

King County Democrats

1. What motivated you to run for this position and how will you evaluate your success over time?

The event that pushed me to run was the landslide victory of Seattle Prop 1A in February. Incumbent Mayor Bruce Harrell was the face of the opposition to the social housing funding measure and I believe he will continue to try to undermine the new public developer. We deserve city leadership that is going to work hard to make social housing succeed. I believe Seattle needs better leadership on many fronts: the homelessness crisis, public safety, land use, transportation, climate action, progressive revenue, and defending against Trump funding cuts and attacks on vulnerable communities.

I will evaluate my success in office based on tangible results that improve people's quality of life. Are we opening, and filling, thousands more units of shelter and emergency housing? Is the number of people living unsheltered trending down sharply instead of continuing to climb? Are our changes to zoning and related laws resulting in dramatically more homes being built across our city? Are carbon emissions falling and are internal combustion and single occupancy vehicle trips falling? Etc. I will also consider increased civic engagement, especially among marginalized communities, a mark of success.

2. In 2024, the Seattle City Council adopted 14 pieces of public safety legislation – the most since 2015. How do you rate the effectiveness of Council's efforts to reduce crime and improve public safety? What other actions do you support?

Much of the public safety legislation passed in 2024 was performative and ineffective and some was harmful. For example, the SOAP and SODA laws are largely not being used, as SPD is correctly choosing to prioritize other things; furthermore, the evidence on these kinds of laws suggests that people will continue to enter banishment areas for many reasons and conditions don't significantly improve or, at best, problematic behavior shifts to neighboring areas. The police contract was poorly negotiated and did not significantly advance accountability or expand Seattle's capacity for alternative response to crisis calls (let alone peeling away other police functions that could easily be performed by civilian staff, like taking down reports of property crimes).

I support expanding alternative response (including the CARE department and Health 99); scaling up proven programs like LEAD, Community Passageways, and hot-spot safety ambassadors trained in de-escalation; public space and storefront activation and improvements like lighting that can improve safety; investing in gun violence prevention; and focusing police resources on improving response times and investigating serious crimes.

3. As Democrats, we believe that everyone deserves the dignity of shelter and security. What are your ideas around creating the diverse types of housing that are needed across all housing types in Seattle?

I support removing the barriers to housing production that lock most of us out of Seattle's most desirable neighborhoods, with access to great public transit, parks, schools, grocery stores, and small businesses. I will work to make sure we can build new homes across our city that people can afford to rent and to buy — and cut the red tape that makes it so expensive and difficult to build right now. Policies I support include eliminating parking minimums, increasing FAR bonuses, and eliminating or reducing set-back requirements so that we can achieve more density on lots in residential neighborhoods while also having varied types of buildings with courtyards and trees instead of the ubiquitous cookie-cutter townhomes.

I think we need to allow much more density near transit, with a more expansive definition of what counts as near transit than is currently in the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Also, as a renter who lives in a 650-square-foot 1-bedroom apartment with my husband and our toddler, I think we need to do a much better job enabling and incentivising building housing that is suitable for young families. Otherwise people with children will continue to leave Seattle.

4. What additional actions should the city take to safeguard residents from federal policy initiatives that may challenge the rights and livelihoods of our residents?

The City can fund legal services for immigrants; educate employers, institutions, and the public about what to do when ICE is at the door; and work with immigrant communities to build a rapid response network that can support detained individuals. The City can join lawsuits to try to stop harmful measures from moving forward, and commit to defending reproductive rights and the LGBTQ community.

Seattle receives about \$150 million annually in federal funds that could be cut. Cuts to federal programs are already impacting Seattle residents and many federal workers are losing their jobs. We can expect that more people will struggle to make ends meet due to the actions of the Trump administration, stretching our local safety net. The City must be prepared to raise new progressive revenue to continue to deliver the services people depend on. I served on the Seattle Revenue Stabilization Workgroup in 2023 and did extensive research into our revenue options. Some, like “turning the dials” on JumpStart and a local capital gains tax, are relatively straightforward; others ideas need further development and unfortunately Harrell's administration is not doing that work.

5. Many cities have made commitments to reducing the impact of climate change. What are your ideas for ensuring Seattle residents have access to healthy environmental conditions? [examples might include tree canopy, infill housing, bike lanes]

Seattle is not on track to meet our emission reduction targets or our related goals around mode-shift — away from single-occupancy vehicle and internal combustion engine trips and toward transit, biking, walking, rolling, and carpooling. There is a ton more the City can do, from dedicated bus lanes and signal priority, to sidewalks and bike lanes, to Transportation Demand Management strategies (which I've written about in The Urbanist), to make progress.

I am a strong supporter of creating plazas and pedestrian areas where people can socialize, play, and shop without fear of being hit by a vehicle. There's been a lot of talk in recent years about super blocks, low-emission zones, eco-districts, etc., but not a lot of action. As mayor I would prioritize this work.

Housing density and affordable social housing are also an essential component of a successful climate strategy, as these enable people to live close to jobs and other destinations. We also have an opportunity in 2026 to expand transit service and transit affordability programs with the renewal (and possible expansion) of the Seattle Transportation Benefit District.

6. Communities across the city continue to face behavioral health issues. What actions are making a positive impact and what else will you advocate for?

There are a number of programs that are having a positive impact, including Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and pilots focused on de-escalation of crises and conflicts before they turn into a matter for law enforcement. These could be scaled up and expanded citywide.

The Housing First model pioneered in Seattle is very effective if done well, but this requires sufficient investment in behavioral health, mental health, and substance use disorder support for residents. Currently many permanent supportive housing buildings are not equipped to handle the people with the greatest challenges. This is causing health and safety issues for neighbors and damage to buildings, often leading affordable housing providers to evict people back into homelessness. As mayor, I would convene PSH providers and other stakeholders to chart a path to providing adequate behavioral health support to all residents in permanent supportive housing so we can realize the promise of Housing First.

I would push to reinstate and enhance Community Court where a judge can have a direct line to enhanced housing and shelter units, in addition to offering treatment diversion services for offenders.

7. What actions should the city take to strengthen its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and promote an inclusive work environment to set an example for all employers in Seattle?

I've spent the last 14 years of my career fighting for working people, renters, and marginalized communities in Seattle and across King County, and getting results that improve people's quality of life: raising their wages, giving them more rights and protections as renters, making public transit more affordable and accessible. The City should be funding programs that protect and support working class people of all backgrounds and ensure that they have the opportunity to succeed in our city. For example, the City should fully fund the Office of Labor Standards, which has recouped over \$42 million dollars in stolen wages and violated workplace rights for nearly 90,000 Seattle workers. The City should create a new office to enforce renters' rights, as the current enforcement mechanisms are not working; in 2021, only five fines were issued from the

3,285 complaints and questions filed by renters with the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). The City should ensure that workers for city-contracted human service providers and other contracted employers make a living wage and receive employer-paid transit passes, as people who work directly for the City already do.

9. For Seattle Mayor: What is the best approach to reducing the Fentanyl crisis in the city?

The fentanyl crisis ravaging Seattle requires both deeper investments and better coordination. As mayor, I would establish a cabinet level position to oversee cross department coordination on fentanyl prevention between SPD, Fire, Parks, HSD, and external agencies such as King County Public Health, HUD, and King County Regional Homelessness Authority.

The City must invest more in opioid treatment programs, behavioral health supports, and substance use disorder counseling. As mayor, I would aim to open a new 24/7 facility fully staffed with mental health and substance use disorder experts with dedicated behavioral health beds that law enforcement, first responders, fire department, and outreach workers can immediately refer people to, avoiding costly visits to emergency rooms or jails.

We also must expand law enforcement diversion programs beyond downtown, make services and intervention efforts available citywide, and continue expansion of the CARE Department for dual dispatch alternative crisis response.

SPD should de-prioritize non-violent arrests and re-prioritize police resources on drug distribution networks, manufacturing, and street level distribution.

10. For Seattle Mayor: Cities thrive when they have a vibrant downtown core. What is needed to sustain continued revitalization of the downtown core of the city?

As mayor I would double down on expanding housing stock downtown with office-to-housing conversions and the development of new social housing. The more people live in or around the downtown core, the more we can sustain a vibrant and safe street environment, grocery stores, small businesses, etc.

The efforts of the current administration to address the public disorder and drug use downtown have succeeded only temporarily and mainly by pushing problematic behaviors to adjacent neighborhoods. More focus needs to be put on placing individuals in housing or shelter with behavioral health services and treatment so that they are not just being moved around.

It's worth studying New York City's positive experience with congestion pricing. This could reduce traffic, raise funds to expand public transit, and improve air quality and quality of life downtown. It could be paired with expanding pedestrian-focused zones, beyond the obvious Pike Place Market area.

Seattle's arts and culture communities already have a strong presence downtown, and I would partner with them closely to expand that presence and make downtown into a cultural hub, including affordable housing for arts and culture workers.