

## King County Democrats 2026 Endorsement Questionnaire

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none

**Consultant name**

Adam Tradii

**Consultant email**

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**Jurisdiction of office sought**

County

**Specific office**

Assessor

**Are you a Democrat?**

Yes

**Have you ever been a member of another political party?**

Yes

**Does your campaign have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers?**

Yes

**Please describe your background (education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation and political activity).**

I have served on the Shoreline City Council for 16 years, including four as mayor. I have served on the boards of the National League of Cities, Puget Sound Regional Council, and the Sound Cities Association. I co-founded the Local Indigenous Leaders organization and served on several legislative and advocacy committees. As a Democrat, I chair the 32nd LD and serve on the national board of the Democratic Municipal Officials.

I am a member of AFT 1789, teaching at North Seattle College, and the National Writers Union. I was previously a member of UAW 4121 and CWA 1184. I earned a PhD in political science from the University of Washington in 2012.

I am honored to be endorsed by Executive Girmay Zahilay, Councilmembers Teresa Mosqueda and Rod Dembowski, former Assessor Lloyd Hara, and over 130 officials from across the county.

As an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation, I would be the first tribal member ever elected to a King County-wide office. I am committed to bringing a voice for sovereignty and equity to the Department of Assessments.

**What motivated you to run for this position and how would you evaluate your success?**

I am running to ensure the Department of Assessments prioritizes equity and transparency. As a tribal member, I am particularly motivated to strengthen the government-to-government relationship with Tribal Nations. I will evaluate my success by the efficiency of our "fee-to-trust" land processing, ensuring that tribal land acquisitions are moved into trust status without the administrative delays hindering tribal sovereignty and economic development.

I will also evaluate success by the expansion of our Current Use taxation programs that offer a property tax reduction to landowners who voluntarily preserve open space or manage farmland or forestland. I want to proactively use these programs to protect critical salmon-bearing habitats and traditional lands. By providing tax relief for conservation and habitat restoration, the Assessor's office can become a vital partner in regional environmental stewardship and Treaty rights protection.

Finally, success means improving customer service and increasing awareness of property tax exemptions for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities. We must do more to help our most vulnerable neighbors stay in their homes.

**What are the top three issues that you will address if elected?**

My top three issues are:

- 1) I want to proactively increase awareness of the property tax exemption programs available to King County residents and provide more responsiveness to residents by Department staff through targeted outreach to help keep people in their homes.
- 2) Work collaboratively with the Executive, Council, and Assessors from other counties to advocate for policies that increase transparency and fairness, ensuring no resident pays more than their fair share.
- 3) Get the Department's budget under control. Like other departments within the county, there have been reductions to the budget for the Department of Assessments. But it does appear that there have been multi-million dollar cost overruns in the implementation of the county's new computer assisted mass appraisal software (Property Tax Assessment System).

**Home ownership is elusive for many King County residents. How would you advance economic equity through the creation of generational wealth from home ownership?**

I am very proud of the work we are doing in Shoreline to address the housing emergency we are experiencing. Our comprehensive plan allows for thousands of more units to be built near transit, abolishes parking minimums, and allow for small-scale retail in most parcels across the city. In general, we need to continue the work to build more homes and a wider variety of housing types in the region.

The Department of Assessments does not deal with land use. What the Assessor must do is assess each property accurately, and apply the correct amount of tax for each parcel. When taxes are applied accurately and fairly, no one pays more than what is owed. When we help people navigate the application processes to get the exemptions they are entitled to, it helps families stay in their homes.

That said, I will continue to lend my voice to support land use and taxation policies that are designed to increase production of housing units across the region.

**Affordable housing remains a growing concern in King County. How will you support the expansion of affordable housing?**

Affordability is a critical concern for all King County residents, affecting homeowners, renters, and small businesses alike. As Assessor, I will use the technical tools of the office to support the expansion and preservation of affordable units.

I will ensure that low-income housing covenants, which legally restrict a property's market value, are accurately factored into assessments so these properties are not overtaxed. I want to streamline the certification process under RCW 84.36.560. This ensures nonprofit providers of very low-income housing receive the exemptions they are entitled to without administrative delay.

It is also vital to capture the value of all new construction in the total valuation of each jurisdiction. The current Assessor recently noted that uncounted new construction has impacted revenue collection. I will develop robust data-sharing agreements with local cities to ensure every new unit is accounted for, providing a fair and accurate tax base for essential services.

While housing for teachers may currently be subject to leasehold excise taxes, I would support efforts to clarify that housing for teachers is exempt from these taxes

**The cost of living in King County continues to escalate to record levels. How will you support property tax reform to help everyday homeowners, renters and small businesses?**

I support efforts to make it easier to qualify for the senior, veterans, and people with disabilities property tax exemption program. I support legislative efforts to reduce the paperwork burden and allow provisional approval at the time of application, ensuring residents receive immediate relief while their eligibility is verified.

I will work with the Snohomish and Pierce County Assessors to create a homestead exemption for property owners. While this requires a constitutional amendment, I am committed to building the legislative relationships necessary to make this a reality for King County homeowners.

I support modernizing the personal property tax alongside Democratic legislators Mari Leavitt and Cindy Ryu. By increasing the exemption from \$15,000 to \$50,000 and removing the outdated 'head of family' restriction, we can provide meaningful relief and cut red tape for thousands of small businesses.

Finally, I will prioritize community education. The Assessor must regularly present at senior centers and veterans' organizations, work with social workers, and redesign mailings to ensure every resident is aware of the tax relief programs they are entitled to.

**King County uses a standard property tax system that assesses land value and property improvements together. Why do you believe this is or is not the best model for King County?**

No system is perfect, but Washington's model is the most fair. I am intrigued by a land-value tax (LVT) because it is frustrating to see vacant urban land during a housing crisis; LVT could encourage development toward a property's highest and best use.

However, moving to a land-value tax would make assessments more subjective. For residential lots, an average home and a neighboring mansion should have different assessments based on their improvements. In commercial or multifamily lots, determining the "highest and best use" becomes highly subjective when appraisers must evaluate theoretical rather than actual improvements.

Washington's system reduces this subjectivity by basing assessments on similar property sales. In practice, the department already captures significant land value when improvements are minimal. For example, at my local Fred Meyer, the land was valued at nearly \$18 million while the building was assessed at just \$1,000 for years. The department correctly recognized that the property's true value lay in the land.

Our current system works because it reflects the actual market while maintaining the fairness of valuing what is truly built on the land.

**Listening to consumer perceptions and concerns about this office can inform challenges that need to be addressed. How will you stay attuned to resident concerns if elected?**

It is important for the department to be more attentive to customer service. I will develop a staff culture that is resident-focused and proactive. The King County Auditor stated the Assessor must improve coordination with the Board of Equalization and better help residents navigate the appeals process.

The Auditor also found that residents have waited eight months or more for exemption approvals. I recently spoke with a resident who was on hold for over an hour just to get information about the exemption program. This is unacceptable.

We need a leader who will strive to eliminate backlogs and to ensure outreach reaches every community, including veterans and our neighbors with disabilities who are often overlooked. I am committed to spending most of my time in the community – listening to people's concerns, educating residents about our property tax system, and providing the hands-on help people need to apply for the relief they are entitled to.

**Attestation**

- The candidate hereby attests that, to the best of their knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.