



**Girmay Zahilay Urbanist Questionnaire 2023**  
King County Council, District

**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?**

Likely not. The appetite of voters for a new property tax is finite. If I'm going to request more property taxes it would be for things I deem higher priorities in our current climate climate like housing and behavioral health.

**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? \***

No

**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? \***

Reliability, expansion of service, last mile service, rider experience, public safety, and employee recruiting and retention. I would address the bus operator shortage through incentive programs, hiring bonuses, better work culture and benefits, public education campaigns for recruiting, and investing in apprenticeship programs and internships to build the pipeline.

**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 would support re-developing the downtown campus to focus on housing, community gathering spaces, public transit, and retail.

**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? \***

I championed the county's own missing middle housing motion this year that would remove barriers to developing modest multi-family homes in unincorporated King County. The county should allow modest multi-family homes in all residential areas. It should also continue to address fears of displacement in areas like Skyway by investing in rental assistance, eviction protection, inclusionary zoning, community ownership models, and other anti-displacement strategies.

**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? \***

With proper safeguards, I support it.

**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? \***

If we're going to solve our region's homelessness crisis, KCRHA will need much more funding. Of course, with more funding should come far more accountability, transparency, and a detailed plan. The funding should come from equitable investments from all regional partners.



**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? \***

The County can boost affordable housing production through upzones, development incentives, and apprenticeship programs for construction. It can also use its advocacy power to change tax policy in Olympia so that it can raise more progressive revenue for public investments in housing.

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

Behavioral health, gun violence prevention, and housing.

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

More diversion programs, more investment in jail health services, more strategies within the jail to prevent self-harm, more behavioral health options outside of the jail, and advocating to Olympia to provide restoration services to incarcerated people who are deemed not competent to stand trial.