



## 2015 Seattle City Council Affordable Housing & Homelessness Candidate Questionnaire Responses

### **Sally Bagshaw City Council Position 7**

There is unmet need for affordable homes in Seattle. The 2015 One Night Count found 2,813 people surviving outdoors within city limits after the shelters were filled. Of all Seattle households 15-20% pay more than half their income for housing costs. This number includes 62% of those with the lowest incomes.

#### **1. If elected, what will you do ensure everyone in Seattle has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home?**

My goal is to increase the supply of housing starting in 2015, while promoting thriving and revitalized neighborhoods for the long term.

Based on data from the City's Office of Housing, the City needs to build, convert, or otherwise add at least 50,000 net new units of affordable housing over the next two decades. If we are to meet the need in the next decade, the Office of Housing's numbers show we will have to create more than 4000 -5,000 very low-income units in the next decade. We need to increase our supply of housing tremendously to meet the needs of people who want to live and work in our community.

I am a longtime supporter and advocate for the Seattle Housing Lev, Multi-Family Tax Exemptions, Impact Fees, Inclusionary Zoning and other programs that create and protect affordable housing options. We are very fortunate to live in a city that values – and votes – for affordable housing assistance on a consistent basis. I believe the first step for anyone's stability is decent housing. I also strongly support zoning incentives and other policies that encourage development of affordable housing. I have and will continue to advocate for more ADU's and DADU's with appropriate size/mass restrictions in our single-family neighborhoods.

---

People of color are disproportionately challenged by access to affordable homes. In Seattle, 52% of White households own their home, compared with just 29% of Black households and 27% of Latino households, according to 2010 Census data cited by the Mayor's office. According to the National Equity Atlas [<http://nationalequityatlas.org/node/7156>], in the Seattle area,

people of color are more likely than Whites to be paying more than they can afford, whether they own or rent. Displacement and gentrification are pressing concerns as more low-income people, disproportionately people of color, are forced to move outside the city into areas with fewer opportunities.

## 2. What is the city's role in addressing these disparities?

Housing disparities like the statistics you mention deserve our focus and attention as we plan for our future population growth. I support up zoning for multi-use, multi-family development in districts near transit and bus corridors (Transit Oriented Development) and within the 10-minute walkshed. I have worked hard to form agreements between the city and Sound Transit to develop affordable housing on land near the Light Rail Line such as the Capitol Hill, Brooklyn and Roosevelt stations. The transit oriented development process surrounding the Capitol Hill Station is a great example of collaboration on development projects with affordable housing at the forefront. The development agreement created by the City and Sound Transit will be developed with more than 35% of the units dedicated to affordable housing. This will be done by increasing building heights and negotiating with developers for more affordable units.

Similarly, I am currently working with Sound Transit and Plymouth Housing to create a new affordable housing project on Sound Transit surplus property at Madison and Boylston.

---

Currently only 30 affordable homes are available for every 100 very low-income households in need of housing in Seattle (2015 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment [<http://1.usa.gov/17BlyKr>]). Rapid growth in Seattle is causing an even greater need for more affordable housing, according to the Seattle Affordable Housing Nexus Study [<http://bit.ly/1Rrug1n>] commissioned by the City Council.

## 3. Do you support an inclusionary housing policy that goes beyond voluntary incentive zoning and requires that development contribute to affordable homes?

Yes

Yes, I am an advocate for requiring developers to build additional affordable housing units. I believe that incentive zoning does not go far enough and does not

create the affordable housing that Seattle desperately needs. I believe in exploring and expanding programs such as inclusionary zoning requirements, extending the Multi-Family Tax Exemption, and focusing on inclusionary performance. We have successful models for this in Redmond and Kirkland.

---

**Housing costs in Seattle are outpacing incomes. According to data collected by the Mayor's office, at the average wage for their profession, a medical assistant living and working in Seattle cannot afford the average 1-bedroom apartment. An elementary school teacher cannot afford the average 2-bedroom apartment. The situation is not improving on its own: gross median rents in Seattle have increased more sharply than in any other large city in the U.S. in recent years (Seattle Times, 9-18-2014 [<http://bit.ly/1zPZidy>]).**

**4. Do you support asking the state legislature to remove the state ban on rent regulation?**

I would like to work with State and local leadership to positively impact the rental market by increasing supply and protecting tenants from unfair practices. Rent control is not enough. I recommend the following:

1. Inclusionary zoning: Include housing that residents can afford as part of new market rate developments.
2. Improve permitting processes: Streamline City-wide and Countywide permitting processes to reduce carrying costs for affordable housing projects.
- 4 Countywide development: identify public land that has the capacity to be developed into housing.
5. Clean up blighted properties and rebuild/reuse: Streamline the condemnation and eminent domain processes to create incentives for current landowners to either sell their property or clean and redevelop the property in a timely fashion.
6. New Housing Levy Approach: Use public funds to purchase affordable units and retain those with covenants on the brink of expiration and to incentivize owners of these units to continue providing their units at affordable rent levels.
7. Impact Fees: Establish development fees for residential, commercial and industrial construction projects to pay for impacts around transportation, fire, parks, and schools.

8. Combine forces with tenant union and landlord representatives: Learn from other cities. Survey property owners, and give priority permitting to those interested in redeveloping their properties at higher densities with affordable or rent-subsidized housing included in the new development.
  9. Increase supply. Prioritize permitting around transit sites.
  10. HALA Committee recommendations: Build on the recommendations of this committee.
- 

**The Seattle City Council recently passed an ordinance authorizing encampments in certain areas for people experiencing homelessness. An amendment called for studying the impacts of allowing encampments in residential areas.**

**5. Should encampments for people experiencing homelessness be allowed in residential areas?**

Yes

Absolutely yes. We already do this through faith-based institutions and we have been successfully providing community for people in our city and across the County.

The City of Seattle expends roughly \$135 million annually in our Human Services Department and approaches \$37 million annually to shelter, house, and feed those who are homeless amongst us. I advocated successfully the past few years for more money for managed encampments. I am disappointed that we are not seeing results we want. Until we have sufficient resources to house our entire homeless population, encampments must be a regulated measure for those that need them.

---

**People experiencing homelessness often face local regulations making it difficult simply to exist. Seattle has banned sitting on sidewalks in some areas during certain times of day. Brushing teeth in public restrooms was recently banned in a neighboring city. Attempts to ban “aggressive” panhandling and smoking in public parks are efforts to address public comfort and safety, but could result in targeting people experiencing homelessness.**

## **6. How should the city balance the rights of people experiencing homelessness with the comfort and safety of all Seattle residents?**

Homelessness is a public health and public safety crisis—for those who are unsheltered and for everyone in the community. We are all neighbors.

The “Housing First” model links people with support services, either on-site or in the community. Housing First successfully keeps people out of high cost emergency rooms and the criminal justice system. Research studies nationally have concluded what we intuitively know — that people who are housed see their physical and mental health improve.

Along with our regional partners in the Committee to End Homelessness, (many of us are encouraging the name to change to COMMUNITY to End Homelessness) the City of Seattle is investing money in programs to prevent homelessness and reduce the duration of how long people are living without shelter. With these financial investments, many more people can move off the street and

Our human service providers estimate that about 1/3 of people who are struggling to survive on the streets of Seattle are dealing with mental and physical illness or addiction problems.

Appropriately, this is where we direct much of the City’s Human Services budget and where we need serious assistance from the State and Federal governments. We need to focus on the most medically fragile unsheltered people. We also need to turn serious attention towards those who are less fragile.

I have previously proposed how we could create a plan to help the people in our community who are “sleeping rough”. Here are a couple examples: Divide Responsibility Regionally; and Tiny Houses Fast to Build. Building on our Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, the goal is to provide appropriate support so people can move up and on with their lives.

One possibility is to contract with experienced service providers to coordinate temporary shelter and case management in some of the City’s buildings including community centers. The Mayor and several of us Councilmembers promote having additional authorized encampments where people can go to be safe and get needed services, without the expectation that they will be there forever.

Another idea is to extend our hours for the existing emergency shelter in City Hall and in other government-owned buildings like the King County Administration, beyond just night hours to daytime shelter as well. This provide respectful places for people to go during the daytime rather than camping out in parks or on our street corners. Investments in permanent housing are the most compassionate way

to help those who are struggling on our streets with mental illness, alcohol/drug addiction issues, HIV/AIDS or other significant health problems.

I have also suggested and obtained funding to provide space for new and expanded partnerships with congregations in our faith-based community. By collaborating with our faith community, non-profits and private organizations that have demonstrated good case management abilities we can bring people off the street into respectful shelter.

As I often say, there's no silver bullet to solve problems this complex but there is silver buckshot. We need to stop arguing and get moving on what we CAN do.

---

**According to Zillow, more than a quarter of Seattle's "low-end homes" (those valued in the bottom third of home values for their market) are underwater. These homes tend to be occupied by low-income and fixed-income homeowners or renters.**

**7. Do you support a mortgage premium reduction plan to address foreclosures in Seattle?**

Yes

---

**8. Please suggest other strategies to prevent low-income people from losing their homes that you would support as a city council member:**

See my answers to Question #4 above. Also: see my blog at [sallybagshaw.com](http://sallybagshaw.com) and read the following as examples which I wrote:

- Our reality: We must create affordable housing starting now.  
<http://bagshaw.seattle.gov/2014/10/20/our-reality-we-must-create-affordable-housing-starting-now/>
- Dignity Village & Tent City: Using our money compassionately and wisely  
<http://bagshaw.seattle.gov/2013/04/24/lets-support-not-thwart-affordable-housing-options-like-micro-housing/>

- From small beginnings come great things.  
<http://bagshaw.seattle.gov/2011/03/07/dignity-village-and-tent-city-using-our-money-compassionately-and-wisely/>