

Answers to Community Organization Questions - Brooke Brod

Hello, and thank you to everyone who submitted questions to the candidates seeking the temporary appointment to the District 4 seat on the City Council. I have tried to address all the questions with the thoughtfulness deserved. Since many groups had questions around similar topics, I have chosen to address them thematically. For the very issue specific question, I tackled them separately.

Seven months is a short period of time and there would be a limit to what I could accomplish in that time. Many of the issues that community groups raise and goals they wish to advance may take years to accomplish. I would hope to use my time in office to raise these issues in work sessions, in hearings, and through collaboration with community groups to help make progress on planning and crafting solutions that the next council member could carry forward.

Thank you for your consideration,



My Priorities

Over the next several months there are some key issues that will likely come before the council that I would want to focus on. And, of course, there will be an opportunity through the budget process to support key priorities. Issues that I am passionate about working on include:

- ***Support Passage of Updated ADU/DADU Ordinance***

After several years and significant community engagement the Council is close to passing legislation that will enable us to build more of this important type of housing. Mother-In-Law apartments and Backyard Cottages provide many benefits:

- Rents are more affordable - up to 14% cheaper than apartments ([see page 5-9 of Final EIS](#))
- They help more people live in high-opportunity neighborhoods.
- They provide opportunities for intergenerational living and make it easier for seniors to downsize, while staying in their neighborhood.
- In community meetings I have heard many great suggestions for lower the cost the building these including offering low-interest loans, pre-approved designs, and more. I would eager to work with community members to get these ideas incorporated into the final ordinance.

- ***Expanding LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) to the U-District***

The LEAD program gives police officers more compassionate tools to address public safety that don't result in the criminalization of poverty or homelessness. Officers are able to connect people to case management instead of jail or fines. This is an extremely effective program. LEAD was brought to the North Precinct in 2018 and is currently is use in Ballard and Aurora. I think the next place for expansion should be the U-District/Ave area.

- ***Using MHA Funds to Address Displacement***

In 2018 MHA brought in \$13M to our affordable housing fund, now that MHA has passed city wide we can expect that amount to increase. As part of the budgeting process I would seek to ensure funds are specifically earmarked to go towards supporting the Equitable Development Initiative, supporting the acquisition of existing multi-family buildings so they can remain affordable, and expanding support for homeownership opportunities through limited equity co-ops and other programs.

- ***Continuing to Address Our Homelessness Crisis***

Over 30,000 individuals accessed homeless services in 2018. As reported in the most recent [Point-In-Time](#) report 98% of individuals would take safe and affordable housing if it was available. The solution to our homelessness crisis is more deeply affordable housing and more supportive housing for the 25% - 45% of individuals struggling with behavioral issues, addiction, or living with a disability. King County is in need of over 90k affordable homes to meet this need.

We need to continue to invest in building affordable homes, but in the meantime we need to do more to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place through funding diversion strategies like rental assistance, continuing to provide more enhanced shelters where people can access services, and support transitional housing like tiny home villages.

In addition to these priorities I would look forward to working with the community to move forward an updated tree ordinance, support community engagement in shaping how new development looks now that MHA has passed, and improving mobility throughout the district.

Bike Lanes, Transit & Mobility Throughout District 4

I am a multi-modal transportation user. I am fortunate to live in an extremely walkable neighborhood and can easily get groceries, fill a prescription, or meet a friend for coffee by foot. I use my bike to commute to work, go to events at Seattle Center, or go see friends. I take buses and light rail when I have a meeting downtown or am headed out for an evening on Capitol Hill. And, yes, I use my car too - to take my partner's son to school, to run errands, or go on day trips in the region.

I lived car-free in Seattle in the 90s and with the expansion of light rail, transit, and the growth of car-sharing options I look forward to being car-free again sometime in the future. Being in a city with robust transit and walkable neighborhoods allowed my grandmother to live independently until she was 101, so I know first-hand the benefits of having a robust multi-modal system in place.

When it comes to supporting mobility in the district I believe that:

- ***Bike Infrastructure is Critical Component***

When it comes to making choices about spending our transportation dollars bike infrastructure seems to be the most expendable, which is unfortunate. Interest in cycling is increasing dramatically; bike commuting was up 12% in 2018 despite little progress in building bike infrastructure. Helping to meet the demand for safe cycling will have positive benefits for pedestrians and the public realm by calming traffic and allowing more people to access neighborhood businesses and amenities.

- I am disappointed that the bike lane on 35th was removed from the plan for that arterial and
- I am frustrated that we continue to scale back and delay implementation of the Bike Master Plan.
- I support including bike lanes in the redesign of Eastlake.

After recent decisions I think it's incumbent upon the Mayor and SDOT to show how they intend to meet commitments to finish the Bike Master Plan. I also think that it's important that money earmarked in the budget for completing bike projects is actually used for bike projects and not siphoned off into utilities or other street improvements. I would look to include provisos in the budget to protect bike lane money for actual bike lanes.

- ***We Need to Make Sure People Can Connect to New Light Rail Stations***

I am excited for the opening of light rail in Roosevelt and on The Ave giving more people an opportunity to get out of their cars and onto transit. [I support the ideas in the U-District Mobility Plan](#)

and other suggestions for improving access to light rail and improvements to the public realm. including improving east/west bus routes, widening sidewalks to accommodate increased pedestrian traffic around light rail stations, and adding more all-way crosswalks (like the one at 40th, 15th Ave NE & Stevens Way) near light rail stations and at 45th and The Ave.

MHA & What Comes Next

I have been a strong supporter of MHA since the first open house on the U-District upzone I attended way back in 2015. Over the years I have attended many community meetings, public hearings, and other events. I strongly believe that MHA is one important tool for making Seattle a welcoming and affordable city for people from diverse backgrounds. Increasing opportunities for people to live in all parts of Seattle means people can spend less time commuting (and emitting carbon), have more time for their families, have more access to great schools, and contribute to the diversity and culture that makes this city such a great place to live.

I am especially proud of having proposed an amendment that incentivizes developers to include family-sized two- and three-bedroom units in exchange for additional height. This amendment was adopted first in the U-District upzone and was included in all the other MHA legislation. We still have much more to do to encourage the construction of family-sized housing and I support recommendations made by the planning commission that would allow us to build more duplexes, triplexes, stacked apartments, and cottages - all forms of missing middle housing

After the passage of MHA in the U-District the community was able to go through a process of updating the design guidelines for the neighborhood. This meant the community was able to provide input on how new development should look and the kinds of things we wanted to prioritize like modulation in building design, using high quality building materials, encouraging stoops, activating street life, using native plants in landscaping and more. I would be eager to see that a similar process was undertaken for neighborhoods like Wallingford and Roosevelt and would work with communities and OPCD to make this happen.

Addressing Public Safety

Over the past two years the crime rate for the district has remained relatively flat and the vast majority (90%) of crimes in the district are property crimes. The recent signing of a new contract with the police union should make it easier for SPD to fill vacancies. Here is where I stand on several key issues that community members have raised:

- ***Sweeping people experiencing homelessness only moves the problem elsewhere.*** I live right by Cowen Park and the Ravine where there has been camping and drug use. I hear the frustration of my neighbors, but I also hear a desire for compassionate and long-term solutions. Criminalizing poverty is not the answer. Greater investment in permanent supportive housing, enhanced shelters, tiny house villages, and programs like LEAD is what we need.
- ***The North Precinct needs new facilities.*** This project has gone back to drawing board and is several years away from completion. In the meantime I look forward to seeing the Racial Equity Toolkit review of the project and support robust community engagement in the planning process.
- ***Jail is not the answer to homelessness and drug addiction.*** Prison, fines, and prosecution are not the best answers to what is ultimately a public health crisis. The city should continue to invest in proven programs like LEAD and medical assisted treatment for people suffering from addiction.

Improving the Work of the Navigation Team and Our Response to Homelessness

It's important to keep in mind that the solution to homelessness is providing more affordable housing and more supportive housing. I am glad that the state legislature is looking at making major investments in our housing trust fund and that with the passage of MHA we will now have more money to build, acquire, and preserve affordable housing. But until that housing is built we need effective solutions to move people towards stable housing.

- **Improving the work of the Navigation Team.** The recent audit of the Navigation Team had many recommendations the ones that stood out to me were:
 - Improving coordination and communication between the Navigation Team, HSD, and service providers.
 - Improving hygiene through more consistent signage, better supplies, and additional/earlier hours. I would also be supportive of piloting mobile pit stops which would allow the city to flexibly respond to needs in the neighborhoods.
 - Ensuring all staff engaged in outreach to people experiencing homelessness get professional development in trauma informed care.

Helping Eastlake Retain and Improve its Unique Neighborhood Characteristics

I like the description of Eastlake as "a pleasant jumble of apartments, condominiums, single-family homes, houseboats, and large and small businesses." I don't think there's really any other neighborhood in Seattle that manages to combine all of these things and this means that Eastlake faces unique challenges and opportunities.

Being bookended by on-ramps and exits to and from I-5 on the north and south means that Eastlake ends up with a lot of traffic moving through the neighborhood. To further complicate matters there are long gaps between streetlights, which means cars speed through the neighborhood. I think one of the best things we can do to enhance the public realm in Eastlake is to calm traffic and make sidewalks and crossings more pedestrian friendly by looking to add more lights, stops and painted crosswalks.

Bike lanes are also an important component to calming traffic and making neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly, which is why I support including bike lanes on Eastlake. Bike ridership was up 12% last year so we know that there is increased demand and interest in safe biking routes. SDOT has looked at many options and Eastlake remains the most user-friendly and cost effective.

That said, parking is definitely a challenge for the neighborhood and I would support creative solutions to increasing access to parking for residents and people who are coming to the neighborhood for work or pleasure. A study done by King County Metro showed that up to 1/3 of parking spaces in residential lots go unused during the day; and there are spaces in commercial lots that are likely going unused in the evening. Giving building owners the opportunity to make those spots available would increase the supply of parking in the neighborhood. I think Capitol Hill Housing's & Capitol Hill EcoDistrict's work on developing shared parking strategies could be an excellent model for Eastlake.

The final piece in the mobility puzzle is transit. Eastlake will always be an important corridor for people heading to South Lake Union, Downtown, and The Seattle Center. South Lake Union's growth as a business center makes it even more important to provide good transit options for people heading to work. The Roosevelt RapidRide plan includes important transit improvements like support for paying off-board, giving buses priority at lights, increasing service time to 7.5 minutes. I think it's important that this project moves forward.

Supporting Access to Healthy Food

41% of Seattle Public School students are enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program, 13% of Seattle adults are food insecure and demand at food banks is up. Too many of our neighbors are struggling to meet this most basic need. Seattle recently, passed a sweetened beverage tax to help address this serious problem and projected revenue is holding steady. I think it's important to ensure that the money raised is prioritized for addressing food insecurity.

To further address food insecurity I think the city should look to project like the University District Food Bank, which includes affordable housing, a rooftop garden that helps provide fresh produce, and robust programs like home delivery and snack packs to school children. I think the Office of Housing should look to replicate this model in other city projects.

I also think ensuring that any transit oriented development projects and other light rail stations include public plaza spaces that can accommodate pop-up farmers markets like the [Roots to All Roads](#) mobile farm stands would be a great way to increase access to healthy food.

Engaging With The Community and Supporting Community Engagement

As a community organizer and civic engagement specialist I have spent my career empowering people to live their values and make a positive impact in their community. I firmly believe that people in the community have a right to be at the decision-making table shaping solutions. I also recognize that historically many groups have been shut out of civic spaces and their voices silenced. I am proud of the work I have done in my career to elevate and center voices that have been traditionally marginalized.

In my personal life, I am involved in many community groups. I have been a member of the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association, am an elected Precinct Committee Officer with the 43rd District Democrats, and support the work of Welcoming Wallingford. I also serve on the Community Advisory Committee for the Northlake Tiny House Village, which provides transitional housing and support to people experiencing homelessness and volunteer with the King County Coalition for the Homeless to help educate and register voters who are unsheltered.

As a community organizer I love getting to know people and connect with groups; in the early years of my career I described my job as "going to meet people for coffee and talking about issues." During my time on the council I would commit to making myself accessible to constituents through holding community coffees out in the neighborhoods, attending community meetings, and being responsive to constituent concerns.

Supporting a Vibrant U-District

The U-District is where I grew up and have lived in off and on for over 30 years. I remember shopping at the Nordstrom that was on The Ave, buying CDs at Cellophane Square, and getting coffee late night at The Last Exit. The U-District has gone through many changes, but throughout them all has remained a hub for small business, entertainment, and great street life. To address some of the specific concerns of U-District residents and business owners I would.

- Fully support moving forward on planning for the Ave to become a pedestrian only street, by working with the community and OPCD to continue fleshing out plans and a timeline.
- Help the U-District BIA and Partnership to work with the Ethnic Business Coalition and the Department of Neighborhoods to reach out to other business owners increase representation.
- Explore whether the community preference policy proposed by the Mayor could extend to small business who are at risk of being displaced.

- Helping the community connect with Metro on creating easy bus/rail transfers and more east/west connections.

Right now The Ave is the only major commercial strip that is not part of the MHA upzones, which means that now that MHA has passed throughout the city makes The Ave especially attractive to developers who may want to avoid MHA requirements. In order to ease pressure, I think it is important to include The Ave in MHA. That said, I would be interested in exploring the possibility of extending the community preference policy to small business and exploring how small business owners and developers could work together to create a community benefits agreement that supports small business on The Ave.

Preserving and Enhancing Seattle's Tree Canopy

When it comes to making decisions about preserving and enhancing Seattle's tree canopy I think it's critical to balance the goals of achieving 30% tree canopy coverage across the city with a recognition that Seattle must do its part to mitigate suburban and rural sprawl that results in large stands of trees being cut down and the loss of farmland.

I am extremely lucky to have two exceptional trees on the curb strip in front of my home. My locust trees are, according to the arborist who has assessed them, over 80 years old and they are beloved by everyone in the neighborhood. I take my responsibility for caring for these trees seriously and regularly get them pruned and their cables checked by ISA certified arborists.

During my short time in office I would be happy to work with the community to move forward on passing an updated tree ordinance. I would agree that we should revisit how we define and protect exceptional trees; ensure that there is enough notification about planned removals, and ensure SDCI can provide property owners, developers and the public have the education, information and support they need to manage their trees.

I would also want to look at ways we can incentivize preservation of significant and exceptional trees by streamlining design review and easing permit fees for developers who incorporate exceptional trees into their design. I would also include an exception to the permit requirements for removing invasive species like holly trees.

Other Questions

- 1. Do you think large employers should subsidize transit passes for their employees? Do you think the City should require this?**
 - Yes, I think the UW should provide ORCA passes for the employees. Metro has robust program in place that easily lets large and small employers do this and there's no reason why the UW should not be able to do this as well.
- 2. The new U.S. attorney for Western Washington has said he would not support the city opening a safe consumption site. Do you believe the City should still move forward with this?**
 - While I am a supporter of safe injection sites as an important part of our public health response to the opioid crisis, I recognize how controversial this is. Moving forward on this would require intense community engagement to make sure all concerns were addressed. Given the recent statements of the U.S. Attorney regarding safe-injection sites I would be hesitant to move forward at this time and getting the city involved in a lengthy and costly legal battle.

3. **Do you support community ownership models like land trusts and allocating resources to support this?**
 - Yes, and I would look to using some of the money we will receive from MHA to pay for this.
4. **In 2015, City Council passed a resolution for zero-percent detention of youth, and to develop policies eliminating youth detention. With that in mind, do you support the ongoing construction of the King County's youth jail?**
 - The Children & Family Justice Center is a County facility supported by County dollars. The CFJC provides a range of services including family court, youth programs and more. I believe that families deserve a better facility than what currently exists. It's disappointing that there is still so much space set aside for incarceration, but I am glad that design is modular allowing that space to be repurposed. I do believe that the City Council and the community should hold the County accountable to phasing the jail out on a fast timeline.
5. **Currently half of City budget goes toward Seattle's police force and public safety budget. Should this budget be reduced?**
 - I certainly believe that investing in our communities, in youth, in education, in public health, and in affordable housing ultimately reduces the need for expenditures for the police and public safety.
6. **Would you support a head tax?**
 - Our state is sadly well known for having one of the most regressive tax systems in the country. Our over reliance on sales taxes means that middle and low income people have a higher tax burden than the wealthy. Ultimately, I believe it's the responsibility of our state legislators in Olympia to address the inequities in our tax system. I am hopeful that a capital gains tax will pass this session. I am also hopeful that lawmakers in Olympia will pass a progressive Real Estate Excise Tax and allow municipalities to keep back some of the state sales taxes to use on affordable housing.
7. **District 4 is a historically red-lined, wealthy, and predominantly white district. How will you use your position to amplify community-led efforts toward equity and justice?**
 - I am committed to using my short time in office to ensure that more people from diverse backgrounds have access to the opportunities for jobs, transit, education, and more that this part of Seattle offers. I am committed to listening to and learning from people from traditionally marginalized and excluded groups so I can understand how the decisions I may make will impact them.
8. **In what ways will you support expanding the current tenant relocation assistance legislation to cover tenants being displaced by economic evictions?**
 - I am supportive of recent recommendations made by The Renters' Commission to require landlords to give more notification about rent increases. This will allow renters more time to find housing.