



## **Dionne Foster Urbanist Questionnaire 2025**

Seattle City Council, Position 9

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

We all deserve affordable housing, safe streets, and a Seattle that protects our rights and respects our voices. I'm running for City Council to refocus city government on our shared progressive priorities– and bring needed change to how our Council works. On Council I will focus on delivering affordable housing for all residents - from investing in subsidized housing to expanding our capacity to build abundantly across the city and bringing our homeless neighbors inside - affordability will be a key focus. Second, I will work to ensure we address climate at the local level with investments in our transportation infrastructure making the city more liveable for all residents with affordable, safe, reliable transit. Third, on Council I will work to protect our city from the overreach of the federal government - through working to protect our budget from harmful cuts to standing with our neighbors who face unprecedented threats, I will be a voice for our values. With your vote, I'll ensure we come together to tackle national challenges and drive local progress.

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

I will bring the experience of a renter who purchased a home thanks to Seattle Downpayment Assistance, I want all our neighbors to have those same opportunities to afford housing stability. On the Council, I will:



Prioritize getting people indoors by working with regional agencies to invest in treatment on demand, permanent supportive housing, and emergency shelter solutions – including tiny homes.

Protect dedicated affordable housing funds, pursue Transit-Oriented Development, and enact zoning reforms that expand housing options for all income levels.

Support the implementation of social housing, which Seattle voters overwhelmingly supported in back to back elections.

Protect targeted “neighborhood centers” to improve livability and provide multi-family housing options throughout the city, so young families can sink roots in Seattle, seniors can age in place, and workers can live in the communities where they earn a living.

Promote home ownership opportunities for populations historically denied access to wealth through exclusionary zoning, denial of access to capital, and racist housing policies.

Implement anti-displacement strategies that safeguard diverse neighborhoods and support community-led development programs that provide affordability and stability.

Support statewide rent stabilization and tenant protections to ensure a level playing field and provide safe, affordable housing for all renters in Seattle.

**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! As Executive Director of the Progress Alliance, we didn't just talk about taxing the rich to fund the essential services we rely on - we fought for it and won. Now, not only are we making childcare more affordable, but we are beginning to balance our upside down tax code that ranks second to last in the nation for the burden it places on everyday people.

Now, I'm running for Seattle City Council because our city is at a crossroads. The Trump administration and its massive budget cuts threaten our city. We need to get real about this threat and get serious about local progressive revenue. I will start with the report by the City of Seattle Revenue Stabilization Workgroup. It is filled with good ideas, starting with a local capital gains tax or exploring partnership with the state for a mansion tax.

I will also work to protect our budgets from harmful federal overreach and work to advance budget transparency at the local level so that community members can actually track and understand proposed budget changes, bringing back the transparency that was sorely lacking in the most recent budget process.

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

As a mom and neighbor, I want to ensure that when people call for help, we're able to match the right response to every call. I also believe deeply that we must invest in prevention strategies including mental health services, youth jobs and engagement, and economic stability. On the Council, I will: Advocate for smart workforce development policies that attract and retain the officers we need while advancing our 30x30 goals to increase women's representation in law enforcement. Invest in proven intervention and prevention strategies to address root causes and create long-term solutions including treatment on demand, behavioral health and crisis



care, and youth development initiatives to address the underlying causes of crime and reduce recidivism. Support continued investment in the city's CARE Team, gun violence prevention programs, and community-driven solutions that make our neighborhoods safer and stronger. Work to ensure that every neighbor and first responder is treated with respect and that our Seattle Police Department is both effective and accountable. Support SPD to achieve constitutional and effective practices, and work to provide strong and effective oversight alongside community partners.

**How do you plan to improve public safety for transit operators and riders, and boost ridership and transit accessibility? What is your approach to making our streets safer for all users, especially with pedestrian traffic deaths rising?**

I have personally been hit by a car as a pedestrian and know that the city can do better to ensure our residents are safe whether they're on foot or riding transit. We must do more to achieve our Vision Zero goals, and significantly accelerate the buildout of specific spot fixes across high-crash areas of the city.

With respect to transit rider and operator safety, I am interested to learn directly from Urbanist members and other experts on transit, mobility, and safety, but recommendations I support include:

Protecting drivers in fully enclosed compartments

Improving systems to support drivers when they are assaulted or attacked

Improving data reporting and collection in order to encourage more people to report incidents



Establishing a regional transit safety task force to coordinate efforts

These are important steps, but we must also focus on community safety and tackle our fentanyl crisis, invest in behavioral health, and increase access to treatment on demand and permanent supportive housing. Transit must be safe, reliable, and frequent, and I will work to make sure that it is so.

**Goldilocks questions on the neighborhood growth centers in the Mayor's One Seattle housing plan: about right, should be more, or should be less? And why? In what ways could your city's comprehensive plan go further, and what would you push for to improve it during your tenure?**

I was glad to see additional neighborhood centers in the Mayor's plan, and would like to see another group of centers added by Council. Because the current Council continues to slow walk this process and has proposed delaying voting for certain sections of the plan, I will hopefully have that opportunity; we need more places throughout the city that welcome mixed use, higher density housing options.

In addition to adding more centers, I want to look at other areas where we can add additional density, flexibility, or options for housing including expanding corridor upzones, areas around transit facilities, along Highway 99 and other underutilized areas, etc. Some of these areas are already zoned for significant growth, but there is more we can do to either expand footprints for redevelopment, or incentivize construction. The neighborhood center approach has its limitations; the fundamental goal is housing abundance.

**What are your transportation priorities in light of budget limitations?**



Thankfully, we have a voter-approved pipeline of resources through last year's Transportation Levy to continue making progress on significant projects and priorities. For me, this means we follow through on promises to frontload sidewalk construction in historically under resourced neighborhoods and along dangerous roadways lacking pedestrian infrastructure. It means targeting "Vision Zero" projects to keep people safe walking to school, transit, work, and services. It means building out the transit ready infrastructure needed for light rail and Metro services – continuing to make it easier to get around Seattle without a car. It also means a focus on ensuring we deliver on bike infrastructure that keeps bikers safe and connected. While we do this, we must also pay attention to basic safety and maintenance on our bridges and roadways, especially with I-5 closures placing more pressure on our already overstressed roadways.

**What outcomes do you want to see from the Seattle Transit Measure up for renewal by early 2027?**

In 2020 while working at Seattle Foundation we invested significantly in the Seattle Transit Measure to help ensure its successful passage. I was proud to support that effort because I know how important it is to ensure continued investments in transit service and affordability for Seattle residents. The Seattle Transit Measure is essential to providing frequent and reliable Metro service to the people of Seattle, and deserves both renewal and retooling to meet evolving needs. In addition to maintaining core services, the measure has been helping provide free and reduced Orca cards, provide planning resources, and other tools to make the transit experience more accessible for all. On Council I will work to ensure the Seattle Transit Measure Continues to: Improve transportation access: Maintain and expand our investments in subsidized passes for low-income residents, young people, and essential workers Improve frequency and reliability: Support investments that move Seattle closer to a Frequent Transit Network, making it easier for every resident to



use transit for daily needs and bring us closer to reaching our climate goals I will work with stakeholders, ATU operators, and riders to best determine the package and priorities that will continue to make this an additive solution to our transit needs.

**What is your stance on the Mandatory Housing Affordability program and particularly if it should apply to middle housing in formerly single family zones?**

MHA has been a critical tool to link new development to the production of affordable housing, and its benefits should be shared equitably across the city—not just concentrated in urban villages or high-density areas. I am interested in looking carefully at the program's design to ensure that it is achieving its goals and not standing in the way of the production of middle housing. Allowing duplexes, triplexes, and other middle housing types without any affordability requirements risks missing an opportunity to ensure that all neighborhoods, especially those that have historically excluded lower-income residents, contribute to solving our housing crisis. I want to make it as easy as possible to build more types of housing across the city. I believe that as we grow supply that prices will decrease but I also believe we need to consider affordability needs in the interim before supply catches up and pricing comes down. I look forward to working with advocates to create a calibrated solution that will both encourage new housing and ensure it is accessible to a variety of incomes.

**How do you think the city should approach the idea of reallocating space away from parking and single-occupancy vehicle travel?**

Reclaiming street space from car storage and car lanes creates room for more efficient, equitable, and sustainable uses—like dedicated bus lanes, protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks, green space, and even housing. To make this transition successful for transit infrastructure specifically, the City must first invest in reliable,



frequent public transit and build out a safe, connected network for people walking and biking. These alternatives give residents real choices and make it easier to reduce car dependence. Reallocating street space is a necessary step to meet Seattle's climate goals, reduce emissions, and create healthier neighborhoods—particularly for communities most harmed by car-centric infrastructure. On the Council, I will lead with a commitment to equity, drawing from successful examples and community engagement to build support for a more people-centered transportation system.