



## **Anders Ibsen Urbanist Questionnaire 2025**

Tacoma Mayor

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

Public Safety, Housing Affordability, Sustainable Economic Development

**How will you boost housing options, particularly for families of all incomes to live near where they work or study? How will you expand shelter, emergency housing, permanent supportive housing? How do you weigh community objections with housing goals for your jurisdiction, while encouraging engagement from neighbors?**

With the passage of our "Home in Tacoma" Missing Middle policy, the city is poised to allow for a significant expansion of housing inventory...provided that the correct incentives and tools are in place, and are user-friendly for the average Tacoman. I also support upzoning tied to transit expansion opportunities, such as revisiting the aborted bus rapid transit proposal for Pacific Avenue, which could be the basis for transit-oriented development that could provide a significant increase in public safety, neighborhood beautification, business revitalization, and affordability.

I support a strategy on homelessness that is regional, evidence-based, and breaks down the current siloed approach to providing services and shelter in favor of greater singular coordination. I would also forcefully advocate for stable funding sources to keep shelter beds available, while also working with service providers to ensure a stable path from housing instability to secure long-term housing.



During my City Council re-election campaign in 2015, I championed livable density and fought off a challenger who appealed to NIMBY sentiment from affluent neighborhoods in my Council district. I am no stranger to sticking to my guns in the face of controversy, and would champion the best policies even in the face of privileged opposition.

**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?**

State tax code should be reworked to make it more equitable and fair for everyone, and not just for corporations or the super wealthy.

Washington state's tax code is backwards in many ways – mostly due to our over-reliance on the property tax and regressive sales tax/user fees. This disproportionately affects the working families, family businesses, and marginalized communities.

Something has to be done addressing the gaps in funding, especially after the Trump Administration's weaponization of funding cuts to states and cities pushing back against his tyrannical agenda. We have to be smart. I will partner with community leaders to find new innovative ways to raise revenue that would not impact working families and our small businesses. I will also work within the city government to best preserve funding for core services within the current fiscal reality, while simultaneously planning for long-term service recovery. I would also



work with the state delegation in Olympia and regional leadership to publicly support sensible tax reform and help rally public support for change.

Washington has the most regressive tax system in the country – let's stop punishing people for working and living here and make the wealthiest pay their fair share.

**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?**

I am a supporter of tenant protections and housing justice. I supported Tacoma's first tenant protections in 2018, and would ensure that tenants' rights and health/safety are adequately protected. We should also support alternative forms of housing such as community land trusts and cooperatives so as to grow a non-commodified sector of the housing system.

Over the long term, I am a big proponent of social housing and believe that a robust public sector presence in the housing market can be a stabilizing force for rents and neighborhood stability as a whole. In the short-to-medium term, we need to leverage Home in Tacoma to ensure that new housing in our city is most oriented towards current Tacoma families and first-time home buyers.

**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 proudly supported Tacoma's "Vision Zero" Initiative when I was on City Council. Building sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes that make walking, rolling, and biking safe and accessible for everyone. We should be investing in designing our streets to naturally encourage slower driving and fewer deaths. We should strive for this. I want to see Tacoma's streets safer and focus on what we know works: prioritizing people over cars. Education here is the key: we should be investing in educating drivers to respect the road and everyone on it, and should ensure that our long-range planning incorporates multi-modal options as a feature and not an extra.

I would like to collaborate with community leaders and city planners to identify high-risk areas and invest in solutions that protect vulnerable neighborhoods first. I also support building off the success of our "Safe Routes to Schools" partnership with the Tacoma School District and exploring a "Safe Routes to Parks" program with the Parks Tacoma district.

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

Everyone in Tacoma deserves to feel safe. This starts by addressing the roots of our public safety crisis by ensuring mental health professionals are available around the clock to respond to crises, so people get care, not handcuffs, when they need help most. We must stop cycling nonviolent individuals through jail and instead connect them to real solutions. Additionally, homelessness can't be solved alone. I'll push for a regional plan with the county, neighboring cities, and the Puyallup Tribe to share responsibility and resources fairly. Safety isn't just policing — it's opportunity, and standing up for everyone's rights.



In addition, I would work to build on the city's successful partnerships with the Tacoma School District for youth programs that do real work to prevent violence, such as the Late Nights in Summer program, Beyond the Bell, and the Whole Child Initiative. Our juvenile justice system has done some incredible work pioneering Restorative Justice initiatives, and there is fantastic opportunity to apply those lessons to even more situations.

Responding to emergencies is important. But it's the work "between the calls" that really makes a community safer and more livable.

**In what ways could your city's comprehensive plan go further, and what would you push for to improve it during your tenure?**

While it's great that Tacoma has passed the "Home In Tacoma" plan to meet the state's growth management act, we need to do more to incentivize development if we are going to meet the goal of building 59,000 new housing units by 2050. Economic factors outside our control like interest rates, building supplies etc also stand to constraint the rate of growth. Allowing for more missing middle housing is just the first step. We need to ensure that average Tacoma residents are able to actually take advantage of the program. For example, the city could explore incentive or finance options to make single-to-multifamily conversions cheaper and more convenient - but with affordability requirements attached to the new units. And we need a dramatic overhaul of the city's permitting department to ensure greater predictability, speed, and precision for builders and homeowners.



**What is your approach to finding common ground between slow growth advocates opposing change in their neighborhoods and pro-housing advocates pressing to meet broader community needs?**

As our city population grows and stable housing becomes increasingly unaffordable and unobtainable for working families, innovation and change become inevitable. This means working with housing advocates to prioritize affordable, sustainably-built homes near transit and jobs. The best balance to strike between livable density and "neighborhood character" is adaptive re-use - encouraging greater utilization of pre-existing properties (especially of a historic variety) without razing them. We see this work quite well in older neighborhoods like the Stadium, North Slope, or Lincoln neighborhoods, and we can scale those lessons even more.

I am confident through discussion and healthy civil conversations, we can strike an appropriate balance between protecting what makes Tacoma beautiful while ensuring that no community is unheard or left behind.

**Planned upcoming expansions to Sound Transit services will reshape the transportation and connectivity of the region. How would you, as mayor, support this regional effort to expand multi-modal transit? How will you foster a positive relationship between Sound Transit, local businesses, and residents?**

Transit should be viewed as essential for workers and I support smart initiatives that improve mass transit. As a city, we should strive for the gold standard of urban planning for the "15 minute community," where someone can live, work, and shop in close proximity – and have meaningful transportation choices besides being limited



to single-occupancy vehicles. This benefits local businesses by providing more “feet on the street” to stimulate local demand, while providing for more housing opportunities for Tacoma residents. Accordingly, long-range planning that emphasizes transit-friendliness is one of the key ways that the city can improve our intra-city and inter-regional connectedness.

Furthermore, the more we focus on transit-oriented development, the better the ridership numbers become for the regional transit system itself, ensuring future solvency as well as greater availability of future service levels.

I further commit to be a tireless advocate in partnership with our state and federal delegations for continued capital investments in Sound Transit's expansion through our region.