



## **Amy Walen Urbanist Questionnaire 2025**

State Senate, LD 48

### **What are your top three priorities to achieve in your term?**

My top priorities are: (1) tackling our housing affordability crisis by building more homes in every community and ensuring access to supportive housing and services; (2) addressing climate change by investing in sustainable, multimodal transportation infrastructure; and (3) reforming our tax system to make it more equitable, so we can sustainably fund education, behavioral health, and housing.

### **How will you boost housing options, particularly for families of all incomes to live where they work? How will you engage the public for new shelters, transitional housing, emergency housing, permanent supportive housing? How do you weigh community objections with the housing goals for your jurisdiction, while encouraging engagement from neighbors?**

We must continue to reform zoning and permitting to allow for more dense, affordable, and family-friendly housing—especially near jobs and transit. I support legislation to increase middle housing and require cities to plan for housing near transit. To invest in supportive housing, I believe in early, transparent community engagement—but not a veto. We must clearly communicate the benefits of housing stability, offer data to dispel myths, and center the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity.



**The Transportation budget became a hot topic this session with efforts to balance the budget on cyclists and tolling transit, as well as falling short on fast ferries. What are your thoughts on the approach of balancing the budget at the expense of non-drivers in the name of bipartisanship?**

We cannot build a just and climate-resilient transportation system if we balance the budget on the backs of non-drivers. Transit riders, cyclists, and pedestrians are often lower-income, younger, older, or disabled—and deserve safe, affordable mobility. I will fight for transportation budgets that prioritize maintenance, safety, and expansion of multimodal options, not just new highway lanes. Bipartisanship should not mean sacrificing equity and sustainability.

**The legislature has tackled big housing policies in recent years: parking reform, transit-oriented development and middle housing. What still needs work?**

We need to further strengthen tenant protections, improve permitting efficiency, invest in the Housing Trust Fund, and ensure that affordability is not just about unit count, but access. Local implementation must be monitored and supported, especially for TOD and middle housing. I will advocate for clearer timelines, stronger affordability mandates, and better alignment of infrastructure dollars with housing goals.

**Of the progressive revenue options the state legislature considered this year that did not make it into the final budget proposal (or were vetoed by the governor), which would you fight for during the upcoming legislative session and why?**



I support closing the tax break on sales of expensive investment properties—a real estate excise tax on large deals—to help fund housing and behavioral health, as long as these policies do not threaten the creation of housing. I also support wealth taxes that target extreme concentrations of capital. We cannot meet our obligations or solve urgent crises without sustainable, fair revenue. It's time for the ultra-wealthy to pay their fair share.

**Do you support adding progressive revenue sources? Which ones would you support to fund your priorities? Or what cuts would you make to balance budgets facing increasing strain under Trump?**

Yes, I support adding progressive revenue sources like a wealth tax, a capital gains expansion, or high-end REET. I oppose balancing budgets with austerity. These investments are necessary to protect public health, education, housing, and infrastructure—especially under a hostile federal administration. I will work to restructure our tax system so it asks more of those who have benefited most and eases the burden on working families.

**What do you think is the most important strategy your jurisdiction can pursue to limit cost increases and make the region affordable to live in? How would you go about implementing that strategy?**

We need to massively increase housing supply—particularly affordable and workforce housing—in every community. That means removing exclusionary zoning, investing in the Housing Trust Fund, streamlining permitting, and expanding public-private partnerships. We must also link housing policy with transportation,



school siting, and economic development to prevent displacement and foster complete communities. I have consistently introduced bills to make design review an administrative process only. This needs to be a priority for statewide action. I have also worked on bills to convert existing buildings (which are embodied carbon) into housing to rapidly house families in need. The sale & use tax exemption is insufficient to incentivize conversion, we should have passed the policy as I originally drafted it, with a property tax exemption as well, for a limited period.

**Traffic deaths are rising across Washington state, with pedestrians composing an increasing share statewide. What is your approach to making our streets safer for all users?**

I support a Vision Zero approach that includes lower speed limits, safer street design, protected bike lanes, better lighting, and automated enforcement with strong privacy and equity protections. We must shift funding toward Complete Streets and ensure WSDOT and cities are accountable for pedestrian and cyclist safety. Road safety should not depend on where you live or how you get around.

**What is your approach to improving public safety over the next five years? How will you actualize it?**

True public safety means ensuring people have access to housing, healthcare, jobs, and community stability. I support increasing investments in behavioral health services, community-based violence prevention, and alternative crisis response teams. We also need more accountability and transparency in law enforcement,



while building trust between agencies and the communities they serve. I will advocate for budgets and policies that reflect this holistic vision of safety.