



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.

For the last 7 years I served the Seattle Urban Indigenous homeless population as the Executive Director of the Chief Seattle Club (CSC). I worked to get our relatives into safe and stable housing. I oversaw the growth of Chief Seattle Club from a small drop in center with a \$500,000 annual budget to raising \$85 million for multiple projects. CSC is building over \$100 million dollars of new affordable housing in the city for Urban Indians.

I've never held office before, but I'm a builder. I've been working to enact solutions in Seattle for a long time. Our current leadership doesn't seem able to solve Seattle's chronic issues such as homelessness, our housing crisis, and the necessary revitalization that our business districts need. I've already put out an emergency housing plan to address homelessness, a comprehensive public safety plan, a housing justice plan, a climate justice plan, transportation plan, and most recently, an arts and culture plan. I'm about to release an

economic revitalization plan that seeks to ensure that this City is a place where small businesses, particularly BIPOC owned businesses can thrive.

Over the past two decades I've worked closely with everyone from community leaders and organizers, to businesses and political leadership on the state and local level to fight against the root causes of homelessness and address the systemic racism in our criminal justice system. On the Seattle Community Police Commission, I've worked hand in hand with neighbors to address the systemic racism in our criminal justice system, and to create progress where complacency has been the rule.

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?

I'm lucky enough to already have several relationships with current City Council members. I believe that innovative solutions require us to come together. I've sat at the table with a wide array of City leaders. I've not fully agreed with everyone I've worked with, but I understand that sometimes change happens with odd alliances. I pride myself on being able to bring people together to achieve common goals, to understand multiple perspectives and channel everyone's needs and desires to common ground. I plan on doing the same with the City Council. Immediately after the election, I plan on contacting each of them and meeting to ensure we understand each other's point of view. They will be my colleagues at this City, and I have no doubt that I can ensure we work well together.

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 want to run a City hall that takes full advantage of the expertise of those living in our vibrant City. I want to look closely with organizations, like the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce, who are working directly with and for Seattle residents. When it comes to being proactive, I believe that organizations like the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce can be the best asset to the new mayor by advocating for positive change in this city and supporting the people and small businesses that reside under your purview. A willingness to share, sit at the table, and hear from different perspectives is something that I hope everyone in this City is able to do. I'm frustrated with folks who

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?

Addressing the humanitarian homelessness crisis is my top priority. We need to care for every human being in our City and get everyone off the streets and into housing. This is why I

created a 22 point Emergency Housing Action Plan to be completed within my first 14 months as Mayor: echohawkforseattle.com/emergencyhousing. This not only assists our vulnerable neighbors, but also dramatically benefits our business community. We must also invest in improving the walkability and livability of our City with things like well lit streets, clean and clear signage, accessible sidewalks, separated bike paths, and green buffers between roadways are other strategies I will prioritize. For immediate street cleaning, bridge repair, and complete streets infrastructure, I will seek short term contracts and amplify public / private partnerships like the Metropolitan Improvement District.

We need to work to revolutionize our police department. Just last year, SPD officers spent nearly **70%** of their time only responding to 911 calls that were labeled Priority 1 and 2, constituting robberies, shots-fired incidents, and assaults. During **221 days** in 2020, SPD focused only on these types of 911 calls, demonstrating that it simply does not have the time or resources to respond to other crises happening in the city. We need to remove a significant amount of burden from the SPD such as transferring parking and/or traffic enforcement to a separate municipal division outside of SPD could provide these units with more specific resources to perform their responsibilities to our City. Mental health related calls, whether they be welfare checks, suicide prevention, substance abuse, counseling, or non-emergency, take up more time than almost any other call. I want to go one step further than the City's current crisis response team by creating a 24/7 mobile team of community paramedics and trained crisis workers. This would allow for Seattle to provide the highest quality service possible by sending the appropriate agency based on the subject of the call. The State of Washington recently passed House Bill 1477, which creates a new 988 emergency phone number specifically for mental health emergencies. I envision our Crisis Response Team being deployed through calls being triaged through this number. The City of Seattle can now focus on who responds after the initial emergency to help guide us toward stability in housing, substance abuse, or mental illness. This plan allows for us to be responsive to the safety needs of this City in a holistic, comprehensive way that prioritizes safety in all the different ways our residents understand it.

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?

We need a comprehensive effort on roads and bridge maintenance. I find it incredibly frustrating that we have allowed our core infrastructure to deteriorate to the point it has. I do support replacing the current bridge and believe it will require a regional approach to fund the replacement. I will aggressively champion federal and state dollars to shore up our aging infrastructure and that includes personally lobbying the Governor, Senator Murray who is on the Appropriations Committee and Senator Cantwell who Chairs the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Workforce and Post Covid Economy

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

Like I stated above, I want there to be clear communication between the residents of this city and it's leadership. I want all residents to feel like they have a voice. I will rely on organizations like the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce to a place where voices are heard and can congregate.

We know that public/private partnerships can be successful. We need to renew and extend those partnerships to activate as much of our City as possible. I would learn hard into making these partnerships viable and sustainable.

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

Like I said earlier, my priority is our city's homelensness crisis. I truly believe that will be one of the most significant tasks I can take on to assist twitch rebuilding downtown and other key business districts throughout the city.

Additionally, by streamlining application and permit approval processes, we will support farmers markets, festivals, film screenings, concerts, and performances. Special events create a thriving culture for our City. And they should not be limited only to national organizations, but rather be available to local businesses, performers, and artists. Creative use of public right of way for sidewalks and parking lanes, as well as ensuring there are meaningful venues in all neighborhoods, can do this. By forming new BIDs, engaging residents through Neighborhood Associations, and prioritizing small business owners in these neighborhoods, we will strengthen Seattle.

I will create an inter-departmental team to coordinate business assistance. Activities, challenges, solutions, and policy proposals will be reported directly to me by the Director of OED at regular cabinet meetings. We must support BIPOC and WMBE owned businesses through grants and long-term land leases. We also need to support the reopening and revitalization of businesses. High retail and restaurant vacancy rates in our business core is a challenge, but presents an opportunity to recruit new businesses that can create new pathways to wealth.

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?

Like my answer above regarding the City Council, I want to bring people together. I believe in bringing people into the story of the solutions of our City. Bringing differing perspectives together to enact real change is something I've done my entire tenure at Chief Seattle Club.

I will work closely with local and regional workforce development experts like the King County Workforce Development Council that has developed a comprehensive plan for equitable recovery in Seattle King county - [Recover Better - A Regional Plan for Equitable Economic Recovery – The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County \(seakingwdc.org\)](#). Building a strong pipeline of workers is critical to ensuring a vibrant future for our city.

Innovative programs like the city of Seattle's CWA can be expanded to enhance internships and apprentice opportunities in construction trades; this will include seeking incentives through credits on development and permit fees as encouragement for private developers to voluntarily adopt this successful program. I will also encourage the expansion of programs like CORE Plus [Core Plus | Skills for work, skills for life \(core-plus.org\)](#) and Career Connect Washington [Home | Career Connect Washington](#) that can be bolstered by direct support from the City and a Mayor invested in forging partnerships and pathways for employment.