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2019 Seattle City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer this questionnaire, which was developed by 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 the screening process to determine which candidates are interviewed as part of our endorsement process.

Responses will be accepted on a rolling basis but are due no later than Friday, May 24th by 5:00p.m.

To submit your completed questionnaire, or if you have any questions, please contact Michael McIntyre at Michael@casecampaigns.com

About the Civic Alliance for a Sound Economy

The Civic Alliance for a Sound Economy (CASE) is a political organization representing diverse local business interests. Sponsored by the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, CASE is committed to creating an affordable, livable, and safe city for all Seattleites to thrive.

CASE endorses candidates who demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of life and economic opportunities for all Seattleites. CASE is focused on four core issues:

Good Governance:

Trust: Seattle deserves a City Council we can trust to put our city on the right track, not one that has failed to make meaningful progress on many of the critical issues we face.

Accountability & Transparency: Seattle deserves a City Council that is accountable to all of us and acts transparently. We need to know whether our city's resources are being used wisely.

Solutions: Seattle deserves a City Council that stays focused on issues facing our city and our neighborhoods - and offers ideas that work. We need leaders who will take a balanced approach and work collaboratively with local leaders, not fight them.

Homelessness:

Big Picture Thinking: Seattle deserves a City Council that will advance long-term systemic reforms to address homelessness in our city, which continues to rise while the U.S. average remains almost flat. We need to do better to help our homeless neighbors.

Best Practices: Seattle deserves a City Council that provides resources to effective programs and groups and holds contractors accountable for meeting performance standards.

Regional Approach: We need prompt implementation of thoughtful, regional solutions with clear leadership and accountability to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

Affordability:

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Housing for All Income Levels: Seattle deserves a City Council that recognizes the importance of building housing for people and families of all incomes. We have a diverse population and broad-based economy, and we all do better when more people can afford to live close to jobs and transit.

Local Businesses & Jobs: Seattle deserves a City Council that is focused on the success of all our neighbors, especially those getting left behind as our city experiences incredible prosperity. We need leaders who will help grow local businesses and expand family-wage jobs.

Transportation:

Congestion & Livability: Seattle deserves a City Council that prioritizes improving transit, reducing traffic congestion, and helping people and goods move around the city faster. We need leaders who continuously strive to make Seattle one of the best places in the nation to live and work.

BASIC INFORMATION

Candidate Name: Mark Solomon	City Council District: 2
Party Affiliation: Democrat	Phone Number: 206-679-1162
Email Address: info@marksolomon.org	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/votemarksolomon/
Website: https://marksolomon.org/	Twitter: @VoteMarkSolomon

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

Political Consultants: Jason Bennett, Argo Strategies
Campaign Manager: n/a
Fundraiser: n/a
Money Raised to Date: \$29,303 including Democracy vouchers
Are you participating in the Democracy Voucher Program? Yes
Total Democracy Vouchers Collected: 705 approved and ready for disbursement
Money Raised Outside of Your District Vs. Within Your District: to qualify for the democracy voucher program, I had 89 \$10+ donors in district, and 69 \$10+ donors out of district.
Fundraising Target for Primary Election: \$75,000

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Fundraising Target for General Election: \$75,000

Total Doors Knocked On: 788 and counting!

Please list all endorsements you have received:

I have received the following Endorsements to date:

ProTec Local 17; Betty Patu, Seattle School Board; Larry Gossett, King County Council Member; Retired State Representative Mary Lou Dickerson (D-36); State Representative Gael Tarleton (D-36); State Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos (D-37); Camille Monzon-Richards, Executive Director Emerita, Seattle Indian Center; Juan Cotto, Director of Social Impact, Bloodworks Northwest and past Board President of El Centro de la Raza.

ISSUE Questions

Homelessness

Most Seattle voters rank homelessness as their number one issue and believe the current City Council has not offered workable solutions despite increased funding.

Q1: What are your top two strategies for addressing homelessness?

The most immediate action that the Council must take is to enhance services for those who are homeless. The services currently available are not efficient or effective enough. I will push to use funds for safe, clean, accessible housing and immediate, effective, wrap-around services people need to participate in changing their circumstances. These services include increasing our low-to-moderate barrier shelter and enhanced shelter capacity, outreach and engagement efforts, case management, mental health counseling, drug dependence and addiction treatment, physical health screenings, education courses, and job application assistance. Although many of these services already exist, they are underfunded. These actions must be taken as quickly as possible.

Concurrently, we must work to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place. This can be done with rental assistance, assistance with utilities, employment opportunities, access to transportation or assistance with car repairs so people can get to work or appointments if a vehicle is their best option. These supports already exist; people need to know they exist and how to access them. There is financial assistance through the Office of Housing and tax exemptions/relief through King County that can assist those

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on the edge of homelessness to stay in their homes. One of my priorities is to ensure those who are vulnerable are aware that this assistance exists and educate them on how to access those resources.

Q2: Do you believe that achieving these objectives will require additional financial resources?

The above objectives do not necessarily need additional financing, but they do need *smarter* financing. The Council must conduct audits to see where money is currently being spent in order to redirect funds in a more productive manner. We must work in better coordination with our business, community-based and faith-based partners so that no one government entity, business, neighborhood, or organization is overburdened. Let's bring all stakeholders to the table and collaborate to bring effective change to our communities!

Q3: What are the most critical things that must change in order to implement your strategy?

The most critical thing to change is our mindset. Homelessness is not a new issue. A broad-brush approach, such as the current Coordinated Entry model, does not serve everyone equitably. What is best for a homeless veteran, may not be what is best for a homeless youth. Services for people experiencing long-term homelessness, especially those that may suffer from addiction or mental illness, may not be relevant to families becoming homeless for the first time. The front-line staff, who work with our unsheltered neighbors regularly, know what to do and how to best serve the homeless population. We need to get out of our own way and let them do the work, specifically on a more individualized basis.

Transportation

We need to meet our region's growing mobility needs, allowing employees to get to work and efficient transportation of goods. Traffic, congestion and public transportation are also top issues for Seattleites. Considering the approval of the 9-year, \$930 million Move Seattle Levy:

Q1: How would you pursue budget transparency and accountability for these funds, and what are your metrics of success?

I would pursue budget transparency and accountability by not only making records accessible to the public, but also through public input. The City Council should be the voice of the people, not just the voice for the people. I think it is extremely important to hold community meetings and discussions to ensure that all voices are heard. I will measure metrics of success by taking into account resident attitudes towards public transit and congestion and will not stop fighting until we see more busses, light rail, rideshare like connectors between neighborhoods, and more frequent and available transit nodes across neighborhoods.

Q2: What are the top transportation needs in your district and how would you address them?

What I'm hearing from neighbors is the need for more affordable transit options, east-west connections, and connections between neighborhoods and transit nodes. I'm also hearing about the need for more designated, protected bike lanes to reduce the number of cyclist injuries and fatalities resulting from accidents involving vehicular traffic.

In general, we must increase the number of transit stops, increase scheduling at all hours, increase consistency and reliability, and advocate for more East to West routes throughout all of Seattle. The program we currently have in place offering reduced rates on bus passes is a good start-- but it is not all-access. Some buses, for those who live further out, cost more to ride, which adds to the burden faced by residents who already struggle to get to work. Some people may qualify for reduced fare but don't know that they do or don't know how to access the resource.

I hope to create an initiative that supports free transit for those who can not afford it and will advocate for increased transit stops and access citywide.

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To ensure that Seattle drastically lowers net carbon emissions, we must reform our transportation system to reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles. We need to offer more transit options so people can move easily around and through our region, while working towards the goal of a lighter environmental impact. We can do this by offering more transit options, transit only lanes, dedicated bike lanes, increased frequency of transit and hours of operation, and all-door boarding. More transit routes, especially more connectors in a spoke and hub system that connects neighborhoods, would increase the mobility of our city, reduce traffic congestion, and increase our city's transportation sustainability.

Housing

Seattle must have more affordable housing to address critical workforce needs. The passage of Mandatory Housing Affordability is a first step in addressing this pressing issue.

Q1: Now that MHA has passed, what would be your top legislative priority be for creating more affordable housing options in your district?

I am fortunate enough to live in the house my family built on Beacon Hill. If this home had not stayed in my family, I wouldn't be able to afford to live here. The current housing market puts home ownership out of reach for many of our working families. Rental costs in some neighborhoods have become so high that some neighbors are forced to move out of the city. Now that MHA has passed, I will make it my top priority to support the tax reduction/exemption and tax deferral programs offered by King County for our seniors and disabled neighbors. I will work with the County to ensure the eligibility requirements for these programs are updated. I support the Multifamily Tax Exemption, homeownership assistance through the City's Office of Housing, and community-based efforts through organizations such as Southeast Effective Development (SEED) and HomeSight. Further, I will work to ensure these efforts not only continue, but are enhanced, so families are not displaced due to rising housing costs. I believe we should invest in mechanisms to keep people in their current homes and build enough affordable housing units and workforce housing to allow people to be able to live in this city without exceeding 35% of gross annual income.

Growth and Competitiveness

Seattle is a geographically constrained city experiencing unprecedented growth. We need City Councilmembers who can plan for the needs and challenges that with that growth, including how the city can physically accommodate large increases in people and jobs.

Q1: How and where should our city direct new growth?

I believe in inclusive economic vitality and opportunity in which our neighbors and family businesses are not displaced. We need to direct our growth in ways that do not overburden one community over another, but focus on centering that growth along an Urban Village mode. Let's smartly manage that growth, ensure people in the affected communities are involved in the conversation, and that new growth connects neighbors to businesses, services, and transit nodes within walking distance of their residence. We should work with our corporate partners to ensure equitable investments in our infrastructure and economy benefit all parties and neighbors. We must work collaboratively with all our employers to ensure that we all contribute to and manage growth equitably.

Funding growth is only one part of the puzzle. We must direct growth upward-- not outwards-- so that our neighbors are able to stay in their neighborhoods and communities. We currently have many luxury apartment buildings with empty rooms because they are not affordable. If our cities made some of these buildings or portions of the buildings into subsidized housing, it would be a much better use of space and resources. Similarly, we should encourage developers to build spaces for families and workforce housing.

Q2: As more neighboring cities develop the housing, transit, and commercial infrastructure needed to support larger employment bases, how will you as a Councilmember encourage employers of all sizes to locate, stay, and grow in Seattle?

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While the goal of Mandatory Housing Affordability is to address the housing affordability crisis, it unfortunately has created an affordability crisis elsewhere. As the City prioritizes residential housing and re-zones available space, small businesses are struggling with displacement. The few commercial spaces that are available are increasingly unaffordable.

As the Councilmember for District 2, I will propose specific legislation to stop the displacement of small businesses. I will introduce legislation to designate a portion of the Equitable Development Fund specifically for small commercial space development. Organizations developing mixed-use projects in District 2 will have priority in accessing these funds to offset costs of construction and improvements for tenants. I will also introduce a pilot program in District 2 that will work with Seattle's Finance and Administration Department and the King County Tax Assessor's Office to provide property owners of commercial space with a tax credit. These tax credits could be applied to the development of new commercial space, upgrading existing space, or the leasing of a vacant lot to manufacturers. This will help small businesses compete with the rising cost of commercial space.

Public Safety

Every Seattleite deserves to be safe in their neighborhoods. However, many Seattleites feel less safe in their neighborhoods than they did just two years ago.

Q1: Please describe the top public safety concern in your district.

The safety of the people in my district is my top priority. I've been working to improve public safety in District 2 for nearly 30 years. I believe that public safety is not just a matter of police officers, firefighters, and other first responders doing their jobs, but also about people feeling safe and engaged as they are doing *their* jobs, living in *their* community. In recent months, we've seen an increase in gun violence incidents resulting in injury, property damage, and community fear. Reducing gun violence in the community is something we must tackle together, NOW. As a Crime Prevention Coordinator, I am currently working with community based efforts - such as Choose 180, Urban Impact, Community Passageways, and Rainier Beach A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth - to reduce youth violence and gun violence. As the city Councilmember for District 2, I will expand support and funding for these programs

Additionally, I believe that improving community engagement in my district is an important step towards addressing public safety concerns in District 2. We must increase interaction between community members and first responders to foster collaboration towards community and relational policing. All stakeholders must be included in creating a strategy to improve the safety of our neighborhoods. I will work with the Chief of Police to ensure the best Commander available is assigned to the South Precinct and ask for a commitment to keeping that Commander in place for at least four years. This will allow the community to establish a strong working relationship with the Precinct Command Staff and further comprehensive community policing and relational policing efforts for District 2.

Q2: How would you better allocate resources to address this issue?

As your Councilmember for District 2, I will focus on advancing programs to increase community interaction with our district's first responders so members of the community get to know these public servants on a personal level. These programs will engage the public with firefighters, medics, and police officers through safety fairs and Fire & Police Station Open Houses. This way, the public can see the facilities, equipment, and vehicles; learn on a more intimate level what our first responders actually do; and learn how to promote public safety in their own neighborhoods. When we all come together in collaboration and trust, we can accomplish so much more. I also believe we should invest in hiring more police officers, firefighters, and Emergency Medical Technicians and provide financial incentives to attract the best and brightest from District 2 to pursue these careers.

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Government Accountability

We know that most Seattle voters do not trust the current City Council. They want a Council that is transparent, accountable and delivers results.

Q1: What would you do to restore trust and accountability?

Our City Council has a reputation of not listening to the concerns of their constituents. We deserve a city government that is responsive and accountable to the people it serves. To restore trust and accountability, I will listen more than talk, be accessible and responsive, and when people come before the City Council to express their views or testify, I will pay more attention to the person speaking than to my phone; I will look up and be attentive.

The City Council must engage in thorough, thoughtful, and evidence-based processes, but it must also make decisions in a timely manner. Seattle residents deserve solutions for their concerns, not endless debate. Seattle residents deserve a council that is focused on the nuts and bolts of being civic leaders; making sure the city is safe, livable, clean and functioning. I'm focused on achieving results. As your City Councilmember, I will work for my constituents. The concerns and priorities of District 2 will always come first.

Q2: Specifically, how would you evaluate spending priorities and measure their effectiveness?

We must regularly audit our spending to ensure that it is being allocated wisely. For instance, we spend about \$90 million dollars a year addressing homelessness. In spite of this spending, results have been marginal in getting our unsheltered neighbors out of unsanitary and unsafe conditions and into housing that meets their needs. I'm encouraged by the regional approach that Seattle, King County and our neighboring cities are undertaking, but I want to see more achievable results. By examining our spending, we can see that diversion programming, like rental assistance, is extremely effective and cost efficient in interrupting the cycle of homelessness. At the same time, we must continue to invest in immediate solutions to meet the current needs of the homeless population. This means increasing our low-to-moderate barrier shelter capacity, investing in permanent supportive housing, and investing in treatment and services for mental health and addiction. By examining our spending, we can make smarter investments in solutions that address both our long-term and immediate goals.

In addition, we must prioritize transparency and accountability to the public on the Council.

Revenue

Many Seattleites believe that there is a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

Q1: Please list the different sources of revenue for the city of Seattle.

- Property tax
- Retail Sales tax
- Business & Occupation tax
- Public & private utility taxes
- Business license and other permitting fees
- Revenue from other public agencies/govt entities
- Admission taxes
- Sweetened beverage tax

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- Court fines
- Paid Parking

([The list above](#) is not exhaustive but covers the major sources of Seattle Revenue.)

Q2: Do you believe Seattle has enough revenue to address our most critical issues? If so, please explain which additional tools you would propose.

I believe that Seattle already has enough revenue. As I mentioned before, I believe that the Council needs to spend our existing revenue in smarter, more effective ways. I believe that we need to invest in spending time on research to better understand what we are doing wrong, what other cities are doing right, and then tackle the problem based on that evidence.

Child Care

Seattle is facing a child care crisis. There are more kids that need care than there are available child care services.

Q1: How would you support increasing access to high-quality, affordable child care for Seattle families?

I believe that high quality affordable childcare should be a public service that is accessible to all. I have friends who recently moved to Louisville, Kentucky to be closer to family because the cost of child care in Seattle was not sustainable for their family. Even though they both worked full time jobs, the salary of one of parent would just barely cover childcare costs, leaving the remaining income to barely sustain their other living expenses. Additionally, we know that high quality child care spaces are in limited supply and there are often long waiting lists.

Whether we subsidize childcare or make it available on a sliding payment scale, we must consider solutions to make childcare more affordable. We cannot expect parents to pay bills and maintain a job if they do not have the time or means to do so.

Labor Laws

Labor laws like Washington's Paid Family Leave Law are most effective when they benefit both employees and employers.

Q1: If a new labor law is proposed, how and when would you engage the business community to help inform your position and approach?

I would engage the business community from the very beginning so all voices are heard and input from all impacted can be brought forth. All opinions matter and should be taken into account before we move forward with any concrete decisions. We all do better when we all do better.

Business Climate

Seattle's business community is a willing partner and expects its elected officials to lead the public policy conversation around solutions to the pressing problems in our city.

Q1: How would you work with the Seattle business community if you were elected to office?

As a former small business owner, I know how important it is to have collaboration between local government and business. I can not say enough how vital community discussions and community forums are. I would regularly interact with our business community, especially our family owned neighborhood businesses, our neighborhood business associations, our Metropolitan Improvement Districts and Business Improvement Areas to make sure that all voices are heard. I will ask them what they need, how the City can support them, and drive resources and personal effort to help them thrive.

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Q2: Specifically, how would you collaborate with our members to address the city's current challenges while balancing the needs of a business community that drives economic opportunity?

First, by looking at you as a partner, not an adversary. We can get a lot more done working together than pointing fingers at each other. Your members are employers and I have people in my district that need jobs. Let's work together to elevate everyone's prosperity.

As the Councilmember for District 2, I will champion policies that will help – not hurt – our family businesses. I believe that we must continue to invest in our local economy by recruiting businesses to District 2. Driving business growth in district will also drive economic opportunity for our neighbors. Residents should be able to live and work in their own neighborhoods. This will enhance community engagement, reduce traffic, and maintain a high quality of life. I will work with the Department of Neighborhoods, The Office of Economic Development and The Office of Arts and Culture to make sure that adequate funding is allocated to District 2 for community development. The Greater Seattle Partnership is our regional business recruiting organization; with their assistance, I will conduct an analysis of District 2 to develop a recruiting strategy to attract businesses to our neighborhoods. I will work with the Seattle Office of Economic Development to create a District 2 business retention and expansion program (BREP). I will work with all of the business associations in District 2 to facilitate connections with decision makers in City Departments and create a comprehensive plan to facilitate growth.