



August 14, 2023

## Seattle City Councilmember Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete the candidate endorsement questionnaire for the Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA). Your responses will help us inform and engage the 200,000+ tech sector employees who live and work in the City of Seattle. This, in turn, will help you engage them more effectively as an electorate.

We will also offer virtual candidate interviews with members of the WTIA Policy Steering Committee for a discussion to gain a more thorough understanding of your answers. Following the interview process, we will make our endorsement decisions.

Please send your responses to Kelly Fukai at [kfukai@washingtontechnology.org](mailto:kfukai@washingtontechnology.org) by Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Please note that this questionnaire and your responses will be published on the WTIA website and used in a digital voter guide provided to Seattle-based tech employees.**

### Candidate Questionnaire

#### **1. What are your top three priorities for the City of Seattle, and what will you do to accomplish them?**

**Priority 1: Public Safety** - The primary Charter duty of municipal government is public safety. Comprehensive public safety requires effective first response and back-end services for any and every emergency a constituency experiences. I am proud to be the only City Councilmember who was selected to serve on Mayor Harrell's public safety transition team, and I am excited to see many of our initiatives begin to show results.

In my first term, I worked with the Downtown Seattle Association to create JustCARE, a public safety initiative to remove problematic encampments from the



city core and restore public order in our streets. I also funded and advanced our first alternative 911 response pilot that will hit the road this fall. These services are necessary to complement the work of the police and free up police service for things only they can do.

I also worked closely with the Harrell administration to advance a comprehensive package of recruitment and retention incentives to attract and retain the next generation of police officers to Seattle service.

These initiatives, and many more, are the cornerstone of achieving comprehensive community safety.

**Priority 2: Homelessness** - We have to solidify a true regional solution to homelessness. I am proud to have been selected by Mayor Harrell and Executive Constantine to serve on the commission to reform the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) into a functioning accountable agency. We need to reorient KCRHA's focus to short-term emergency enhanced shelter to clear encampments now. In the meantime, we need to clear hurdles to build the diversity of housing necessary to meet regional supply demands and truly end chronic homelessness.

I applaud the idealism of the early leadership of KCRHA, but we cannot leave thousands off the streets to achieve housing for mere hundreds. In the short term, we need to scale up strategies like hotel/motel acquisition, tiny house villages, and enhanced shelters to get people off the streets like the emergency the moment requires. In the meantime, we need to build more volume and diversity of type of housing.

In Seattle, it is currently illegal to build Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units and micro units. Legacy SRO units can rent for as low as \$800 a month. Micros are not that far behind at \$950-\$1000. We need more supply of SROs to create a housing option deeply affordable at market-rate prices. This will help considerably with non-profit placement and will help thousands of people find housing choices they can afford.



**Priority 3: Climate Change** - We need to dramatically increase efforts to meet our climate goals in Seattle. We are running out of time to make a meaningful impact. Our energy code needs to reflect green building standards necessary to reduce the building-based emissions contributing to our overall carbon accounting. We need to get serious about a transportation system designed to encourage mass transit and walking and biking. And, as alluded to above, we need a comprehensive plan around housing and landuse to dramatically increase the supply and density of housing.

These next few years will determine whether we are a climate follower or leader. We need to be leaders.

**0. What do you see as the role for the tech sector in Seattle's future? How would you partner with the tech sector to foster a robust and resilient community?**

The tech community is a partner in governing and must continue to be. I am proud to have a "strongly aligned" rating from the Downtown Seattle Association because of my strong collaborative approach toward business.

We are so fortunate to have the innovation ecosystem that we have in the Puget Sound Region, and Seattle in particular. Getting more of that expertise and innovation into government would redound significantly to our benefit. I don't think Seattle government has the same reputation for being innovative.

I am currently engaging in a project with the Seattle Chamber of Commerce to figure out ways to more efficiently and effectively deliver public services with the assistance of technology (or rebidding current systems that aren't performing well). I will certainly be in touch as I continue to do that work.

**0. Given the importance of the tech sector's contributions to the Seattle economy, what would you do to increase Seattle's competitiveness vis-a-vis**



**emerging tech hubs like Denver, Miami, and Austin? What initiatives would you put forward to support tech employers, entrepreneurs, and employees?**

One of the biggest investments we can make to be competitive is to get a handle on housing demand. We need bold housing investments and more permissive planning standards in next year's comprehensive plan update. It is make or break for climate, but it is also make or break for our international competitiveness for attracting and retaining talent. Housing is BY FAR the biggest thing I hear from tech workers who I doorbell in my district. And I have knocked thousands and thousands of doors.

We also need to incorporate innovation ecosystem planning into our comprehensive plan. In the triaging of permitting demands enterprises likely to have a significant impact on innovation and our tech sector should have priority. In some cases, a deregulatory land use approach allowing permitting by-right should be explored. Time is money in development and innovation. It takes far too long to build something in Seattle.

Finally, we need to maintain a strong partnership with the University of Washington. We take for granted the advantage of having such a great research university right here within the borders of our city.

**0. How would you work toward ensuring the successful advancement of policies and programs that create equitable outcomes for underrepresented communities and BIPOC individuals in the tech industry?**

First and foremost we need to dramatically expand educational opportunities to access the tech industry early and often. There needs to be a focus in the next renewal of the Families and Education Levy to build a culturally inclusive pipeline from early learning through K-12 into the tech sector. Our community college system needs to be strengthened to create 2-year degree programs for careers in the local tech economy significantly reducing the barrier to entry.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve our community.



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