AT-LARGE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE: Julia Mejia

1. What letter grade would you give Mayor Wu at this point in her tenure?
C. She has pushed the needle forward in many ways which she deserves credit for but when it comes to community engagement and voice, there’s still room for improvement.

2. What's the best thing the council did this term, and what's the biggest mistake it made?
I am most proud of how we maneuvered the budget process this year with everything simultaneously going on. There were a lot of competing perspectives and different voices in and out of the room but as a City Council, we got the city through it and we were able to pass legislation and the annual city budget while trying to establish the infrastructure for the newly created participatory budget process.

The biggest mistake was not addressing the strained relationships of the City Council post the August 31st meeting. I proposed a restorative justice circle but we instead continued business as usual. So looking back I think as a body, we should have done more to restore the harm from that meeting.

3. What's the first piece of legislation you'd file next term?
Having passed 15 pieces of legislation in my first two terms, I’ve learned that we need to do a better job at bringing people together to ensure that we continue centering the needs of the people first. It is from there that we can enact meaningful legislation and so that is where I want to place my focus entering term 3. [This response has been updated at the request of the Mejia campaign, which says the previous response was erroneous due to a miscommunication with a staffer.]

4. Do you support building a new recovery campus at the edge of Franklin Park?
I have publicly called to slow down to examine the community engagement process and the long term impact of the project on the neighborhood. Substance use and mental health are major issues, as is housing, so we need to hold space to address all of the issues while ensuring all stakeholders have a seat and a voice at the table. We also need to ensure this is a shared responsibility across the city and the state. [This response has been updated at the request of the Mejia campaign, which says the previous response was erroneous due to a miscommunication with a staffer.]

5. Is there anything the city should be doing differently to address the intersecting crises at Mass and Cass?
I think that as a city we need to be doing more to support the people on Mass and Cass. I have consistently advocated for more conversations around ways to engage the community and
health care providers in this conversation and will continue to do so if re-elected for a third term. The problem is that we're not looking at the root causes and so I want to continue this dialogue with my City Council colleagues and the Administration.

6. Do you support plans to move the John D. O'Bryant to West Roxbury?
No, I don't support moving John D. O'Bryant to West Roxbury. The concern is now, if they move to West Roxbury, the diversity may be watered down. To me, it feels like school gentrification and displacement.

7. Was the council's approval of $3.4 million in grant funding for the Boston Regional Intelligence Center the right move?
While I believe public safety is an important issue affecting our community, when it comes to racial profiling and racial equity I called for a pause and additional hearings so we can do a deeper audit and examine the concerns of BRIC and in particular the gang database. [This response has been updated at the request of the Mejia campaign, which says the previous response was erroneous due to a miscommunication with a staffer.]

8. The council has become increasingly acrimonious in the last two years. Who or what is responsible?
What is happening is that we are mirroring the national landscape coupled with the fact that Boston has yet to reconcile with the busing era and other racially charged issues. Until we do that work, we are going to continue to feel and be divided.

9. What else should voters know about you?
I became a City Councilor to change the conversation. For me, I was tired of hearing the same conversations happening in our city and the only thing that seemed to change were our hairstyles and the clothes we wore. I'm an organizer and convener at my core and so for me, this is more than a job—it's my passion and my purpose. If re-elected, I will continue to fight for everyone here in the City of Boston so we can all see a Boston reflective of an inclusive and safe city that we all deserve.