



Alex Hudson Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Seattle City Council, District 3

What is your preferred Comprehensive Plan housing growth alternative and why?

I support Alternative 6. Without significant transformation in the amount of housing, transit, neighborhood business districts, and supportive infrastructure like parks and libraries we cannot be an economically, environmentally, or socially just city. Our current Urban Village strategy is over 30 years old, this plus exclusionary zoning has contributed to massively harmful cost escalation, displacement, disproportionately lower homeownership rates for households of color, and forced travel and commute patterns that worsen the climate crisis. I'll push for a Comprehensive Plan - and implementation - that builds a Seattle for the future - an equitable, sustainable, livable place, a true Emerald City.

What investments do we need to make to achieve our housing affordability goals, and what should those goals be? Do you support the Housing Levy?

> Investments. I am an ardent supporter of the Housing Levy. While it is a critical must-pass investment, I worry it doesn't go far enough. I support the Jump Start Levy and want to ensure we protect as much of that revenue for housing as possible. I support and will work to pass legislation to implement a municipal capital gains tax and believe that money should go directly for affordable housing and resident services and workers.

> Cost Control. The City needs to make it easier and faster to build housing by easing restrictions and streamlining overwrought permitting and design review processes. In Auburn, every affordable housing project is guaranteed a six-month review; in Seattle, it can take two years! In a housing crisis, that's unacceptable. I'll push to create a centralized 'Housing Ombuds' to speed up housing delivery. We need better design standards, so all projects start with a stronger baseline on the things that matter to neighborhoods - better sidewalks, more tree canopy, etc. And we need fewer overreaching, subjective guidelines about aesthetics so we can reduce reliance on Design Review processes.



> Housing Goals. We can be a city where no one is cost-burdened, with enough housing of all types and costs that no one is homeless or housing insecure. We need a minimum of 200,000 houses in the next decades, and I have a plan to get us to 270,000.

Under what circumstances would you support pedestrianizing streets that are currently open to cars?

I support pedestrianizing streets with high volumes of pedestrians and activating businesses and destinations serving high-consideration users, such as parks, schools, retirement facilities, and hospitals. These streets are a feature of every great city, and where done right, businesses and people thrive. Pedestrianization can include a spectrum of solutions from baseline safety improvements to full closures, and we can implement movable bollards and/or variable timing to allow for deliveries and emergency access considerations. I'll work with neighbors, stakeholders, and advocates to find solutions that meet our needs.

I have experience doing this. I led the development of the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan and the creation of Seattle's first 'pavement-to-parks' pilot and permanent betterment, which transformed a highly dangerous intersection in First Hill into a place for people to gather and relax. I also raised \$4million for improvements to Terry Ave in First Hill, which will be transformed into a woonerf-style street in the coming years.

What is your approach to generating progressive revenue for the city?

> Municipal Capital Gains Tax. This is a tax on the ultra-wealthy (less than 500 people in Seattle) and a two percent city tax is estimated to generate about \$60 million in annual revenue.

> Sustain our Jump Start Tax. Jump Start is a critical revenue source that generates badly needed revenue to invest in critical services and housing. It must be maintained and protected.

> Housing Vacancy Tax. This is a reasonable way to generate revenue from a handful of property owners and investment firms and change behavior - encouraging empty housing to be put to use in providing badly needed housing.



> Luxury Transportation Taxes. I support increased sales taxes on luxury transportation goods like private jets and yachts. These items contribute to climate change, and we can use this revenue for alternative infrastructure and adaptation.

> Making good use of our existing dollars. In addition to raising revenue, the city needs to take a good look at its spending to ensure that we're funding our priorities and not wasting taxpayer dollars on endless studies or nice-to-have programs over need-to-have services.

What is your position on impact fees?

I consider myself a 'supply side progressive' who is interested in building the things we need at scale and speed - housing, transportation, and other social infrastructure. Though largely passed with good intentions, over the years, we have built a spider web of administrative and bureaucratic regulations and costs that make it hard, slow, and expensive to build things and created mechanisms for these rules to be weaponized by interests with means to prevent good things from happening. I believe that impact fees are not a tool that works in an urban context or a housing supply crisis and, ultimately, they contribute to cost escalation and delay, and I do not support them.

What items do you view as essential to the next Seattle transportation levy due in 2024?

As a committed urbanist and a car-free Seattleite, I believe that our transportation system should build equity, create safety, support good green economy jobs, enhance our quality of life and make our lives easier. I envision a Seattle where getting where and what you need is convenient, safe, and sustainable and where your commute can be the best part of the day.

> Multimodal Transportation Infrastructure. I want a fully funded plan that delivers a highly legible, safe, connected protected bike lane network, a highly-connected bus priority network, and sidewalks, crosswalks, signals, and curb cuts throughout the city. Multimodal transportation infrastructure creates thousands of jobs and keeps all of us safe, healthy, and connected to opportunity and each other.



> Programs. I support e-bike rebates, providing zero-cost transit to people who don't own cars and or who live in housing without parking. I will invest in market streets , street tree plantings and maintenance, benches and other street basics, and opportunities for public art in our right of way.

> Maintenance and Preservation. Our streets and bridges are the foundation of our city's mobility and absolutely need to be kept in a state of good repair. This is especially important from the perspective of disaster and climate change preparedness and resiliency, and equitable access for people of all mobilities. Our mobility is limited, and our economy cannot function well if our sidewalks are buckled and lack curb cuts, our bike lanes are filled with glass, roads are full of potholes, or our bridges have holes in them or get stuck open in heatwaves.

Would you vote to approve completing the streetcar network via the Center City extension and work with the mayor to prioritize funding and building it?

Few people have been as vocal and actively supportive of this project as I have. I'm a leader and champion in the Streetcar Coalition, a group that has pushed for completing the streetcar network since the Center City Connector was promised over a decade ago. I helped to pass the Fare Share tax, which was promised to fund that project, and I fought against the use of those funds for general-purpose spending. I conducted voter research, developed campaigns, testified to the City Council, and presented to community groups on the need to finish this project and provide this mobility and actiation. I will not rest until this project is done - ideally in time for the FIFA World Cup.

Under what circumstances are homeless encampment removals appropriate?

Encampment removals are appropriate only after a deep level of repeated engagement has been conducted, and every person has been offered a housing or shelter solution that works for them. Anything less is simply pushing people around, which only causes further trauma to those individuals, and does not solve any problems. CoLEAD is a program and approach that works, and I will champion adopting this framework and supporting that program.



Hiring incentives haven't worked so far to attract additional police officers to the Seattle Police Department. How can the City promote public safety in such an environment?

Safety and well-being is created by every department in our government. It's SDOT implementing Vision Zero so we can walk, bike, and roll on safer streets and sidewalks. It's SPU ensuring our streetlights are working, Seattle Parks and Recreation supporting well-maintained parks, community centers full of programming and opportunity, and Seattle Public Libraries with longer hours and more locations. It's a focus on connecting to at risk youth to help them find a positive pathway into adulthood. It's the Office of Arts and Culture supporting cultural spaces that enrich our neighborhoods day and night, and the Office of Economic Development supporting small businesses and reducing retail vacancy. It's our housing and planning offices pushing for dense, walkable cities where neighbors know each other and have great places to gather in the community, and on and on. I'll push our government to always be thinking about how to increase prosperity, well-being, and safety so that our city can be peaceful and prosperous.

In terms of recruitment, Seattle should have a police force that looks like the city at large and reflects its values. That will require not bonuses but rather innovative and creative non-traditional recruitment efforts using alternate channels to reach a more diverse universe of potential applicants. Last year City leaders committed to implementing new recruitment strategies and diversifying the police force, but so far we have yet to see any significant change.

What is the appropriate role for the Seattle Police Department to play in creating public safety in Seattle? What would a police contract that encourages safety look like? What does the next police contract need to have in order to earn your vote of approval?

The appropriate role of the Seattle Police Department in creating public safety in Seattle should be rooted in a progressive and community-centered approach that prioritizes well-being and equity. A police contract that encourages safety should reflect the principles of social justice and address the historical disparities and systemic issues that have disproportionately impacted marginalized communities.



- > Alternative response: The contract must include alternatives to traditional policing responses, especially for nonviolent situations. Funding should be directed toward developing and expanding specialized teams of mental health professionals and social and case workers equipped to handle mental health crises, substance use disorder, and people in desperate need of housing.
- > Accountability and transparency: Establish strict protocols for reporting and investigating misconduct, with independent oversight by community representatives.
- > Training, education, and an emphasis on culture change: We still have significant work to do to change the culture of the police department. The contract should emphasize comprehensive and ongoing training for police officers, with a strong focus on de-escalation, cultural competency, trauma-informed practices, and recognizing and addressing implicit biases.
- > Community-led policing and engagement: Encourage a community-led approach to policing, centering the voices and experiences of the community in shaping public safety strategies via community advisory boards, restorative justice programs, and neighborhood-specific policing plans.
- > Data-driven and equity-focused approach with continuous review: We should prioritize data collection on police interactions, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and other factors. This data should be regularly updated and public-facing and used to identify and address disparities, guide reforms, and hold the department accountable for equitable outcomes.

How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?

- > Improving Reliability. We can make transit trips fast, frequent, and reliable through bus-only lanes, intersection prioritization, and other tactical improvements that ensure we're using our precious transit resources well and making clean transportation a competitive choice. Transit service hours and riders' time should not be wasted caught in congestion, and there are many spot and linear improvements we can make to ensure that doesn't happen.
- > Supportive Services. It's a reality that our public transit systems have, in some instances, become a form of shelter for people in crisis and that this sometimes leads to conflict with riders and operators. Rather than ignoring this issue, we need a non-punitive response to get people in crisis riding our buses and trains connected to the help they need. I helped create the nation-leading fare enforcement reforms



and investments in ambassadors and mental health case workers in transit agencies across the region and will push for that to be deepened.

> Activation and Rider Dignity. The City can use Seattle Transit Measure funds to partner with King County Metro to create better bus stops - ones with places to sit, covered from the elements, and with basic amenities like lighting and garbage cans. We can also partner with Sound Transit and other agencies to create activation and vibrancy in stations to keep them safe and welcoming and simultaneously create opportunities for micro-businesses and artists.

> More Commute Trip Reduction Incentives. Employer-provided transit incentives and solo vehicle trip reduction works. The reality is that only some workers have this level of access, and fares can be a financial or logistical barrier. I'll champion incentives that make access to employer-covered transportation easier for more workplaces and workers, supporting an equitable economy and a sustainable future.