



Shane Macomber Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Seattle City Council, District 5

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

Alternative 6 is my preference. It is the most inclusive and the diversity of it's approach will be of a broader benefit across the 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?

Yes I support the Housing Levy.

The ultimate goal of our investments should be to increase the overall housing supply which will alleviate inflation by better meeting demand.

We need to heavily invest in our new social housing developer created by I-135 which will offset our low-income housing needs. Additionally the city's zoning needs to be revised to streamline the process of development, and incentivize building for density around all transit hubs.

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

The Healthy Streets initiative has proven that there are many areas in our city that could be better optimized for pedestrians instead of cars.

As we create more urban villages in Seattle, I want to see these be heavily pedestrianized. Expanding areas classified as urban villages will have an important impact on encouraging folks to view and use the space for recreation and commerce.

More specifically, as an advocate of District 5, I think I would be most supportive in pedestrianizing streets if our public transit system is bolstered enough to be an effective alternative. In many parts of North Seattle it is unfeasible to be carless



because there isn't pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks, walkable-distanced resources like grocery stores or sufficient public transit.

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

I am largely in favor of the recommendations from the 2018 Progressive Revenue Task Force. The report is well researched and it matches my opinions regarding who and how we finance and facilitate our city. I'd also like to review city spending and income in a way that prioritizes exploring the following opportunities for additional income:

A non-residency tax

A vacancy tax

Foreign-interest property ownership tax

Head tax

Reviewing the state of income tax being illegal in Washington and consulting with subject-matter experts as to the viability of exploring something that could stand in our municipal code without triggering this legality

What is your position on impact fees?

I think the use of impact fees can be a highly effective tool the city has to incentivize the type of development we want in specific areas, however I recognize these fees have been controversial for being used to exclude minorities from developing in the past. By revisiting our zoning to include mixed use development focused around transit hubs, I believe we can instigate the type of development which is of universal benefit to our working class and empowers our BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and disabled communities instead of excluding them.

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

We need appropriate funds for the 130th St station and the re-establishment of effective east-west bus routes. As an advocate of District 5, my priorities are getting the district better connected to our city's infrastructure in a way that my constituents can use.



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?

Yes

Under what circumstances are homeless encampment removals appropriate?

As a general rule, I do not support sweeping camps. I approach this situation from the lens of my background in mental health support and real estate. Displacing people who have no ability to know what a forwarding address will be creates chaos. Social workers and support organizations don't know where to find their clients. It re-enforces the despondency many of the unhoused are already experiencing. Building trust is already hard and the more we displace our unhoused citizens, the deeper the trust deficit we have. Not only that, but the costs we incur for moving support resources, cleaning the area and adjusting our administrative reporting will only happen again in the next place they end up. Sweeping camps is expensive, and does nothing to solve the problem.

I cannot condone leaving encampments that pose an active risk, but I do not approach the decision lightly or without an understanding of the consequences.

Acting as a voice for my district, I have to mention that North Seattle has had an increasing number of instances where the activity and location of a camp has created an active danger to the residents living in the camp and the surrounding areas. There have been 5 devastating fires just this year that have caused major damage.

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?

Police don't stop crime, they respond to it. We promote safety by giving people the resources to be stable, supported and feel optimistic about their future in Seattle. As a city we achieve this by building enough housing to fully support our population and investing in our education system ensuring our students are graduating with a full understanding of their career options. We defend the buying power of our



working class citizens by addressing the root causes of our escalating home and rental prices, and by supporting our 3rd places and other local small businesses so our citizens are able to cultivate a sense of community and belonging.

I recognize that the answer above is great philosophy when we aren't in an emergency, but we are.

My concrete goals in order to address the emergency in front of us are providing and streamlining the preventative and supportive services to those with substance abuse and other chronic mental health challenges. The minimum we must have is accessible social services, enough long-term in-patient beds, transitional housing, and ample support staff. The city must root our responses and service in recognizing the dignity of our fellow citizens, and not only support individuals initially moving into housing, but also provide wrap-around services that prevent them from falling into the cycles of distress or addiction which instigated their initial inability to be housed.

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 think the SPD's role in public safety must be focused on violent crimes and organized criminal efforts. Other than that, I think it is clear they are ineffective and can be dangerous when fulfilling their duties.

An appropriate police contract would look at moving administrative duties like non-emergency calls away from the SPD and armed-responders. The SPD has too many obligations. Cuts to social programs stripped away support systems for our most vulnerable and many of those responsibilities were dropped on the police to hold. The SPD wasn't given training, resources, or equipment to take on these additional duties and I recognize it is unfair to the SPD to hold them to a standard of service they were never trained for and are still not prepared to provide.

The next police contract has to include moving duties away from the department, and reallocating from their budget to fund it. I think we can find a balance that allows the SPD to feel confident in the size of their officer count while taking the



responsibilities the SPD never wanted and moving those to a department that can provide services effectively. My initial idea is to leverage the SPD's desire to raise their numbers via hiring bonuses in exchange for putting some of the department's budget allocation into the pilot task force not under their department.

I will dig into the current contract expiring at the end of this year as well as the accountability ordinance tracker to assess whether it supports or refutes this idea, but that's where I'd like to start because really it should be a discussion and collaboration with SPOG.

A separate department under a separate charter means we can move the focus toward non-violent crime support services that help people feel seen and supported. It is also good fiscal policy to diversify the city's investments in identifying solutions that focus on and resolve specific problems.

How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?

By moving our focus of development away from cars we bolster the ease-of-use factor with our transit systems. If private citizens want private vehicles they can seek out private development which makes private parking easier for them, but parking a vehicle wherever you take it cannot continue to be the city's responsibility to provide.

Seattle as a city should be spending more on our transit to increase route frequency, reliability and expand routes served. Many potential riders have cars, because if they miss the anticipated transit pick up, the wait until the next option is often too long or too unreliable.