



## **Tye Reed Urbanist Questionnaire 2023**

### Seattle City Council, District 5

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

The city has developed five Comprehensive Plan alternatives for Seattle's growth plan in the coming decade. None of the options are sufficient to equitably meet the widespread housing shortage in Seattle. I prefer and support "alternative 6," a holistic growth strategy championed by Share the Cities, Real Change (my employer), and other progressive organizations.

Urban density should not be limited to urban villages. Alternative 6 would allow four-to-six story apartment buildings in all neighborhoods, which would reduce displacement rates and racially-disparate impacts of development. I myself am all too familiar with such effects: my residency in District 5 came as a result of being displaced from a home closer to downtown. Without bold action now, more folks, myself included, may find themselves priced out of the city entirely.

Community members have shown a strong preference for the quality-of-life improvements that would come from being able to meet their employment, child care, recreation, and shopping needs without taking long trips to different parts of the city. Seattle needs to encourage and incentivize growth in existing neighborhood residential zones in order to reduce risk of displacement and fully embrace the growth of Seattle as a 15-minute city.

Alternative 6 would make explicit and reward the goal of affordability, tree preservation, and environmentally sustainable building practices such as Passive House and mass timber by providing height bonuses to developers who meet result-focused criteria

#### **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?**

We know that more and more people every year are being displaced and made homeless by our housing affordability crisis. That is why I co-founded the House Our



Neighbors coalition that has won green, union-built social housing in Seattle. As the next D5 Councilmember, I will ensure the Social Housing Developer has a guaranteed line item in the budget to acquire and building affordable housing for families across the income spectrum. In addition to an increase to the JumpStart tax, Seattle needs a large source of progressive revenue to fund the myriad housing solutions we need to slow the pipeline into homelessness and the displacement of the region's Black and brown populations.

I do not support regressive taxes. We know that poor Black and brown homeowners, who are often elderly, are being pushed out of their homes by ever-increasing property taxes. Even supporters of the levy admit the funds don't go nearly as far as they used to; we're planning to spend three times the amount for the same number of units. Seattle has a housing deficit of more than 80,000 units and we are not going to end our homeless crisis by chipping away at it. That is why it's vital that we fund affordable housing models like social housing. With its ability to bond on future rent and house tenants up to 120%, the SHD is designed to maximize government investments while keeping units permanently affordable and owned by the public forever.

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

Car crashes are a leading cause of preventable death in Seattle, and district 5 is home to two of the biggest culprits: Aurora and Lake City Way. The regular, predictable losses of life come as a result of streets that prioritize throughput volume and speed over pedestrian and bicycle safety, and that needs to change. Our economic vitality, community safety, and quality of life will be improved by expanding sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and providing street space for people to live and interact, not just travel through.

I support the immediate pedestrianization of a car-free Pike Place Market. I support building pedestrianization into our plan for streets that are currently slated for redevelopment, including Aurora Avenue and Green Lake Avenue. De-arterialization (or road diets) of multi-lane city highways is a proven intervention to save lives. I also support expanding protected bike lanes, widening and expanding sidewalks, and constructing protected intersections.



Pedestrianization will be most effective in conjunction with related quality of life improvements. Increased investments in bus hours and frequencies, along with Sound Transit expansions, will allow high volumes of people to move throughout the city without relying on cars. When people can use transit more easily and reliably, they will. Scaling up Metro labor can be accomplished by budgeting for pay increases.

All Seattlites using our streets have basic needs that can be met through expanded access to public bathrooms. As a city councilmember, I will support reopening all public bathrooms and expanding services. The city spends millions on sweeps of homeless encampments—that funding should be redirected into these above strategies that improve public safety for all.

I will connect with the community experts on these issues, such as the Bicycle Advisory Council and Disability Rights Washington to advise as plans develop.

These pedestrian thoroughfares could become public green spaces, with park-like seating and accessibility that would improve neighborhood health and activity. Many of these pedestrian-only streets could be transformed into full-on greenways, which are especially important near the water to mitigate flood damage, as was recently seen in South Park, and could potentially be seen throughout more of Seattle as extreme weather events increase in intensity and frequency.

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

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Seattle is home to 50,500 Millionaires, 121 Centi-millionaires, and 10 Billionaires and yet, our state has the most regressive tax structure in the nation, leading to unconscionable disparity and human rights atrocities. This is unacceptable. We must pass progressive taxes, sharing the wealth of the very top who've profited on Seattle's abundance for the sake of our collective community wellbeing. I will

- Impose tax on long-term capital gains above \$250,000, which would target only the truly wealthy, to pay for essential services.
- Explore a Luxury Sales Tax for non-essential, only-affordable to the wealthiest items such as jewelry, yachts, private jets, and real estate valued at over \$1M; include rebate options for low-income homeowners.



- Make changes to the JumpStart tax to increase revenues for general expense purposes (increase rates, expand number of businesses, etc.).
- Defy austerity budget cuts; reallocate funds from the most expensive method of addressing social issues (police, courts, and prosecutors) to ensure continuation of vital services that actually meet people's needs.

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

Until recently, I tentatively supported the implementation of impact fees to fund essential transportation, parks, and education development. I have come to see the flaws in carrying out such a plan. Not only would the implementation process cost precious time and resources, the fee itself would slow down Seattle's already stagnant development. Additionally, tying vital services to the whims of private developers is a dangerous and short-sighted move. If we truly want to build more sidewalks, green spaces, and deeply affordable, we need a bigger pool of money that doesn't slow the rate of multifamily housing construction in our city.

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

The Seattle Transportation Levy should ensure that the demands of the broad coalition listed in the Seattle Solidarity Budget are met:

- Fund Vision Zero, including spot improvements such as daylighting intersections, adding curb bulbs, left turn pockets, hardened center lines, and raised crosswalks, as well as funding safety projects in SODO, on Martin Luther King Jr Way S, Rainier Ave S, and Aurora Ave N.
- Invest in safe streets infrastructure in South Seattle, where traffic deaths are disproportionately taking place (over 50% of traffic deaths in Seattle in 2021 occurred in District 2).
- Fund Transit corridor improvements and build sidewalks on all transit corridors. Maintain existing sidewalks, and improve pedestrian street crossings including curb bulbs, curb cuts, and signal improvements.
- Build safe bike routes connecting every neighborhood, including fully funding the Georgetown to Downtown bike route through SODO and the Beacon Ave S bike route.



-Invest in public community gathering places in our streets such as cafe streets, pedestrian plazas, and park-like amenities such as tree coverage, trash collection, benches, and public art.

Overall, the Seattle transportation levy should prioritize pedestrian and cyclist accessibility and safety as Seattle is in the midst of a traffic-related death epidemic. We must not only expand protected bike lanes and sidewalks, but also expand our rapid ride lines, which will allow for fewer cars on the streets, improving air quality and bike/pedestrian safety. In my District, we will be looking towards the Aurora Ave redesign which must not only maintain its bus-only lanes, but also include full protected bike lanes, which can be done with a strip that includes a dense tree cover. We must also expand green ways, pedestrian and bike-only corridors, pedestrianize Pike Place Market, and expand protected bike lanes along the RapidRide J line corridor from North Seattle into downtown along Eastlake. Lastly, we should be expanding our partnership with Seattle Public Utilities to ensure best practice for drainage and road runoff to protect our streams, the Sound, and endangered salmon habitats.

The Transportation Levy should not be funding freight projects at this time. This is a matter of funding commerce over people's lives. Vision Zero must come first.

**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. The streetcar network provides new mobility options, supports economic growth, and strengthens connections in Seattle's densest neighborhoods. When complete, 5 miles and 23 stations of convenient streetcar service will be available to access hundreds of key destinations, including Pike Place Market, Colman Dock, and Link light rail. This project was paused in June, 2020; I would prioritize finishing this project.

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

Sweeps, also referred to as encampment removals, are never appropriate. If people have resorted to living somewhere that is dangerous or an obstruction for other residents, it makes far more sense to spend the time and resources necessary to get



them safely inside than shuffle them from one inconvenient and dangerous spot to another.

**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?**

The Seattle Police Department does not provide public safety. Their own data show that over 50% of their calls are for moving and parking violations, noise concerns, premise checks, and suspicious people, vehicles, and buildings. These are the exact types of calls that can and have resulted in the needless deaths of community members at the hands of the police. In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform recommended that SPD only respond to 27% of the calls that it currently handles. The Center for American Progress and Law Enforcement Action Partnership found that SPD should only respond to 28.6% of the calls it currently handles.

In an environment where the scope of work of our police department needs to be reduced, there is no need to incentivize police hiring in Seattle. Instead, the city should remove those dollars from police control and use them to address the root causes of crisis in our city. We can accomplish more by expanding access to affordable housing, safe lots, culturally-sensitive health care, immigrant rights, and basic income support. While often overlooked as a part of public safety, car-related deaths are too common, and by modifying our streets' physical layouts, we can reduce car speeds and increase public safety in our streets.

For emergency situations that do arise, Seattle needs non-police community-led entities to provide compassionate care and accountable conflict resolution that does not involve the criminal legal system.

**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?**

As I said above, SPD does not create public safety. Safety is not an external state that can be obtained with enough dollars going into any single department. True public



safety is found in neighborhoods where community members have equity in their environment and can support each other's needs through mutual aid. Key factors that allow safe environments to flourish include accessible affordable housing, transportation, education, child care, and green public spaces.

An acceptable SPOG contract does not allow badged officers to hold a monopoly on certain types of calls, such as "premise checks," and "person down," where there is negligible risk of violence. By allowing SPD to respond to such situations, they introduce their own weaponry and escalate the risk of violence against community members. By definition, a police response arrives after the fact (if at all) and does nothing to address the root cause of the call in the first place.

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

I would like to one day see a fare-free Seattle. We can start by expanding our free ORCA program which now serves youth, to those with disabilities or medicare, seniors, and low income households (who currently have reduced but not free fares). We can expand the Promise Scholar Transit Pass so that rather than making public transit subsidized for some students, we can make it free for all students.

The SHA Transit Pass program began in 2019 as a pilot program on a smaller scale and has served nearly 2,000 SHA residents over the last three years. The ORCA Recovery Card program was a pilot that provided free, unlimited-use cards for more than 2,200 people working in food service and grocery industries in Pioneer Square, Chinatown-International District, Rainier Beach and Othello. The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) Transit Pass is available to residents who live in an SHA owned and managed property. Residents are eligible to receive an unlimited-use ORCA card to take transit at no cost. We must extend these programs indefinitely as a number of them have sunset dates of December 31, 2026. These programs should all be made permanent and continuously be expanded until transit is fare-free, convenient, and accessible to all of Seattle.

We must also invest in our routes (areas served), our green safe street access points, our hours of service. This, along with free transit, will transform Seattle from a car city to a transit city, inevitably saving lives in the process.