



Questions for City Council Position 9 Candidates: Magnolia Chamber of Commerce

The Magnolia Chamber of Commerce believes that an educated, engaged electorate is one of the key aspects of a thriving community. To assist our members, the local business community, and Magnolia residents better understand our at-large Seattle City Council candidates, we are asking each candidate to please fill out the questionnaire covering topics important to the Magnolia neighborhood AND/OR be interviewed one-on-one by our executive director, relying on the techniques we have developed for our Chamber Chat series (see [Chamber Chat interview with Councilmember Andrew Lewis](#))

Each of the at-large city council candidates will be asked the exact same questions. We will post your video and/or your written answers on our website and make available to our members via a special election newsletter that will go out before the primary election date.

About the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce. The Magnolia Chamber represents just over 370 Magnolia businesses and family members. Our mission is to add to the vibrancy of our community by fostering connections between Magnolia's businesses, residents, and community groups. Our purpose is to promote civic and commercial progress in our business districts and neighborhood. Learn more about the Magnolia Chamber by visiting <https://discovermagnolia.org/>

For questions and/or to set up a video interview, please contact Jason Thibeaux, Executive Director, Magnolia Chamber of Commerce at 206-618-1589 or email at jason@discovermagnolia.org

Seattle City Council Position 9 Candidate Questions (these questions can be answered either by video with our Executive Director, Jason Thibeaux or filled out and sent to the Magnolia Chamber, 3213 West Wheeler Street #42, Seattle, WA 98199)

Good Governance, Effective Leadership

1. What distinct leadership strengths would you bring to the city council? Please provide examples of your leadership strengths to assist us in identifying you as an effective city-wide, at-large councilmember.

I'm the only candidate running that has extensive experience with current city politics and the successful organizing and advocacy that set Seattle as an example of progressive policymaking. Achieving these policies on workers' rights, electoral integrity, and police accountability requires knowing how to collaborate with many different stakeholders. I have proven to be a leader in and outside City Hall, and will continue to do so if elected.

2. How will you, if elected for one of the two at-large council positions, work with the other city council members to address community concerns, including increasing affordable housing, reducing crime, promoting public safety, and encouraging and supporting small business growth? And what specific steps will you take to ensure a more positive working relationship with the Mayor's office given the relative rancor of the past 12 months?

The concerns that affect District 7 affect everyone in Seattle. Throughout Seattle, there's an immediate need to increase our public transportation capacity while abiding by sustainability measures, for example. I know your council representative Andrew Lewis

has worked extensively on transportation, and I have elevated his efforts in my capacity as Chief of Staff to Council President Lorena Gonzalez.

Increasing affordable housing will require getting serious and honest about our revenue sources. I support progressive revenue measures, and am a firm believer that the answer to homelessness is homes. Waiting to invest in long-term housing and the healthcare services needed to address trauma and addiction is costing folks' humanity and dignity. I am prepared to work with all stakeholders in the region to ensure our budget reflects the urgent need for housing and wraparound services.

The City diligently supported small businesses during the pandemic. Normalizing these policies, such as making permanent our Safe Streets program, and encouraging economic development in neighborhoods that allows folks to work, play and shop where they live keeps people out of their cars, and builds vibrant communities. The Council can also more adequately fund the OED, which is currently a very under-funded but incredibly important resource. To fund this recovery, we need progressive revenue streams.

I will lead on economic recovery by centering those most impacted: BIPOC, low-income communities, small businesses, the arts community, and essential workers (grocery store employees, bus drivers, the restaurant industry). 41% of Black businesses have gone under during covid, so we urgently need to create opportunities for them to thrive since they are the backbone of our economy and hugely important parts of our community. It's within the council's control to make permitting processes simpler for small businesses and change zoning laws to allow for smaller plots that folks can afford.

3. What would you like to see from local Chambers in terms of working positively and proactively with you and the city council? How can organizations like the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce be an asset to the Position 9 councilmember?

At the City Council, I recognized how important adjusting access permit processes are to standing up and maintaining businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of any city, and it's very important they have the resources to thrive in these quickly changing times. I would like to see Chambers coordinate with the City Council on how to best meet the needs of small businesses. This includes disseminating information on COVID regulations in a more organized and centralized manner and promoting resources that assist with completing permits and grants for small businesses who need it.

Public Safety

4. In recent years, Magnolia has experienced several public safety issues, including but not limited to an increase in property crime, the effects of drug use from the homeless population, RVs being parked in the neighborhood, etc. What do you see as the chief causes of the challenges? How do you propose to work with an array of organizations including entities like the Magnolia Chamber, Seattle Police Department, homeless, public safety and social justice advocates, etc. to address the issues?

The causes of people living in RVs, drug use, and other behaviors compound the difficulties of living impoverished is the lack of homes. Seattle has become a difficult place to live, even for people who have roofs over their heads. We must continue to raise wages that meet the cost of living in the city and surrounding areas, and ensure our homeless and other public services have the resources they need to take care of houseless people. Wrap around services need to be robust to reach affected individuals.

I don't see homelessness as a moral failure on the person, and don't believe it should be criminalized. Instead, we need to get serious about how we're caring for our houseless neighbors.

Infrastructure

5. The Magnolia Bridge is reaching the end of its useful life. Do you support the replacement of the Magnolia Bridge at its current location? If so, describe the necessary steps to accomplish this goal and how might you leverage other elected officials and local state and federal government to find funding. If not, what alternative(s) do you recommend for replacing the access by Metro, school busses and truck traffic to Magnolia and the neighborhood provided by the current bridge?

I support the replacement and look forward to crafting policy informed by constituency groups like the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce. As a resident of West Seattle, I have a strong personal stake in addressing our infrastructure, especially bridges.

Workforce and Post Covid Economy

6. How will you, as one of two at-large councilmembers, work with local chambers of commerce to ensure thriving business development in neighborhoods like Magnolia?

The City has the power to adjust zoning laws and permit processes to encourage business creation and sustainability. As many businesses have closed their doors indefinitely or have put on hold their business plans to expand and grow their business, I would also propose a temporary abatement of B&O taxes for new small businesses. This would help allow for businesses to make up for lost time and encourage people to emerge from the pandemic with the business they had always wanted to start, but due the pandemic had to put on hold their plans.

I am committed to city planning that prioritises safe and secure pedestrian walkways that connect to transit. This allows for people to meet all their needs for living, shopping, working, and playing without having to venture far from their homes or struggle to find accessible connections. If the planning and implementation of our development is committed to sustainability and racial equity, we can become resilient to climate impacts. As someone who hasn't had a car in years, I am passionate about enhancing walkability and transit accessibility in all Seattle neighborhoods, as well as access to parks and other greenspaces. I look forward to working with the local chambers of commerces to partner meaningfully on these initiatives.

7. What steps will you take and how will you collaborate with your fellow councilmembers and the mayor's office to revitalize the Seattle economy and help rebuild downtown and key business districts throughout the city?

I am eager to work with the DSA to create systems that allow businesses to flourish. Due to the impacts of the pandemic nearly 200 downtown businesses have permanently shut their doors, including many with BIPOC owners. That is why I want to propose a temporary abatement of B&O taxes for new small businesses that start up downtown, so we quickly fill those empty storefronts. With the viaduct gone, we have a unique opportunity to build ground-floor retail, and I look forward to working with Friends of the Waterfront on projects like this. The Council should continue to work to simplify and improve permitting processes for businesses, like we saw with the extension of outdoor dining and Safe Street permits.

8. What are your business and workforce priorities as an at-large council member and specifically,

how will you work with business and labor interests and your fellow councilmembers to seek consensus among the various stakeholders?

Equitable economic recovery is something that I've been advocating for and will absolutely be a top priority once elected. This means prioritizing our small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy and community. It also means prioritizing the arts and entertainment industries, including tourism and hospitality attractions.