



Dale Kutzera Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Seattle City Council, District 6

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

Seattle needs to better manage growth. The issue has largely been left to private interests and their concerns may not be in the best long-term interests of the city. In recent years, the city has focused on encouraging supply by streamlining design review, removing parking requirements, and waiving impact fees. This has led to a rapid increase in supply (we're now a majority renter city), but little impact on price. Increasing supply will not lead to lower prices. Developers will stop building once they realize the market is saturated or demand is falling. There are only two ways to affordability: a decline in demand typically through an economic downturn and loss of population (see Detroit), or public housing. Seattle needs to embrace public housing and the social housing initiative that recently passed is a potential start. Build more housing near transit. Do not wreck our green single-family neighborhoods. Zone strategically. And build public housing at a variety of price points. At the same time, encourage growth in other parts of the state to reduce demand in King County.

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? *

We should devise policies based on data. We need data on the housing in each neighborhood and the price points of that housing. Our goal should be housing at a variety of price points in every neighborhood. The first step toward that goal is to understand what's available and tailor strategies to create what's missing. We need strategic zoning to encourage the kind of housing we want. I support the recent social housing initiative because it could operate at a scale that non-profit builders



often can't. I don't believe taxpayer dollars should be handed over to a private business. If taxpayers pay for land or a building, then taxpayers should own it. This is the historical model of the Seattle Housing Authority. We should build housing over new libraries, fire stations, and police stations if the zoning allows. We need to prioritize housing in the city for people who work in the city. Social housing for retirees or people unable to work can be provided in less expensive parts of the state. Most of all, we need to encourage growth outside King County and incentivize businesses to base new jobs in other regions. A recent study suggested Western Washington needs four new cities and that would certainly help reduce demand and prices in the central Sound region.

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

I lived in Los Angeles for many years and one of the best parts of the area is the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica. Recent mall developments in LA have tried to emulate this pedestrian-only shopping experience. The area around Westlake Center was originally pedestrian only and it's a shame they opened it back up to cars. The street along Pike Place Market should be pedestrian only with cars/trucks only allowed for deliveries in the early morning hours. It would be difficult to pedestrianize areas given that our city was built based on the car. It's hard to split the difference as they are trying to do in old Ballard. Businesses need access to parking lots and for deliveries. But we should explore the option when possible.

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

That's a hard one. Seattle has been on a spending spree for the past 10 years or so given the abundance of construction downtown and related sales taxes. This fountain of money may be drying up. In general, I believe we will need more sensible budgets. Ideally, we would find a way to repeal the 1% growth limit on



property tax levies and rely less on add-on levies that leave people feeling nickel-and-dimed and force some on fixed incomes out of their homes.

What is your position on impact fees?*

I think we need to better connect cost and benefit. Often the short term benefits of a business endeavor are kept private, while the long-term costs fall to the taxpayers. The clean-up of the Duwamish river is an example. So, there should be impact fees. A new skyscraper creates impacts in terms of population, transit, energy use, pollution, environmental damage, etc. We can't turn a blind eye to those impacts.

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

In general, I feel we need to acclimate ourselves to the major changes the city has already embarked on. We need to make sure these new transit systems function properly and make the most of them. We need to get the basics right, like paving streets that haven't been paved in decades. In District 6, a rail extension to Ballard should be paired with a replacement Ballard Bridge that is wider, taller, and multi-model. I'm not a fan of more tunnels.

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?*

I don't believe streetcars are an effective use of transit funds given that they share the roads with cars. I'd rather see the return of free bus service downtown and circulator buses in the downtown area. A new rail line through downtown could connect South Lake Union with existing streetcar lines and make a streetcar extension pointless.



Under what circumstances are homeless encampment removals appropriate?*

One of the main reasons I'm running is to put the idea of a Social Services Department on the table. I think we need such a department, funded on the scale of the Fire Department, that directly provides services including long-term treatment centers for those with mental illness and drug addiction. This system would augment the current patchwork quilt of non-profit service providers. We also need to use civil commitment laws to bring the homeless off the streets and into appropriate treatment that meets their needs. In this system, all homeless encampments would be removed.

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?*

We need more police officers and my assumption is the difficulty in hiring has more to do with morale than money. Police are now asked to be de-facto social workers or therapists. They see the revolving door of arrest and release as defeating. A Social Services Department would go a long way to dealing with many situations for which a police response is not appropriate. This would allow the police to stay in their lane, which should be clearly defined. More police would mean less officers are working overtime.

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 city is already doing the common-sense things like body cams. We need to reduce interactions that could potentially turn violent. Across the country there is a



re-evaluation of when to chase suspects, of avoiding pull-overs for minor issues like a busted tail light, and prohibiting no-knock warrants. We're also making training more diverse and robust. Any new contract should make it very clear when an officer can be fired.

How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?*

Transit has to be safe and clean. A Social Services Department that takes custody of the mentally ill and addicted would go a long way in accomplishing that goal. I think public transit could also take a page from some of the private shuttle buses (Amazon, MSFT), and how they use data.