Transit Riders Union Questionnaire for 2019 Seattle City Council Primary Candidates

Candidate Name:
City Council District:

1. Many employers in the downtown and center city neighborhoods— including the City of Seattle— fully or partially cover the cost of ORCA transit passes for their employees. Incentivizing public transit and reducing drive-alone commuting is especially important during the next five years, with the “Seattle Squeeze” creating challenging traffic conditions. However, many employers don’t provide any transit pass subsidy. Anecdotally, higher-paid workers are more likely to receive employer-subsidized passes than lower-wage workers, who are disproportionately women and people of color. Many lower-wage workers earn too much to be eligible for the ORCA LIFT low-income reduced fare program, but not enough to afford housing in Seattle without being severely cost-burdened. For the following questions, please choose either Yes or No. You may explain your answers if you like.
   - Do you think employers of a certain size should subsidize employee transit passes? (Yes)
   - Would you support city council action to make this a requirement? (No)
   - Do you think the City should cover the costs of transit passes for employees of human service providers that are funded by city contracts? (Yes)

2. Report after report— notably the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released in October 2018— tells us we need to cut carbon emissions dramatically NOW. What will you do to put Seattle on the path to decarbonization?

I support buying clean energy when it is viable and reasonably competitive, I am also against giving tax breaks to fossil fuel companies. I would like to get more people riding mass transit by incentivizing ridership, by extending the reduced and or free pass cards to the working class. I would also push for improving the gps app so that it would be more like uber, where you can actually see the vehicles location. The more people on buses the lower the carbon footprint.

3. What is one community, specifically in your district, that you feel is being “left out” as our city grows and changes? What will you do to make sure their voices are heard?

The working class often gets forced to move because they don’t make enough to live here. We need to require developers as part of the permitting process, to build affordable housing in addition to the market rate housing that they already want to build.

4. What should the City’s role be in creating a healthy climate for business in Seattle?

City government should be less confrontational of the business community. They should be able to have their voices heard and their opinions should be considered.

5. Seattle has the most regressive tax system of any city in Washington State, which has the most regressive tax system of any state in the US. Do you believe that the City has a responsibility to raise significant new revenue to address the challenges facing our communities? If so, what tax policies would you advocate for at the city level to generate new revenue?
I do not think the city has a responsibility to raise significant new revenue. I feel the city government has a responsibility to be good stewards with the funds that are already entrusted to them.

We do need to do a better at reducing waste and fraud. The first step should be a complete and independent audit of the city’s expenditures.

6. Seattle is deeply divided on how to address the homelessness crisis. How would you characterize these divisions, and how would you address them?

I would say that we need to think of the homeless as if they were our own Son’s and Daughters.

Would we want them to have access to safe shelter’s if they are temporarily out of work or otherwise struggling? Yes.

If they were hopelessly addicted to heroin, meth, or crack would we prefer society to simply let them kill themselves? NO!

Would we prefer that they be in a correctional institution that provides them with the medical and other treatment they need to be able to try and get their lives back in order? I would say Yes! People seeking treatment on their own is great, but the odds don’t seem to be in their favor? If it is my Son or Daughter, I would want them to be forced into getting off of heroin and given the tools necessary to stay off of it.

If they are unable to work because of a permanent physical or mental health condition, would we want somebody to help them through the process of getting disability? Yes

7. There is widespread agreement that all areas of response to the homelessness crisis need to be stepped up— but in practice, an elected official’s job is often to prioritize. How would you rank the following in terms of relative priority for increased funding and attention? (1=highest, 4=lowest) You may explain your choice, but if you fail to rank the options, we will not consider your answer.

- Homelessness prevention (1, 2, 3, 4) 1
- Mental health and drug treatment services (1, 2, 3, 4)
- Low-income housing (1, 2, 3, 4)
- Emergency shelter (1, 2, 3, 4)

This is how I would rank them:
1.) Homelessness prevention
2.) Emergency shelter
3.) Mental health and drug treatment services
4.) Low-income housing

This is an incredibly tough question. However, I agree that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We desperately need both.

8. What lessons do you think should be drawn from the experience of the “head tax” last year?
1.) You should not institute a tax on jobs!
2.) If you do decide to pass a new tax you need to be very specific and accountable for where that money is going. Homelessness is too broad.
3.) The city council and the mayor need to do a better job reaching out to businesses and encourage them to help in coming up with innovative solutions for solving the problems the city faces.