



Mo Malakoutian Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Bellevue City Council, District 3

Bellevue is one of the most expensive cities in the state. Beyond what the city is already doing, what policies should Bellevue enact to create more deeply affordable housing?

I believe that creating deeply affordable housing is a critical issue for Bellevue in order to live up to its motto "Our diversity is our strength". While the city has taken steps to address this problem, and I am proud to have contributed to that work as a member of the Bellevue Planning Commission, more needs to be done. There are policies that we should explore to create more affordable housing, such as streamlining permits, encouraging mixed-income developments, and requiring affordable housing in new developments. Overall, I believe that we need to think outside of the box and implement progressive policies that will ensure long-term affordability at every level so we don't displace longtime neighbors and are welcoming and inclusive for new neighbors.

How can we expand the housing types legal to build in every Bellevue neighborhood?

As a candidate for Bellevue City Council, I want to allow more types of homes to be built in every neighborhood of Bellevue. I believe the legislature made the most important change by eliminating single family housing zoning and other changes made this session, but there is more we can do on the local level. Reviewing the existing zoning codes and regulations, modifying and amending the codes to allow for a wider variety of housing types to be built. Encouraging mixed-use development, combining commercial and residential uses within the same building or development. Incentivizing developers to build affordable housing, such as density bonuses or tax credits. Engaging with the community to understand their needs and concerns regarding housing options. Partnering with non-profit organizations that specialize in affordable housing development could provide expertise and resources to support the expansion of housing types in Bellevue.



Do you support the slate of tenant protections proposed by A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) Committee in April 2022? What additional policies do you believe are needed to protect tenants in Bellevue?

I support the slate of tenant protections proposed by the ARCH Committee and am committed to ensuring that everyone in our city has access to stable, affordable housing. I also believe that we need to consider other policies to protect tenants in Bellevue including notifications of rent increases above a certain level, limiting the cost at the time of move in, ensuring that all qualified renters have a fair shot at housing, and providing rental assistance for tenants struggling to pay rent.

What steps would you take to ensure a citywide bike network is built out as quickly as possible?

Thanks to forward thinking leadership, Bellevue is about to welcome Light Rail which will connect us to the surrounding region, reduce traffic and commutes, and improve mobility to and from Bellevue. As a City, we have also taken important steps to ensure that we are preparing for light rail with safe and accessible multi modal opportunities including building out our citywide bike network. The main step is to develop a comprehensive plan that outlines the proposed bike network, including its routes, connections to other modes of transportation, and infrastructure improvements needed. The plan should be based on input from stakeholders, including cyclists, community groups, transportation experts, and city officials. Securing funding is crucial to building out the bike network. The city should prioritize funding for the bike network by allocating a dedicated budget for bike infrastructure and applying for grants and funding opportunities from state and federal agencies. Implementing pilot projects is an effective way to demonstrate the potential benefits of the bike network and test out different infrastructure solutions. These pilot projects can help build public support for the network and provide valuable data to guide future construction. Finally, the city should work to streamline the process by creating a simplified permitting process and providing resources to help developers navigate the process.

Would you support a higher minimum wage for Bellevue workers, similar to actions recently taken by voters in Tukwila and Seatac?



Yes, a top priority of my career and my run for Bellevue City Council is creating pathways for higher wage jobs and improving access to opportunity. I support a higher minimum wage for workers in Bellevue as the current statewide minimum wage is not a living wage in our city. But as important as higher wages are worker protections, benefits, and security in retirement that comes from higher education beyond 4-year programs. I want to increase access to trade and technical colleges, apprenticeships, and union membership.

What is the best way for the Council to promote public safety? What programs would you like to see added or expanded?

Safe and healthy communities require investments in proven solutions to keep every neighbor safe and connecting vulnerable neighbors with resources and support to prevent revolving doors of jail, emergency rooms and homelessness. I was proud to support KC Prop 1 and look forward to facilitating local implementation as needed to ensure the places and people needed to meet our growing behavioral health needs. Having alternate and complimentary responses to armed officers will also keep our community safer and ensure we have appropriate response times for peace keeping.

The Eastgate men's shelter will open shortly, but only after years of delay and significant neighborhood opposition. What will you do to help Bellevue create adequate services for unhoused people more quickly?

The Eastgate men's shelter is another excellent example of forward-thinking leadership who were willing to stand up against vocal neighborhood opposition to invest in places and resources for neighbors in need. That is the type of elected leader I aspire to be on the Bellevue City Council, standing up for proven solutions, best practices, and investing in root causes of problems rather than reacting.

On the Council, I will partner with elected leaders and service providers at the state, county, and local level to ensure we are accessing funding, working collaboratively, and implementing workable and community driven solutions. One way to address the issue of inadequate services for unhoused people is to increase funding for housing and homeless services. The city can allocate more funds to nonprofit organizations that provide shelter, food, and other services to people experiencing homelessness. The city can streamline the permitting process for homeless service



providers to quickly establish emergency shelters or affordable housing units for unhoused people. The city can work with local businesses and developers to encourage the construction of affordable housing units or the donation of vacant properties for use as shelters or other services. The city should work with local nonprofit organizations and service providers to identify gaps in the current system and develop new strategies to address the needs of unhoused people. Finally, the most important strategy is preventing homelessness in the first place. The city can work to address the root causes of homelessness, such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, and joblessness, by implementing policies and programs that provide resources and support to vulnerable individuals and families.

With East Link light rail potentially opening in 2024, how can Bellevue encourage more people to ride transit?

I am enthusiastic about the potential opening of the East Link Light rail in 2024. I believe that the city needs to take a multi-faceted approach that includes creating a great and safe transit experience, ensuring short wait-times for riders, creating campaigns to promote transit use, and encouraging local employers to incentivize transit use.

What are the key policies you support to help the city achieve its goal of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030?

There are several key policies that could help Bellevue achieve its goal of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030 such as renewable energy, sustainable transportation, energy efficiency, green building codes, waste reduction, carbon pricing, and education and awareness. Promoting the use of renewable energy, such as solar and wind power, can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Encouraging the use of public transportation, electric vehicles, and bicycles can reduce emissions from transportation. Promoting energy-efficient buildings and appliances can reduce energy consumption and lower emissions. Implementing green building codes can ensure that new construction is energy-efficient and sustainable. Implementing policies to reduce waste, increase recycling, and promote composting can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills. Implementing a carbon pricing system can provide a financial incentive for individuals and businesses to reduce their emissions. Finally, the most important strategy is educating the public about the importance of



reducing emissions and encouraging sustainable practices can help to create a culture of sustainability and support for emissions reduction policies.