

2021 Boston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Leonard Lee

Office Sought: District 4 City Council Seat

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(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

Public Safety: Covid-19 Recovery, gun violence, education

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

30 years of experience in the for profit and non profit sectors from the grass roots to city and state agencies

3. What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to see Boston adopt?

Youth Violence Prevention projects in Los Angeles and Detroit. They have made major strides in those cities.

4. Which of the following groups have you chosen to reject / would reject campaign contributions from? (For-profit developers, Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers)

Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers.

(B) Racial Equity & Community Engagement

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- 1. Name three accomplishments you've been able to achieve to advance racial justice or equity.**

To mitigate health disparities among people of color, I created "Masking the Community" to provide free PPE. To develop racial equity at the MA Dept. of Public Health, I introduced a concept and program to get white people "woke." To educate young people, I took young people across the Edmund Pettis Bridge to mark the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday."

- 2. What steps would you take, if elected, to engage all the diverse communities of Boston in policymaking, and what past actions of yours should give voters confidence that you will follow through?**

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(C) Charter Reform & Balance of Power

- 1. What do you see as the role of the City Council in our strong-mayor system?**

Bringing the people's voices to city hall. Developing holistic relationships with city, state and federal elected officials.

- 2. The City Council currently has very little ability to influence the budgeting process. Would you support legislation to enable line-item budgetary changes? YES/ NO**

Yes. The City Council needs more power than they currently have.

- 3. Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Boston? YES/ NO**

No.

- 4. Would you support changing the city charter to impose term limits for the office of Mayor in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes. 8 years is enough to have an impact on the city

- 5. What, if any, other changes to the City Charter would you like to see?**

All firefighters and police officers must live in the city like public elected officials.

(D) Revenue

- 1. Do you support the PILOT Action Group's [recommendations](#) for a standing PILOT commission with community representation? YES/ NO**

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Yes. Anytime the community comes together for a good cause, it's a good thing.

- 2. Given state law, Boston is limited in its taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue?**

Taxing colleges and universities is one strategy.

(E) Education

- 1. What are your top priorities for reducing persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in the Boston Public Schools?**

To have an elected school committee which reflects community voices and is not controlled by the mayor.

- 2. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Do you support a change in BPS governance to allow Boston voters the right to elect school committee members, like every other city in Massachusetts? YES/ NO If so, what would your ideal structure be? If not, why not?**

Yes. A three year term with 7 members.

- 4. Do you support removing police from Boston public schools? YES/ NO**

No. Public safety is critical to help children learn and police presence promotes community policing within a school environment.

- 5. Do you support making a permanent change to the admissions process for Boston's exam schools? YES/ NO And if so, what would your proposed alternative system be?**

Yes. lottery system to promote equity and provide more access to children with promise

- 6. What steps would you take to make universal pre-K a reality in Boston?**

Increase line item in city and state budget and work closely with electeds and education officials and the community.

(F) Public Safety

- 1. Do you support requiring the police department and other city agencies to get City Council approval before acquiring new surveillance technologies or military equipment? YES/ NO**

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Yes.

- 2. Do you support the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office's do-not-prosecute list and expanded approach to dealing with such low-level offenses? YES/ NO**

Yes. People need to be prosecuted but not persecuted.

- 3. Do you support ending information sharing between the Boston Police Department and ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes. I believe there's need to be accountability and information sharing between the departments.

- 4. Do you support closing the loopholes in Boston's Trust Act which allow BPD to inquire about immigration status or pass information along to ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 5. Do you support shuttering the Boston Police gang database? YES/ NO**

No.

- 6. Would you support a hard cap on overtime for individual officers? If so, what percentage of an officer's salary? YES/ NO**

Yes. 20%

- 7. What changes to the 2017 Boston Police Patrolman's Association (BPPA) contract would you advocate for in the latest round of contract negotiations?**

More accountability. Hard cap on overtime. End qualified immunity.

- 8. What current functions of the Boston Police Department should be transferred to agencies under civilian control, and what governance would you propose for them?**

Public, private details and construction sites. Private companies.

- 9. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Boston Police Department budget to reinvestment in communities? YES/ NO *If so, how much?***

No. How do you develop a budget that is efficiently used and meets the public safety needs of the city?

- 10. Which of the following would you support banning the use of by the Boston Police Department? (Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs)**

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Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs.

- 11. Do you believe that affiliation or sympathies with white supremacist organizations among officers is a problem with BPD? YES/ NO If so, what measures would you take as mayor to combat that issue?**

Yes. Race and equity training. Psychologists and Sociologists to weed out the racists.

- 12. Do you support safe consumption sites? YES/ NO**

Yes. As long it's safe, legal and does not harm the public.

(G) Environment & Transportation

- 1. Do you believe Boston needs to reduce its dependence on cars, and if so, how would you propose to do so?**

More bike trails, free T passes for students

- 2. What are your top three policy priorities for making Boston a climate-resilient city, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?**

More bike trails, green buildings, green homes and working closely with underserved communities.

- 3. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 4. Do you support fare-free public transit? What steps would you take to achieve this goal? YES/ NO**

Yes. Work with local, state and federal officials to develop a strategy.

- 5. Do you support the adoption of a curbside composting pickup program? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(H) Housing

- 1. How would you expand affordable housing in Boston and ensure development without displacement?**

Leverage city owned land to expand affordable housing.

- 2. What opportunities do you see for leveraging city-owned land for expanding affordable housing?**

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Work with city and state officials including the mayor to make this a priority and a mandate.15

- 3. Do you support a real estate transfer tax for commercial and residential sales, with the revenue going to an affordable housing trust? YES/ NO What exemption threshold, if any, would you advocate for?**

Yes. 15%.

- 4. Do you support rent control? YES/ NO If so, how would you structure such a policy? If not, why not?**

No. I support co-ops and affordable home ownership.

- 5. Do you support the renewal of Boston's condo conversion law, which affords residents of covered properties a notice period, right of first refusal to purchase their unit, relocation assistance, just cause eviction, and relocation benefits if their unit is converted to a condominium? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 6. Would you support a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance, enabling tenants to purchase a building if the owner seeks to put it on the market? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 7. Boston's inclusionary development policy (IDP) requires that 13 percent of the units in a building need to be affordable. Do you support increasing this number? YES/ NO If so, to what? *Please List %***

Yes. 30%.

- 8. Do you support requiring that a majority of new affordable units be built on-site, in order to ensure communities are diverse and integrated? YES/ NO**

No. Affordable units should be built in communities where they live in their neighborhoods near friends and family.

- 9. Do you support breaking up the BPDA and creating an independent public office of planning? YES/ NO If so, how will you make it happen?**

Yes. Through the city council and the citizens.

- 10. Do you support increasing the number of units that are ADA compliant in projects that receive City funds? YES/ NO**

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Yes.

(I) Economic Opportunity

- 1. What steps would you propose to reduce Boston's income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap?**

Equity for all: Focus on the economy, education housing and community engagement. Increase minimum wage.

- 2. Do you support requiring city contractors to give their employees at least two weeks' notice before changing their schedules and to compensate workers for late schedule changes? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Do you support ending subminimum wages for tipped workers in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 4. How would you enforce the hiring goals set forth in the Boston Jobs Residency Policy (which requires that least 50 percent of the total work hours in each trade must go to *Boston* residents, at least 25 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to people of color, and at least 10 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to women)?**

Comprehensive monitoring program for compliance.

- 5. What targets in city contracting would you commit to for minority-owned businesses as well as Black-owned businesses in particular, and what steps would you take to realize such targets?**

35%, A monitoring department that would report directly to the City Council rather than the mayor

- a. Will you commit to immediately directing all City departments and quasi-city agencies to unbundle large contracts that are set to become available in 2021 and beyond in order to facilitate this? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- b. Will you commit to regular reporting to track progress toward and beyond this goal? YES/ NO**

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Yes.

- 6. The cannabis industry is expected to be a major source of growth in Boston in the coming years. What steps should the City take to make sure that it grows in an equitable way, in which the communities most impacted by the drug war are able to benefit?**

Develop a system that enables people of color to secure an actual business rather than be a figurehead.

- 7. Would you support the creation of a municipal broadband network? YES/ NO**

Yes. It facilitates equity in urban communities.

(J) Democracy

- 1. Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 2. Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. In 2022, Boston will engage in redistricting on the municipal level. What would an equitable redistricting process look like to you?**

The community must be part of defining equitable redistricting

- 4. Would you support the redrawing of Boston's wards and precincts ("reprecincting"), which has not happened in more than 100 years -- and which happens decennially in other MA cities and towns? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(K) Additional Comments

I believe in equity and democracy for all - especially for those who have been disenfranchised for more than 400 years in this country.