

2017 Seattle Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer this questionnaire, which was developed by members of the Civic Alliance for a Sound Economy (CASE). Please note, answers will be shared with CASE members and we reserve the right to publish any information provided in this questionnaire.

Your responses to the following questions will be used as part of a screening process to determine which candidates CASE will interview.

Responses are due Monday, May 1 by 8:00 a.m.

To submit your completed questionnaire, or if you have any questions, please contact Monica Fouts monicaf@seattlechamber.com or 206-389-7303.

About the Civic Alliance for a Sound Economy

The Civic Alliance for a Sound Economy (CASE) is a political action committee sponsored by the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. CASE is the strongest political voice for businesses, large and small, in the Seattle metropolitan region. We represent employers and organizations from every industry sector in the region.

CASE supports local candidates and issues that help create a healthy economy, competitive business climate, and high quality of life for the Seattle metropolitan area.

BASIC INFORMATION	
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Candidate Name:	Mike McGinn
Party Affiliation:	Democratic Party
Phone Number:	
E-mail Address:	info@mcginnformayor.com
Website:	http://www.mcginnformayor.com/
Twitter:	@mayormcginn
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CAMPAIGN QUESTIONS

**This is for background information and internal use only. It is confidential and will not be published.*

- 1) Please list your political consultant(s), campaign manager, and fundraiser.

Consultant(s): John Wyble

Campaign Manager: Julie McCoy

Fundraiser: TBD.

- 2) Please list all endorsements you have received.

I just entered the race. As in 2009 and 2013, I anticipate receiving institutional and individual endorsements.

- 3) Please list how much money you have raised to date, and your fundraising targets for the primary and general elections.

For strategic reasons we prefer to not share our campaign budget. When I ran in 2009 and 2013 we raised sufficient funds to ensure multiple contacts with primary and general voters.

- 4) Please describe how you would use the CASE endorsement.

Endorsements from major organizations such as CASE will be publicized widely in print and digital media.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Please tell us why you are running for mayor and what impact you hope to make.

For the past three years, we've seen Seattle change in ways that I think we all should be concerned about. Rising housing prices combined with higher taxes are making our city inhospitable to lower and middle-income individuals and families. Similarly, small businesses are getting squeezed by taxes, regulations and rising rents.

The city's general fund budget has grown 25% over the last three years, over \$250 million a year, yet our city leaders tell us they do not have the resources to address homelessness or maintain our infrastructure.

When I took office in 2010, in the depths of the Great Recession, I had to cut over \$60 million a year from the city budget. I did so while maintaining essential services and while rebuilding the rainy day fund. If we took the same approach during these strong economic times, we could free up dollars for our pressing needs while reducing the pressure for new taxes. To the extent we need new taxes, I support options that are less regressive than our current reliance on sales taxes and property taxes.

Seattle has always been known for its openness and for its quality of life. If we don't get ahold of these issues, we will choke off the stream of people who may not have a lot of money, but who have so much to offer our great city. We will also drive out the folks who

have been here, and who want their children to be here.

My announcement speech detailing why I entered the race can be found at mcginnformayor.com

- 2) What are the top three issues in Seattle today you think the City should address? How would you, as mayor, help address these issues?

- (1) Review City operating and capital budgets – no new taxes considered until review is complete.
- (2) Address the housing crisis – including meeting demand at market rate, expanding affordable housing, and providing safe housing for Seattle's homeless. Regular people need to have a seat at the table and neighborhoods will help inform spending priorities.
- (3) Get back to the basics – politicians love expensive projects, but good government is about doing a lot of little things right.

- 3) Seattle is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. Is this a good thing? What steps can the City take to help effectively plan for continued growth?

Growth is a blessing, but it is the responsibility of city governments to plan for and respond to growth appropriately.

It is imperative that we plan for growth by building enough housing to address the present shortage and keep up with the influx of newcomers. To accommodate the diversity of needs, we need a wide spectrum of housing – dense transit-accessible housing for urban professionals, missing middle housing (backyard cottages, mother-in-law units, duplexes, and triplexes), congregate housing, subsidized housing for teachers and service workers, senior housing, and so on.

We also need transportation systems that are efficient, connecting neighborhoods to transit and ensuring that routes to business districts and transit hubs are safe for walking and biking.

In the digital age, expanded access to high-speed internet also provides opportunities to work and study from home, giving many workers, students, and job-seekers flexibility and resilience around life's realities -- family needs, illness, inclement weather, and so on.

I made substantial progress in these areas even in the depths of the Great Recession, all while balancing the budget and creating a rainy day fund. We can go much farther in the current economic boom.

- 4) What impact do you believe a healthy business climate has on a city?

Many live or work in Seattle for the social and economic opportunities provided by our vibrant city. A healthy business environment invites opportunity, talent, and innovation.

When I took office in 2010, the city was reeling from the Great Recession. Unemployment was over 9%, large and small businesses were failing, and people were unable to pay their mortgages and rent. The recession led to a steep drop in tax revenues that made it difficult to support basic city services and to help those most in need. I made jobs and a healthy business climate a priority by launching the [Seattle Jobs Plan](#) in 2010. We identified priorities and specific ways to take action. I am proud of the fact that when I left office, Seattle was one of the fastest growing cities in the nation– a testament to the innovation and resiliency of our people and businesses. Bottom line, a healthy economy is essential to achieving the goals of the people of this city. The challenge today is to ensure that growth works for all of us, and does not squeeze out the people who made this city what it is, and the people we need to come here to continue our heritage of diversity, innovation, and growth.

5) What is the City's role in supporting business growth and economic development?

First and foremost, the City's primary responsibility lies in providing critical infrastructure, public safety, and appealing neighborhoods. It also has a role to play in supporting individuals in acquiring the skills they need to contribute to the community. That starts in early childhood and runs through post-secondary education and training.

I also believe in ensuring that government is responsive to every business, large or small.

For example, during my time in office, I brought together stakeholders to develop a regulatory reform package, which included:

- Streamlining environmental review with higher regulatory requirements in Urban Centers and certain Urban Villages
- Providing greater ability to mix residential uses in the ground floor of commercial zones
- Expanding opportunities for accessory dwelling units such as backyard cottages
- More parking flexibility and support for home-based businesses
- Easier permit renewals for temporary uses

I heard from our nightlife industry that they wanted a better relationship with City government. We adopted new policy changes to promote nightlife, from a collaborative approach to code compliance, responsive and fair noise ordinance enforcement, providing new transportation options, and providing training to nightlife security.

I heard from Amazon and South Lake Union businesses about the need for more reliable power, and expedited the construction of the new Denny substation. We also worked with our research sector to revise our fire code for upper story research labs. We worked with The Bullitt Foundation and Skanska to expedite deep green buildings. And we worked with shoreline businesses to ensure that our Shoreline Master Plan update worked for them while also improving environmental quality.

There are more examples. Whereas my focus at that time was to help Seattle climb out of the recession, the current economic boom provides opportunities to collaborate with businesses for an even greater impact on our city and the world.

- 6) What would you hope to accomplish in your first year in office? Do you have specific legislation that you plan to introduce? If so, please describe your strategy to get your idea implemented.

I will immediately review City operating and capital budgets, with no new taxes to be considered until the review is complete. The city's general fund has grown by 25% in the past three years, over \$250 million a year in new spending. My goal is to ensure that we are spending taxpayers dollars wisely on the city's highest priorities.

We must act rapidly and comprehensively to deal with the city's homeless crisis, discussed more fully below.

I would also renew the work we were doing under the Jobs Plan to make sure city agencies, and the Mayor's office, is accessible to all businesses in Seattle.

- 7) What experiences have you had that best prepare you to be mayor of Seattle?

I served as Mayor of Seattle from 2010 until 2013, during the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. During this time, my accomplishments included:

- Balancing a \$67 million budget shortfall upon entering office without raising taxes
- Reforming regulations to make it easier to manage growth in Seattle
- Managing effective city responses to major snow and other weather events
- Lowering Seattle's violent crime rate
- Collaborating with King County to cancel a new jail and develop alternatives to incarceration
- Working with City Council and civic leaders to expand the Families and Education Levy
- Negotiating a consent decree with President Obama's Justice Department to reform the Seattle Police Department
- Advocating successfully for a 520 bridge design that is more traffic- and transit-friendly for Seattle neighborhoods
- Holding over a hundred town halls to directly hear from the public and bring city government closer to the people

- 8) Please describe your process for developing legislation.

Legislative ideas can arrive from many sources – agencies, council members, interest groups, individuals, etc. Good ideas deserve to be heard, vetted and developed, with stakeholders given an opportunity to provide input before legislation is finalized. Much of that input can occur before introduction, but the legislative process also provides that opportunity.

I believe the best legislation starts with listening. For example, the Families and Education Levy included money for dental care in schools – kids can't learn if their teeth hurt. That idea came from low-income parents at our Youth and Family Town Halls. Similarly, we

changed the fire code to allow upper story labs in South Lake Union, which is critical to our biotech and health research institutions.

9) Please describe your process for evaluating legislation.

I weigh all legislation with an eye towards the triple bottom line of economy, environment and equity.

10) If you have any other relevant information that you think would be useful in our evaluation, please add it below.

ISSUE QUESTIONS

1) HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a growing crisis for King County and the City of Seattle. How would you create systemic change to the way the city delivers human services and spends money on homelessness, even in the face of political push back?

We need to systematically review existing spending for effectiveness while simultaneously scaling our response to the growing magnitude of the problem. I believe the public wants to see bold action from elected officials to deal with the issue of homelessness.

We have the ability and the obligation to fund both short- and long-term solutions. That includes family, low-barrier, and 24-hour shelters. It includes support for well-managed and regulated encampments in the short term. It includes housing policies that provide sufficient low-cost options for rapid re-housing. And it includes expanding options for those struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues. For example, we need citywide expansion of the law enforcement-assisted diversion program that provides treatment in lieu of punishment for drug users.

Since 2013, our city government has lost time by waiting for the state or federal governments to expand their help. In this time of extraordinary growth and wealth in Seattle we need to look to our own resources – both in the public and private sectors – to urgently address this crisis.

While dealing with individuals' immediate needs has to be a priority, we also need to look at the root causes of homelessness as well. Many people have been pushed out of their homes due to a lack of housing affordability. By effectively outlawing mother-in-law units, backyard cottages, and [micro-housing](#), we have guaranteed fewer units and less flexible options.

2) PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Do you support a statewide paid family leave policy versus a citywide policy? In general, what are the consequences and/or benefits of the City establishing legislation ahead of other jurisdictions?

I support a statewide paid family leave policy, and support creating a citywide policy now while we wait for the state to act.

3) PUBLIC SAFETY

Do you believe we have adequate public safety resources in Seattle?

I believe that public safety is the highest priority for a Mayor. I also believe that every agency within the city government has a role to play in providing public safety.

For example, our police department must work in close harmony with Human Services, schools, and libraries to prevent youth violence, which is why I expanded our Youth Violence Prevention Initiative to cover more at-risk youth. We need housing and job creation programs for felons, which is why I launched Career Bridge – an innovative program to prevent recidivism. Public safety also extends to how our streets are managed. We have approximately the same number of traffic fatalities each year as murders in this city. In a city surrounded by bodies of water, pools and lifeguards are essential to preventing avoidable death by drowning. Our building codes need to protect us in the case of natural catastrophes like earthquakes.

I'm not saying this to avoid the question of whether we are sufficiently funding our police department; as mayor my last budget provided for hiring 61 new police officers. I say the above to emphasize my belief in a holistic approach to public safety.

It's also clear to me that it's not just the amount of dollars that we spend on public safety, but how we spend them that matters. Those dollars must be used effectively.

During my administration we launched directed patrols so that officers would be on foot 15 minutes of every hour in known crime hotspots. We launched law enforcement-assisted diversion, a successful program to direct low-level offenders to drug treatment rather than ineffective use of the courts. We launched the Center City Initiative, which brought together human service providers and businesses in our downtown neighborhoods to identify solutions to public disorder. We also launched Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion downtown which gave officers the ability to connect drug users with services. That program should be expanded citywide.

I met weekly with command staff in conjunction with other agencies to identify innovative approaches, and would continue to do so if elected Mayor. I also regularly visited precincts to hear directly from officers to better understand the challenges that they face. I would continue doing so, as well as continuing to ensure that our city agencies on the front lines of public safety have their needs addressed in the budget process.

4) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

How would you improve transparency and accountability in Seattle's budget to help citizens better understand how their money is being spent and whether they are getting the desired outcomes?

During my administration, the City Budget Office revised its budget book to make it more accessible, and we launched interactive tools to better understand the budget. We also published online the performance agreements between department heads and the Mayor's Office that identified metrics that we were working towards. We launched the Find-it Fix-it app so that the public could follow in real time how government responded to requests for service. Through our Open Data Portal we made more government data available to the public. I believe that advances in technology and better budgeting systems, coupled with a commitment to transparency, can yield greater opportunities for the public to understand spending and hold the city accountable to outcomes.

5) LABOR LAWS

Q1: Do you believe the Office of Labor standards has adequate resources for employer education and outreach?

Probably not. There have been a lot of recent changes in labor law, so education needs to be a priority. The vast majority of businesses are trying to do the right thing, and we need to help them to appropriately follow regulations.

Q2: If a new labor law is proposed, how and when would you engage the business community to help inform your position and approach?

During my administration, we regularly convened business and industry panels to advise us on potential regulatory or legal changes. As an example, accompanied by city planners, I personally sat with maritime and industrial business owners to review new local ordinances required by the state's Shoreline Management Act. I would take the same approach on any new labor law or regulation.

6) EDUCATION

Business, government, and philanthropic sectors have united to form the [Seattle Region Partnership](#) to advance local middle-income jobs and promote inclusive economic success in our region.

This effort is co-chaired by the Seattle Foundation, the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, King County, and the City of Seattle. Together these leaders will work to help align existing efforts in order to increase access to middle-income job opportunities for local residents through workforce development, training, and placement.

Q1: Do you support the use of City resources to help support this effort with partners?

Yes. In fact, in my first year in office I partnered with Phil Bussey (then-chair of Seattle Greater Chamber) to convene a working group composed of representatives from business, labor (King County Labor Council, SEIU), Foundations (Gates, Seattle Foundation), colleges (UW, Seattle Community Colleges), and the school district to identify opportunities for collaboration. We adopted a “road map” approach that identified key outcomes from birth through post-secondary education, including job training opportunities. That group met through the remainder of my term, identifying multiple opportunities for collaboration.

Most notably, it led to our Pathways to Careers Initiative, in which the community college system developed accessible job training programs in fields identified by the business community. We also developed Career Bridge, an innovative program that partnered with community groups and job-training agencies to assist felons who were returning from prison to integrate back into the community. Different groups need different approaches to gain the skills needed to obtain meaningful work, and the city was committed to working with partners on new approaches. If elected I would look forward to continued collaboration.

Q2: How can city government help improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all students across the city?

That was the question that informed our Youth and Family Initiative, in which we heard from over 3000 residents about what they needed for their children to succeed. The process, which culminated in an education summit, led to a series of recommendations extending far beyond the classroom. We incorporated these ideas into an expanded Family and Education Levy, as well as changes to city policy. With local business partners and celebrities, we also launched our successful Attendance Campaign. Our office funded the first study of universal pre-school.

The next renewal of the Family and Education levy gives us the opportunity to look at expanding pre-k option. I also believe we need to take a closer look at skills centers in our schools in partnership with the city and the community college system.

While Seattle Public Schools has responsibility for what happens inside the classroom, the city government in partnership with the community creates the environment in which children can succeed. If elected, I would once again launch a broad-based process to gather input on steps that the city could take, and act on them.

7) **REVENUE**

The City Budget Office projects a significant budget shortfall that will start in 2018 and grow rapidly in following years.

Q1: How would you solve the looming budget shortfall and balance the tax burden?

We should be using the good times to prepare for the bad times. For example, the very highly variable real estate excise taxes that we are receiving now should be prioritized to known maintenance needs, not new projects. If we fail to do this now, it will make the budget crunch that much worse during economic hard times – not only will we have insufficient funds to complete the projects started now, we also won't be able to maintain existing assets.

We also have to take a close look at growth in city personnel costs. Though it undoubtedly takes more people to provide more services, there are significant costs associated with cyclical hiring and firing of city staff.

Finally, to get out of the box of merely cutting spending or raising taxes to address shortfalls, we need to ensure that city spending enhances the overall wealth of the city. Specifically, we need to take a close look at the financial productivity of spending decisions and new regulations. All too often, city spending is in response to political demand, without a close eye on whether it improves the financial bottom line of our businesses and residents, which is critical to a sustainable tax base.

These were exactly the hard choices we faced in 2010. We made \$60 million in cuts in my first year, rebuilt the Rainy Day Fund, and helped support a dramatic reduction in joblessness. Fiscal discipline now, combined with smart investments in people and infrastructure, will help us prepare for the inevitable downturn.

Q2: Do you support a city income tax? Why or why not?

I support a city income tax. When I announced that I was running for mayor, I called on the City Council to pass one this year, as soon as they can. We know it will be challenged legally, so we should get a test case in front of the courts right away to resolve the issue.

I support it because our regressive tax structure is fundamentally unfair to city residents. We need to reduce our reliance on the property tax and sales taxes.

8) **HOUSING**

In response to rapidly rising rents and public pressure, Mayor Ed Murray, along with other key stakeholders, developed the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), a 65-point plan to help create 50,000 housing units by 2025.

Q1: Do you support the HALA recommendations? If so, how would you, as mayor, move forward the upzone plans to add development capacity in the face of strong opposition from anti-HALA groups?

HALA is a significant step in the right direction, and I support many of its recommendations. But I do not anticipate that HALA, once it winds through the legislative process, will be sufficient to address our housing affordability problems.

The proposals in HALA have run into great difficulty because too many people felt they were excluded from the discussion. If elected, I will return to the issue of housing affordability in a way that allows everyone to have a say and advocate for their respective positions. When I was Mayor, we used extensive outreach processes with regard to Road Safety, Public Safety, and Education, and we made progress. I fundamentally believe in the willingness and desire of Seattle residents to work together to improve housing affordability.

9) **TRANSPORTATION**

Because of significant projects happening around the city and the continued rapid population growth, mobility in the city is in jeopardy. In 2015, voters approved a 9-year, \$930 million Levy to Move Seattle.

Q1: How do you propose we create transparency and accountability for how these funds are allocated? How do we create metrics to measure the success of this substantial taxpayer investment?

As Mayor, I would require any levy package that is put on the ballot to be accompanied by a spending plan that clearly outlines all major deliverables, the sources of funds for those deliverables (levy funds and other non-levy fund), and the anticipated timing for expenditure/completion. With regard to the existing levy, on a semi-annual basis, I would require the department(s) responsible for completing the levy commitments to report on the project status and actual spending patterns by fund source, and I would post this information on the levy website. This tracking mechanism would allow the public to track how their tax dollars are being spent. If a project timeline is slipping or is over budget, it would be up to me as Mayor to work with the department to explain what is causing the problems and proactively develop a plan to get the project back on track (i.e. avoid cost overrun surprises as was the case with the SPU/SCL billing system). If, on the other hand, projects were coming in at a lower-than-anticipated costs, it would provide me with the opportunity to work with the department and the public to reprogram those dollars towards other needs.

This information is notably different from what is currently made available to the public on various dashboards in that it would list specific projects and the timing of expenditures.

10) **BUSINESS CLIMATE**

What can be done to reduce the cost and administrative burden for small businesses operating in Seattle?

The first thing city government has to do is listen. As part of our Seattle Jobs Plan when I was in office, our Office of Economic Development staff conducted outreach to hundreds

of small and large businesses across the city. We convened industry-specific panels to solicit suggestions for improvement, and then acted upon them. I held a monthly jobs sub-cabinet with relevant department heads to ensure that the Mayor's Office was troubleshooting issues that arose in implementing the Jobs Plan.

As examples of our efforts, with input from labor and business we passed a regulatory reform package to [remove outdated regulations](#). We added General Fund revenues, not just permitting fees, to ensure construction applications were dealt with in a timely manner. I received a weekly report from the head of the department on how responsive we were. We worked to improve relations between [nightlife](#) businesses, the police, and neighborhoods. We launched "[Only in Seattle](#)", which provided grants to neighborhood business districts. When approached by our tech entrepreneur community, we launched our "[Startup Initiative](#)." We made it easier for [mobile food trucks](#), which often grow into brick and mortar businesses. There are more examples. Good government is about doing a lot of little things right.

We all know that decades of laws and regulations from multiple levels of government – all written in good faith at the time – combine to make government unresponsive and inefficient. As a long-time advocate for action on climate, I know that many of those regulations stand in the way of a sustainable environmental future. When I was Mayor I made it a priority to be as responsive as we could, without compromising vital public health and safety regulations. As with legislation I would take a triple bottom line approach of looking at all regulations with an eye towards the effects upon the economy, environment, and equity. If elected, I would continue those efforts with the recognition that there remains a lot to be done to make government as efficient, responsive and effective as it should be.

