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? (Yes)
   - 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?

Meeting our climate goals requires that we advocate across jurisdictions to end our reliance on fossil fuels. We have a Climate Action Plan but half of Seattle’s carbon emissions are from passenger vehicles. Yet we are still prioritizing cars, not building our bike network, sidewalks are crumbling or missing. This just continues reliance on an extractive economy. These issue impact communities of color and low-income communities most acutely, which is why we need to invest in green infrastructure that stems displacement and provides opportunity to these communities.

- Complete streets to allow for all modes of transportation
- Mass transit
- Green building for commercial and residential
- Just transition for workers w/apprenticeship and re-training
- Expand use of renewables.

If we’re going to reduce carbon emissions we have to invest in the right things—that’s not car infrastructure. As Vandana Shiva says, It’s not an investment if it’s destroying the planet.

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?

When I talk to people in D2 who are concerned about transportation safety and equity, one thing that I hear is our Dept of Transportation doesn’t listen and is slow to make changes. It’s heartbreaking to hear communities describe how they’ve identified unsafe roads and have tried for many years (and in some cases, decades) to get to the City to make improvements. It was only after two young girls were
struck while crossing Rainier Ave at Henderson last year that the City finally made some improvements, and even then the improvements were damaged to the point of ineffectiveness almost immediately. Being accountable to communities of color means listening to our ideas and solutions and including people of color in every step of decision-making. As a policy maker, I would ask “who benefits from this proposal?” “Who’s bringing this solution to the table?” “Were the people who will be most impacted part of creating this proposal?” If people of color aren’t part of crafting and deciding what proposals look like, then the proposals aren’t equitable and won’t be real solutions that work for everyone.

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

The economic climate right now is great for big businesses. The regressive B&O tax on gross receipts gives a competitive advantage to large corporations, while squeezing everything out of small and immigrant owned businesses. Washington’s poor people pay more in taxes than in any other state. With the changing nature of work, working families feel increasing economic insecurity. At the local level, I believe there are a few things we can do:
- permanent affordable housing is critical for economic security of working families. When workers spend less money on housing/rent, they spend more in the local economy and increase the velocity of money.
- We need to close the pay gap in our city and invest in low-income communities and communities of color to build their community wealth.
- We also need to right the wrongs done by redlining, by fighting for a public bank to increase funding in historically ignored neighborhoods and schools.

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?

‘We all know our city works best when we invest in the infrastructure we all need to thrive. We live in a wealthy city and expect a lot: reliable electricity, beautiful parks, buses that come on time, responsive public agencies. But when wealthy elites and corporations starve our city of resources, and push the burden of paying onto those who can least afford it, we pit neighbor against neighbor, and we all suffer. We need to identify better sources of revenue where the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share. I will dive into new options, and find the right mix — like taxing the unearned passive income wealthy people make on their investments, or increase the real estate excise tax on mansions, or make our taxes on businesses more progressive, to make sure all Seattleites can thrive and the wealthy pay their fair share.

The progressive taxes that seem most promising:
Increase the commercial parking tax downtown and spend the money on transit/ bike/ ped infrastructure.
Tax capital gains on unearned income.
Get the state to allow us to do a local option REET (additional 0.25%) on luxury homes (above $1 million?)
Put disincentives on purchase of homes that are not a primary residence, or vacant properties, or flipping, and use the proceeds to fund affordable housing.

Local estate tax.

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

We have a decades-long lack of investment in housing, but some are blaming homeless people for being on the streets. We need to address homelessness by investing in Housing First. Whether we’re talking about more housing for low-income families at risk of being homeless or that smaller percentage of folks who are chronically homeless, the solution is to increase the pace of production. I’d like to see social housing on publically owned land, a streamlined permitting process for projects that will serve low-income people, and an investment in the permanent supportive housing and services needed for the chronically homeless.

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.

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

We have to prioritize Housing First. With more housing for low-income folks we can stem the eviction rates and help prevent homelessness for most. We must also invest first in permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless. Once they are in stable living situations we can offer the services and care they need if they are ready to seek it.

8. What lessons do you think should be drawn from the experience of the “head tax” last year? Oof. I taught a whole workshop on this. What we learned is that we need to frame progressive revenue differently. We can’t let people be duped by promises of corporations. Whether or not they get the tax environment they want, they always leave. Boeing moved it’s HQ to Chicago and laid off 15% of the state’s workforce. Amazon moved part of their operations to Bellevue even after the tax was repealed. We can’t continue to let corporations dictate how our local government works.