



## **Eddie Lin Urbanist Questionnaire 2025**

Seattle City Council, Position 2

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

My top priorities are (1) lowering housing costs and increasing housing options, (2) helping people get off the streets into shelters and tiny homes and providing treatment options and mental health resources for those that need them, (3) promoting comprehensive public safety, including addressing the record youth gun violence affecting our communities.

### **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?**

We need a bold Comprehensive Plan and to reduce housing production barriers like design review, parking requirements, and overly restrictive limits around height, setbacks, floor area ratios (FARs) and lot coverage. We can streamline the permitting process, both in terms of timelines and substantive requirements from SDOT, SPU, and SCL. And we need more Housing First options, with robust supportive services.

We can increase tree canopy by putting more trees in public spaces, including rights-of-way, instead of trying to impose tree retention burdens on housing. We can look at providing more tax exemptions for housing production (we currently have a 10% sales tax on housing construction).



We should increase shelters and tiny home villages, by permitting more of them throughout the City, including on public property, and funding them, especially funding supportive services and paying workers what they deserve. If we do not sufficiently fund the supportive services, then conditions can deteriorate for both residents and neighbors, thus eroding support.

In terms of community engagement, we need to prioritize the voices of renters and marginalized communities, rather than wealthier homeowners. And at the end of the day, we need to produce more housing everywhere, neighborhood objections notwithstanding.

**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?**

I absolutely support new progressive revenues. I have been advocating for many years for progressive revenues at both the state and local level. Our regressive tax system is immoral and bad public policy. I would defend (and potentially increase) the Jump Start Payroll Tax. I would support a local Capital Gains Tax and open to considering other taxes, like a vacancy tax. I support the Wealth Tax at the state level. I would also support providing tax cuts for workers, like supplementing the Working Families Tax Credit, at the local level. In terms of budget cuts, we should look at raising revenues first, including by incentivizing housing production (which brings in revenues through sales taxes, REETA, and increased property taxes). If we need to make cuts, I would prioritize meeting the needs of our most vulnerable first, and make cuts at the top before asking our lowest-paid workers to do more with less.



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

We need a comprehensive public safety plan that addresses root causes. A Police Lieutenant told me recently, “we can’t arrest our way out of a societal problem.” When someone is in crisis or committing a crime, we need to intervene. We need better 911 responses, with more social workers and mental health specialists for situations that do not require an officer, and must negotiate a SPOG contract without limits on the number of CARES or Health One responders. That will allow police the capacity to respond to dangerous crimes. We need more treatment and diversion options. Jailing someone without rehab or support correlates with high rates of recidivism. There is a revolving door with the criminal system which is expensive, harmful and ineffective. Also, homeless neighbors are the most impacted by a lack of public safety. Which is why we need more housing AND shelters AND tiny homes so they have a safe place to sleep and store belongings. And we can increase gun storage awareness and gun safety permit requirements and provide dedicated funding to community-based organizations that do gun violence interruption work with youth. Finally, I will insist on real accountability in the SPOG contract.

**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?**

Public transit should be safe, clean, frequent, and accessible. Unfortunately, our abject failure to help people who are suffering from mental and behavioral health challenges is impacting public safety on transit. So, as mentioned above, we need to provide more support, including treatment on-demand and shelter and housing and job training, to those who need it. We should work with Amalgamated Transit Union 587 and groups like the Transit Riders Union to find ways to address transit



safety. I heard from an ATU member who drives for Metro that we need better coordination between SPD and the King County Sheriff's Office.

In terms of street safety, our two-lane streets like MLK and Rainier are some of our most dangerous. We need to slow down traffic with infrastructure changes that convert the roads to one lane in each direction. We can also use traffic cameras as an interim measure to slow traffic. We need protected bike lanes, more sidewalks, and raised crosswalks and I'm excited about the new Shared Streets law, which we can use to put pedestrians first and reimagine our rights-of-way as public spaces.

And, if we build dense, walkable neighborhoods, we can reduce the demand for driving!

**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?**

Our plan should allow for much more growth!!! The reason we are facing unprecedented housing costs and homelessness is because we majorly messed up the last Comprehensive Plan by underpredicting growth. And if we make the same mistake again, we will have 10 more years of increasing housing costs and homelessness.

We really should be allowing dense, walkable neighborhoods everywhere, and not just concentrating growth on arterials or in little pockets. Dense, walkable neighborhoods solve so many problems simultaneously. They increase affordability, can reduce segregation, improve health outcomes, reduce greenhouse gases, reduce reliance on vehicles, increase accessibility and increase tree canopy. During



my tenure, I would be pushing to maximize density and growth as much as allowed, particularly through the zoning code updates.

It shouldn't be trees versus housing - we can have both by increasing housing density and by planting and preserving trees in our rights-of-ways and other public spaces. I push back against the idea that trees have to be maintained on private property, and I'm concerned that wealthier neighborhoods are using trees as a way to continue segregation and stop housing production and renters from entering the neighborhood.

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

We just passed the Transportation Levy, so thankfully those funds are protected and dedicated to the identified projects. My priorities will be around transportation safety - making the types of infrastructure changes and improvements that will save lives and prevent serious injuries. In addition, we need to prioritize accessibility. I also think there is an opportunity for the City to work more closely with Seattle Public Schools to figure out a better, safer and more cost effective way to get kids to and from schools.

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

Reporting from the Urbanist showed that STM funds might be at risk of being diverted from their original purpose for staffing for ST3 planning. While ST3 planning is important, I think STM funds should be protected for their intended purposes, primarily increasing frequency and improving service on existing Seattle bus routes. I would like to see more east-west routes, and I would support a regional transit



measure, as our transportation network is regional and many City residents and workers need to take transit across jurisdictional boundaries.

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

The MHA program has had some successful outcomes by raising hundreds of millions of dollars for affordable housing and through the creation of MHA performance units, but it definitely needs to be revised and updated in light of what we have learned about its unintended impacts (including from a recent Berk study), in light of changing housing conditions, and in light of changes to the Comp Plan and related zoning. I do not support applying MHA to middle housing in formerly single-family zones, or at most the MHA payment and performance amounts would need to be de minimis. We do need to address the unintended consequence of having MHA apply with significant contributions required in some LR zones, but not NR zones, which may be pushing development out of LR zones and into NR zones. Further, I would be interested in thinking more broadly about MHA. It seems like we should be encouraging density and discouraging low-density development, but MHA almost seems to do the opposite by exempting NR zones.

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

I think we should be piloting more car-free zones near businesses, like at Pike Place Market or Ferdinand Street in Columbia City. I think pilot programs can be implemented more quickly (without the years-long delays that often occur with permanent changes), and can help the public imagine a different future. We should eliminate parking requirements for housing developments, and use more rights-of-ways for trees. I would be interested in pursuing congestion pricing which



appears to be wildly successful in NYC. Finally, if we really want to get people out of their vehicles, we need to make transit just as fast and convenient as driving. And we need to develop dense, walkable neighborhoods, with a range of services (schools, childcare, parks, libraries, health centers, grocery stores, restaurants, etc...) so more people can meet their daily needs without ever needing to drive.