



Vandana Slatter Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

State Senate, LD 48

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

Creating Affordable Housing and Preventing Displacement. We must meet our housing needs with urgency and compassion by increasing affordable options near jobs and transit, while ensuring we don't leave behind low-income and working families. Equitably Funding Public Education. Our children deserve a fully funded, accessible, and inclusive education system. I will continue championing statewide funding models that also respect the unique needs of local school districts. Ensuring Inclusive and Accessible Healthcare. Healthcare should be a right, not a privilege. I will continue to advocate for mental and behavioral health access, reproductive healthcare, and culturally competent care, especially for underserved and rural communities, so that every Washingtonian has the support they need to live a healthy life.

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?

To ensure families of all incomes can live near where they work, we need affordable housing mandates in all transit-oriented and middle housing policies, along with support for workforce housing and rental stabilization tools. I support state



investment in permanent supportive housing, transitional shelters, and emergency options, paired with wraparound services. My commitment to this was recently shown during the 2025 legislative session, where I sponsored Senate Bill 5725. This allows community and technical colleges to lease underutilized land for permanently affordable workforce housing. This initiative aims to provide housing for public employees, frontline workers, faculty, staff, and students, ensuring that those who serve their communities can afford to live in them. Community voices matter, but we cannot allow “not in my backyard” sentiment to block essential housing. I believe in early, transparent engagement processes that educate residents on the benefits of inclusive housing while emphasizing our collective responsibility to prevent homelessness. My approach is rooted in data, compassion, and accountability. We can and must house our neighbors.

The Transportation budget became a hot topic this session with efforts to balance the budget on cyclists and tolling transit, as well as falling short on fast ferries. What are your thoughts on the approach of balancing the budget at the expense of non-drivers in the name of bipartisanship?

Balancing the transportation budget on the backs of those who don't or can't drive is inequitable and shortsighted. Roughly 1 in 4 Washingtonians rely on walking, biking, or transit. Penalizing these residents undermines our goals of equity, climate action, and mobility justice. I reject the false choice between bipartisanship and fairness. We can, and must, build budgets that reflect our values. That means protecting transit riders, investing in fast ferries and reliable public transport, and ensuring safety and access for everyone who uses our streets. I am proud to have advocated for the building of light rail; fought for funding for Bus Rapid Transit (light rail on wheels); been a strong proponent of the East Rail corridor, and the Mountains to Sound Greenway. I look forward to continuing to advocate for significant budgetary



increases in resources for greener and safer transportation infrastructure, and to learning from stakeholders, experts, and fellow legislators to determine and deliver the needed resources.

The legislature has tackled big housing policies in recent years: parking reform, transit-oriented development and middle housing. What still needs work?

We've made important progress, but affordability remains the missing link. Transit-oriented development and middle housing reforms must come with clear, enforceable affordability requirements. We also need to address implementation gaps, particularly local administrative capacity, zoning inconsistencies, and displacement protections. This is why I co-sponsored Senate Bill 5222 in the 2025 legislative session, a bill that aims to improve housing stability for tenants by limiting rent and fee increases, requiring advance notice for such increases, and establishing a landlord resource center. Further work is needed on rental protections, housing quality enforcement, and equitable access to housing near high-opportunity areas. In addition to this, we must center racial and economic justice in every housing decision.

Of the progressive revenue options the state legislature considered this year that did not make it into the final budget proposal (or were vetoed by the governor), which would you fight for during the upcoming legislative session and why?

In the absence of a state income tax that I have experienced in other states, I would fight for a wealth tax, a modest tax on extreme wealth that would generate meaningful, sustainable revenue without placing the burden on working families.



Washington has the most regressive tax system in the nation, where those with the least pay the highest percentage of their income in taxes. It's time for the ultra-wealthy to contribute their fair share so we can invest in the foundations of strong, healthy communities: public schools, affordable housing, behavioral health services, and modern transportation infrastructure. That said, I represent Bellevue, a city with deep ties to innovation and home to some of the wealthiest individuals in the country. During discussions about the wealth tax, I heard real frustration from constituents who felt they weren't meaningfully included in the conversation. These are individuals who, in many cases, are willing to contribute more, but want transparency and clarity about where their money is going and how it will be used to improve lives across the state. Our policy solutions must be thoughtful, precise, and forward-looking not just in principle, but in implementation. I believe we can design a wealth tax that is equitable, transparent, and effective, one that reflects our state's values and modern economy, while securing the resources we need to build a more just and inclusive Washington.

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 support progressive revenue options like the wealth tax, capital gains tax expansion, and closing corporate tax loopholes. These tools are essential to fund public goods without sacrificing our most vulnerable communities. I do not support cuts to education, housing, or healthcare. Balancing our budget shouldn't mean balancing our values. We must resist austerity narratives and push for smart, fair, and forward-thinking fiscal policy.



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?

One of the most important strategies we can pursue to limit cost increases and make our region more affordable is to increase the supply of affordable, transit-connected housing while ensuring it remains truly accessible to low and middle-income families. That means advancing thoughtful land use policies, like middle housing and transit-oriented development, but with clear affordability mandates and strong local collaboration to prevent displacement. Implementation is key. Policy alone isn't enough. We need strong administrative follow-through, funding mechanisms, and accountability to make sure these housing options are actually built and maintained. I've supported bills like SB 5662 to reduce development costs and SB 5552 to expand lower-cost housing models like kit homes. Going forward, I'll continue working with cities, housing advocates, and regional stakeholders to align zoning, infrastructure investments, and community input so our growth serves everyone, not just those at the top. By pairing bold policy with thoughtful implementation, we can build a future where people can afford to live near where they work, where their kids go to school, and where their community roots are strongest.

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?

I believe we must invest in complete streets and multimodal infrastructure that puts people first. That includes protected bike lanes, safer crossings, better lighting, and



traffic-calming measures—especially in areas near schools, transit, and community hubs. Over the past few sessions, I've advocated for significant investments in safer, greener transportation options through the Climate Commitment Act, and I'll continue to push for more resources that prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety, not just car-centric planning. We also need to look at where the risks are highest and address the inequities that persist in how we build and maintain our streets. As we have seen it is often lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color who face the most dangerous conditions. My approach is to work collaboratively with cities, planners, and local advocates to implement people-first infrastructure and make sure state-level investments are reaching the communities that need them most.

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

Public safety requires collaboration with local leaders, advocates, and law enforcement to build trust and accountability. I've worked to support legislation that improves transparency and strengthens community engagement in public safety decisions. Actualizing this means consistently listening to the voices of those most impacted, prioritizing resources toward community-led solutions, and holding ourselves accountable to measurable outcomes. I will continue to advocate for policies and funding that center prevention, healing, and equity, working across sectors to build safer, healthier communities where everyone can thrive. Public safety is not just about reacting, it's about building a system that supports safety in every part of life.