

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Candidate Forum on Disability Issues

JULY 14, 2025 | 5:30-8:00

GENTILIA CULTURAL CENTER, BEACON HILL



Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in the Seattle City Council Candidate Forum on Disability Issues. In advance of the forum, please complete this questionnaire and email it to isabelle@wacda.com by the end of the day on Friday (7/11). We look forward to reading your responses!

Name:

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Campaign Statement:

I ran four years ago because I saw a city in need of recovery. Too many people were living unhoused, overdoses were skyrocketing, and 9-1-1 response times were getting worse. Since taking office, I've been working to make Seattle a safer, more livable, equitable, and prosperous city – for everyone.

As a person in recovery myself, the belief in second chances drives everything I do. It's why I pushed for expanded access to comprehensive, on-demand treatment and secured major investments in recovery services and overdose prevention.

I brought that same urgency to housing and public safety. We've moved people inside faster, doubled direct rental assistance, and Seattle's investment in affordable housing is now at an all-time high. And under my leadership, this Council has passed a record number of public safety-related bills and we've reversed the years-long trend of losing more officers than we hire. Today, gun violence is down 29%, car theft is down 30%, and 9-1-1 call response times are 10% faster.

Seattle has turned a corner but progress is fragile. As the federal government wreaks havoc, the local government must step up – not go backwards to the failed policies of the recent past. I'm running for re-election to keep up our momentum in delivering measurable results for the people of Seattle.

Endorsed by: Seattle Times, Seattle Fire Fighters, Seattle Building Trades Council, Ironworkers, Congressman Adam Smith, Senate Majority Leader Jamie Pedersen, former Governors Chris Gregoire and Gary Locke, and many more.

What are the top three priorities of your campaign?

1. Housing Affordability: I will continue to champion policies that support our affordable housing providers, incentivize workforce housing, and expand public-private partnerships to create more housing options for Seattle residents. I will soon introduce legislation to reform our permitting system which will accelerate housing construction and reduce its cost and I have a set of amendments to the permanent HB1110 legislation to incentivize more affordable middle housing units.

2. Reducing chronic homelessness through expanded access to addiction treatment: The fentanyl crisis and addiction in general are inextricably linked to chronic homelessness. That's why I'm fighting to put treatment at the center of the City's agenda. Since taking office, I've led the charge to expand access to comprehensive, on-demand treatment and I'm now advancing legislation (Resolution 32174) to fund a coordinated suite of promising new treatment services and recovery-based affordable housing while stabilizing existing services.

3. Strengthening Public Safety – A safe city is essential for everyone who lives and works here. We need a balanced approach that ensures emergency responders have the resources they need while also investing in crime prevention, community-based safety programs, and behavioral health interventions.

Representation

A popular saying in the disability community is: “nothing about us without us.” Will you commit to appointing people with disabilities to city commissions, boards, and advisory committees that impact housing, transportation, public safety, the arts, and health?

Yes

Maybe

No

Would you support a citywide emergency preparedness plan that includes specific strategies for reaching and supporting people with disabilities and older adults?

Yes

Maybe

No

What will you do to ensure that city-funded agencies and public forums, including city council meetings, consistently provide qualified ASL interpreters and CART (computer aided real-time transcription)? (CART provides written subtitles in real time, usually projected on a screen). *Please provide a brief response.*

As Council President, ensuring government transparency and accessibility is a core responsibility. Current meetings include CART and the department is contracting with Language Access to translate public comment in languages other than English. Though it can require some advance notice, ASL interpreters are also provided. To improve these processes, the City Clerk's Office has been directed to seek guidance from the

disability community on strengthening accessibility measures. This work ensures that all residents can meaningfully participate in their government.

Infrastructure

Blind and low-vision pedestrians need Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) at street crossings. Will you commit to expanding APS installations in high-traffic and high-need areas, and involving Blind and low-vision pedestrians in the siting process?

Yes

Maybe

No

Would you push for disability impact assessments to be included in all major city infrastructure or policy proposals, similar to existing environmental and social and racial equity reviews?

Yes

Maybe

No

Scooters and e-bikes are regularly illegally parked, blocking sidewalks and creating dangerous conditions for people with mobility impairments and the Blind and low-vision community. How would you approach micromobility parking to ensure it works for everyone? *Please provide a brief response.*

Increased micromobility services have created a frustrating problem that requires action from both the services themselves and the city. The city can do more to educate riders about the impact scooter and bike parking has on people with disabilities and enforce existing rules against riding on sidewalks. Some scooters can be programmed not to

operate on sidewalks and can only be parked in designated places. SDOT should explore contracting with services that provide this alternative model to better protect sidewalk accessibility for all users.

People with disabilities are 4x less likely to drive than people without disabilities, meaning people with disabilities are more likely to commute outside of a car. Traffic deaths continue to rise every year despite Seattle's Vision Zero goal to end traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030. As a council member, how would you prioritize the needs of different road users to address our road safety crisis? *Please provide a brief response.*

Safety must be the first priority. Everyone in Seattle deserves to feel safe getting around without a car. The Council's role is to allocate funding for Vision Zero Action Plan projects and oversee their implementation. The increase in traffic deaths, particularly for non-car users, over the past few years is appalling. While this increase aligns with national trends, Seattle should not be at the mercy of wider trends but should lead the conversation on safety for all road users. Vision Zero funding has been consistently supported in the Capital Plan, and the budget should continue prioritizing completion of the 30 actions over the next two years.

Housing

Would you support an ordinance requiring a certain percentage of new multifamily developments to be fully accessible to people with mobility disabilities?

Yes

Maybe

No

Would you support an ordinance requiring a certain percentage of new multifamily developments to be fully accessible to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDDs)?

Yes

Maybe

No

Currently, most housing that is required to be accessible under federal and state law (multifamily housing with 10 or more units; developments with 4 or more units when units are one level) is prohibited in the majority of Seattle, while stacked flats face city and state policy obstacles to economic viability. If elected, you will be responsible for finalizing Seattle's biggest zoning reform for the next 20 years. How will you work to ensure that there is more affordable, accessible housing in Seattle? *Please provide a brief response.*

On housing, the approach should be pro-growth. I sponsored legislation allowing 1,000 units in SoDo, half affordable for 75 years. The Comprehensive Plan's Neighborhood Centers deserve support, along with historic affordable housing investments. Permitting reform remains essential to build more housing faster across all neighborhoods and income levels.

Seattle needs to aggressively expand housing across types and incomes. This means following through on HB 1110 permanent controls and building more 3-bedroom units for families. I led on workforce housing in the Stadium District and supported Seattle's record \$342 million affordable housing investment for 2025–2026.

The renewed Multifamily Tax Exemption program should be calibrated to maximize developer participation in order to generate more workforce and market rate housing faster.

As an at-large Councilmember, I hear from a wide range of residents. The role requires weighing community concerns with the citywide need for housing. Open public input is

important, but the responsibility is to weigh that feedback in the context of long-term housing and equity goals for the city.

41% of the chronically unhoused population in Seattle has a physical disability, compared to 17% of the non-chronically unhoused population. 37% of the chronically unhoused population in Seattle has an intellectual disability or memory impairment compared to 9% of the non-chronically unhoused population. How will you work to ensure unhoused people with disabilities receive accessible services? *Please provide a brief response.*

I serve on the KCRHA Governing Board, which provides direct oversight of the regional budget for emergency shelter and transitional housing - ensuring accessibility standards are prioritized. I've also backed Seattle's funding for YouthCare's Constellation Center, non-congregate shelter beds, and direct rental assistance to meet these specialized needs.

The city must scale up permanent supportive housing with on-site services and hold operators accountable to Good Neighbor policies. I've supported tiny home villages, recovery housing, and on-demand treatment as crucial pieces of this continuum.

Employment

Do you support city investment in job training, internships, or workforce programs specifically designed for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

Yes

Maybe

No

Would you support policies that make city employment more inclusive, such as alternative and holistic applications or on-the-job support for candidates with disabilities?

Yes

Maybe

No

Health Care

The federal government recently reduced federal funding for Medicaid, a legislative decision that will disproportionately impact people with disabilities. In your capacity as a city councilmember, how would you support older adults and people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid-funded services? *Please provide a brief response.*

The stream of cuts, chaos, and tantrums coming out of the federal government is outrageous, and advocacy for restoration of this critical funding must continue. The pullback of federal funding is creating increasing pressure across the city, and options for how the city can help support those harmed by these cuts need consideration. While the city is facing a notable budget deficit, this is precisely the moment to ensure Seattle's budget serves all residents. The city should prioritize avoiding cuts that impact people's quality of life, especially (in areas like disability support) where the federal government will not be an ally – and will even be hostile.

What will you do to ensure that culturally relevant in-home care and community-based services are available and accessible to older Black adults with disabilities? How can the city expand the paid caregiver workforce and support these critical workers? *Please provide a brief response.*

Simply put, we need to listen to the Mayor's Council on African American Elders and other members of the community to see what's currently missing from our community-based services and in-home care providers. Seattle needs to continue partnering with trusted community organizations, invest in culturally competent caregiver training, and prioritize funding for services that reflect the values and needs of diverse communities. Expanding the paid caregiver workforce requires raising wages, offering benefits, creating career pathways, and ensuring training programs are accessible and inclusive. Supporting these critical workers with fair compensation and professional development will strengthen care quality and improve retention in this vital workforce.

How do you imagine the city could support family caregivers, especially those caring for loved ones with dementia? *Please provide a brief response.*

The Human Services Department of Seattle should continue funding programs that serve and provide resources for caregivers. We need to see if we can give further resources to caregivers such as training and respite for their unpaid labor. Dealing with aging parents is no easy task, and as a city we need to ease the burden in ways that we are able to. For example, we could create centralized caregiver resource hubs that would give families a clear point of access for guidance, support groups, and referrals, helping them navigate the challenges of caregiving more effectively.

It also comes down to tackling the affordability crisis by increasing housing supply, which is what I have worked to do. Caregivers are finding it increasingly difficult to afford

to live in Seattle on an average salary of \$42,000. We need to look at making their lives easier by promoting higher pay and cheaper housing.

Education

Would you support policies that prioritize school placement for children of Deaf parents in schools with Deaf programs and language access infrastructure, such as TOPS K-8 and Roosevelt High School?

Yes

Maybe

No

Recreation and Social Programs

Will you restore the staff size of Seattle Parks and Recreations Specialized Programs—which provides recreational, sporting, and social programs for people with disabilities—to pre-pandemic levels?

Yes

Maybe

No

Will you take steps to increase participation in Specialized Programs in South Seattle and West Seattle?

Yes

Maybe

No

Will you commit to rebuilding the Camp Long building that was damaged by arson, given its role in hosting the city's only overnight summer camp for youth with disabilities?

Yes

Maybe

No

Would you support initiatives to create more sensory-friendly city spaces and events like quiet hours at community centers or inclusive recreational programming?

Yes

Maybe

No

What steps will you take to ensure the accessibility of recreational and social programs for people with disabilities? *Please provide a brief response.*

Ensuring accessibility starts with listening to people with disabilities about their experiences and problem areas, then acting to fix them. It also requires building a culture of inclusion throughout city programs.

Seattle currently ensures accessibility in recreational programs through inclusive initiatives like adaptive activities - wheelchair basketball, power soccer, and inclusive summer camps through Seattle Parks & Recreation and partners like Outdoors for All. Continued investment in these programs is essential. Many parks, including Yesler Terrace and Waterfront Park, feature ADA-compliant facilities with accessible playgrounds, beach mats, and tactile wayfinding. Staff receive training in inclusion, and programs are adapted to meet physical, sensory, and cognitive needs.

Community input from disability advocates helps guide design and policy, ensuring Seattle's recreational spaces welcome all residents. Listening to the community and implementing what works must remain the foundation of this approach.

Arts and Culture

What steps will you take to ensure the accessibility of the arts and cultural sector for people with disabilities? *Please provide a brief response.*

I recognize the importance of uplifting Seattle's arts and cultural community, but it would be made stronger if venues and events were more accessible for everyone. People also won't want to go to the events in the first place if they can't get there easily, which is why we need to ensure public transit is safe and accessible, parking structures are accessible, and that ticket sales are accurate and fair. As Council President, having a thriving arts scene is a goal of mine. I started the Seattle Film Commission to bolster Seattle's film economy, and I also started the Music Venue Permit Parking Program to make it easier for musicians to unload the equipment for shows. These are two steps in the right direction, however, I must continue listening to people with disabilities to ensure they have the same access to music venues, theaters, and sporting events. I will continue working with the arts and cultural sectors to make events more accessible for people with disabilities to participate, have fun, and take advantage of the great arts and culture Seattle has to offer. Additionally, we need to continue funding programs such as Seattle Public Library's Library Equal Access Program (LEAP) which is a resource that provides reading materials for the Blind, low-vision, and Blind-Deaf.