



Efrain Hudnell Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Seattle City Council, District 3

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

I don't currently support any of the 6 Comprehensive Housing plans. We are in a housing crisis and it's my understanding that with one million new people projected to come to our region by 2040, we need at least 200K new homes to keep pace. Of the current Growth plan alternatives, I believe that plan #6 gets us the closest with 120,000 new units of housing in ten years, but that is nowhere near enough. I am committed to only voting to approve a comprehensive plan that would put Seattle on a path towards the creation of no less than 200K units of housing in the next ten years, so that we can begin to reverse the housing crisis.

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?

First and foremost, I absolutely support the Housing Levy proposed by Mayor Harrell. While the \$970M will go a long way to help us meet our affordable housing goals, the next step beyond this levy will be fully funding the social housing program. While I don't have an exact figure yet, I believe that if we do these two things, and up zone the remaining portions of Seattle which will be left out of HB1110, then we will meet our housing needs.

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

I don't really have a formula for pedestrianization, however, when I think of the places that would benefit, all generally have mixed-use development and green space within the walk shed. As an example, I think that Pike Market and the area around Cal Anderson Park are both rife for pedestrianization. But I'm excited by the prospects taking space from cars and giving it back to people :)

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



I have three strategies for progressive revenue for the city: 1) a tax on vacancy; 2) a land bank tax; and 3) taxing capital gains.

My proposal on taxing vacancies is inspired by the Vacancy Tax in Vancouver, British Columbia. The idea is to tax all residential and commercial properties, that are fit to be occupied, but do not have an occupant of some kind beyond a threshold established by the city. An example of what this could be: a tax on residential properties where an occupant does not reside there for at least 180 days in a calendar year, and for at least one term of 30 consecutive days. This could be self-reported by property owners when property taxes come due each year, and checked against voter databases on a randomized basis.

My proposal on land banking taxes can also be seen as a revised "highest and best use" tax. This tax would be imposed on property that sits in a state where it cannot be occupied for an unreasonable amount of time. An example of what this could look like is: a tax on any property in an area zone for mixed usage where the current use is solely for the purpose of motor vehicle parking and/or a tax on any property that could not be occupied within a thirty day period that is not an active construction zone. This could be monitored by a combination of self reporting from the property owner when property taxes come due, as well as the Seattle Building Permits authority which in theory should have a master reference of all properties pending alteration.

Lastly, My proposal on enacting a capital gains tax is simply a modest increase at the city level on any transaction in excess of \$250K in value, beyond what the state currently taxes. The enforcement mechanism would piggyback off state mechanisms.

What is your position on impact fees?

Bad, just bad. Impact fees are one of the many ways that we reward and encourage a lack of density in our cities. We must flip this paradigm on its head by removing impact fees and imposing tax penalties for practices that don't comport with our imminent need for more housing.

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



1) Funding an aggressive Bike lane buildout campaign: Seattle is in dire need of a road diet and I believe that one way to accomplish that expansion of separated bicycle lanes within current rights of way is a way to accomplish this. In so doing, we can calm traffic, reduce automobile trips, and make it safer and more feasible for more Seattle-ites to travel by bike or scooter.

2) Funding a robust, docked, E-scooter/E-bike share network: Companies like Lime-Bike are profiting off of the public's need to get around the city all while having little accountability for the negative impacts their equipment has on blocking streets, sidewalks, and occasionally ending up at the bottom of our ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water. Seattle should put a moratorium on dock-less micro-mobility options, and instead, use the move Seattle Levy to get a public-private partnership for a docked e-bike and e-scooter system throughout the city. The idea borrows heavily from the Citi-bike model in NYC, and would be supercharged by the bike lane build out mentioned above.

3) Funding Trolley bus expansion: Trolley buses are proven zero-emissions public transit vehicles. Instead of pumping money into acquiring battery powered busses, the city should use the Move Seattle Levy to build out our already very popular and successful trolley bus network, as well as acquire more for the fleet. There's also the added benefit that with each new trolley bus route, under state law, there will be a mandatory upzone to allow for six-plexes in the vicinity of the trolley bus routes.

4) Funding Streetcar expansion(s): Admittedly a bit of a reach, but streetcars/trams are an important complement to light rail, bus, and bike infrastructure. Seattle should use the Move Seattle levy to pursue expansion of the streetcar network beyond the center city connector, prioritizing spaces and places that are rife for pedestrianization.

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?

Absolutely! Completion of the Central City connection is LONG overdue and the longer we wait the more expensive and disruptive it will be to eventually complete. We must fund this essential connection now, and begin plans for other streetcar lines if we are to accommodate the growth we are expecting in the years to come.



Under what circumstances are homeless encampment removals appropriate?

Whenever there is a risk of harm to persons within the encampment, or those around the encampment. Otherwise, it is essential that we allow encampments to remain in place so that support teams can do the work that they do which takes time to build rapport to the extent that individuals are ready to relocate voluntarily to partake of services.

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 to de-prioritize Law Enforcement on tasks that don't require a commissioned officer. EG speed enforcement, parking enforcement, traffic guidance, and other tasks which automation or otherwise qualified persons could do the job, likely with more effectiveness. In so doing, we can free up Police resources to respond to instances of violent crime being committed.

Further, the built environment must also change. Currently, much of our city encourages property crime as a result of dereliction, darkness, and decay, as a result of intentional decisions that discourage population density and activation. Where a parking structure once sat, I would like to replace it entirely with mixed use development. Where there are vacant lots, I would like to encourage the creation of housing and well lighted green spaces. Promoting public safety is more than simply responding to anti-social behavior with a badge and a gun, it's also about undoing the conditions in which anti-social activity is encouraged or thrives.

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?

I believe that there can and should be an emphasis on keeping response times low for emergency calls, as well as detective follow up for investigation with harmed parties. In my opinion, everything that the contract has in it should tie back to those two metrics and my approval of any police contract will be conditioned on effective



support of those two metrics. This is based on my belief that Law enforcement does less to deter crime than people think, the main deterrent to crime is opportunity in one's community and social safety nets that catch people before they fall through the cracks.

How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?

Make transit frequent, reliable, comparable to driving, and safe. Rightfully or wrongfully, there is a stigma in Seattle that transit is dirty, unsafe, and slow. We must make transit a priority above private automobiles where the two compete for space. To do this the built environment will need to change significantly as it currently broadcasts the clear preference for automobiles above all other forms of transit.