



## Seattle Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire on Housing and Homelessness, Summer 2017

Prepared By: [Solid Ground](#) and [Seattle University's Project on Family Homelessness](#), in partnership with [Housing Development Consortium](#) and [Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness](#)

Dear Candidate,

Thank you very much for responding to this questionnaire!

We are a non-partisan partnership of housing and homelessness providers and advocacy organizations with a combined substantial presence in Seattle. We will use your responses as part of an online **Voters' Guide on Housing and Homelessness**, which we'll publish to coincide with ballots arriving in mailboxes in mid- to late July.

Because we all are from 501(c)(3) organizations, we are unable to make endorsements; but we will share the questionnaire results with thousands of people interested in housing and homelessness.

Please complete and email this form in Word or PDF format to Catherine Hinrichsen, Seattle University, at [hinrichc@seattleu.edu](mailto:hinrichc@seattleu.edu) by **5 p.m. Thursday, July 12**, if you would like to be included in the Voters' Guide.

- If you send it as a pdf, please ensure your links are live.
- Please either attach a photo or indicate you give us permission to use a photo from your campaign website.

Please direct any questions to Catherine. Thank you!

*In addition, please save the date: We will invite the candidates who advance to the general election to a **Seattle Mayoral Candidate Forum on Housing and Homelessness<sup>1</sup>**, **Tuesday evening, Sept. 12 (tentative)** at Seattle University. More details will come after the primary.*

Questions begin on the next page.

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<sup>1</sup> We decided to cancel the forum previously scheduled for July 12 after counsel advised us we would need to invite all 21 candidates, per IRS regulations for 501(c)(3) organizations. We determined that a discussion with up to 21 candidates would not be productive. We are distributing this questionnaire instead.



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**Candidate's Name:** Mike McGinn

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**Question 1.** King County and the City of Seattle have recognized that the crises of affordability and homelessness are complex, regional issues that require regional solutions, exacerbated by the threat of potential drastic HUD funding cuts. If elected, how would you work with other regional leaders and the state and federal governments to identify, enact and implement innovative, forward-thinking solutions to decrease homelessness and increase affordability?

As mayor from 2010-13 I enjoyed strong working relationships with other mayors, as well as the King County Executive, because we met regularly and listened to each other. I led regional coalitions on new funding approaches for local streets, as well as opposing coal and oil trains. If elected, I would partner with other regional leaders to convene a working group on how to decrease homelessness and increase affordability. That would mean setting goals and building support for regional funding options as well as land use reforms to make housing more affordable. Statewide, we should restart the conversation around tax reform a way to increase affordability, diversify revenue streams, and reduce our reliance on regressive taxes. We cannot rely on the federal government to address our homelessness and affordability.

**Question 2.** What is your position on the policies contained in the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA)? What do you agree with? Disagree? .

I support most of the recommendations in HALA, including Mandatory Housing Affordability and its call for more "missing middle" housing in our communities. However, I don't believe it will be sufficient to address rising rents and rising home prices once all its recommendations are accepted or rejected in the legislative process. If elected, I would immediately start a broad based public conversation to identify how to address housing prices. This will include a



discussion of how neighborhoods can accommodate housing growth as well as how to accompany growth with appropriate investments.

In addition, I support greater investment in publicly-financed, community-owned housing, paid for by taxes on large successful corporations. We are fortunate to have job growth in Seattle, but the companies profiting from that growth should help pay for the impacts of growth on housing prices.

**Question 3.** How would you balance the disagreement and anger expressed by some neighborhood residents towards increased density and affordable homes in specific areas of the city, with our unprecedented growth and need for increased housing options that must be shared equitably across the city?

We must provide housing to meet job growth - there's no way around it, Seattle is going to keep growing. We can do so by working *with* communities on how to allow more diverse housing types, including "missing middle" housing (backyard cottages, mother-in-law units, duplexes, and triplexes), congregate housing, subsidized housing for low-income workers, and senior housing. As I mentioned above, we should have a broad based public conversation that brings everyone to the table - those who oppose density, those who support it, and perhaps most importantly, those who are in the middle. I believe that most Seattle residents understand we need more housing, but they want their voices heard.

And that is not just on housing, but on everything that makes communities work - transit, parks, safe streets, public safety. By listening and responding to concerns, I believe we can go farther than with a top-down approach.

**Question 4.** Did you vote for the Seattle Housing Levy in 2016? Why or why not? What kind of funding mechanism do you believe is best to generate money for housing and homelessness services?

I voted for the housing levy because it is essential.

I believe we need to take a hard look at our budget and how we tax. Our City's general fund has increased by 25% over the past 3 years, over \$250 million a year in new spending. If elected I would immediately review the budget. In the 2010 recession I cut the budget by \$67 million



while protecting human services. I will take the same approach to cut unneeded dollars and re-prioritize dollars to essential needs and social services.

To the extent we need more revenue for major new initiatives, I support progressive tax and/or fee policies - like a high income earners tax, or taxes on large successful corporations. When levies come up for renewal, I will look at funding packages that include progressive sources.

**Question 5.** Given that half the residents of Seattle are renters, what tenant protections -- above and beyond what the city has already done -- would you push to enact to ensure that potential tenants are being treated equitably?

I believe in renter protections. During my term I partnered with the city council to pass rental inspection legislation quickly before it was pre-empted by state law.

I support repealing the state prohibition against rent control so that Seattle can have more flexibility to take action. We may be bumping up against the limits of what we can do, which we will find out when the courts rule on challenges to recent tenant protection laws.

This is one of the reasons I support a major funding initiative to build more publicly owned housing. If we own the housing, we can control the rent and ensure fair practices toward renters.

With regard to private rentals, I would work with the renters commission to identify appropriate new tenant protections.



**Question 6.** Virtually every city in Washington has responded to the growing homelessness crisis by criminalizing behaviors such as sitting, lying or sleeping in public. If elected, (a) will you work to repeal and/or mitigate the impacts of ordinances that criminalize homelessness in Seattle, and (b) will you oppose attempts to introduce such ordinances?

Absolutely. In 2010 I vetoed the anti-panhandling statute due to these exact concerns. That action helped set the stage for our Center City Initiative, which brought together social service providers, agencies, business leaders and residents to identify new innovative approaches.

One outcome of that process was expanding Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, which prioritized drug addiction services over arrest for non-violent violations of the law. I would work to expand LEAD citywide. As a general principle, we must prioritize harm reduction and abandon punitive approaches that don't work.

I mention my prior actions, because while it is easy to espouse progressive action, it is far more difficult to do it when powerful economic interests are demanding immediate (but ultimately unproductive) actions to criminalize homelessness. You can count on me to stand up to that pressure.

**Question 7.** The recent tragic killing of Charleena Lyles highlights the issues of police accountability and the intersecting systems of care in our community whose failures led to her death, including housing, mental health, child welfare, justice and more. How would you address the failure of these systems to work together?

The tragic killing and loss of Charleena Lyles highlights a series of systemic failures. Two threads that weave these failures together is our failure at every level of government to prioritize the well-being of people, and the clear and ongoing presence of racial inequity across institutions and systems.

It is difficult for a city alone to resolve these systemic failures. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of a mayor to marshal the resources at our disposal to address them.

That means

- Budget prioritization



- Actively managing city agencies to work together. As mayor I held weekly cabinet and subcabinet meetings to break down silos.
- Convening across government, providers and community as we did with the Center City initiative.
- Empowering and listening to the Community Police Commission.
- Holding oneself accountable in public
- Never shying away from a hard look at the racial inequities embedded in our institutions.

**Candidate Signature** for verification (electronic is ok):

Mike McGinn

**Date:** July 12, 2017

**- END OF QUESTIONNAIRE -**

Distributed on behalf of partners Solid Ground, Seattle University's Project on Family Homelessness, Housing Development Consortium and Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness, by SU's Project on Family Homelessness, Institute of Public Service, Seattle University/CASY 204W, P.O. Box 222000, Seattle, WA, 98122-1090.

Please return to: [hinrichc@seattleu.edu](mailto:hinrichc@seattleu.edu) by Thursday, July 12, 2017, 5 p.m. Thank you for participating.

*Illustration of Seattle skyline by Mandy Rusch, SU '17.*