



Paul Dutton Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Renton City Council, Position 6

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

Safety, Accessibility, Inclusion

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?

There are many ways to increase housing options: supporting middle housing, mixed-income housing, ADUs, mixed-use buildings, subsidizing lower-income housing through MFTE programs. Housing cannot be separated from transit, as zoning, parking requirements, and access to transit impacts where people need to live and how successful they can be in their jobs.

As a Geotechnical and Tunneling engineer, I think that cities need to do a better job conveying these issues and options to residents. A lot of pushback can happen when people simply don't have full understanding about how something that they see as a big change would work. I work on large transit and water projects (such as the Northgate Link extension and the DC Clean Rivers Project) and know firsthand that our elected leaders could do a much better job of explaining which issues are important and why.



I plan on hosting office hours and also teaming up with nonprofits and groups that work on these issues to host discussion sessions. We have a housing emergency and are living through an affordability crisis. This requires a lot of transparency coming from public institutions so that we can work to solve these problems while maintaining public trust.

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. Washington State currently ranks 49th in tax fairness. As an engineer, our current system does not make logical sense and is being balanced on the backs of working people. We need to raise taxes and revenue in areas where it makes sense to do so. This will mean raising caps on property taxes to fund public services in a way that is more reliable and sustainable. This should also mean lowering sales tax so that it shifts the overall tax burden away from disproportionately falling on working people. We also need local lawmakers who aren't afraid to successfully lobby state lawmakers (which can sometimes mean calling them out and applying pressure) to do better and create a more equitable tax structure that won't cause long term cost burdens and funding gaps. We will need to develop new revenue streams to support all of the housing and transit systems that are needed to both improve quality of life and move our cities into the future so that our residents don't get left behind.

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?



Everything starts with housing. I want my kids to be able to live on their own, comfortably, in the city that I love, when they are old enough to do so. Right now that is not likely unless they are able to find a high enough paying, more exclusive type of job. Increasing housing supply via rezoning, lifting certain restrictions, incentivizing large-scale building and then implementing subsidies to make housing more affordable will take the collaboration of many different groups: elected officials, city staff, nonprofits, and developers. With so many stakeholders at play, we must also not forget the role that our residents play in this. Making sure that the city does its job to inform the public about what affordable housing options exist for residents will also be key.

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?

We need more bike lanes and off-the-road bike paths that, along with increasing transit options, also add character to our city and will likely increase the happiness and fitness level of residents, as well. The same can be said of more visible and wider sidewalks and crosswalks, as well as for allowing for longer time when crossing the street... but I also must acknowledge that there are many neighborhoods throughout Renton that lack even the most basic sidewalk infrastructure and need to be prioritized for an upgrade. We also should never substitute the importance of lower speed requirements and traffic calming measures, especially in high-risk areas. We also need to do what we can to deter bad behavior through enforcement measures. Making cities more walkable and bikeable is key to having a healthier future, but increasing public transit options can also play a critical role in lowering the number of traffic and pedestrian deaths as it



lowers the opportunities for such deaths to occur by giving residents options that are safer and more reliable than having to drive or travel by bike or on foot.

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

We need systems that respect the dignity and safety of all of our residents, regardless of circumstance. This includes respecting those who might be going through a tough time, but also respecting the rights of taxpaying residents who want to be able to use public resources without fearing for their safety or without feeling harassed. For people who are going through a tough time, we need to make sure that they know what their options are for getting help and make it as easy as possible for them to procure that help... but we also need to be firm in respecting the rights of those around them if they opt to not get help. This means utilizing our criminal justice system when necessary, as a deterrent to harmful and unsafe behavior. One thing that residents throughout Renton have made clear is that they are fed up with feeling like the current way of doing things (which to many looks like doing nothing) isn't working. We have to balance compassion with being realistic about repeat offenses and the rights that all citizens have to enjoy their parks, public amenities, and public spaces in safety and in peace.

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

Federal funding cuts have significantly strained our local resources, particularly in areas like public transportation, affordable housing, and social services. These cuts



have made it challenging to maintain and expand essential services that our community relies on. To address these impacts, I plan to advocate for increased state and local funding and revenue sources to fill the gaps left by federal cuts. Additionally, I will prioritize creating partnerships with local organizations and businesses to leverage resources and seek solutions. By engaging the community in discussions about our needs, we can develop strategies that ensure our infrastructure and services remain robust, easily accessible, and equitable.

What are your views on the SeaTac Sustainable Airport Master Plan and how will it impact your jurisdiction? What plans do you have to address the impacts of the airport on your community?

The SeaTac Sustainable Airport Master Plan represents a crucial opportunity to balance growth and sustainability. However, I am concerned about potential noise pollution, traffic congestion, and environmental impacts. I believe we must prioritize community engagement in the planning process to ensure that local voices are heard. To address these impacts, I will advocate for stringent environmental assessments and mitigation measures, including noise reduction strategies and improved public transit connections to the airport. Additionally, I will work on policies that protect the neighborhoods affected by the airport's expansion, ensuring that the benefits of development do not come at the expense of our residents' quality of life. At the same time, having an airport like SeaTac in our backyard is an incredible source of good jobs and exciting opportunities that we are lucky to have access to. This needs to be about balance and listening to the needs of constituents will be key when it comes to figuring out what the best balance is.



King County has good policies and codes designed to protect agricultural, forest and rural lands, including our natural areas, waterways, and small rural communities. However, these policies and codes are too often not upheld and enforced. How will you ensure that rural lands are protected, and that violators are subject to enforcement?

There are several mechanisms defined by the Growth Management Act that protect rural and agricultural land as well as wildlife habitat such as forests, grasslands, and fish passageways. Preventing urban sprawl is important. However, there are unincorporated areas where stripping power from rural residents hasn't worked as planned. Giving more power by implementing rural governing bodies would allow them to partner with adjacent cities, lessen community divisions, and enable them to more easily support environmental stewardship programs that have been successful in urban areas, such as Green Tukwila, a program that I would like to see Renton copy. Most people do not understand what an urban growth boundary is and why it is there. The environment could be better protected if some of these boundary lines were reconsidered. For example, it doesn't make sense to have certain businesses next to critical habitat areas. Many of these issues are outside of the scope of the City Council, but the city needs to encourage the county to do a better job of bringing community into these discussions, both in an effort to increase transparency and in an effort to bring community members on board with why protecting these boundaries is important.

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



It depends on the circumstances. Sweeps can make the homelessness problem worse in that it can destroy personal items that are needed to successfully rebuild lives, thus causing people to cycle into homelessness further. At the same time, all city residents and visitors should have the right to visit and utilize public resources (including parks) that are peaceful and that center around nature without being littered with tents and covered in garbage. I would like to see more accessible options that can get people off of the streets and into more secure living situations so that the public isn't having to pay to repeatedly dismantle so many encampments in public spaces. I would also like to see the city do more to create services that can actually be of use to people who are temporarily unhoused. This includes helping people securely store important documents such as birth certificates or other legal papers that they will need to be able to get back on their feet. This also includes helping homeless individuals receive mail. Are there times when public areas get out of control and need to be cleaned up? Yes. But sweeping just to sweep is just plain cruel.

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

The Renton Comprehensive Plan still needs to do a better job at considering just how much Renton has changed over the past many years, including the wide array of diverse communities and diverse neighborhoods with unique needs that exist throughout the city. Renton's transportation issues are particularly unique, as Renton is an incredibly spread out city that is geographically divided by the Cedar River Valley and I-405, and that hasn't (yet) benefitted from light rail expansion, so is expected to remain predominantly reliant on single passenger vehicles. Growth has outpaced road network improvements considerably and our bus system remains unreliable or insufficient for many residents. There are also Potential Annexation



Areas that contribute a lot to citywide traffic but that don't currently feed into city revenue streams. I would love to see these areas join the city and be able to support it financially and also gain the rights that incorporated city residents have in terms of selecting their local elected representatives and impacting city decisionmaking. This would also make Renton a bigger player at the table when it comes to discussions with King County Metro and Sound Transit, especially since Renton has been historically overlooked for transit expansion.