



Rory O'Sullivan Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Seattle City Attorney

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

My first priority is to rebuild a public safety system that actually reduces crime by breaking the cycle of repeat offenses. In the immediate term, that means creating a more wide-reaching and accountable community court and diversion programs to address root causes, instead of just throwing nonviolent offenders in jail over and over again. At the same time, we must hold truly dangerous individuals accountable quickly. I will speed-up the prosecution of serious crimes like DUIs and domestic violence to prevent further harm.

Equally important is protecting Seattle's workers and tenants. I will support the Office of Labor Standards and the Department of Construction and Inspections with staff from the City Attorney's office to ensure we are enforcing our labor laws and cracking down on landlords who provide unsafe living conditions.

I'm also committed to defending civil rights and our progressive values. I will stand up to the Trump administration against unlawful executive action. I will also use the resources of the city attorney's office to step in where the federal government is stepping back. This includes bringing affirmative lawsuits against entities that are discriminating against our LGBTQ+ community.

Do you support adding progressive revenue sources? Which ones would you support or defend to fund city priorities?



Yes I support progressive revenue. Even our current fairly conservative City Council almost passed a capital gains tax, which I would support. I think we should also consider a vacancy tax, a flat income tax with a tax credit or tax rebate for low income individuals and families, a land value tax, and an estate tax, among others.

How do you plan to defend Seattle under a Trump presidency?

First and foremost, I will be initiating litigation to protect the funding that has been appropriated for programs that help Seattleites. I will review all of Trump's executive orders to determine how they impact Seattle and determine what challenges we could bring in court. I will also support the enforcement of state and local laws that protect our immigrant community.

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

We can't jail our way to safety. I will expand proven programs that prevent crime by addressing its causes. That means bringing back Community Court and investing in other therapeutic courts and diversion initiatives that connect people to the help they need – addiction treatment, mental health services, job training, and housing. We'll reserve prosecution and jail for cases that truly threaten public safety. But for many low-level offenses, I'll push to redirect those individuals into behavioral health care or community service rather than wasting resources on endless prosecution.

I will redirect the City Attorney's resources toward what works. I'll assign prosecutors to focus on serious crimes like domestic violence, DUI, and repeat thefts that hurt small businesses and residents. I will also advocate for better conditions in our jails for those who are incarcerated, ensuring they have access to addiction treatment, education, and re-entry support. Right now our jail system is unsafe and ineffective; I



intend to negotiate improvements so that anyone in custody is less likely to reoffend when they get out.

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?

Everyone deserves to feel safe on public transit. To protect bus drivers and riders, I will ensure that offenses on transit are taken seriously. I'll team up with agencies and advocacy groups to expand programs that send mental health professionals or social workers onto transit to help those struggling. We've started to see this approach with the pilot of transit safety ambassadors, and I will support and empower such programs.

I'll make sure legal obstacles don't stand in the way of redesigning streets for safety. I'll also use my office to push for stronger enforcement of traffic laws focusing on the most dangerous behaviors. That means prioritizing the prosecution of egregious offenses like DUI and reckless driving that put pedestrians and cyclists at greatest risk

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

I do not support cruel and counterproductive policies like blanket camping bans or aggressive sweeps of homeless encampments.

Yesterday, I attended a community meeting about the establishment of a new Nickelsville tiny house village in my neighborhood. I am excited to welcome this new group of neighbors and I'm frustrated that the current administration has delayed



and blocked the construction of tiny house villages. If we had more shelters, tiny house villages, and permanent supportive housing, there would be fewer unsanctioned encampments. I will prioritize the construction of every form of housing so that fewer of our neighbors are forced to live on the street or in unsanctioned encampments.

I will use place-based approaches to work with people who are currently living in unsanctioned encampments and ensure that they are offered safe and suitable housing options before being asked to move.