



Questions for Seattle Mayoral 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 Seattle mayoral 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 mayoral candidate 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.

Seattle Mayoral Candidate Questions (these questions can be answered either by video with our Executive Director, Jason Thibeaux at 206-618-1589 or jason@discovermagnolia.org and/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 City Hall if elected the next mayor of Seattle? Please provide examples of your leadership strengths to assist us in identifying you as an effective mayor.

Seattle is my hometown. As Mayor I'll bring to City Hall the perspective of someone who grew up in Seattle and now is raising three young kids here. Growing up in Seattle has had a significant influence on the experiences and values I apply to everything I do in my life. This is where I learned the values of inclusion and community service, and how our innovative and entrepreneurial spirit has throughout Seattle's history supported small businesses, and led to the creation of new industries and homegrown global companies. It also means I have witnessed firsthand the transformation of the Seattle of my childhood that has many neighborhoods struggling to maintain their individual sense of identity amidst rapid growth and development, among other challenges facing our neighborhoods and small businesses.

I know how to get things done. I've been spent my career advancing practical, progressive solutions at every level of government and fighting for Seattle. As legislative staff to U.S. Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA) and U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), I worked to expand programs serving low-income families

and workers; directed resources to community based organizations and tribes; and secured funding to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct and South Park Bridge, expand light rail, and restore critical habitat throughout Puget Sound. In January 2020, I became the first Indigenous person in Seattle's 170-year history to serve as deputy mayor. Previously, I served as chief operating officer of King County, managing the day-to-day of one of the largest counties in the nation. In both of these roles, I worked to craft and advance practical solutions for some of our city's (and region's) biggest challenges. I broke through red tape and other barriers to deliver new shelter and housing for individuals experiencing homelessness; expanded access to parks for underserved communities; worked to dismantle institutional barriers to advancing equity; expanded transit access and service across our region; and over this past year helped to manage the city's pandemic response, which kept 10,000 people housed and sheltered, fed thousands of families every week, and has contributed to Seattle leading the nation in vaccination rates and on the path to fully reopening our economy.

I've been a small business owner. I know firsthand the risks and rewards of owning your own business; the excitement (and fear) of growing and the sting of bureaucratic barriers and fees; the importance of the customer experience; and the challenges in attracting and retaining employees that match your business model. As Mayor I'll bring a business acumen that is missing from City Hall.

I'll be ready from Day One. No other candidate in this race is more clear eyed about the challenges facing our city and has managed large, complex organizations. The Mayor of Seattle is the CEO of a \$6 billion enterprise with more than 12,000 employees spread across dozens of business lines and nearly as many labor unions. I have a long track record of leading effective management teams and turning words into action. Meeting the challenges facing our city requires a management culture and systems that values continuous improvement, accountability, and transparency. As Mayor I will set clear, measurable performance metrics and align funding and programs to solutions so we can make progress, generate data, and adjust our approach if we're not meeting our targets.

I understand trust is earned. Good government is rooted in trust. As Mayor, I will work to rebuild the trust that has been broken between and among our communities due to years of divisive politics; division that is holding us back from achieving the future we all want for Seattle. I've spent my career bringing folks from all sides together to solve problems; making progress where many said it was impossible.

2. How will you, if elected mayor, work with the city council work together 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 city council given the relative rancor of the past 12 months?

We cannot allow the divisiveness of our current politics keep us from achieving a brighter future for Seattle. The Mayor and the City Council don't need to agree on everything but we must find ways to work together on the important issues facing our city. I've spent my career bringing people together to solve problems; sitting down with those that I might not agree with and working to find common ground so we can move forward. I will approach my relationship with the City Council with the same way -- beginning with working with the City Council to identify those issues we *can* work together on and not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good. Former Mayor Norm Rice and the City Council of the early 1990s worked together to tackle some big challenges and helped to revitalize downtown. A different time, for sure, but Mayor Rice prioritized his relationships with Council -- he invested in them, shared credit, and let others lead on important issues. It was an approach that served the city well and is one I fully intend to replicate as Mayor. In fact, as deputy mayor I utilized this approach on several occasions with the current City Council so I know a change in this dynamic is possible.

3. What would you like to see from local Chambers in terms of working positively and proactively with you and your office? How can organizations like the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce be an asset to the new mayor?

I believe that making impactful and lasting positive change requires partnership and a commitment to

building a big, inclusive table. I will not be a mayor who lives in an echochamber—I want to hear all voices and perspectives on an issue, even if we disagree. Let me be clear—Seattle won't thrive unless our small businesses thrive. As we emerge from the pandemic we have an opportunity to build back a stronger, more equitable Seattle that works for everyone. Local Chambers and Business Improvement Districts are critical thought partners and leaders whose expertise and long history with the city and in the neighborhoods they serve should be leveraged not ignored.

Public Safety

4. In recent years, our community 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 advocates, etc. to address the issues?

I believe it starts with a value statement that every Seattle resident should be able to walk down the street and feel safe, regardless of the color of their skin or the zip code they live in. Unfortunately, that is not the case today. Crime is up across the city compared to 2020. At the same time, more than 300 officers have departed the Seattle Police Department over the past 18 months and 911 response times are double what they were a year ago (an average of 10 minutes). We must make changes to shift the approach and culture of policing in Seattle to be community-based and community-informed, and more accountable. Moving more 911 calls away from an armed police officer is a critical first step to improve the relationship between residents and the police. It will require expanding crisis response programs like Health One, doubling the City's unarmed civilian Community Service Officers (CSOs) program, and scaling up non-profit community safety programs so they can respond in real time. Culture change requires reforming hiring practices to increase racial and cultural diversity, ongoing training requirements with an emphasis on non-lethal tools and crisis response, and setting a community-informed standard of excellence, transparency, and accountability for officer conduct and removal.

But we need to be completely honest with the public. With all the above strategies, we still need to hire additional police officers to address the dramatic reduction in the size of the force. Furthermore, efforts to improve recruitment and retention of officers that reflect our community's values must be implemented immediately. This includes my proposal to develop a Seattle Colleges program in partnership with the City of Seattle to create an AA in community safety as a pathway for a local workforce pipeline to become CSOs and sworn officers in SPD. Chief Harold Scoggins created such a program with the Seattle Colleges over the past 3-years that will launch this fall for a similar pipeline for future careers in the fire service. We should create an equivalent feeder program for local, homegrown talent for policing.

With regards to homelessness, if there is one thing that we can all agree on it's that our homelessness response is not working. It's not working for homeless people and the conditions in our parks and on our streets are inhumane. Despite record funding by Seattle and King County, homelessness in Seattle has gotten worse.

We cannot fix twenty years of broken systems and failed efforts overnight. But we can do better.

It starts with investing in what we know works. That's why my focus will be on creating 3,000 new permanent places for individuals to call home and continuing to create temporary shelter units so we can get more folks inside and connected to services.

We need to see better performance of the existing system. Last year our shelter system served 3,000 less households than it did the year before. And 40 percent of those served were not last housed in Seattle. That tells me we have both a systems problem and a regional one.

That is why I will be linking funding to performance metrics that meet all our expectations and working regionally to close service gaps and increase both coordination and accountability.

Lastly, many encampments are causing harm to the surrounding community and are a threat to public safety and unsafe for campers. An intentional approach that gets folks inside and returns our parks and streets to their intended uses is a win-win. We must lead with compassion and offers of shelter, and services, but refusing these offers does not give anyone license to continue camping in our parks or causing harm in our community.

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 are you going to 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 fully support the funding and development of infrastructure projects across Seattle, including replacing the Magnolia Bridge at its current location. I have been fighting for investments in infrastructure and the jobs these projects create my entire career. From securing federal resources to support expanding light rail, to replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct and South Park Bridge, to reimagining the Mercer Corridor and Seattle Waterfront, to keeping the expansion of the Washington State Convention Center moving forward this past year, I have been at the forefront not just advocating but actively working to secure hundreds of millions of dollars in investments in Seattle's future and in those men and women doing the work. I support funding Seattle's critical infrastructure needs, including bridges, roadways, water, electric grid and affordable housing. As we move forward funding these projects, I also support labor standards, including labor harmony and community workforce agreements to create good paying jobs for our community.

Workforce and Post Covid Economy

6. How will you work with local chambers of commerce to ensure thriving business development in neighborhoods like Magnolia?

The pandemic caused deep, economic harm to our small businesses and the thousands of frontline workers that hold our city together. Every empty store front or shuttered restaurant is a loss to our communities. We need to do more to help small businesses so they can move beyond surviving to thriving. This includes more small business stabilization grants, B&O tax relief, and other support to help get businesses reopened and hiring. Longer term we need to do more to keep small businesses rooted in their neighborhoods, not priced out by new development.

7. What steps will you take to revitalize the Seattle economy and help rebuild downtown and key business districts throughout the city?

I know we can meet the challenges holding our downtown and business districts back. It demands rallying around a shared definition of success, putting aside our differences, and advancing practical solutions that don't take years to achieve. My recovery plan has five key components:

- Stabilizing small businesses by providing immediate B&O tax relief, increasing and streamlining grants, and new resources to cover unanticipated costs and lost revenues;
- Expanding joint marketing and programming to attract customers back downtown; cutting through bureaucratic permitting and street use processes to pilot new, innovative uses of rights of way and filling vacant storefronts with new businesses;
- Fully leveraging the opening of the Climate Pledge Arena, Seattle Waterfront, and expanded

Washington State Convention Center;

- Ramping up emphasis patrols and enforcing existing laws to address street-level property crime and community harm that has been allowed to escalate for far too long;
- Executing a comprehensive and systematic approach utilizing tiny homes, hotels, and other shelters to compassionately transition folks living in downtown parks and streets inside to safer spaces, connected to enhanced services, beginning with those encampments that are preventing businesses from reopening, preying on visitors and vulnerable individuals alike, and negatively affecting downtown's brand and experience--and then keeping those areas encampment-free.

8. What are your business and workforce priorities and specifically, how will you work with business and labor interests and the city council to seek consensus among the various stakeholders?

I'm committed to finding common goals among business, labor and the council to move Seattle forward. As mayor, I'll support business and workers by prioritizing:

- Helping small businesses recover from the pandemic through additional stabilization grants, B&O tax relief, continuing programs piloted over this past year, and ensuring our business districts are safe and ready to welcome back customers;
- Investing directly in working families through my guaranteed basic income program so every family has a future in Seattle;
- Partnering with labor to expand apprenticeship programs and opportunities to create career pathways for young people; and
- Pushing aside the rhetoric and working to retain, grow, and recruit new businesses to Seattle and create jobs.