



Teresa Mosqueda Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

King County Council, District 8

Would you vote to put a countywide transportation benefit district geared at boosting Metro transit service on the ballot, as had been proposed in 2020?

Yes, I would vote and support a countywide transportation benefit district. Our region has only grown since, making the need for robust, accessible, and well-funded transportation that much more important. As we continue to navigate the ongoing pandemic and the impacts of inequity it exacerbated, equitable transit must be a priority to improve the interconnectivity of our region and the health of our shared environment. We cannot see cuts to transportation services, such as King County Metro's proposal to suspend 20 routes. Transportation must be funded even when there's no or low riders.

As a King County Councilmember, there's a chance you'd be tapped to be on the Sound Transit Board of Directors. Would you seek such an assignment and how would you use such authority to improve outcomes?

I would love to serve on the Sound Transit Board of Directors. I would use this authority to make sure no one was getting left out or left behind when it comes to transit and the many opportunities it presents. I would use such authority to make sure we are building housing and childcare as we simultaneously build new transit stations. I would use this to support building small business opportunities as well as helping to keep existing lines open. I would use this to prevent harassment and enforcement of fairs or unsheltered folks. I would use this to push for the subway vision of Seattle Subway across our region.

What do you view as the top priorities for King County Metro over the next five years? How would you work to solve Metro's bus operator shortage?

When thinking about the top priorities for King County Metro, it's important to me to center the needs of the people who make our systems run: the drivers. The concerns of the Amalgamated Transit Union must be addressed by paying drivers a living wage; increasing affordability near transit hubs so drivers, mechanics, and



other staff can meet the requirements of the job; and supporting other concerns and ideas from the ATU. We also need green vehicles and more ergonomic vehicles to support worker safety and physical health. To do this, and more, funding must be poured into our transportation services so we can continue to have robust, reliable public transit.

Some top priorities include:

- Ensuring drivers make a living wage, have healthcare and retirement benefits, have a voice on the job, and they're safe on the job;
- Protecting drivers' right to bargain and encouraging metro to honor contract negotiations;
- Addressing the climate crisis and approaching environmental protections through an environmental justice framework;
- Improving mobility and accessibility;
- Supporting equitable, transit-oriented communities.

I don't believe the bus operator shortage should be addressed by taking transit away from the public. That won't increase interconnectivity, instead it'll create less options for people, particularly folks who live outside of Seattle proper. Instead, we can look to hiring solutions that encourage and retain workers—similar to the efforts made in Spokane with Spokane Transit Authority employees eligible for up to \$9,000 bonus. Hiring bonuses are a great way to incentivize workers and bolster the workforce.

Do you support redeveloping King County's campus in Downtown Seattle as proposed by County Executive Dow Constantine? What would be your primary goals in such a redevelopment?

I support King County Executive Constantine's commitment to close the King County jail and his plan to redevelop that space to better suit the needs of our workforces and community. A primary goal for this redevelopment should be to add public gathering space and green space around affordable housing and supportive housing. It's my goal as we approach redevelopment projects, or any new development projects, that folks aren't harmed and crises are exacerbated. I think this vision of a campus can be done regardless of the final Sound Transit decision on 4th Avenue.



Recent state legislation will substantially impact residential zoning in much of King County. What role if any should the county have in supporting and shaping equitable development?

The county has a responsibility to act swiftly to support and create the development that has been authorized by the suite of state legislation. Infrastructure investment through equitable development is critical for sustained economic development and essential when creating robust affordable housing for people who live, work, and play across King County. Seattle's population is growing rapidly (1.68% annually) with King County's population growth not far behind (1.45% in the past year). Over the next few years and looking even further into the future, this growth will strain virtually every aspect of our public infrastructure including water, power, sewer, and transportation systems as well as parks and cultural venues. We've begun to make up for underinvestment in mass transit and housing, but it is far from enough. As King County continues to grow, we can support and champion more tax reforms on high earners and the nation's largest corporations that also call Washington home. We can also continue to explore additional non-tax sources of revenue so long as they do not increase the burden on working families.

At City Council, I've championed funding and development for affordable housing through JumpStart Seattle and worked with housing developers to create a pipeline of affordable housing projects—all of which were awarded funds from JumpStart, a progressive payroll tax that makes historic investments in affordable housing. JumpStart will do more than bring more affordable housing options to our region facing a housing crisis. It also funds critical investments in equitable development, the city's Green New Deal, economic resilience, and workforce development—all important tenets to generating jobs.

As your King County Councilmember, I will continue to work with community, small business owners, and community-minded, small developers to mitigate displacement. It's not just about creating more housing options—it's about creating vibrant communities through affordable housing options, near transit hubs, with accessible and affordable spaces for artists, small businesses, early learning centers, and community spaces.



Historically, King County has often opted to contract with community-based organizations to provide social services (such as rental assistance, diversion services, etc). What do you think of this approach?

I have also done it at Seattle City Council and wholeheartedly support community-based organizations and community-based services being contracted, funded, and having an active role and voice in not just providing social services but also identifying what those needs are and how they are best addressed. When creating solutions and alternatives to meet community's needs, folks in those communities know what works best. Community-based organizations have the trust and partnership with community members to help deploy resources and to know what else is needed.

Serving in public office during the time of this moment of racial reckoning and global pandemic has brought even more urgency to my push for transformational policies to protect front line workers, prioritize affordable housing and stability for working families, many of whom belong to the BIPOC community, to ensure access to jobs that are not at the expense of workers' health or our environment's health. My goal is to include BIPOC community priorities at the policy making table so no one is speaking for another community, and to direct funding into the hands of those affected because they know best how to serve their needs. A healthy community is where residents feel safe, empowered, and have the resources and infrastructure for self determination and protection from harm. To invest in our community's health and safety, we must work to expand the capacity of community solutions that move us away from past harmful policy and a reliance on the criminal legal system. It requires deep investments in upstream restorative community-health oriented solutions and away from our reliance on the criminal legal system. We must decriminalize poverty, homelessness, and addiction. I am so proud of our accomplishments towards stronger communities, but there is much more to be done to reverse harm caused. Creating progressive policy that pursues healing from the trauma that many in marginalized communities hold, means centering their voices, and ensuring they are not only at the table, but defining what the table is in the first place. I will continue to build on this record of allocating resources into community-driven public safety and services that ensure healthy and thriving communities.



Seattle remains the primary funder of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) while other cities in the region do not contribute directly. Do you support increasing funding to the KCRHA and, if so, how?

I support increasing funding to services and providers that are best able to meet the needs of our most vulnerable community members: houseless folks. A coordinated response is integral to solving this pervasive issue because it is not just the symptoms of one city failing its citizens, it's a regional issue rooted in the trend of divestments from community programs and services that promote wellbeing, health, and safety of the people. Progressive, robust, coordinated investments into housing at the regional level will be the only way we solve this crisis.

Even before the pandemic, our shelters were at capacity, the cost of housing across King County was unaffordable for working families, and the housing stock was not keeping up with the growing demand. We must build more housing in the city so fewer people are getting displaced and pushed out of homes. The lack of affordable housing is causing more workers, and high numbers of workers of color specifically, to be pushed further away from their place of employment and community. We do this by rezoning our city to be more inclusive through Residential Zoning instead of Single Family Zoning alone. We must expand our permanent supportive housing services to those who need access to shelter and affordable housing so that folks get not just a roof and a door, but also behavioral and mental health counseling and supportive services so folks can stay housed. We need to continue with funding non-congregate shelters as the preferred alternative to mats on the floor or living outside. Hotel rooms, tiny homes and other non-congregate options allow for more dignity in the shelter model and help stabilize folks who need housing first.

In 2018, the King County Affordable Housing Task Force [reported](#) that the County needs about a quarter million net new affordable homes by 2040 to address the housing affordability crisis. Since then we're nowhere near that trajectory. How can the County boost affordable housing production?

Although we have made important progress building more units of affordable housing over the last four years, our housing supply has not caught up with the growing population and the growing need for more affordable and missing-middle units.



By the year 2050, our region needs around 418,000 new housing units. Right now the average cost of a home is just under \$800,000. With the support from Jumpstart, we will now have at least \$135 million a year for the next 20 years dedicated to building housing and investing in development and acquisition to create and refurbish new units.

I will continue to be the leader that will build bridges between housing advocates, businesses, labor, and King County communities to put those dollars into action to provide greater housing stability across our region. With my proven track-record of collaboration and record delivering on housing investments, we will make progress on safe, stable, and affordable housing for all by:

- Building faster and with greater urgency by expediting permitting to build more housing, especially for Built Green standards and those who apply community benefit agreements and high workforce/labor standards.
- Working in partnership with local jurisdictions to rezone to allow for building a more inclusive, equitable, affordable city by permitting and promoting diverse housing options, especially in high-opportunity access areas close to grocery stores, schools, transit options and parks.
- Providing renter and small landlord financial help through rental assistance, small landlord supports, and other rent-stabilization efforts to prevent more people from losing their home in the wake of the pandemic and due to the ongoing housing affordability state of emergency
- Spending and authorizing new funding for strategic housing acquisition including purchasing multifamily buildings, apartments, hotels to allow for diverse, affordable housing options.

What are your top public health priorities for your potential term?

The importance and the vulnerability of the public health system is on full display since the pandemic hit our region. This includes vulnerabilities in our systems due to gaps in resources and services for behavioral health as we see more people with compounding health crises experiencing homelessness and a lack of places to care for them. King County is the jurisdiction with purview and oversight of the public health system and behavioral health. My priorities are to:



- Increase funding and support for Public Health Seattle/King County to have a stable workforce and adequate resources necessary to address our compounding health crises today and the possible public health emergencies of the future.
- Address gun violence, youth violence, interpersonal violence as the public health crisis that they are by supporting local communities and jurisdictions to have direct and early investments.
- Increase access to care by investing in behavioral health services and workers, support human service providers who care for those who are experiencing homelessness or living in supportive housing by creating wage parity and creating career ladders into public health service.

These investments are more important than ever, as we see the shadow pandemic of isolation and depression compound the public health crisis of addiction and the looming global pandemic. I will bring my commitment to creating a healthy community for all as the central pillar of my service to King County residents.

How would you work to eliminate jail deaths in King County facilities?

Eliminating jail deaths begins with keeping promises made to eliminate the harmful and deadly King County jail. Since 2019, 17 people have died in King County's jails, 14 of those deaths were in the King County Correctional Facility in Seattle. Earlier this year, King County was sued by the ACLU of Washington for having violated a 1998 settlement which guaranteed access to medical care and other basic needs. This is simply not okay, and it's certainly not the way to keep communities safe or reduce harm and/or violence. I support Executive Constantine's promise to close the jail, saying, in part, it was no longer fit for its purpose.

Jails are not a place for rehabilitation; it's a place where harm gets reproduced and it often can leave folks in worse conditions than when they entered. We've heard from folks on the ground that people are locked up for 23 hours a day and have little to no access to medical or mental health care. I will continue to learn from and follow the lead from folks on the ground engaged in the daily work of harm reduction and transformative justice. There have been a number of proposed solutions to help mitigate the crisis in the jail that I support, including prohibiting law enforcement from arresting people who are experiencing mental health crises and to stop penalizing mental health crises. Approximately 95 percent of people in the jail are there because they cannot afford bail with 38 percent being Black—despite the fact



that Black people make up only 7 percent of the county's population. Instead of perpetuating harm and racist carceral punishment, we can invest more into the health and wellness of our community through better funded mental and behavioral health services, accessible care, ensuring people are paid living wages, affordable and supportive housing. We've seen this prioritized in the recent Proposition No. 1. Crisis Care Centers Levy—and we need to continue to invest in things that make up true social safety nets so folks aren't left alone or left to fend for themselves.