

1 Tell us about your campaign

1a Name

Jim Pugel

1b Campaign phone

206-919-5342

1c Campaign email

jim@jimpugel.com

1d Campaign website

jimpugel.com

1e Council district

Seattle City Council, District 7

1f Approximate campaign budget

\$150,000

1g Raised to date

\$96,000

SEIU 1199NW

King County Sheriff Mitzi Johanknecht

King County Councilmember Larry Gossett

King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg

ACLU of Washington State* Drug Policy Director Alison Holcomb

CEO for the Alliance for Gun Responsibility* and former Executive Director of the Seattle Police Foundation* Renee Hopkins

YouthCare* Executive Director Melinda Giovengo

Matt Talbot Center* Executive Director Gregg Alex

Justices Bobbe and Jon Bridge

Director of UW Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy* Eric Trupin

Former Deputy Mayor and Vulcan* Public Policy Specialist Phil Fujii

Former Seattle City Council President Jan Drago

Public Defender Association* Director Lisa Daugaard

Downtown Emergency Service Center* Executive Director Dan Malone

Mike and Donna James

2 Tell us what you believe

2a What role does affordable housing play in our community?

This is a big one and will be a crucial aspect of any effective, comprehensive plan to tackle long-term homelessness and ensure Seattle is a livable city for all our workers and families. People are getting priced out of their homes and students, nurses, janitors, and families increasingly cannot afford to live in the city where they work, learn, and play. We can do better.

If elected I will work toward developing surplus government land within the city and build affordable and mixed-use housing, as well as services to make these new developments equitable for all involved. These services will include childcare, community centers, permanent supportive housing and mental health care, assisted living for seniors and disabled Seattleites, and parks and green spaces. All at a cost that won't break the bank or misuse taxpayer dollars.

King County Assessor John Wilson has already identified many publicly owned, surplus property in the city that can be converted to public housing at little or no cost. This would be a huge step forward and one we cannot afford to ignore. The city has got to stop selling public land to developers for an amount that rarely ever gets translated into affordable housing. We need this land to build the Seattle of tomorrow that will need to house thousands and thousands of more workers and families, and those workers need to be able to live here. We all want more affordable housing, the key is working with all stakeholders to find practical mechanisms of getting to where we need to be.

2b What are the top three things the city should focus on in its response to homelessness?

I believe that the City's role in addressing the homeless crisis — thus far unfulfilled — is to offer clear and unwavering leadership and a clear plan toward resolving the homeless crisis, all the while respectful of the fact that homelessness also impacts communities and businesses. We substantially fund fragmented approaches, but have been unable to integrate these programs into a larger policy. The bottom line: We do not have a clear plan. While there are important, data-driven assessments at our disposal, we lack a comprehensive and courageous approach which balances the objective to stabilize the lives of homeless people with public safety and humanitarian objectives. Allowing car camping and other laissez faire approaches is not a 'Program,' nor fair or effective to either the businesses and residents impacted, or the homeless Seattleites themselves. I have always been a strong supporter of preventing homelessness, rapid re-housing and the policy of 'housing first'. I believe that the gold standard to address homelessness is permanent supportive housing. While we invest a lot of tax dollars in this great city, we likely need more investments, but — unlike the current approach — they must be smart, effective and data driven.

The looming specter of diminished support for homeless housing from federal funding sources increases the urgency for a more regional approach to managing our resources and crafting a comprehensive approach to this crisis. In a real sense, we are on our own when it comes to addressing homelessness. One of my priorities will be to work toward a substantive consolidation of City and County government entities addressing human services, housing and mental illness as well as rational programs of addiction response. This common sense approach was achieved in the past with Metro Transit (e.g. the consolidation of county/city bus services), the Public Health agencies (into Seattle/King County Department of Public Health) and with Wastewater Treatment, which occurred in the 1970's.

My core values on the issue of addressing homelessness are as follows – I refer to them as the 'four pillars' approach: 1) prevention (both long term and immediate), 2) Harm reduction for those currently experiencing homelessness 3) Housing (rapid re-housing, transitional housing, supportive housing and permanent housing) and 4) enforcement (not criminalizing the status of homelessness but holding offenders responsible regardless of homeless status).

I adopted this approach/belief after being a founding member of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) initiative in the Belltown neighborhood of Seattle. The program focused predominantly on people who were homeless, addicted, had co-occurring physical and mental disabilities and were mostly unemployed. The scientific based study showed a recidivism reduction of 61%, a significant increase in housing, significantly improved psycho/social qualities and no increase in cost compared to the 'trail, nail and jail' approach used for the previous 3 decades.

2c How should the city respond to unsheltered homelessness?

With a plan that will get the job done. We need immediate solutions, increasing the number of beds available in city and county facilities, as well as working with private organizations like Downtown Emergency Service Center that are also working towards the same goal. We need to integrate our public resources and streamline partnerships with others so we are not duplicating work and wasting limited resources.

We also need to increase critical services and bring them to where they are needed. It helps no one if we have services available but cannot connect them with people in need of help. I will work with the rest of the council to develop a school loan repayment program to attract more case managers to work with the numerous human service provider agencies that contract with the city. Certain amounts of student loans would be paid for based on the commitment the case manager makes toward working with our vulnerable populations. This kind of incentive program has been effective with limited teaching programs throughout the country, and shows that we will put our money where our mouth is regarding our homelessness crisis. If we are serious about actually solving this challenge, and providing the necessary services to help people out of the cycle of poverty and homelessness, then we need the staff and capacity to bring those services to the folks who need them where they need them. If we are burdening social workers, mental health providers, and case managers under exorbitant piles of student debt, paying them less than a living wage, and not doing close to enough to ensure they can live in the city they work, how can we reasonably expect people to go into this field? We need to make it just a little easier for Seattleites who want to help, who want to dedicate their careers to helping fix our homelessness crisis and bring critical services to the most vulnerable Seattleites, to get there and help our city. This is also an investment that will pay off with more professionally trained people in our workforce and engendering an emphasis on service. I will also introduce legislation to expand the LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) program throughout the city and county to help reduce crime and incarceration. Addiction is closely intertwined with homelessness, especially those who are unsheltered. If we can find ways to get these folks to the treatment they need, rather than jail, we can make real progress in solving unsheltered homelessness.

2d For the past two years, city production of affordable homes has increased due to an infusion of one-time resources. Do you support increasing resources to sustain production of affordable homes? If so, what sources would you support?

Absolutely. If we are serious about creating more affordable housing, then we have to put our money where our mouth is and just build more affordable and mixed-use housing. I will support working with businesses in finding a sustainable revenue source for affordable housing that won't cause the negative backlash that came with the Head Tax and look into our bonding capacity to raise the funds we need to build enough affordable units of housing. But I believe our best bet for building more housing will be to develop the publicly owned land already at our disposal. We can build on this land for almost nothing and can bring communities together in planning these developments with green spaces, community centers, child care, as well as affordable housing.

2e What is the role of private companies and market rate developers in supporting affordable housing?

We need partners in the business community and market rate developers to effectively address the issue of housing. Construction of more affordable housing can only occur by working with ethical developers and non-profit service providers that specialize in leveraging public and private dollars. The overarching theme of our policy surrounding affordable housing needs to be a comprehensive and long-term plan (rather than the piecemeal, reactionary policies currently in place) that continues to spur our economic success while providing adequate affordable housing, schools, childcare, and other critical community services to all Seattleites. If we can get buy in from private companies and developers, we can create a long-term plan that will actually keep up with our growth in ways that create enough affordable and market-rate housing.

2f Is Seattle spending enough to create affordable homes and provide support services for people with the lowest incomes? How do you know?

We are not doing enough. I know this because I worked in Seattle government for 31 years and King County Government for 4 years and saw what works and what does not work. In my neighborhood I see folks living unsheltered and in need of mental health and addiction services. As long as there is a single human being living outside, or one kid forced to go to school without a meal, or a disabled veteran who can't access the treatment they need, then we have not done enough to end this crisis.

2g Should cities have the authority to set policy to stabilize rents and prevent rent gouging?

We have to work with the State Legislature on this so it is a state wide response. The homeless crisis and housing affordability issue is A STATEWIDE ISSUE, not just a Seattle centric issue. If the Legislature is not going to act on this, then municipalities need to take the first step. The bottom line is that no one should be getting priced out of their home who works full-time and is just trying to raise their family and live in our city. I will work to pass responsible renters' legislation and make it easier for folks to pay their rent with vouchers, assistance, and by maintaining affordable rents for families, workers, students, and retirees.

2h Senate bill 5600 that passed the legislature this year reformed the eviction process. What additional steps should the city take to reduce evictions and keep more people in their homes?

While at King County Sheriff's office I oversaw the 'Civil Unit', which performed all of the evictions. We need to increase the resources to that unit so they can help those who are about to be evicted find alternative sources of rent subsidy or other financial assistance. They are literally on the front line. The best way to get a grip on our homelessness crisis is to prevent more people from becoming homeless. That means making it easier for folks to stay in their homes and expand rapid rehousing and Supportive Housing Programs. This would include various initiatives including rental assistance, utility vouchers, and other low-cost financial support that will prevent individuals and families from becoming evicted or otherwise homeless in the first place. These folks may also need to be connected with other existing supportive programs to help them manage their re-housing. Expanding access to affordable housing, ensuring there is adequate mental health care (not just a city or county issue), making sure there is permanent supportive housing in the region and ensuring that there is an adequate number of intensive case managers to help these people navigate the disjointed and complex regulatory system are all steps we can take to address this crisis.

2i What gaps exist in protections for Seattle tenants?

Perhaps the biggest 'gap' in tenant protections that I know of is that too many of our laws put in place to protect renters go unenforced or ignored and renters do not have easy access to their rights or information regarding actions they can take. This is especially prevalent for immigrants and non-English speaking residents who can be taken advantage of and sold unhealthy, unsafe apartments or houses. Can we really have no better system than mostly-optional inspections, no fines for violations, and lax oversight? If we are going to take affordable housing seriously, we need a government and City Council who will do better than just 'okay' and maintaining the status quo. We need a Council who will see these gaps and actually do something about it — regardless of the political cost.

2j What policy tools do you support to prevent displacement, particularly displacement of communities of color?

Displacement, gentrification, and eviction are all sides of the same coin when it comes to discrimination in housing. And that discrimination can really only be enforced when the Office of Housing, Civil Rights and the police conduct joint operations that will stand up in court showing that there is discrimination. This comes down to working together and building partnerships between community activists, developers, landlords, and our government — a co-operation that has been too easily neglected by the current City Council. Evictions that disproportionately affect people of color and poor people can be greatly reduced by assisting those who are behind in rent or utility payments with vouchers and then assisting those folks with case management to get them back on solid financial ground (this also needs to be a major aspect of preventing increased homelessness).

2k Do you support the recent passage of the MHA citywide? If not, do you support any other form or version of inclusionary zoning legislation that requires affordable homes to be built in conjunction with market rate housing?

I supported the MHA compromise, and continue to do so while we are implementing its changes and coming to see its effects. And while there are remaining concerns held by many of the recent MHA vote, the objective of using public policy to increase opportunities to expand affordable housing options is a high priority of my candidacy. As a city, we should do what is necessary to ensure that below median and moderate income workers and residents have access to quality housing, should they freely choose to live in Seattle. It makes absolutely no sense for those who serve us in the hospitality industry, the trades, our child care, teaching, public safety and health care fields to spend multiple hours a day transporting themselves to and from their work places. There are myriad negative consequences to a City being unaffordable to workers and residents: Traffic congestion, stress and unhealthy life styles, absence from the civic life of their City, time away from family and friends, and other components that determine quality of life.

In my engagement and communication with District 7 residents, I am just beginning to see the wealth of progressive thinking on this issue. Like most daunting challenges, the answers are out there, as long as we value listening over personal agendas. I support converting city, county, 'regional' and state land to below median and moderate income use — an option recently permitted by state law — with the goal of developing public/private collaborative partnerships with the economic sectors and non-profits to develop quality housing, and to develop low cost programs to prevent any of these folks from being forced out of this housing.

I also support moving low-income and affordable income projects to the front of the line at the Department of Construction and Inspections and allowing alternative construction approaches to the current onerous one experienced by everyone.

2l Legislation to make in-law apartments and backyard cottages (ADU/DADU) easier to build was proposed in 2018. Do you support this legislation?

I support this legislation as another tool we have to build more affordable housing. We need to work with communities when ADU/DADUs are added to ensure services like adequate parking are taken into account, but this is a small step in the right direction. As long as we can get neighborhood support, this is exactly the kind of legislation we need going forward.

2m Do you see ADUs/DADUs as an affordable housing solution? How and for who?

This is obviously not a panacea for our affordable housing solution, but it is part of a more comprehensive solution to our housing crisis. We are looking at needing over 100,000 new units as we grow and people move to our city and there's not going to be a silver bullet to get there. Rather, we will need many, many creative solutions such as easing requirements to build ADU/DADUs that will slowly add units at affordable prices. This likely will not help house homeless Seattleites, but it will create the space we need for students, single workers beginning their first job, disabled folks who need accessible units, and other people who are not homeless but cannot afford the sky-high rates of the current housing market and don't need the space of a new house.

2n 75% of Seattle is zoned single family. Do you support changing any of these areas to allow for multi-family housing?

Re-zoning of existing single-family residential neighborhood has always proven to be a serious challenge and must be done with much thought, listening, evaluation and implementation. I fully support increasing density and adding affordable housing along transit hubs, where parking can be more limited and folks of all economic backgrounds can succeed due to the accessibility of affordable public transit. This would also require adding childcare, community centers, grocery stores, small businesses, and mental health services to create flourishing communities for all incomes. Affordable housing cannot mean a lack of amenities or services or rows of cheaply made houses in a food and transit desert without accessible businesses, schools, and daycare. We also need to look at reinstating the policy of community planning and give a real voice to communities that will be affected by new development. I will work with all stakeholders — community members, affordable housing activists, and homeless folks — to ensure we are creating effective solutions that will allow for building of affordable housing.

We need to show that affordable housing will be a benefit to communities and this can only be done through trust and partnership with those communities during every step of the process.

2o As Seattle grows, how should the city balance increasing housing supply with preserving older existing housing stock that often has lower rents?

we need to strike the right balance between creating affordable and new mixed-use market-rate housing as well as preserving the housing we have that is already affordable. Seattle is only 82+ square miles. To develop any more living capacity we will either have to continue building 'up;' re-zone the existing low-density, single family housing areas into multi-density housing; or annexing (White Center and Skyway). It appears that 'building up' in existing high-rise areas will continue into the foreseeable future, but that is market rate and high rate housing. We must also leverage private/public partnerships to build housing outside of Seattle yet near transportation hubs so people have quality housing with reliable and affordable commutes into/out of Seattle.

The bottom line is that we need more affordable housing today. To me, finding that balance is easy using one question as the metric: do we have enough housing for all Seattleites to live in the city where they work and raise a family? Until that answer is a firm, unequivocal 'yes,' then we need to find ways to add more affordable housing options. If an older unit is providing high-quality, affordable rents, let's work to preserve it or at least work with the building owners and developers to preserve the rent scale. If an older unit is not offering the housing we need, we must look into getting it to where it needs to be.