

Questions for Portland City Council Candidates

Your name: *Jill C. Duson*

Your home address: *101 Pennell Avenue*

Your email address: *duson4council@gmail.com*

Your phone number: *878-0769*

Your website:

Other blog/social media sites you use: *I have a personal page on Facebook*

In your opinion, what are the top three issues facing Portland and its residents?

1. *Sustaining our city as **a welcoming community** where all are welcome and valued. To secure our economy, our unique community, and Maine's future, Portland's needs to attract the workers, business owners, artists, entrepreneurs, renters and homeowners of tomorrow.*
2. ***Balanced development** that sustains and builds on what makes Portland, Maine special while welcoming and making room for new opportunities.*
3. *Equipping every Portland School student to be successful.*

In which ways can the city improve transportation? What are your short, medium and long-term goals for Portland's transportation?

Assertively encourage use of alternate and public transportation.

Short term - more assertively educate the public about and enforce share the road rules to make commuter cycling a safe and attractive alternative to the automobile.

Medium term - look at creating park and ride options on the outskirts of Greater Portland city to encourage commuters to leave their cars and take the bus into the city.

Long term - partner with surrounding communities to restore commuter rail throughout central and southern Maine and move forward with vision to humanize the Franklin arterial corridor.

What are Portland's strengths and weaknesses regarding affordable housing? How can we improve the weaknesses and expand on the strengths?

Portland has strong rental and ownership housing markets and Portland has challenges peculiar to each. Rental affordability is a critical issue for entry level wage earners and young professionals. Scarcity and affordability are problems for young families and downsizing retirees. Portland has the capacity to take on multiple strategies to address housing issues specific to each market segment.

When, and in what ways, are TIFs (tax increment financing) appropriate and where are opportunities to utilize this tool in your view?

I support consideration of a TIF in a "but for" scenario where a project has a clear and unique public benefit.

Given the city's financial constraints, where do you believe the city should trim and/or raise revenues?

Revenue: I continue to support a local option sales tax to raise revenue for infrastructure improvement projects in Greater Portland. The challenge is how to structure a local option tax proposal so that Portland retains a substantial share but other communities gain from it as well.

Trimming Budgets: I have served as Chair of the Council Finance Committee twice and each time have presided over a process where we had to significantly trim budgets. My experience is that we implement cuts as part of a detailed and very public balancing process. It is not effective or useful to offer cuts out of context and in isolation from a comprehensive budgeting process.

How would you prioritize Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) monies in Portland?

After a very detailed public process, the council approved a detailed process for prioritization of these funds. I voted in support of that process and will review and respond to the recommendations developed by the prioritization group and the Manager at the appropriate stage.

What is your impression of the Old Port and Arts Districts?

I love, love, love our city's art and activities scene. I am a regular participant in 1st Friday, in festivals and events downtown, and am a fairly regular theater goer.

What changes, if any, would you like to see regarding liquor/entertainment licensing and regulations?

I would place emphasis on supporting efforts to stop service to underage drinkers. I think that Old Port bar and restaurant owners have done a good job of working together to help manage crowds and partner with PDD.

Do you support the Charter Commission's recommendation for a popularly elected mayor elected through Ranked Choice Voting? (yes/no). Why or why not?

Yes, I plan to vote "yes" on this question. Portland is disadvantaged by the annual change in leadership when we need to pursue resources and policy changes at the state and federal level.

Do you support giving the right to vote to all legal residents of Portland?

I plan to vote "No" on this question. I believe that voting should be a privilege of citizenship. I would support efforts to help people navigate the citizenship process..