



Caitlin Konya Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

City of SeaTac City Council Position #2

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

1. Housing our community with dignity 2. Safe, healthy, complete neighborhoods 3. Strong labor standards for working families

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?

The city updated its Comprehensive Plan to prioritize affordable housing development and encourage diverse housing types including multifamily units and accessory dwelling units to increase options near transit and job centers. SeaTac has also adopted policies, that I support, to streamline permitting processes, reducing barriers for new housing projects.

I believe in transparent, early, and ongoing community outreach that educates residents about the urgent need for these services and how they benefit the entire community. I will promote multilingual forums, workshops, partnerships with trusted community leaders and local organizations, to create inclusive conversations and address concerns openly to prioritize voices that are historically marginalized and most impacted when we seek to develop cities.



While community objections are understandable, I weigh them against the critical housing needs of our city. Balancing community objections with the urgent need for more housing requires early and transparent engagement. I believe in starting conversations early, clearly explaining the purpose and need for new housing, and actively listening to concerns. When neighbors understand how stable housing benefits the whole community, by reducing crime, improving health outcomes, and fostering economic opportunity particularly for our unionized laborers, many may shift from opposition to support.

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 adding progressive revenue sources to ensure our city can meet community needs without placing additional burdens on working families. In a city like SeaTac where income inequality, housing costs, and underinvestment in infrastructure are our everyday challenges, we need fair and forward-thinking solutions.

I would support exploring local options such as a high-end commercial square footage tax, progressive business license fees, and transportation impact fees on large developments that contribute significantly to congestion and infrastructure strain. I would also advocate for regional collaboration on taxing mechanisms like a payroll tax on large corporations, especially those benefiting from proximity to SeaTac Airport.



As a last resort, if cuts were unavoidable, I would prioritize protecting core services, housing, public safety alternatives, and community programs, and look first at trimming duplicative services, contracts or administrative overhead that do not directly serve our residents. Our budgets are moral documents, and in the face of national disinvestment, we must protect the people who make this city work.

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 SeaTac can pursue to limit cost increases and improve affordability is to expand and diversify our housing options, especially near transit and job centers (like our airport), while protecting existing residents from displacement. SeaTac is already taking steps in this direction, through zoning reforms to support “missing middle” housing, offering a Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program to incentivize affordable units, and participating in the South King Housing and Homelessness Partners (SKHHP) to coordinate regional investments in housing.

As a councilmember, I will build on this momentum by prioritizing implementation of our Housing Action Plan, pushing for stronger tenant protections, and ensuring local incentives actually lead to permanently affordable units. Not just short-term gains. I will also advocate for aligning infrastructure investments with affordability goals so we're not just building more. Most of our city is the airport, the rest is where our residents and local businesses exist, meaning we have a responsibility to use this limited space to build smarter. This means supporting complete neighborhoods, safe transportation, and access to services.



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?

As a city that hosts an international airport, SeaTac experiences high traffic volumes that impact our neighborhoods daily. Our Comprehensive Plan rightly calls for a multimodal transportation network and safer pedestrian connections. With the upcoming FIFA World Cup and the region expecting nearly a billion dollars in economic impact, SeaTac must prepare now. As the gateway city for many international travelers, we have a responsibility to ensure our streets are safe, accessible, and reliable. I will prioritize calming traffic through design (like curb extensions and raised crosswalks), improved crosswalk visibility, sidewalk expansion, and better transit connections to protect pedestrians and reduce congestion, while making sure our infrastructure meets the needs of our residents first, but keeps in mind that we also benefit from the positive and safe experience of visitors. I would advocate for a Vision Zero framework to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries, while ensuring community voices, especially those most impacted by unsafe streets, shape our transportation priorities. We must also work closely with regional partners like WSDOT and King County Metro to ensure that state roads within our city don't become barriers to safety and mobility.

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

One of the most effective ways to increase safety is by investing in community-based public safety programs. These include youth engagement, mental health support, housing stability services, and violence prevention initiatives.



As a Community Services Advisory Committee member, I've championed funding for core services and will ensure they remain well-funded, evaluated, and guided by community input. We also need to rethink our response to behavioral health crises. Law enforcement should not be the default for nonviolent mental health emergencies. I support co-responder models that pair clinicians with emergency responders and investments in crisis response teams. These efforts reduce harm and free up police for higher-risk incidents. SeaTac's unique location places us as ground zero for illnesses that quickly spread across state and international lines. This requires proactive, well-coordinated planning for both natural and man-made emergencies. I support prioritizing investment in infrastructure resilience and cross-agency planning, ensuring that our most vulnerable residents are protected and included in all emergency response strategies. Lastly, building trust between residents and public safety institutions is essential and will provide long-term benefit. I would like to continue improving transparency in policing practices and involving residents, especially those in historically underserved or over-policed neighborhoods, in safety planning and oversight.

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

One of our more emergent issues is how to maintain essential social services, particularly for immigrant and refugee communities who already face systemic barriers to housing and economic stability. One clear example is the reduction in federal resources for transitional housing and refugee support services which has left local governments and grassroots networks to fill the gaps.



In SeaTac, we've been able to continue supporting transitional housing in part due to partnerships like Washington State's Washington Migrant and Asylum-Seeker Support (WA MASS), which stepped in to coordinate resources and emergency housing support when federal immigration policies posed obstacles. This kind of community-led infrastructure has been crucial to sustaining services and keeping people's lives stable despite stagnation at the federal level with no additional cost-burden to residents.

I will prioritize diversifying our city's funding strategies such as strengthening nonprofit partnerships and identifying progressive local revenue options. I believe that we can also leverage state grants, but to be cautious given the last legislative session which saw major, unexpected cuts. It would be devastating to be fully dependent on funding that may not be available in the near future. I will also work to ensure city contracts and programs are aligned with equity goals, so that every dollar we spend stretches further in supporting those most impacted by federal rollbacks.

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?

While I recognize the need for efficient infrastructure and long-term planning, I believe any development must center the well-being of SeaTac residents who already bear the brunt of airport operations.



Our community lives in the airport's shadow and is disproportionately impacted by its environmental and public health effects. Children in SeaTac have lower life expectancies than those in neighboring cities. We experience higher rates of noise pollution, air quality concerns, and traffic congestion and without strong advocacy, those harms will only increase with airport expansion.

I will insist on a robust community voice in the implementation of the SAMP. I will advocate for enforceable environmental protections, air and noise mitigation funding, and direct investments into impacted neighborhoods. This includes increasing tree canopy, improving pedestrian and transit access, and ensuring that job opportunities created through expansion prioritize local hiring and union labor.

I support sustainable development, but not at the cost of equity and public health. Our city must hold the Port of Seattle accountable to its promises, and I will fight to make sure that the people of SeaTac are not treated as collateral in regional growth decisions.

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?

While SeaTac is a primarily urban city, we are part of a broader region where the protection of rural lands, forests, and waterways has real consequences for our environment, food systems, and long-term sustainability. King County has strong



policies in place to protect these areas, but those protections are only as effective as their enforcement. I believe enforcement must be consistent, transparent, and equitably applied. If elected, I will advocate for stronger inter-jurisdictional coordination and resource allocation to ensure the county can hold violators accountable. This includes supporting funding for enforcement staff, investing in tools to track and respond to violations more quickly, and ensuring that fines and penalties are meaningful enough to deter harmful behavior. Additionally, I will champion public transparency around land use and environmental enforcement, so that communities, especially those near protected lands, can stay informed and involved.

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 camping bans or sweeps that simply displace people without offering meaningful solutions. If an encampment is obstructing a sidewalk, the appropriate response should be to engage with residents and ask for adjustments to restore accessibility. If there are confirmed incidents of violence or illicit activity, those individuals should be held accountable through appropriate channels.

But if there is nowhere for people to go, no available shelter, treatment, or services, then forcibly moving people and discarding their belongings is not only ineffective, it is inhumane. It solves nothing and only moves the problem from one block to the next. Real solutions must address the root causes of homelessness by expanding access to permanent housing, behavioral health care, and community-based supports. I will advocate for policies rooted in dignity, harm reduction, and long-term stability, not punishment or optics.



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

SeaTac's Comprehensive Plan makes important strides toward promoting affordable housing and transit-oriented development, particularly around our light rail stations. However, it stops short of fully protecting existing residents from displacement and doesn't require developers to deliver affordability in exchange for increased density. I will push for binding anti-displacement strategies like an anti-displacement fund, stronger tenant protections, and community benefit agreements tied to upzoning near transit.

The plan also references environmental sustainability, but doesn't do enough to address the public health impacts of airport-related pollution on residents amidst a pretty large push for economic development. I will advocate for measurable, community-informed goals to reduce emissions, mitigate noise and air pollution, and invest in green infrastructure. This includes a detailed plan on how the city intends to meet its environmental goals and make sure our workforce development and retention can keep up.

SeaTac's plan could also better integrate equity and accountability throughout. I will push for clearer benchmarks and public reporting that ensures our investments prioritize historically underserved communities and support a more resilient, inclusive city. I would like a forward facing or interactive medium where residents can more quickly see how our city is prioritizing this. The city's website update is a great chance to make this information more accessible.