



Ry Armstrong Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Seattle Mayor

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

My top three priorities are housing affordability, innovative public safety, and equitable climate action. First, I'll prioritize deep investments in social housing, accelerating production of permanently affordable homes and enacting strong tenant protections to keep Seattleites housed and prevent displacement. Housing stability must become a guaranteed right, not a privilege.

Second, I'll lead on innovative public safety by shifting resources from punitive measures toward community-based responses. This means investing in mental health services, unarmed crisis responders, and restorative justice programs; ensuring our approach meets crises with care, compassion, and effectiveness, rather than perpetuating harm through outdated policies.

Finally, equitable climate action demands we rapidly accelerate Seattle's transition toward sustainability, prioritizing frontline communities most impacted by pollution and climate change. This includes upgrading essential infrastructure, such as replacing our outdated gravity well sewer system to prevent toxic overflows, expanding clean public transit and green spaces, and driving policies grounded in environmental justice.

Together, these priorities will create a safer, more just, and resilient Seattle for everyone.



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?

To expand housing options for families of all incomes near employment centers, I will aggressively increase funding and zoning support for dense, mixed-income, transit-oriented development. I'll streamline permitting processes and incentivize the construction of larger units suitable for families through inclusionary zoning and expanded density bonuses. Social housing investments will provide permanently affordable homes for working families, ensuring neighborhoods remain economically diverse and accessible.

To address homelessness directly, I'll immediately add 1,000 new shelter beds within my first 100 days, paired with robust investments in emergency housing and permanent supportive housing. These efforts will rely on sustainable revenue streams, including progressive taxes, Housing Levy expansions, and strategic use of public land.

Balancing community concerns requires active listening paired with principled leadership. I'll prioritize early, transparent community engagement processes, clearly communicating the benefits of increased housing and dispelling misconceptions. While legitimate community concerns will inform our approach (especially around infrastructure and services), I'll firmly advocate for our housing goals, emphasizing that thriving neighborhoods depend on inclusive growth. Ultimately, ensuring all Seattleites have secure, affordable homes is non-negotiable, and I'll remain steadfast in leading our city toward equitable housing solutions.



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, I strongly support adding progressive revenue sources to fund our critical priorities, especially given the increasing federal uncertainties under Trump-era policies. To ensure Seattle's continued growth and equity, we need stable funding streams rooted in fairness. Specifically, I support expanding the JumpStart payroll tax, implementing a city-level capital gains tax targeting high earners, and advocating for a vacancy tax, which would require approval from the state legislature, to encourage active use of residential and commercial spaces. Just relying on a capital gains tax may only generate between \$17-50M, which is not enough to meet the needs of our upcoming crisis. More bold action will have to take place to prevent devastating cuts that are looming over the future of City Hall.

Additionally, if legally feasible, I would support putting a wealth tax or even a flat-rate income tax before voters through a referendum. Seattle must lead in making Washington's tax structure fairer and more progressive. Right now, Washington is the most regressive blue state in America when it comes to taxation, disproportionately burdening working families. By pursuing these progressive revenue options, we can address systemic inequities, sustainably fund essential services, and build a city that works equitably for all.

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

My approach to public safety centers care, accountability, and evidence-based innovation. Over the next five years, I'll shift resources away from punitive, one-size-fits-all responses toward holistic, community-driven solutions. This



includes expanding unarmed crisis-response teams, scaling mental health and substance-use treatment, and investing deeply in restorative justice programs that heal communities instead of punishing poverty.

I'll also invest in safer streets as a core aspect of public safety: expanding solar-powered street lights, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, and strengthening protections for cyclists and pedestrians to prevent vehicular injuries and fatalities. To actualize this vision, I'll lead a community-involved budget review, reallocating resources from outdated enforcement methods to proactive social services and preventive infrastructure.

Clear metrics will guide these changes, emphasizing improved safety outcomes and community trust. Partnering directly with impacted communities (particularly communities of color and 2SLGBTQIA+ residents) will ensure these strategies are driven by those closest to the solutions. Additionally, I'll champion accountability through robust civilian oversight of policing, requiring transparency and swift consequences for misconduct. Real safety comes when everyone feels protected, respected, and genuinely secure.

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?

To improve public safety for transit operators and riders, I'll advocate for increased staffing and presence of trained, civilian ambassadors on transit vehicles and at stations—providing immediate support, reducing conflicts, and enhancing safety without criminalizing riders. Enhanced lighting, real-time safety alerts, and improved facilities can make transit safer and more welcoming, especially at night.



Boosting ridership means investing in transit reliability, affordability, and frequency, particularly in historically underserved neighborhoods. I'll expand fare-free transit programs, prioritize bus lanes and protected bike infrastructure, and establish seamless transfers between modes, making transit more accessible and appealing for daily users.

To address rising pedestrian fatalities, I'll prioritize infrastructure upgrades citywide, including solar-powered streetlights, safer crosswalks, protected intersections, and comprehensive traffic-calming measures. Implementing Vision Zero effectively requires strong leadership: we must redesign streets to protect our most vulnerable users, not just cars. By strategically reallocating street space, investing in pedestrian-focused design, and proactively managing speeds citywide, we make our streets safer, more inviting, and equitable for everyone.

Planned upcoming expansions to Sound Transit services will reshape the transportation and connectivity of the region. How would you, as mayor, support this regional effort to expand multi-modal transit? How will you foster a positive relationship between Sound Transit, local businesses, and residents?

As Mayor, I'll be a strong advocate and collaborative partner in Sound Transit's regional expansion, ensuring that new multi-modal transit connects seamlessly with existing local infrastructure and genuinely serves the communities it reaches. I will prioritize smooth integration between regional transit lines, local bus networks, protected bike lanes, and pedestrian-friendly streets, creating accessible transit hubs citywide.

To foster positive relationships between Sound Transit, local businesses, and residents, I'll commit to early, transparent, and meaningful community engagement processes. I'll establish clear communication channels and proactively address



concerns, from minimizing disruption during construction to ensuring equitable outcomes in station-area development. By convening regular stakeholder forums, bringing together small businesses, residents, transit planners, and advocates, I'll ensure decisions reflect community needs and priorities.

Additionally, I'll champion targeted support and mitigation measures for businesses and residents affected during construction phases, such as direct assistance, clear signage, and proactive communication. Sound Transit's growth presents enormous opportunities for economic vitality and sustainability. Under my leadership, Seattle will embrace these opportunities thoughtfully, ensuring transit investments strengthen neighborhoods, support local economies, and serve all residents effectively.

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?

The current number of neighborhood growth centers in the One Seattle housing plan is a step in the right direction, but I believe we should expand this initiative further. While the plan proposes 30 neighborhood centers to accommodate housing and employment growth through 2044 and beyond, this approach may not fully address the pressing housing affordability or climate crisis, and the need for equitable development across all neighborhoods.

To improve the city's comprehensive plan during my tenure, I would advocate for:



1. Expanding Neighborhood Centers: Increase the number of designated neighborhood centers beyond the proposed 30 to ensure a more equitable distribution of housing and resources across the city.
2. Promoting Middle Housing: Encourage the development of diverse housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, in more neighborhoods to provide affordable options for families of varying incomes.
3. Enhancing Community Engagement: Implement robust community engagement strategies to involve residents in the planning process, ensuring that development aligns with the needs and values of each neighborhood.

By taking these steps, we can create a more inclusive, affordable, and sustainable Seattle that meets the needs of all its residents.

What are your transportation priorities in light of budget limitations?

In light of budget limitations, my transportation priorities focus on equity, connectivity, and climate resilience. I support completing a unified streetcar system that connects South Lake Union and First Hill and I believe it should be fare-free. A connected, free streetcar would boost ridership, serve small businesses, and provide accessible transit, especially for low-income and disabled residents.

I'll also prioritize increasing the reliability and frequency of our bus network. When buses are late or inconsistent, we lose public trust. Dedicated bus lanes, signal priority, and better stop infrastructure are essential to making transit dependable and accessible for all.



Finally, I'm committed to keeping Sound Transit 3 (ST3) on track. It's a transformative opportunity to shift our region toward sustainable, multi-modal transportation. I'll advocate for equitable delivery that centers displaced and underserved communities, while ensuring transit-oriented development includes deeply affordable housing. Even with tight budgets, we must make smart, people-first transit investments that move Seattle forward.

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

As the Seattle Transit Measure (STM) approaches renewal in 2027, I want to see it expanded and restructured to deliver more equitable, reliable, and sustainable transit outcomes. The current measure has successfully funded thousands of additional weekly Metro trips and provided free ORCA passes to Seattle Housing Authority residents, saving people money and increasing access. Building on that progress, the renewed STM should significantly expand fare-free and reduced-fare programs for low-income residents, youth, and seniors, and innovate its tap system similar to the OMNY payment system in NYC so any card or device can tap to pay for convenience. I also want to see stronger investments in service reliability (specifically, more dedicated bus lanes, signal priority infrastructure, and upgrades that make transit faster and more dependable). Additionally, I'll push for STM dollars to support clean, electric transit options and safer, multimodal connections for people walking, biking, or rolling. Finally, I believe every transportation measure must be rooted in community accountability. That means building in mechanisms for feedback, transparency, and continual adaptation based on the needs of riders. With the right vision, STM can be a powerful tool to make transit not just accessible, but transformative—linking people to opportunity, reducing emissions, and creating a city where mobility is a right, not a privilege.



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

I support the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program and believe it should be expanded to apply to middle housing in formerly single-family zones. If we are truly committed to addressing Seattle's housing crisis, we must ensure that growth comes with clear, community-centered benefits; including the production of deeply affordable homes in every neighborhood.

MHA has been a critical tool for generating affordable housing by requiring developers to either build below-market units or contribute to a fund that does. As we upzone for middle housing like duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, it's essential that we do not repeat past mistakes by allowing new development without affordability requirements. Middle housing can and should be part of a more just housing ecosystem, one that includes affordability at all levels.

Expanding MHA to cover middle housing ensures that affordability is baked into our housing strategy, not an afterthought. It also sends a message that every neighborhood has a role to play in solving our housing crisis, not just a few. During my tenure, I'll push for an expanded, equity-driven MHA framework that works alongside social housing investments to make Seattle a city where all of us can afford to live and thrive.

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

Seattle must lead the way in reimagining how we use our streets, not just to move cars, but to move people safely, sustainably, and equitably. Reallocating space away from parking and single-occupancy vehicle travel is essential if we're serious about



meeting our climate goals, improving public safety, and creating a city that works for everyone, not just those who can afford to drive.

We've seen bold leadership from Lisa Brown in Spokane, where street space is being actively rethought to prioritize transit, walking, and biking. That kind of innovation shouldn't just be happening in Spokane: it should be led right here in Seattle. As the state's largest and most transit-rich city, we have the responsibility to model what a multimodal, people-first urban environment looks like.

Under my leadership, I'll prioritize converting parking lanes into protected bike lanes, bus-only corridors, greenways, and public space, especially in high-traffic, high-opportunity areas. I'll also ensure that these changes are accompanied by strong community engagement, support for local businesses, and investments in accessibility. Reclaiming our streets is not just a transportation issue: it's about justice, climate resilience, and building a Seattle that truly puts people first.