

## The Urbanist Seattle City Council Endorsement Questionnaire

- Do you support Seattle's commitment to Vision Zero, and what legislative strategies would you seek to implement the goal of reducing serious injuries and fatalities on our streets to zero within the next decade? Do you think legislative strategies are sufficient to achieve this goal?

*Seattle needs councilmembers with the political courage to implement Vision Zero. The current Council has both failed to use the legislative tools at its disposal to reduce serious injuries and fatalities on our streets and failed to lay out a vision for their constituents of what safe streets could look like.*

*Under the Seattle City Charter, the Council has the power "(t)o lay out and improve streets . . . and to regulate and control the use thereof." (Art. I, §14, 6). The Council sets policy via ordinance, and delegates implementation of that policy to SDOT and the executive branch.*

*When SDOT, or the Mayor's office, takes actions that impede Vision Zero, the Council should step in and correct those actions. Powers that the Council could, but has thus far refused, to exercise include: pass ordinances to require a certain level of pedestrian, bike, transit, or street infrastructure to promote safety on particular street projects; make general road project funding contingent upon completion of Vision Zero corridor projects; or exercise their oversight function and have the City Auditor evaluate the challenges that impede the city's Vision Zero progress.*

*Informed by my perspective as a regular user of a wide variety of modes of transportation (walking, bus, streetcar, solowheel, car), as well as the extensive feedback I have received from D3 residents over the last few months, I support Vision Zero, and will do everything in my power to help Seattle reduce road fatalities to zero.*

- Do you support the completion of the current bicycle master plan? If so, what strategies, both political and financial, do you propose to ensure its completion?

*Yes. The way the city has approached funding the Lander Street Overpass verses funding the BMP shows that funding is not the challenge, political will is. Even in cases where funding was not in doubt (such as 35th Ave), SDOT and the mayor have explicitly chosen to endanger cyclists and pedestrians in order to prioritize automotive speed.*

*We have only 10 years to decarbonize our society if we want to avoid the worst of the climate crisis. We absolutely must reduce our dependence on automotive transportation, especially in a city as dense as Seattle, and that includes both placing more necessities within walking distance of more homes and investing in mass transit, cycling, and pedestrian infrastructure.*

*I will use every tool in the councilmember's toolbox to ensure the mayor appropriately prioritizes the BMP. This includes setting explicit goals and benchmarks and requiring SDOT regularly report to council on their progress. I support the aggressive use of budget provisos to withhold funding until the mayor's office can demonstrate their commitment to BMP-related projects.*

*I will establish SDOT policy through legislation setting minimum standards for bicycle infrastructure (as well as standards for how and when crosswalks and pedestrian infrastructure is installed (no more determining the need for a bridge by the number of swimmers). I will require anything SDOT builds for cycling be truly all ages and all abilities and I will define minimum standards for that in legislation if the*

*mayor continues to decline to do so. I will also prioritize projects that improve the connectivity of our bike network to make sure that cycling is not just a safe, convenient way to get around individual neighborhoods, but is also a good way to get across town.*

- The current Seattle Transportation Benefit District funding bus services and transit access expires at the end of 2020. Should it be extended and do you envision any changes to the programs it funds?

*It should definitely be extended. Given capacity constraints at King County Metro, I expect to move some funding towards street improvements that accelerate existing buses (rather than buying more bus service). For example, adding less than a mile of dedicated bus lane to northbound side of 24th Ave E approaching the Montlake Bridge would significantly reduce delays for Routes 43 and 48, improving service for current riders and making mass transit a more appealing choice for commuters in that corridor.*

- The Move Seattle levy expires as the end of 2024. What features should the next transportation capital project levy have? What lessons do you take away from the way the current levy has gone?

*We have seen underwhelming performance from the city in terms of projects delivered with levy funds, underscoring just how important it is to have strong oversight and leadership that values operational excellence that transcends specific projects and political goals. We've also seen pedestrian and bicycle projects be systematically scaled back or denatured in exchange for increased emphasis on automotive transport and car dependency. One lesson I take away from the implementation of the current MSL is that SDOT needs a new approach to its public engagement and comment process. We need to start having holistic conversations about projects, taking into account where they fit into the citywide transportation network and incorporating perspectives from a diversity of users, and to get away from public meetings where neighbors are asked whether they support street parking vs. bike lanes.*

*The current investments by MSL do not put the city on track to vastly scale back car dependence, which we need to do to avoid a climate catastrophe, nor does it advance the goals of Vision Zero. Between now and 2024, I plan to provide intense oversight of SDOT and facilitate improvements in its operation and capabilities to deliver results. I will work to change the culture of city government to where the Council exerts significant influence on SDOT's priorities. I will also write more a prescriptive focus into the next levy on projects that accelerate our mass transit (e.g. queue jumps and bus-only lanes), protect our pedestrians, and encourage bicycle/scooter/solowheel usage in the city.*

- Do you support the construction of the Center City Connector streetcar and why/why not?

*Yes. It appears that the capital cost per daily boarding is very reasonable. More importantly, it provides one of the best and only ADA-friendly forms of transport in downtown. Street cars are roll-on/roll-off for wheelchair users and do not require the use of elevators of questionable reliability to access. Having at least one line through downtown that is ADA-friendly is very reasonable.*

- What considerations should inform the discussion around finding additional funding for a light rail tunnel to West Seattle? To Ballard?

*I am skeptical of the tunnel options. I think we need rail lines to serve Ballard and West Seattle sooner and at a lower cost than tunnels would allow, and if we have the money available for a tunnel, we almost certainly should spend it expanding transit service instead. A tunnel in Ballard, however, may be the best way to avoid a moveable bridge (which would be bad for reliability), and should be studied for that purpose.*

- For what purposes should impact fees on development be used?

*State law limits our use of impact fees to four specific areas: public streets and roads; publicly-owned parks, open space, and recreation facilities; school facilities; and fire protection facilities. If elected, I will follow the law.*

- Do you support imposing additional fees on ridesharing services like Uber and Lyft?

*I support a Congestion Charge on all car users that drive in downtown as part of a funding package to significantly increase mass transit frequency and reliability in the city. I specifically support forms of pricing that capture the increased miles driven and other externalized costs of Uber/Lyft vehicles.*

*All automotive transport imposes significant negative penalties on surrounding individuals in terms of lost time, worse pollution, and worse health outcomes. It is critical that the city recoup those costs and invest the funds into alternatives for the entire city. (See additional answers below)*

- Do you support a congestion pricing program downtown? If so, what considerations should be made when setting up such a program?

*I support congestion pricing in downtown Seattle. It would reduce car usage, ease congestion, improve air quality, enable faster bus and streetcar service, and make downtown safer for people on wheels of all forms and pedestrians.*

*Social and racial equity are important considerations to incorporate when setting up a congestion pricing program. The City should engage community stakeholders to determine the criteria it uses to evaluate equity. Revenue from the program should first be used to address any equity concerns (e.g. by providing subsidies or funding transit or infrastructure improvements to help those people that the program may harm) before being earmarked for other projects.*

- How do you feel about the current allocation of street space in Seattle? Under what circumstance would you support converting general purpose lanes to other uses?

*My unscientific estimate is that 95% of street space is allocated exclusively or near-exclusively to automotive use. I'll start aggressively reducing that to something more like 90%, more than doubling mass transit and cycling infrastructure in the city!*

*General purpose lanes should be converted to other uses whenever the change can (1) increase the speed, capacity, or reliability of transit, (2) create a safe and connected bicycle network, or (3) substitute HOV for SOV car trips. Seattle currently needs to allocate more space on its roadway for transit and bike infrastructure, which would enable more people to choose options other than a personal car when plausible. I will work to reduce the amount of scarce street rights of way we use for car storage, so that we can efficiently move our growing population.*

- What approaches would you take to ensure that emerging mobility options (bikeshare, rideshare, e-scooter, etc) are implemented in a manner that increases access to our mobility hubs?

*Seattle should encourage micromobility options that allow people to safely and easily travel without a car. Approaches I will pursue on Council include: permit scooter share operations, lower vendor fees for bike and scooter share operators, provide on-street bike share and scooter share parking in dense neighborhoods, create a safe and connected bicycle network throughout the city, and only seek to enforce bicycling helmet laws for people under 18.*

- What lessons did you take away from the head tax vote/debate? Would you support bringing back the head tax?

*The head tax situation demonstrated that taxes should be productive, not punitive. By characterizing the tax as a punishment for businesses, and for Amazon in particular, the Council lost the support of the Seattle public who support or work for those businesses – as well as the support of people who want their government to coherently present well-reasoned policies instead of appealing to negative feelings towards some of the city’s industries.*

*In addition, the head tax did not meaningfully address the problem it purported to solve. 75% of the funds raised would have built a few hundred housing units annually, while Seattle has a shortage of 30,000 housing units. If the head tax had a clear plan to effectively address the homelessness issue, then I think it would have received more support. It would have received mine.*

- What responsibilities do you think that corporations doing business in Seattle have to the city, and are they meeting them? If not how would you get them to do so?

*Ultimately, businesses are not like individuals. They do not have a motive beyond their intended mission, typically to profit as much as possible, and will ultimately do whatever they can get away with. It is incumbent upon our leaders to define and instill the values of the people upon corporations through the force of law.*

*As an elected leader in Seattle, I will use every tool at my disposal to require that corporations pay fair, living, non-discriminatory wages to their employees, that they fairly and equitably serve all customers, and that they contribute a fair share of their profits through taxes to the continued health and well-being of the people of Seattle who provide corporations with the environment in which they thrive.*

*I support Seattle’s wage, sick leave, scheduling, and other worker protection laws. I walk the talk on this issue. My wife, Jerina, and I operate a small business with 35 employees. We started entry-level staff at \$15 before Seattle’s minimum wage ordinance, and we were one of the first in our industry to provide healthcare to all of our staff.*

- If you had been on council at the time it was considered, would you have voted for Mandatory Housing Affordability, Seattle’s version of inclusionary zoning? In what ways did the final approved plan differ from your ideal policy?

*Yes, I support MHA. Seattle needs more housing, we are short at least 30,000 units, and MHA helps. However, it does not help enough. Any housing plan that does not provide 30,000 units is insufficient.*

*However, MHA concentrates new housing in only a few neighborhoods. This is inequitable. Seattle must allow more density throughout the city in order to accommodate the demand for housing. My ideal policy would relegalize multifamily housing on every lot in Seattle. I want to permit duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and small apartments in every neighborhood. These wood-frame homes are less expensive to build than high rise apartments, and multiple housing units can fit on the footprint of a single-family home. With this zoning change (which is a reversion to the way Seattle was zoned at the time most of our neighborhoods were formed) the cost per housing unit will be lower, and the market rate for each unit will be much more affordable than current single-family options.*

- Do you support transit-oriented development? If so, how do you ensure TOD is affordable and doesn't displace communities around new transit infrastructure?

*Yes, I support transit-oriented development. I think MHA is a good guide for providing density near transit and providing either affordable units or funds that can be used for affordable housing. However, Seattle should not concentrate all new housing in just a few neighborhoods, because that leads to displaced communities. Instead, TOD should be one tool within a full citywide rezone, which can spread new growth throughout Seattle.*

- What do you think is the most important strategy or set of strategies Seattle can pursue to make the city affordable to live in? What assumptions about affordability do those strategies rely on?

*The most important strategies we can pursue to make the city more affordable are those that increase housing supply, housing affordability, and walkability. Relegalizing small multifamily developments of up to four units on every lot in Seattle, similar to Minneapolis recent rezoning, would go a long way toward this goal.*

*But we also need land use policies and budget priorities that lead to 100% walkable neighborhoods, meaning that the amenities and services people use on a regular basis (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants, child care) must be located within walking distance of every home. Only by providing families options other than using a car to access daily necessities will they choose a mode other than a car. By creating affordable places to live that minimize transportation costs and commute times, we can significantly improve the affordability of the city and the region.*

- What would you do as a city council member to address evictions and the displacement they cause, particularly in communities of color?

*I am glad that the Washington legislature passed SB 5600 earlier this year, which increased to 14 days the minimum notice to vacate for late rent. However, the system is still designed to favor landlords. As a renter myself, I know that most of us work very hard to afford their monthly rent. I support protections that give renters stability so that rent increases don't turn into a housing crisis for the renter. In the long term however, the only way to prevent displacement, is to make sure we have enough housing at affordable prices for everyone, and that is why I focus on legalizing low cost multifamily housing in 100% of Seattle.*

*We are also seeing significant displacement of poorer communities and communities of color because the City Council has deliberately chosen to concentrate growth in those communities through the zoning code. At a time when Seattle's population is booming and many communities of color are being displaced by redevelopment, the Council has outlawed new housing in the wealthy, white*

*neighborhoods, and those neighborhoods are seeing population declines! This is unjust and facilitating a new wave of racial segregation in Seattle.*

- Do you support the proposed creation of a city-county authority to address homelessness in Seattle/King County? If so, what steps would you take to support it on city council?

*Yes. Homelessness is a regional problem, so it needs to be addressed at the regional level. Seattle City Council needs to collaborate with King County and our neighboring cities to share information and resources to ensure everyone can be sheltered.*

- What causes people to experience homelessness in the City of Seattle?

*People and families are unhoused because they cannot afford housing. The ultimate cause of housing instability can be traced to many different causes (job loss, eviction, medical expenses, rent increase, etc). The solution is more housing, more affordable housing, more transitional shelters, and more services to move unhoused people and families into permanent housing or permanent supportive housing.*

- What, specifically, should the city do to address racial disparities in housing opportunity?

*Most of Seattle's zoning history has been explicitly designed to segregate the city. It was done so with terrible effectiveness. I will reverse this so that wealthy, mostly white neighborhoods are no longer off limits to communities of color and lower income households.*

- How would you define "historic character", and in what ways do you feel your definition is inclusive of Seattle's indigenous communities?

*I typically hear the term "historic character" is used when discussing structures in the city and it typically wielded in bad faith.*

*I believe it is critical we fully acknowledge our history and especially the indigenous communities that have lived here for thousands of years. I support federal recognition of the Duwamish tribe as the next of many steps.*

- What approaches would you consider to ensure that multi-generational, affordable housing is located in high-opportunities neighborhoods?

*By pursuing HALA, MHA, and citywide rezoning for multifamily, we can enable housing to become available in high-opportunity neighborhoods that are currently reserved for affluent single-family homes.*

- What role should Safe Seattle and like-minded groups play in our public discourse?

*Civic groups are an important part of public participation, and public officials should listen to all constituents. I disagree with Safe Seattle on causes of and solutions to homelessness, and I believe they have at times crossed the line into outright harassment. But I recognize that they represent a cohort Seattle's residents. I am grateful that other groups and individuals have stood up for rational and humane policies for addressing the problem. As a Councilmember, I am bound to listen to the people and communities in my district, and I will make decisions in the best interests of the city.*

- To what extent has pursuing racial equity been a priority in your work to date? How do you plan to continue that work on city council?

*At Hashtag, we have worked hard to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment at all levels. I am proud of the results. We have an incredibly diverse team at every level and our leadership team has both been developed entirely from promotions of our front-line team and is diverse along every axis.*

*I carry this commitment to council. Indeed, central to my campaign is the reversal of Seattle's racist and segregationist zoning policies that have even been reinforced by our incumbent councilmember in 2014 and 2016.*

- What approaches do you feel are most-important to ensuring that programs, policies, and practices are prioritized in historically underserved and underrepresented communities, who may not have the loudest voice in a public forum?

*We know that the individuals that show up at city hall and at neighborhood meetings are not representative of everyone, especially the classically marginalized groups who don't have the ability to go to events. I will work to center all communities in our decision using every technique I can to lower the barrier to engage all communities. That includes translator services, in-district office hours that rotate through times and locations throughout the district, proactive engagement of advocacy groups, and tracking who is advocating for what to properly weight feedback coming from the various constituencies.*

- What are ideas for progressive revenue sources for transportation and housing that do not burden low-income communities?

*I support progressive taxation like a local income tax and capital gains tax. However, these revenue sources are not legally available to Seattle. We need Councilmembers who can work with state legislators to make these sources available. I have experience working with Olympia to pass laws on behalf of the industry of my business, and I look forward to working with state legislators on behalf of Seattle as well.*

*However, getting progressive tax reform passed in Olympia will take at least a couple years, if not more. Until the time we can raise revenue without burdening low-income families, Seattle needs to work with what is has. My plan to relegalize multifamily housing costs the city nothing, but will enable reasonably-priced units to be built throughout the city. For transportation, we can increase the efficiency of the system by creating more transit-priority lanes and signals at a reasonable cost. These solutions do not take an extraordinary amount of revenue, but they do take political will that the current council lacks. I have a plan and I have the will to make it reality.*