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## The Urbanist Seattle City Council Endorsement Questionnaire

1. 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?

The cheapest and fastest thing we can do is lower speed limits on arterials to 25mph city-wide. It's unclear why SDOT has repaved projects but for many they've left the speed limits higher than 25mph. While we know that physical roadway changes are needed to truly ensure that drivers travel at safe speeds, changing speed limits is a good first step.

In addition, simple paint-only changes such as narrowing wide lanes and 4-to-3 lane reconfigurations have an outsized impact on motorist behavior. These solutions don't require increased funding, only the political will to do what is right. We also need to update our Complete Streets policy to ensure that any time we're modifying a street or sidewalk (including basic repaving), we're prioritizing the safety of vulnerable users, folks like our wheelchair users and pedestrians. Too often we repave a dangerous street and leave it without functional sidewalks, and in a configuration that's dangerous to cyclists, pedestrians, *and* motorists. These are wasted opportunities to drastically improve the lives of people who use Seattle streets.

The city is currently asking the state legislature for permission to install cameras for automated enforcement of bus-only lanes and "box blockers". I've been conflicted about this since communities of color often experience over-policing and surveillance, but after conversations with the folks at Rooted in Rights and the ACLU, I've become more supportive.

2. 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, we have to ensure the safety of those who get around our city by bike. In addition, we need to consider (and fund) proper maintenance of our bicycle facilities. During snow and ice events, protected bike lanes and neighborhood greenways need to be cleared. Bike lanes need to be regularly swept of leaves and debris, especially after heavy rainfall. We also need a regular schedule for replacing the flex posts that are used to protect bike lanes, or change to more robust protection like planter boxes everywhere. I believe many council members are becoming aware of the need to move forward on this. Fortunately, funding is the easier part. Even in Downtown Seattle, protected bike lanes only cost around \$30,000 per mile once you eliminate all the tacked-on car infrastructure improvements and street beautification projects.

3. 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?

Yes, this needs to be extended so we can continue to offer more frequent bus service. I would like to work with other Councilmembers and the Mayor to identify if the STBD could include full fare

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coverage for all Metro riders in Seattle. Free fare would reduce fare enforcement costs, encourage even more transit ridership, and speed up bus service through reduced boarding times.

Free public transit isn't enough to improve bus speed and reliability, though. Even with increased funding through the existing STBD, Metro has been limited by a lack of bus drivers. They simply can't hire enough people. That means we need to make better use of existing service and drivers by ensuring that buses aren't stuck in traffic behind cars. Bus-only lanes, bus priority signals (where buses get a head-start at red lights), and transit-oriented pilot projects (like in-lane bus stops through temporary boarding platforms) need to be a standard part of our Complete Streets toolkit.

4. 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?

The Move Seattle levy is a great example of progressive, forward-thinking policy that I'd like to see more of: building infrastructure to support safe pedestrian and cyclist travel so that more folks can take more trips without cars, repairing and retrofitting our existing bridges to harden them against seismic activity, and integrating those improvements with expanding Link service. Unfortunately, many of the goals around bike and multi-modal corridors are going unmet because of a lack of urgency at City Hall and local opposition. Expected federal funding has also fallen short, stalling Move Seattle projects. What I'd like to see from the next levy is a commitment to exactly the same vision of a multi-modal transportation system that gets people out of cars so that freight, emergency services, disabled folks, and buses can get around efficiently. I'd also like to see a greater commitment to equity. My district remains underserved in terms of bike infrastructure and sidewalks. Also, local businesses haven't seen nearly the same compensation as other parts of the city when local transportation projects disrupt business (like they did during the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave corridor improvement). One of the biggest failures of Move Seattle has been a lack of buy-in from local communities, and sometimes hostility to non-car infrastructure installation. I'd like to see future levies have more budgeting for outreach. The best project in the world isn't going to get built if it's subjected to endless review and litigation. At the same time, I want to see more political leadership from City Hall – change is always difficult, and leadership isn't just reflecting local sentiment, it's about convincing folks that the change being sought is worth the work.

5. Do you support the construction of the Center City Connector streetcar and why/why not? I'll admit to being skeptical of this project. Ridership seems low and the poor planning and budgeting of the past feeds a narrative about local government being ineffective. I hope that it serves low-income communities by allowing better access through the city and that it helps reduce car traffic through downtown.

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

While I fully support the expansion of light rail to West Seattle and Ballard, I don't believe plans should shift where the stations are to accommodate a tunnel. In the Rainier Valley we've seen what happens

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when parts of a neighborhood are given short shrift by skipping a station. Community members need to have reasonable access to stations to ensure the line has the ridership it needs.

7. For what purposes should impact fees on development be used?

Seattle has been on the verge of adopting impact fees for years now – I'd like to see the City Council finally put together a plan so that we have the resources we need to accommodate new residents. Traditional uses for impact fees are things like transportation infrastructure improvements and service improvements in local schools, and I absolutely support those things. A more urgent need, I think, is mitigation for the consequences of displacement. We need to ensure that as we build to meet Seattle's growth, longtime residents have the opportunity to age in place, and those who are economically dislocated have the opportunity to stay in their own neighborhoods near their support networks. Impact fees could go towards subsidizing housing, much like the in-lieu fees in the MHA, but targeted locally to preserve our communities as they negotiate rapid growth.

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

Right now, we have a number of problems as we adjust to this new transportation model: low wages for drivers, the safety of passengers and drivers, the carbon emissions of vehicles that are idling or between fares, a lack of education and enforcement for drivers who park in bike lanes and greenways, and the traffic consequences of there just being a lot of vehicles on the road. I support fees to help mitigate these negative effects. Rideshares are going to be a piece of a complete transportation plan, but we need to ensure that we're still encouraging more carbon neutral options whenever possible. We should also bring the drivers to the table when we're talking about fees – many rideshare drivers are struggling to make a living as it is, and I'd want to see some of the money collected from increased ride share fees going towards services the drivers themselves want. What we can't have, and what we've allowed thus far, is for these huge, often predatory corporations to squeeze workers, consumers, and cities, privatizing the profit and leaving communities to deal with the negative externalities of the business model.

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

I'm conflicted about congestion pricing. It could be a sensible solution to reducing traffic downtown, but I worry that a) it will disproportionately affect trade workers who must drive and low-income families who've been pushed out to the suburbs b) the actual reduction in traffic won't be nearly enough to make the drastic reductions in carbon emissions that we need in the next 12 years, and c) in order to be equitable, funds raised from congestion pricing need to go back into public transit improvements that help not just folks in the city, but also people who have been displaced to the suburbs/exurbs. Before we start taxing people for driving into the city we need to make sure there are solid alternatives for them to rely on.

10. 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?

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I'd like to see transit prioritized so we move more people more reliably through the city. I'd also like to see more protected bike lanes and a completed network. In D2 we have no commuter path into downtown and very little greenway space east/west. I'd like to see the actual build out, not just design of our bike paths.

11. 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?

It's important that we plan for how these options will be used, stored, and recovered before we finalize anything. Each of these has the potential to increase access to mobility for our communities, but they require their own infrastructure since sidewalk use is unsafe for pedestrians and those with physical disabilities. We should be sure to include the disability community in these discussions and be sure that streets and docking stations are planned with these uses and users in mind.

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

Oof. I taught a whole workshop on this. What we learned is that we need to frame progressive revenue differently. We can't let people be duped by promises of corporations. Whether or not they get the tax environment they want, they always leave. Boeing moved its HQ to Chicago and laid off 15% of the state's workforce. Amazon moved part of their operations to Bellevue even after the tax was repealed. We can't continue to let corporations dictate how our local government works.

I've been advocating for progressive revenue in the city for the last few years. I helped organize town halls in support of the citywide income tax campaign in 2017 and testified in favor of the EHT last year. We can't keep asking individual households to pay more sales or property taxes. Instead, big corporations should be paying taxes too. If the legislature isn't going to take responsibility for fixing our upside down tax code, then the City should do what it can to make changes locally.

13. 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?

The biggest responsibility that corporations have when they're doing business in Seattle is to actually be a part of Seattle. The reason why companies like Amazon and Microsoft are here is because of the combination of livability and access to human capital, resources that they don't currently pay their fair share for. Right now, the Seattle area GDP is around \$350 billion. In the midst of a homelessness crisis, displacement of longtime residents, rickety infrastructure, transportation improvements stalled for lack of funding, with 1,100 people moving here each and every week, our city's proposed discretionary budget for next year: \$1.3 billion. The resources are here to finance public services, but right now many corporations are using what we've built to extract profit and send it to shareholders rather than doing the right things (and the smart thing!) by reinvesting it here. The failure of the head tax reflects the reality that corporations are going to fight tooth and nail to avoid paying for the services they currently depend on to generate all those billions of dollars. We're going to need a marshalling of the city's people, particularly those folks who are already bearing the cost of this extractive capitalism in the form of displacement, to ensure that there is the political will to back up Council efforts to have a more equitable relationship between the city and corporations. That said, I think there is an opportunity to

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bring more forward-thinking big businesses to the table and explain that if they want to keep building their presence here, paying for things like housing and transit is going to ensure that they can continue to grow and benefit from the talent we cultivate and draw to this city. If we're going to keep on being one of America's most livable cities, we're going to need to invest in the housing and public services that we all need.

14. 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?

I supported the linkage fee and the original effort to require production of affordable units on site. The 'grand bargain' was really a giveaway to downtown property owners. MHA was never intended to address displacement, which is the urgent issue in my district. Instead, it will create some moderately affordable housing units in a few years. That said, I would have voted for it. Now I believe we need to move on and have a genuine discussion about addressing displacement.

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

Stemming displacement is key to keeping our communities of color intact. We have already seen the impact on community cohesion when people have to move away from their social networks, cultural or religious institutions. To solve displacement we need wholesale change in the way we permit new buildings and raze old buildings. If these permit applications demonstrate that they will not displace communities of color, they can be approved. Otherwise they need to evaluate their projects to see how to address the inequity.

16. 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 housing crisis is the greatest challenge that our city faces. Obtaining home-ownership or even sufficient and safe rental housing has become a daunting challenge for many in our city – especially in neighborhoods at high risk for displacement. I support strategies that include:

- Right to return and affirmative marketing so folks can return when their building gets renovated or replaced.
- Build more housing – support increased development of backyard or garage apartments and small apartment buildings (~20 units) in all neighborhoods so there are more kinds of units available, including units targeted for lower income people.
- Require Displacement Impact Study – Our development process must align with our Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) goals. Ensuring equity in development must be a part of the process. We will work with SDCI to adjust permit process so that permits are granted for projects that don't cause displacement or that meet racial equity goals.
- Develop a comprehensive anti-displacement strategy that includes community ownership.
- Secure a permanent source of funding for the Equitable Development Initiative.

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

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Seattle has a responsibility to its residents to put them first by enforcing renter protection laws, educating landlords and tenants, and enacting stronger renter protection and rent stabilization programs.

- Provide resources for small/new landlords on their responsibilities and the rights of tenants.
- Eviction reform – extend notice to 21 days. Make it harder for folks to become homeless
- Ensure that tenants have legal representation at eviction court.
- Increase the Notice Period for Rent Increases to 90 days.
- Anti-displacement voucher – increase rental relocation assistance to serve more people for longer period.
- Equipping SDCI (Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections) to more vigorously enforce renter protections against harassment and insufficient heating.
- Provide the SDCI with increased funding and review their inspection procedures to make sure inspections are thorough.
- SDCI should work with stakeholders to develop guidelines and an enforcement framework to protect renters from retaliation.

18. 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?

Homelessness is a regional issue. The picture we have of homelessness as being a downtown issue or a Seattle issue ignores the reality that “homeless” often means sleeping on couches, sleeping in vehicles next to jobs or resources, bouncing between state facilities, or just having inconsistent housing (relying on motels and other short term housing options). A lot of the homelessness is happening out in the suburbs. As urgent as the need is here in Seattle for housing first intervention, if we want to get a handle on it as a region, we need regional solutions. I would be strongly in favor of an equitable, county-level response to homelessness. I want to be sure our neighbors without homes get solutions where they’re at: in their own communities, near their own social support networks, where they’ve already decided it makes sense for them to be.

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

There are many things that contribute to homelessness - eviction, domestic violence, loss of a job or unexpected medical expense, and for some - acute mental health or substance abuse crises. But the biggest factor is always the cost of housing. We don’t have enough affordable housing in Seattle, and as long as people keep coming here, there’s going to be more and more expensive competition for what housing there is. Having a lot of affordable housing doesn’t stop folks from being in crisis, but it does make it possible for people living on fixed incomes, living on savings, living on disability to find places to stay that meet their needs.

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

We need to plan the city for working class people. That includes permanently affordable rental and homeownership opportunities, requiring city surplus land to be used for rentals that are affordable to low- and middle-income families, and preserving existing affordable buildings. It also means investing

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in economic development that creates family-wage union jobs and connects people to apprenticeship programs. Affordability is not just about housing prices; it's also about increasing the household income of our neighbors so we can build healthy neighborhoods.

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

"Historic character" should never be used to make permanent the exclusion of the past. One of my concerns around using "neighborhood character" as a reason not to build things like housing and infrastructure is that it's often used by wealthy people to protect particular neighborhoods from having to accept their fair share of the rapid growth in our city. When I think of "historic character," I think historic character is best defined more in terms of community spaces and community legacies. The Seattle Black and Tan Hall, for example – it's a community owned space that honors the historically Black character of the Central District by recreating the Black and Tan club, which was one of the best and only integrated nightclubs in the country. When it comes to our indigenous communities, I think we have woefully underutilized the talent and the history of the Duwamish people on whose land the city sits. We already have the wonderful Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center right next to the tribal services office over in West Seattle. I'd like to see underutilized city and county land in our area used, in partnership with the Duwamish, to create both cultural legacy projects but also co-operative businesses and housing for the Duwamish people.

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

We need to ensure that every neighborhood in the city includes family-sized housing that is affordable to people of all incomes. Exclusive zoning and exclusive neighborhoods that preserve access to opportunity only for our wealthier neighbors are anti-democratic. The City needs to change single-family zoning to allow for urban infill, including small (10-20 unit) apartment complexes that can serve an array of incomes.

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

These groups have every right to advocate for policy they prefer. They have absolutely no right to harass or intimidate those with different opinions.

24. 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?

Racial equity has been an important part of my work for the last 20 years. As a community planner, I've always fought for communities of color to have equitable access to resources, whether affordable housing, food security or early learning opportunities. My commitment as a city council member is to continue centering racial equity in all our policy decisions by passing an RSJI ordinance to give teeth to the existing resolution. I also want to ensure every City department has adequate budget to support authentic community engagement in different languages and with the goal of focusing on impacts and outcomes for our communities of color.

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25. 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?

As an organizer with Rainier Beach Action Coalition, I've been a part of South CORE (Communities Organizing for Racial and Regional Equity) for the last several years. Our focus is to advance the inclusion of these communities, and to hold accountable jurisdictions and programs including Sound Transit, climate justice organizations and others. Too often, well-intended organizations claim to speak on behalf of communities of color rather than working in allyship. At RBAC we often ask "What's happening *to* us and what's happening *with* us?" It's important to take the time to build relationships with those most impacted or most at risk of disparate impacts and ask them what they want to see change.

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

We all know our city works best when we invest in the infrastructure we all need to thrive. We live in a wealthy city and expect a lot: reliable electricity, beautiful parks, buses that come on time, responsive public agencies. But when wealthy elites and corporations starve our city of resources, and push the burden of paying onto those who can least afford it, we pit neighbor against neighbor, and we all suffer. We need to identify better sources of revenue where the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share. I will dive into new options, and find the right mix — like taxing the unearned passive income wealthy people make on their investments, or increase the real estate excise tax on mansions, or make our taxes on businesses more progressive, to make sure all Seattleites can thrive and the wealthy pay their fair share.

The progressive taxes that seem most promising:

- Increase the commercial parking tax downtown and spend the money on transit/ bike/ ped infrastructure.
- Tax capital gains on unearned income.
- Get the state to allow us to do a local option REET (additional 0.25%) on luxury homes (above \$1 million?)
- Put disincentives on purchase of homes that are not a primary residence, or vacant properties, or flipping, and use the proceeds to fund affordable housing.
- Local estate tax.