply.)	Over-six-unit apartment building, As a renter, Single-family home, Urban
1. While the MBTA controls bus service, the City of Boston controls the streets the buses operate on. How would you accelerate bus service and bus priority infrastructure? [1200 character limit]	I would advocate for an expansion of the work that has been done to prioritize public transit over individual transit-- especially the expansion of dedicated bus lanes which have been shown to be extremely effective. While the MBTA controls the service itself, collaboration to prioritize bus priority must be a primary objective of BTM.
The MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) makes important decisions regarding MBTA service, projects, and programs. The FMCB is sunseting in July and the MBTA will be without a dedicated governance board. Will you advocate for a new governance board and a seat on it for the City of Boston, and how? [1200 character limit]	Yes! Boston plays such a significant role in the region and is greatly impacted by most of the decisions the MBTA makes. Boston should have a dedicated seat on the Fiscal and Management Control Board (or whatever the future board iteration looks like), the MBTA's oversight board, given that Boston is so important and impacted by the system. We should also explore increasing revenue received from Transportation Network Companies to help fund a free T. Working alongside our federal Massachusetts lawmakers for the federal government to help fund free transit, will also have a net benefit in tackling climate change. With a free T, we would save the close to \$1 billion it costs just to collect fares, and we can reinvest that money in our infrastructure.
3. The City of Boston's comprehensive transportation plan, Go Boston 2030, includes the implementation of 26 priority Better Bike Corridors and other bike projects. How will you ensure all short-term projects are implemented within three years, and long-term projects are implemented by or before 2030? [1200 character limit]	I will work with the BTM to ensure that they are claiming ownership to these projects and make sure that the teams working on these projects are adequately staffed. The power of the Bully Pulpit is real from within Boston City Council, and I will use that power to advocate for protected and continuous/connected bike lanes, especially in neighborhoods like Mattapan and Hyde Park. Every time we repave a street, we should also be thinking about whether we can provide for a bike lane.

<p>4. Often street projects designed to improve safety involve removing on-street parking or reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes to make space for people walking and biking. How would you advance safety projects when there is active opposition to narrowing the roadway and removing parking? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>When discussing the implications of reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes, I find it incredibly useful to point to the fact that increasing the number of bike and walk lanes directly correlates to fewer people dying. For example, on American Legion Highway, many drivers are upset with the reduction to one lane and increased traffic. However, prior to the implementation of the bike lane, some drivers were using American Legion Highway as a racetrack, and some drivers and passengers died as a result. With a narrower car lane, we can expect to see fewer people die. This will be one of my main talking points. I will also center the work of BIPOC bike advocates so that the opposition becomes aware of the diverse faces and incomes of riders.</p>
<p>5. Boston's inclusionary development policy (IDP) program requires that new developments of 10 units or more include at least 13% of the new units be affordable and income-restricted. There is conversation about increasing the IDP percentage; however, experience and research around the country has shown that setting an IDP percentage too high can actually reduce the total number of new affordable units built. Would you support a new 12 unit building where 50% of the units are affordable over a 60 unit building where 20% of the units are affordable? Why? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>This is a difficult question to answer without having more facts. Is the new 12 unit building emblematic of fewer developments happening overall because of the higher IDP threshold? What AMI threshold are we using to determine affordability? What neighborhood are we in? Our IDP is currently 13%. It should at least be 20%, possibly more if research shows the market can handle it. Often an argument developers make for not providing the affordable units offsite is that they can create more affordable units in Dorchester than they can in a new build in the Back Bay for the same amount of money. But doing so entrenches a pernicious problem that we have as a city: residential segregation. Density is certainly a goal to help solve the housing crisis, especially around transit hubs. But we must not confuse density with affordability. We might be creating transit-oriented dense units while shutting out working class, Black, and Latinx residents from an expensive market. We have to be careful not to do that.</p>
<p>6. Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030 determined that Boston needed 69,000 new homes by 2030. The last public update (Q4 2019) indicated that the city is likely behind schedule. The current lengthy permitting process in Boston is a well-known barrier to meeting this challenge. How would you reduce timelines and unnecessary costs to create more homes for people in neighborhoods across the city? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>I would consolidate the functions of city agencies in the permitting and approval process; streamline permitting process for small- to medium-sized builders; promote zoning relief for 100% affordable housing; and work to make it easier for homeowners to build out additional units in their homes or in their yards.</p>
<p>7. What actions or policies that fall under existing municipal powers (i.e. do not require a home rule petition) do you support to help prevent displacement? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>The BPDA/BRA is not community-driven. It has a developer-driven policy, coupled with a history of displacement. There are not enough banks offering affordable mortgage products like the ONE & ONE+ Boston programs. There is a lack of enabling authority from the state to regulate development of luxury builds. Historically, zoning codes have been used as a tool of exclusion. Our zoning code needs updating to increase how quickly and easily residents and affordable housing advocates can develop housing, especially multifamily housing. The ZBA must be reimagined to remove conflict of interests.</p>

<p>8. In a new housing development where space is limited, and parking adds substantially to the cost, how would you prioritize space/think about tradeoffs (between more units, parking, open space, etc.)? What would you do in the face of community opposition to developments that seek to balance these priorities? [1200 character limit]</p>	<p>We should always prioritize housing people and housing people affordably. For developments that are 100% affordable, we need to be able to waive any parking requirements. This is especially so in neighborhoods that are transit-rich. We need to connect the dots for all our neighbors, incentivize less car dependency, and address the crisis at our doorstep: climate change. We also need to make sure there are diverse faces and voices advocating for fewer parking spaces. I would be sure to center these voices in the face of opposition. I would also acknowledge that different housing developments have varying needs - for example, parking needs may look different for a new senior housing development or for a new development targeted to families with children, where one can make legitimate arguments for parking spaces. But again, it's important for us to connect the dots for our neighbors, and that's something I am eager to do.</p>
<p>1. The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition supports the removal of direct policing from Vision Zero goals, citing issues of safety and equity and a lack of effectiveness in improving safety. You can read about these issues in the Boston Vision Zero Progress Report and the Coalition Statement on Gov. Baker Administration's Road Safety Legislation. Do you support removing police enforcement from Vision Zero?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>2. Police details are often required for construction projects and open streets events -- it would save money and create jobs if community members were allowed to do this work. Civilian flaggers were first authorized in 2008 to help fill these roles in Massachusetts; nevertheless, these projects and events are still primarily staffed by police on overtime, and detail requests often go unfilled entirely. Do you support reducing police involvement in streets-related projects and events?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>3. One key strategy that has been proven to effectively reduce speeding, improve safety, and remove racial bias in traffic enforcement in other states and countries is automated enforcement (i.e. speed cameras and red light cameras). If the State House passes automated enforcement legislation that allows cities & towns to opt-in to a speed or red light camera program, would you support your municipality using this tool?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	

<p>4. The Boston Transportation Department's Neighborhood Slow Streets program has been very popular when implemented on smaller neighborhood-level streets, but many injuries from traffic crashes happen on busier arterial roads. Do you support traffic calming for high-crash intersections and roadways of arterials to prevent crashes and save lives, even when it means taking away parking or travel lanes?</p>	Strongly Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	
<p>5. The Go Boston 2030 plan was released in 2017. Do you support updating the plan and working to advance the plan's goals?</p>	Strongly Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	
<p>6. Mode shift occurs when people get out of their cars and choose other ways of getting around. Do you support the City's Go Boston 2030 goal of reducing car trips by 50% by 2030?</p>	Strongly Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	
<p>7. Do you support reassessing the plans and viability of major capital projects, such as the Northern Avenue Bridge or the Rutherford Avenue redesign?</p>	Strongly Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	
<p>8. How curb space is managed can impact many different city functions, including bus service, commercial delivery, and residential parking. When used effectively, curb space can speed up bus service with dedicated lanes, create safe biking infrastructure, and/or allow businesses to quickly and safely receive deliveries. Do you support conducting a city-wide parking study to evaluate how effectively curb space is being used?</p>	Strongly Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	
<p>9. Do you support charging an annual fee for residential parking permits?</p>	Somewhat Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	Depends on what neighborhoods. Yes in transit-rich and downtown neighborhoods. No in low-income neighborhoods where residents are dependent on bus lines alone within a 10-minute walk (e.g., areas of Hyde Park, Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, Roslindale).
<p>10. Do you support free bus service on the MBTA and a low-income fare option for other public transit options?</p>	Strongly Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	
<p>11. Boston has many traffic signals that do not work well for pedestrians. Do you support making signal timing safer and more convenient for people crossing at all speeds, including those walking and using mobility assistive devices?</p>	Strongly Support
Please explain. [300 character limit]	

<p>12. Do you support ensuring large-scale developments (including Sullivan Square, the Allston I-90 Interchange, and Suffolk Downs) incorporate the community's desire for walkability, connectivity, open space, and resilience?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>13. Do you support prioritizing and advancing the housing production goals outlined in the 2018 update to Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>14. Lawsuits filed against two much needed, 100% affordable housing developments in Jamaica Plain have recently underscored how mandatory parking minimums can be weaponized within the legal system to significantly slow or prevent affordable housing. Do you support the proposal by Councilors Matt O'Malley and Kenzie Bok to update the zoning code to eliminate mandatory parking minimums for affordable housing?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>15. Given the affordability crisis, many are critical of the perceived large amount of new "luxury" construction and would like to see more moderately priced housing options being built. Yet, the city's zoning code mandates strict parking minimums for any new housing development, and parking is expensive (a single structured parking space adds an average of \$50,000 in per-unit costs). This substantial cost often pushes otherwise moderately priced new housing into the "luxury" price range. In order to increase the amount of moderately priced homes in the city, would you support reducing mandatory parking minimums for all new development city-wide?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	
<p>16. The City of Boston has devoted significant resources and conducted extensive community processes to develop neighborhood-based plans (i.e. PLAN: JP/Rox, PLAN: South Boston Dorchester Ave). However, the city has failed to incorporate these plans into the zoning code, perpetuating a system of parcel-by-parcel discretion and diminishing public trust in the planning process. Do you support codifying these and future plans into the city's zoning code within a reasonable time frame (six months of a plan's release)?</p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>
<p>Please explain. [300 character limit]</p>	

17. The City of Boston and Boston Housing Authority have recently launched a city project-based housing voucher program. Do you support continued funding for this program, and do you support expanding it to include additional funding and/or a mobile voucher program?

Strongly Support

Please explain. [300 character limit]