

Dan Strauss 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?

Yes. Achieving Vision Zero starts with building a citywide network of protected bike lanes and proactive street design. We as a city need to put pedestrians and cyclists at the top of the list of priorities when designing new roadways or renovating old ones - they are the most vulnerable users of our roads. I have made a connected network of bike lanes a centerpiece of my platform, and I will continue to do so on the Council.

I also support pedestrianizing more areas of Seattle. One example is Ballard Avenue. I want to see Ballard Ave converted to a pedestrian-only street with local business access.

Overall, we need to slow traffic in our city, increase pedestrian protections (curb bulbs, activated crosswalks), and implement all recommendations offered by the Vision Zero team. As we think about what investments to prioritize, we need to put our primary focus on equity. We need to seek out the communities which haven't benefited from traffic calming in the past and look at those places with the highest injury rates.

- 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. I agree with the City Council's request for the mayor to find additional funding beyond the Move Seattle Levy in the 2020 budget to fully build out the master plan. When Move Seattle dollars are exhausted and we have more miles of bike lanes to build, I will advocate for new transportation dollars to be directed to this infrastructure. I will also monitor school zone camera funds to ensure those dollars are implementing safety projects and bike lanes that overlap with the overall master plan. Additionally, I support a new levy to continue to fund the buildout of our network of connected bike lanes. The big jump in bike ridership from 2018 to 2019 has shown when we invest in a network of protected lanes which truly lets people move around the city safely, they use it.

As staff, I have advocated for the completion of important projects such as the 4th Avenue protected bike lanes, and I know where the opportunities and roadblocks are to get this work accomplished as fast as possible.

- 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, it should be extended. The scope of what the funding can be used for has already been updated once since the District was created to take into account changing land use patterns and transportation

needs, and it should continue to be updated as needs dictate. I particularly support the change which allowed these funds to be spent on capital projects such as dedicated bus lanes and signal priority - these are low-cost ways to improve service using our existing fleet. Right now, the number of buses we can put on the roads is constrained by the capacity of our bus bases, and until planned capacity expansions are complete, we need to focus on how to improve service with our existing buses.

We also need to use Transportation Benefit District Funds to expand the ORCA Lift program. Right now, you have to earn less than \$24,280 to qualify, which is far too low. I am advocating for raising the income eligibility limit to 50% of Area Median Income, which is \$38,750 per year. This will help ensure everyone has access to our world-class transit system.

The largest weakness of the STBD is that Metro could not keep up with hiring drivers and buying coaches. I will work with Metro and SDOT to provide the lay-over space near bus bases and identify ways we can help Metro hire the drivers we need for them to successfully keep up with our service needs.

- The Move Seattle levy expires at 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 next levy needs additional focus and funding for completing the Bicycle Master Plan and building out our network of dedicated bus lanes. The main takeaway from the current Move Seattle Levy is to under promise and over-deliver.

Seattle is failing to deliver on the level or speed of improvements voters were promised on a number of levies and initiatives. We need to rebuild trust, especially with SDOT. I will work with SDOT and stakeholders around the city to develop ambitious and attainable goals for the next transportation levy.

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

Yes. It will link the South Lake Union and First Hill lines into a coordinated corridor. When we build out a transit mode into an interconnected network, it becomes more useful and encourages greater ridership. SDOT projects if the Center City Connector were built, the consolidated system would boost ridership 230% and carry a total of 18,100 riders a day, far more than the busiest bus route.

Streetcars are often criticized because they get stuck in traffic and have poor on-time performance. This problem is being addressed with the Center City Connector by putting the tracks in a dedicated lane and I will advocate for the entire line to be in dedicated lanes. Building out the streetcar network is one more way we can encourage Seattleites to shift more of their trips away from single-occupancy vehicles, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and improving safety in the process.

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

The needs of the community are paramount to the discussion. Ultimately, we need to take a comprehensive look at who and what will be affected by the light rail line, positively and negatively, and make an equitable decision on the alignment. For additional funding, we need to consider all possible funding authorities, and we need to take into account who will benefit most from the new line.

I have sat as staff at the table and know the current opportunities we have to reduce the cost to the city. I organized the Interbay Regional Corridor Transportation workgroup to take stand-alone projects that were not competitive to funders and bundled them together to receive state funding. We have received the first \$1 million from the state and will continue to make the case for state and federal funding for transportation projects in Interbay, the light rail tunnel being one of them.

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

Affordable housing, transportation, and childcare are my top priorities. In short, impact fees should offset the cost of scaling the services which need to grow to serve our growing population.

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

Yes. I strongly support Mayor Durkan's Fare Share proposal to ensure rideshare drivers earn Seattle's established minimum wage and extend worker protections for rideshare drivers while investing millions in affordable housing and completing the downtown streetcar. This proposal creates needed revenue to address some of our city's greatest needs while protecting rideshare drivers and putting us on a path to raise wages to minimum wage. We need to develop worker protections which are adaptable to the changing economy, and Fare Share is a great start.

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

Yes. We know from climate scientists that we're running out of time to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. In Seattle, the majority of these emissions come from transportation. Requiring drivers to pay a fee to enter the most clogged parts of our city is a proven method to reduce congestion and generate revenue which can be invested in infrastructure and services which further encourage people to walk, bike, or ride public transit.

A key concern in developing a congestion pricing program is equity. As we consider this policy, we must be mindful of the equity impact – congestion pricing can disproportionately impact low-income communities. We also need to ensure the policy accounts for people who work more than one job, late or early hours, or need to use their vehicle as a function of their job, whether it is carrying tools or materials. Seattle and King County both have robust programs focused on equity and social justice. I will work with the relevant teams to make sure we know where people who work in the congestion pricing zone are commuting from and ensure those areas are well-served by non-car commute options.

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

We need a citywide network of dedicated bus lanes and safe and separated bike lanes. These issues have been pillars of my campaign from the beginning and are top priorities for me if I am elected. Despite big expansions in our bus and bike lane network in recent years, most of our street space is still reserved for cars. I am in favor of converting general purpose lanes to other uses when they are needed as part of our interconnected bus and bike lane networks.

- 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?

I applaud SDOT's allocation of street space for bike and scooter parking and think this needs to continue. This helps ensure an adequate supply of bikes and scooters where they're needed and keeps them out of everyone's way. I think we can do a better job of coordinating with the shared mobility companies (e.g., bike and scooter shares) to locate parking in areas of high demand, and will work to make sure the city is getting the data it needs from the companies to support this. We also need to look at the equity of where bikes (and eventually scooters) are distributed. If we want to use bikes and scooters to increase access to mobility hubs, we need to make sure everyone who may want to use them has this option.

I also want to explore the possibility of holding either riders of bike/scooter share companies accountable for improper parking. Bikes or scooters which block the sidewalk, wheelchair ramps, building entrances, etc. are bad for everyone and we can do more to rein in this problem. There is a framework of enforcement that puts the onus on the user, and we need to implement this framework.

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

I don't relitigate the head tax. The discussion was supposed to be about addressing our housing and homelessness crisis and instead, the conversation became about everything else. It is a year and a half later and we have not made any meaningful actions in addressing the homelessness crisis, but we are still arguing about a failed proposal.

The takeaway lesson is that you need all of labor in the tent to be successful. We need big, bold solutions at a regional level, and we need them today.

- 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?

Corporations benefit from all that Seattle has to offer, and they should make contributions to creating the solutions that our city is experiencing. I support Seattle's efforts to tax income -this would make

sure that a portion of the wealth generated by corporations helps support Seattle. I will also work with the Third Door Coalition to find additional ways for business to contribute to our city.

- **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, Mandatory Housing Affordability was a critical step in the right direction, and didn't go far enough. If I had been on the council at the time, I would have pushed for higher fees for developers who opted not to include affordable units in their developments, as well as a requirement for some of those fees paid into the affordable housing fund be spent in the same neighborhood where the developers paid them. I also would have required more affordable units be built on-site at new developments and made it harder to opt out of building them. We also need to ensure builders have options to pay the in-lieu fee in installments, as the largest burden of cost is often at the beginning of the project.

We need to keep fighting against displacement. I support policies like the Equitable Development Initiative and the Community Preference Policy and others which help residents stay in affordable housing in their own neighborhoods.

- **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, TOD is a great way to ensure people do not have to depend on their cars for their mobility. As Seattle grows, a significant amount of our new housing needs to be TOD. The way to avoid displacing communities around new transit infrastructure is through policies like Mandatory Housing Affordability and Community Preference Policy. These will make sure affordable units are being built, and those at risk of displacement get priority access to them.

- **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 set of strategies to make Seattle affordable is building more homes of all kinds - duplexes and triplexes in single-family neighborhoods, multi-story buildings on transit corridors and thousands of additional income-restricted homes. Creating more supply is an integral part of this strategy, and so are income-restricted homes. No matter how many homes we build, the market can't produce high-quality, secure homes which are affordable for people with very low incomes. This is why income-restricted homes have to be a major part of the solution as well.

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

I support the new tenant protections which passed in Olympia earlier this year, including increasing the notice period for rent increases from 30 to 60 days and increasing notice period for evictions from

three to 14 days. These will help people stay in their homes, and they are not enough. Some examples of additional policies I want to introduce include a “first-come, first served” rental law, a portable screening acceptance requirement, and a requirement for lease renewals at set time intervals (such as 12 months) to avoid month-to-month maneuvering by landlords. I will also work to rein in excessive fees and insurance requirements for tenants, because these make it much more difficult for families to get into affordable, stable homes 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 issue - there are people experiencing homelessness in every community, and we need to meet people where they are. We need our region to step up and help us combat this crisis, which is why I support coordinating efforts with our regional partners. I strongly support the new Regional Homelessness Authority, and as a Councilmember, I will work within this framework to implement a response with proven solutions which meets the scale of the crisis we are facing.

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

The high cost of living and lack of affordable housing in Seattle are the biggest drivers of homelessness in Seattle. People who can barely afford their housing are much more likely to fall into homelessness due to a job loss or other life event. There are other contributing factors which we also need to address, including mental health and drug addiction, and these experiences can be what tips people over the edge from being stably housed to homeless when the cost of housing is over 1/3rd of an individual's gross income.

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

We need to start by recognizing the exclusionary origins of our single-family zoning. Many of our single-family zones were put in place to keep people of color out of wealthy, white neighborhoods. We need to redefine the single-family zone citywide to include additional forms of low-density residential development such as duplexes and triplexes. This would re-legalize types of housing which were once common throughout Seattle and still are in many parts of District 6.

I also strongly support the City of Seattle’s Race and Social Justice Initiative, which requires all city departments to come up with plans for how they will systematically eliminate institutional racism and race-based disparities in city government. This has led to many changes, including the Seattle Housing Authority tracking, measuring, and making changes in how well its programs meet the needs of minority groups. We can’t address racial disparities in housing opportunity if we don’t address institutional racism within our city departments.

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

The term “historic character” is often misused to justify exclusionary decisions (like the preservation of single-family residential zoning). I also think the term is disrespectful to Seattle’s indigenous communities, given the term “historic character” is rarely used in Seattle to advocate for the preservation of indigenous places of significance. The term effectively values the history of Seattle’s settlers of European descent over the communities who were here before them.

I think a better term to use is “places of historical significance,” and we need to have an expansive view of what this means. There is value in preserving historically significant architecture and neighborhoods built by settlers of European descent, and we also need to recognize, celebrate, and preserve the places which are significant to our indigenous communities as well.

As staff, I have worked to require the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Office of Arts and Culture, the Department of Neighborhoods, and the Office of Intergovernmental Relations to build a framework for evaluating the appropriateness of historical markers and artwork which honor, reference or display Native American culture on City-owned land. As a Councilmember, my first bill will be to recognize the Duwamish tribe.

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

I strongly support permitting ADUs and DADUs in neighborhoods across the city. ADUs/DADUs are a great tool to create more affordable homes in high-opportunity neighborhoods. They also give people who want to age in place the ability to earn extra income while remaining in their home.

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

I have not found them to be solution-oriented groups or productive members of the community.

- **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?**

I have dedicated my life to public service because too many times throughout history policies have been made by people like me - white, heterosexual, male, cis-gender - for the benefit of people like me. I want to change this. My specific experience has been serving in the Lower 9th Ward after Hurricane Katrina to rebuild the community with the highest percentage of black homeowners in the nation, to serving community members daily at the soup hour all four years of college, to supporting co-workers experiencing racism in the Washington State Legislature.

I will ask with every policy we consider on Council, “does this get us closer to a city in which everyone, regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or income, has the opportunity to live affordably and access the opportunities that Seattle provides?” This is and has always been my guiding principle for policy making, and it will continue to be so on the Council. An example of this

approach is ensuring that when we create district-specific solutions, the same solutions and funds are also invested in other districts in our city that have not historically received the same investments.

- 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?

My role as a Councilmember is always to listen and actively work to lift up historically underrepresented and marginalized communities, from hiring, to mentoring, to introducing legislation designed to correct historical injustices perpetrated by society against community. I have a history of asking how to best support community, following through with my part, and stepping back to ensure I do not occupy space unnecessarily. I will continue to follow this principle on the Council.

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

I strongly support the Fare Share proposal, which would fund transportation and housing in addition to ensuring better wages for rideshare drivers. Other policies I will consider are charging companies for use of transit-only lanes and a vacancy tax on condominiums and apartments. I will also work with the Third Door Coalition to find a revenue source from businesses.