



Joe Bushnell Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Tacoma City Council, Position 5

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

1) Public Safety 2) Housing Affordability 3) Homelessness

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?

I'm excited about the progress we've made in passing Home in Tacoma 2 to dramatically increase the supply of housing options for everyone to live here in Tacoma. However we have far more to do especially in addressing the lack of low-income and the missing middle housing. My district in South Tacoma and the South End has historically been on the receiving end of other neighborhoods' objections: from industry to social services to housing, we've been the "yes" side when other areas object. I strongly support increasing the housing supply and providing more shelter space across the city – including in my district – and as part of that I expect that the rest of the city needs to do its part as well.

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, absolutely. Our legal options as a municipality are regrettably limited, with the courts blocking Seattle's high earners income tax, and the municipal capital gains taxes not currently being allowed under State Law. I fully support advocating for greater municipal progressive taxing authority. In the meantime, property taxes are the least regressive taxing option we have available, and regrettably the voters just rejected a proposed tax that would have increased funding for street upgrades that included bicycle and pedestrian safety. I will continue working with our Legislative delegation to increase our options available.

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?

Tacoma has led with a number of bold measures recently to address affordability. Home in Tacoma (1 & 2), and the city councils tenant protections, which I supported, all sought to significantly increase housing supply, fill the missing middle gap with ADUs and other increased duplexes/quadplexes, and help protect tenants. Right now our biggest task is to monitor progress on these and other measures to ensure that our goals are being met and to fine tune the legislation as needed based on the success and gaps in these programs.

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?



This is one of the aims of the recently rejected Tacoma Streets Initiative 2. We need to return to the drawing board and work with the Legislature to expand our options for funding pedestrian and cyclist safety upgrades to our streets without relying on regressive taxes.

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

I'm proud of the progress we've made since I was elected, hiring 30 additional police officers and reducing response times by 22 minutes. I've partnered with neighbors and local businesses to create the Hosmer Business Association that has significantly reduced crime in our city's biggest hot spot neighborhood. We've also added Community Service Officers and non-police HOPE Team co-responders to handle non-violent crises—significant steps addressing our challenges with equity in policing. We need to continue supporting these programs and build community capacity and economic opportunity.

How have federal funding cuts impacted your jurisdiction and how do you plan to address those impacts?

Tacoma is very vulnerable to Federal cuts and the impacts of the Trump administration's disastrous trade and budget policies. As a Port City, we stand to suffer from trade wars that will cost many well-paying jobs. As a low-income urban jurisdiction, we have many residents on Medicaid that may be cut in the near future. We have a lot of veterans that rely on their benefits and we have a lot of seniors on social security. While these issues aren't impacting our city's budget yet, they may be



catastrophic. We will need to do what we can to bolster wrap around services supporting our community's most vulnerable residents—especially low income seniors and homeless students. I hope that we can also trust the Courts and our State to help stand up against the administration injustices and disastrous policies.

Do you support camping bans or sweeps? If elected, how would you adapt or change current law/policies to protect and support our neighbors?

Housing is the first step to getting folks off the street. Sweeps are an inhumane and ineffective “solution” to homelessness. I've supported limited camping bans around protected waterways, and emergency shelters. The only solution to homelessness is to help people access the services they need and be able to afford a home. I'll also work to better identify people on the brink of homelessness and get them the critical support they need, as this is the most cost effective and humane way to prevent people from falling into homelessness in the first place.

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

I'm very proud of the Home in Tacoma 2 measure that we passed, but I believe that there will be more that we can do in the future in particular in higher income predominantly single family neighborhoods to increase housing density and housing options, as well as making it easier for homes to be built overall through our permitting process.