



## A Vision for Boston: Questions for the 2009 At-Large City Council Candidates

### PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

*How would you like the City to collect and use data to improve service performance and be responsive to service needs? What role would you play in this process? How would you engage citizens in your performance measurement program? What degree of data and analysis would you make available to the public?*



#### Felix Arroyo

As a community organizer I believe in collaborative politics and governance. All residents must have the opportunity to participate and have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. All must have equitable access to our government so that it truly is a government “of the people and for the people.” Government must be fully transparent and responsive in order to ensure this ideal. In my four years at the Boston City Council, I served as a Constituent Services Director working hard to ensure that our parks and streets were cleaned, potholes were fixed, and that all of the Basic City Services needs of our constituents were met. I believe that this work is key for city government and I will work with all residents throughout the city to ensure that quality, basic city services are delivered. As a City Councilor At-Large, I will fully support CitiStat and a 311 system as important new tools to improve transparency and the delivery of city services to all Boston residents.

#### John Connolly

We need a better system to collect and use data to (1) allow residents to obtain information and request services from the City on their own, and (2) allow city workers to deliver services and report on the progress of work in real time. A critical piece of this effort is the creation of a user-friendly City website where the public can access every City document and record online.

A more interactive website should provide not only access to all city records, but also real-time information about events, issues, and actions before our city government. This website should also allow Boston residents to log constituent service needs and receive an immediate logging number that includes an estimated time to meet that need. This will go a long way toward ensuring that basic city services are met with an equitable and rapid response regardless of where someone lives or who someone knows. In addition, to foster transparency and to hold elected officials accountable, we need to provide full and open access to public information, including data collected by individual departments. Any new website must also provide context and related analyses to help residents interpret the released raw data.

#### Tomas Gonzalez

I would encourage the use of CitiStat, a statistical tracking program, integrated with a 311 constituent service line that is viewable online. In this way residents can easily monitor the status of their requests to the city, and city managers can track trends across neighborhoods in order to pinpoint problem areas. In my role as a City Councilor I will advocate for such a system and I will ensure that it is as robust as possible. I would like to see data from this system be as open as possible while also protecting individual privacy. In this way the public will be able to monitor the city’s effectiveness at responding to requests, and schools will be able to use the raw data for teaching purposes.

## **Tito Jackson**

Boston residents deserve effective partnerships with City government. These partnerships rely upon transparent access to the decisions made by elected officials, and information about their performance outcomes. Informed citizens benefit not only from access to these data in terms of “the numbers”, but also from developing a rich understanding of how decisions are made that affect their neighborhoods.

Residents have diverse needs, and as an At-Large City Councilor, I will use diverse means to keep them informed. As Industry Director for Information Technology for the Commonwealth, I regularly saw the impact of technology on people’s lives, and I will use these insights to better take advantage of social media in creating a more effective communications infrastructure. To inform residents do not have access to these technologies, I will engage in regularly scheduled Rap Sessions—public forums with residents in their neighborhoods. While increased transparency and access to performance data is one objective of each of these efforts, my overarching goal is not simply to direct resources to those programs that do best on individual measures, but more broadly to use these data to learn more about how the many diverse programs developed in each of Boston’s neighborhoods work.

## **Andrew Kenneally**

Since 2004 I have been advocating for Boston to adopt a CitiStat like model which establishes goals and provides data that allows officials the ability to measure the progress made to those goals. Our neighbor Somerville and their version of CitiStat, SomerStat, is something we should be seeking to attain. Somerville is transparent with the problems in their city, what they are doing to deal with these problems, and the progress they are making on solving them. When we engage the public in this way, we are showing our bosses – the taxpayers – what we are doing. No one has the monopoly on good ideas so it’s important to engage the public to get their ideas. Not to mention that when you engage the public and get them involved in the decision that impact them, you will have a more informed and engaged citizen which is good for the city.

## **Ayanna Pressley**

Boston has made great strides over the past few years in utilizing data, but we need to broaden the measures we use, open the process to more residents, and extend the use of data to more city managers.

There are great programs that are working in other communities, like ResiStat in Somerville and ComNet in Worcester, which can serve as models for how we can be more responsive and more connected to the needs of residents.

In principle, I think that city data should be available to the public as much as appropriate. I think that we should open source some of our data, like constituent service information, parking information, traffic cameras, and many other internal workings. Rather than having the city’s departments building applications for public use, we should encourage developers to build those applications at no cost whatsoever to the city and helping our residents gather critical access to information that will make their lives easier and more efficient. The MBTA has recently done a good job with this, and we should follow suit.