



## **Stephen Brown Urbanist Questionnaire 2023**

Seattle City Council, District 1

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

I like Alternative Concept 5.

Alternative Concept 5 allows for a more comprehensive approach to planning. It takes into account a variety of factors, such as equity, sustainability, economic growth, and community engagement, to create a more well-rounded plan that addresses the needs of all residents.

Alternative Concept 5 provides for the development of urban areas while also preserving the natural environment and promoting sustainable growth in rural areas.

This approach prioritizes the needs of communities that have traditionally been marginalized or disadvantaged. This includes communities of color, low-income communities, and immigrant communities.

It is important that the comprehensive plan is flexible and can evolve to meet new challenges and opportunities. Alternative Concept 5 provides for ongoing community engagement and feedback, allowing the plan to be adjusted as needed to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

Overall, Alternative Concept 5 is a strong choice for the Seattle Comprehensive Plan as it takes a comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptable approach to planning that addresses the needs of all residents and prioritizes equity and sustainability.

### **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?**

To meet its future housing goals, the City of Seattle should consider investing in several key areas:



Seattle should invest in the development of new affordable housing units to address the shortage of affordable housing in the city as specified in the McKinsey Study. This can be done by increasing funding for affordable housing programs, partnering with private developers to incentivize the construction of affordable housing, and streamlining the permitting process for affordable housing developments.

The city should prioritize the preservation of existing affordable housing units by implementing policies and programs that protect tenants from displacement and prevent the loss of existing affordable housing due to redevelopment or renovation.

Promote mixed-income housing: I recently spoke to Paul Lambros ex-CEO of Plymouth Housing. He shared an exciting project near Broadway and Madison that is 17 (362 residents) and combines housing for Permanent Supported clients as well as having the upper floors for those with less pervasive needs in the range of income between 30% and 60% on median.

We need to prioritize the development of high-density housing in transit-rich areas, such as near light rail stations or major bus lines. We need zoning changes and increased efficiency of permitting that allow for higher density development in these areas, and by providing financial incentives for developers to build high-density housing.

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

There are many instances where I would support pedestrianizing streets. If the change will accomplish several of the following things without significant disruption, then it should be considered a viable candidate for pedestrianization: Does it increase safety? Does it increase beauty? Will it encourage physical activity? Will the change encourage transit? Will it boost retail businesses? If most of these are "yes", the change should be considered.

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

Piggyback the Washington State laws with Carbon taxes on smaller polluters - this might be very difficult to do. We should consider a Land value tax which taxes land based on its value rather than the value of the buildings on it. This would incentivize



the development of underutilized land and generate revenue for the city. I am a supporter of the Jumpstart tax and was from the (jump) start.

**What is your position on impact fees?**

If done well, impact fees can advance equity and match value provided by government to value received. New public use developments would need to have a mechanism to assign benefits (and tax burdens) on to developers and owners. We can front load costs and collection to avoid interest charges and get more bang for the buck.

Good impact fees need to be transparent and easily understood to retain the participation and goodwill of the taxed entity.

We need good infrastructure and we need revenue to support it.

Fair, cost effective and transparent would be my trilogy to analyze if an Impact Fee is a good one,

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

Expand public transportation - light rail, BRT, transit to underserved areas.

Maintaining and improving existing infrastructure.

Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle use - make walking and biking more safe, fun and interesting.

**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 I would.

**Under what circumstances are homeless encampment removals appropriate?**



This is not an easy issue with simple answers. We must consider public safety, environment damage, health concerns, access to public amenities for Seattle residents.

And we must take into consideration, what are the alternatives for people being moved.

Layer on top of that the very real pressures of what the community is calling for. If something approaching a consensus seems to be emerging for the removal of homeless encampments, that must be given serious weight.

Removing homeless encampments does not solve the underlying issues of homelessness. It is important to address the root causes of homelessness, such as lack of affordable housing and mental health issues to provide sustainable solutions.

**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?**

**Community Policing:** This connects police to the community and vice versa. The City can invest in community policing programs, such as neighborhood watch programs, citizen police academies, and community-oriented policing forums.

**Crime Prevention Programs:** The City can invest in crime prevention programs that target specific issues - drug prevention programs can be used to address the rise in drug-related crime in the city.

**Social Services:** One reason for the rise in crime in Seattle and other cities is a lack of social services. The City can invest in programs that address underlying social issues, such as mental health, poverty, and homelessness. This can help to reduce crime and make the community safer.

**Technology:** The City can invest in technology that can help to prevent and solve crimes. For instance, surveillance cameras can be installed in high-crime areas to help police monitor criminal activity. The City can also invest in technology that can help to analyze crime data, identify patterns, and predict future crime trends.



Collaboration: The City can collaborate with other agencies and organizations to promote public safety. For example, the City can partner with schools, businesses, and community groups to create safer environments for children and families. Additionally, the City can work with neighboring jurisdictions to share resources and strategies for reducing crime.

**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 support all of the below:

Organizations like Pride, Dignity Action (PDA) as providers of non-arrest solutions to public safety situations. Mental health crisis teams, substance abuse counsellors, mental health counsellors are all part of the mix.

These professionals can help respond to non-violent emergencies, freeing up police officers to focus on more serious crimes.

Community Policing - people like having a police presence they know and trust nearby.

Better technology - security cameras, license plate readers, and gunshot detection systems will lead to enhanced response times.

Better trained officers - de-escalation, implicit bias training and cultural competency.

**How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?**

Improve the quality of transit services, frequency of service, and reducing wait times. This will make the transit experience more convenient and reliable, which will encourage more people to use it.

Improve the transit experience: Seattle can improve the transit experience by making transit stations and stops more inviting, clean, and safe. This can include adding more amenities like benches, shelters, and lighting.



Promote transit use: Make it cool to take transit. Talk about the pain of car use - costs, stress, parking, damage and wear and tear