



## **Tanya Woo Urbanist Questionnaire 2023**

Seattle City Council, District 2

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

I believe that a public servant needs to listen to people. People have favored option 5, with option 6 a close second. We need to allow for more housing but only option 6 has addressed gentrification and displacement. There are many opinions on what option 6 may look like but it includes taking away the design review process. I believe a streamlined design review process is needed. Design review helps fight displacement and not only allows for exceptions for housing code but ensures that all development is culturally appropriate. Until there are concrete details about option 6, I would favor option 5 to include more studies on how we address gentrification and displacement.

### **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 have helped build 84 units of affordable housing in the Chinatown International District, a neighborhood identified as one of the most endangered places in the nation. If Seattle wants more housing - I have the experience to build. We need to make broad investments to achieve our housing affordability goals and include social justice initiatives. These goals will need private and public partnerships and a mix of housing options. We also have to be mindful of gentrification and displacement in communities of color. The approach to density in communities of color facing disaster gentrification should be examined on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis.

Housing affordability goals should include more units of all types of housing. We need to build and preserve subsidized rental housing, homeownership programs, land trusts, construction of affordable housing and down-payment and rental assistance. We need to allow more middle housing in all areas of the city that is not facing disaster gentrification.



We need to streamline the permitting process and simplify the design review process as well. Affordable housing and small businesses should have front of the line access.

I do support the housing levy and we should also look at property tax exemptions for vulnerable populations.

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

I would support pedestrianizing streets in Seattle under circumstances when there is existing high-pedestrian activity (like during the International District Night Market, and Columbia City Farmers Market", and to help with neighborhood revitalization. It is important to involve the community in decision-making and address concerns about access and parking. If surveying was done and it was found that there would be no access or equity issues regarding closing the streets and impacted communities were in agreement, I would be in favor of it.

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

I am interested to see what the Progressive Revenue Stabilization Task Force recommends.

I am especially interested in the perimeters of a vacant or unoccupied property tax. I would be concerned about potentially burdening property owners who have legitimate reasons for keeping their properties vacant, such as recent development, seasonal use, or future development plans.

I am interested in promoting programs that help promote more developments like New Market Tax incentives, MHA and streamlining processes that allow for buildings to sell their air rights or to obtain historic tax credits.

I'm also interested in the impact fees, as talked about in the following question.

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



I believe that impact fees run the risk of trickling down to low-income, people of color and vulnerable people. They also may prevent developments from happening which means a loss of jobs and it's unclear if these fees will benefit the communities they originate from. If a fee is needed, I think only luxury or corporate developments should be charged. These fees should not be extraordinary so as not to impact development or development schedules tremendously. The revenue from these fees must be prioritized for communities most disproportionately impacted by the new development.

The Seattle City Council plans to impose a transportation impact fee that is now currently being appealed and a hearing scheduled. This fee plans to fund a list of existing transportation projects. As this fee would replace a SEPA fee, I would want to know what the cost difference of these two fees would be. What will the city do for future projects and what project SEPA fees are currently funding? This fee is exempt by low-income housing, childcare centers and other developments that benefit the public. I think we need to expand this list to encourage more housing of all types and that these funds stay in the communities they affect.

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

There are three things I think are essential to the next Seattle Transportation levy due in 2024 are community engagement and outreach with a prioritization towards communities of color. We must do more to ensure we are paying fair market rate mitigation fees over the entirety of construction for any impacted communities. It would be a fraction of a multi billion dollar levy, and would help to keep struggling communities intact during years-long construction processes.

We need to ensure that affordability and accessibility is prioritized. We need to think about how we can continue to decrease the cost for users, and being able to provide fee relief to even more populations, and expand access to the ORCA Lift program can help provide mobility options to more people I believe reopening the Free Downtown Ride District that used to exist will help with mobility and provide more opportunities for small businesses to benefit from the increased ridership by tourists.



We have to make sure that materials are translated and accessible to people who do not have access to technology. We need direct in-person engagement with communities of color, low-income and vulnerable people utilizing the city's racial equity toolkit. I believe there are many inequities in transportation in South Seattle and by doing this outreach and thoughtful community planning these past harms can be repaired. South Seattle has the highest car-ped deaths and needs vital infrastructure upgrades to catch up with the infrastructure as in other parts of the city.

**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?**

I would approve completing the streetcar network if we can put together a plan to obtain federal and private funding to help pay for it. In addition to funding, I would require an additional plan with additional funding to help mitigate the effects of construction on surrounding businesses.

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

Every week I go into the encampments to provide mutual aid, wound care, meals and check in on our unhoused neighbors. We develop relationships and trust and try to direct people to services. I used to pick up needles but in the past few months have had to administer narcan and CPR. I have seen many members of our unhoused community injured or pass away.

The need is great and unfortunately we are not seeing the engagement and outreach people are asking for. Engagement and outreach should be done to develop trust with our unhoused neighbors. Letting people live outside without any options of shelter or help is inhumane. Offers of shelter and wrap-around services should always be offered. Forced encampment removals are not appropriate but offers of alternative shelter is..

**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?**



I believe the city can promote public safety by expanding and developing alternatives to policing. The group that I volunteer for Chinatown International District Community Watch is a volunteer group that has developed trust in the community as well as helped resolve many emergencies without police involvement. If we can expand these programs to many neighborhoods and have the city support and fund it, we can help alleviate some of SPD's work.

I would also like to see the Community Service Officers program expand. Officers are not trained as behavioral health specialists so I am interested to see a program that pairs social workers with officers. Allowing for people to be able to call 911 and ask for a social worker to respond directly without police involvement is also desperately needed.

**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?**

SPD needs to rebuild trust with the communities and a few ways to do that is to align current accountability practices in the negotiation of the police union contract, look at alternative forms of public safety and hire from within communities.

We must negotiate the police contract to allow for alternative public safety responses other than sending an armed officer. It could look like a community patrol group like the one I run, or a social worker responding instead of an officer.

The police union contract has not been renegotiated since the consent decree in 2012. I believe that the contract needs to incorporate accountability practices that have been approved in the recently negotiated Seattle Police Management Association contract and the 2017 Accountability Ordinance. Similar accountability standards have been approved in police contracts in other cities and these standards would be no different in any other jobs.

Programs that hire officers from within communities like "Before the Badge" are instrumental for hiring people who live, know and care for the communities they serve.



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

I believe that by expanding transit hours Seattle will encourage more people to ride transit. We also need to make sure areas around transit stations are safe and inviting. I love the small business activation ideas. Activating the open spaces of these stations with ideas from entrepreneurs and musicians could add a new dimension to our city and provide an incentive for riders to continue riding.

The city can also continue to help with affordability of transit. I love how the students of Rainier Beach were able to organize to help get students access to free transit. I think the more we can provide affordable, reliable, accessible and safe transit, we will continue to be able to see ridership adjust again post-pandemic.