



Shobhit Agarwal Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Seattle City Council, District 3

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

Seattle has limited land. That means we have to grow taller and not wider. We want to maintain our greenness and our tree coverage. As we pursue de-zoning and grow taller, the high density would make it economical to provide infrastructure like public transit, last mile loop buses, as well as concentrated electric car charging stations. The density also enables food stores to thrive by catering to a lot more people. Higher density also raises more revenue from the same square footage of land that would pay for a lot of this infrastructure. We should also convert empty office building in downtown Seattle either partially or fully to residential complexes or health facilities.

I prefer multi-story condos and apartments over townhouses. It is easier to require such building to build sufficient underground parking as well as electric car charging facilities.

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?

I support I-135 and the corporation that would use public land to create more housing for low and medium-income housing. Leveraging my previous answer, the denser we grow, the more taxes we generate. For example, I live in a condo with 153 units. My building has seven Storeys. The seven stacks combined pay about \$40/sq ft of land in property taxes. comparatively, one unit household only pays about 10-12\$/sq ft. As Seattle grows, the additional taller properties will provide the taxes to support affordable housing. And yes I support additional housing levies. In the past two years, i have actually seen my total property taxes go down as the property values have declined.

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

Pedestrianizing streets works if you would a concept around them. For example, Santa Monica promenade. If we want, we want high density so that there is a lot of foot traffic which would result in many successful businesses especially service focused businesses.



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

I want to identify the revenue streams that we are not maximizing yet. I am also open to additional progressive revenues as needed.

What is your position on impact fees?

I have not studied this idea yet. My fear is that we always underestimate the impact of a development and therefore probably charge less than the impact fee should. The infrastructure needed needs to be planned better. Maybe we use the past performance of individual builders. If they have been consistently costing the city more than the impact they had promised, maybe they should have a higher beta rate for future developments based on their past failings.

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

(1) Public transport, especially buses in the last mile loop so people do not have to drive to the sound transit station. (2) Work with Seattle City Light to build the electric infrastructure to support electric cars.

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?

Homelessness needs to be handled compassionately. Youth LGBTQIA, old age and economic homelessness can be handled more easily by providing security of medium-term housing along with an orca card. Then the un-homed people can pursue school or work or retire. If we resolve this portion of the problem early, we prevent the mental health and substance abuse problems that might emerge for prolonged homelessness.

In addition, we need to handle un-homed individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues with compassion one person at a time. This will take them off the street,



increase the belief that downtown is safer in the general public's mind and increase the vitality of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

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?

Monetary compensation by itself is not sufficient. With that we are only attracting potential employees from outside Seattle. We have to outreach within Seattle and talk about changing the police culture. We need to reach out to local schools, sports coaches, churches and other places of worship, Lambert house and other similar entities to encourage youth of all kind, all economic, racial, sexual-orientation background to join. If we cut the expense on the weaponry and instead focus on build a neighborhood watch where the residents know their local beat cop, who might not even carry a firearm and might be on foot patrol, then we will build the trust of the community back in the police. We want to reduce and limit 91 calls to true emergencies. People should be able to reach out to and call their local beat cop whose job should be to resolve non crime/threatening issues or raise issues accordingly. For example a health or mental crises can be directed away from police. Also, if we encourage local youth to join en masse, we will change the culture of the police unions. If we see black and hispanic cops, gay cops, trans cops that reflect the population, we will have a more symbiotic relationship. And we need to cut cops just driving in their cars. make them stop and be a part of the neighborhood.

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?

See my previous answer

How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?

If we keep it clean, if we address homelessness, if we provide last mile loop buses, we will increase the use of public transit. free orca cards for youth, old age and un-homed people will also help. And we do need to build pride in our local transit.