



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.

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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:

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: Egan Orion	City Council District: 3
Party Affiliation: Democratic	Phone Number: 206 478-2527
Email Address: egan@eganforseattle.org	Facebook: facebook.com/eganforseattle
Website: EganForSeattle.org	Twitter: @EganForSeattle

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION	
Political Consultants: Christian Sinderman and Erin Schultz, NWP Consulting	
Campaign Manager: Olga Laskin	
Fundraiser: Kevin Geiger and Amelia Brown, Blue Wave Political Partners	
Money Raised to Date: Approximately \$30,000 with more vouchers coming in every day.	
Are you participating in the Democracy Voucher Program? Yes.	
Total Democracy Vouchers Collected: 681	
Money Raised Outside of Your District Vs. Within Your District: 53% of contributions from D3, 89% of contributions from within Seattle.	
Fundraising Target for Primary Election: \$75,000	
Fundraising Target for General Election: \$125,000	

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Total Doors Knocked On: 1,380

Please list all endorsements you have received: I am currently in the process of seeking endorsements from progressive organizations and leaders, small businesses and other business groups, LGBTQ and community leaders. I have received the Hospitality endorsement but cannot announce until next Tuesday, 5/28/19.

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?

Those who are chronically homeless—around 2000 of our neighbors—are our most vulnerable residents. We are already paying to assist them but in temporary ways that contribute to their suffering and increase our long-term investment. We know there's no easy solution to solving the homelessness crisis—it's going to take a variety of strategies addressing the complicated root causes and mitigating the ultimate effects if we're going to make progress on this issue.

First things first, we need to get people on the street into housing where they can be comfortable, get the care they need, and feel confident their possessions will be safely stored. Let's work with King County and cities throughout the region to create supportive housing for all of our chronically homeless with wraparound services—including mental health and addiction recovery services—and provide the stability and support these residents need for a better future. This focus on permanent supportive housing will result in less suffering and better long-term outcomes.

Next, let's address one of the main drivers of homelessness—lack of affordable housing. I will elaborate on this more in the affordable housing section below, but to put it simply, we need more housing, and we need it now. Through upzoning, filling the “missing middle” with “light density” (ADUs, duplexes, multi-family buildings, etc.), and implementing creative reforms to take advantage of vacant spaces, we can bring down the cost of housing for all.

I have many more ideas for how to address homelessness, but it all starts with revisiting our current policies, reviewing what's working and what's not, and then making bold decisions that get unsheltered neighbors into safe, permanent housing now, as well as creating more housing to bring down costs going forward.

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

Given the magnitude of this challenge, the City very likely will require more financial resources to meet our goals. However, before we pursue raising those funds, we need to do a complete review of our current methods, programs, and services. We need a better understanding of what homelessness strategies are actually effective, and which aren't working. After this thorough review, we can build a new, comprehensive plan to address homelessness with measurable targets and achievable objectives, and present it to all stakeholders, especially those who we may seek new revenue from. One reason why the head tax was a failed effort was because the voters had no confidence that Council knew what they were doing and were spending taxpayer dollars well. We must have the confidence of voters and taxpayers for any major policies. It is essential and central to a representative democracy. Let's get the basics right and if more is needed, Council will seek additional, fair, accountable funding.

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

Measurable objectives, stakeholder buy-in, and a comprehensive approach that brings together both services for those in need and strategies to deter future neighbors from becoming unsheltered. We need to acknowledge that what we're doing now isn't working—instead, we need a thoughtfully constructed blueprint that will lead to real results. The current council (in particular my opponent) is more focused on ideology than solving the core problems. We can do both. Create a plan. Build a coalition. These are the essential pieces of legislating that the current council member has failed to do.

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?

Transparency and accountability are key parts of my platform—in transportation and across all key policy areas. We need to be clear about how we're spending these funds and better involve the public in the decision-making process. Seattle has a wealth of potential transit projects, and I want to make sure we make the most of our money by investing in equitable projects that will make Seattle transit more affordable and reliable.

Seattleites want less traffic and more transportation options. The key metrics I will look for in a successful transportation system are increased transit ridership, shorter commute times, use of alternative modes, and reduced cars on the road. Seattle is one of the fastest growing cities in America and we also have one of the fastest growing transit systems; let's keep this up by providing plenty of options that serve communities where they need it. By taking more cars off the road through better access to transit, we can shorten commute times, reduce traffic, and cut carbon emissions to fight climate change—three great outcomes everyone can get behind.

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

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First, we need connected Rapid Ride bus lines and connected bike lanes so that whether through mass transit or bike/micro-mobility solutions everyone has an affordable way to get around this city quickly. We need to make sure every part of the district has access to a wide breadth of micro-mobility transportation options like e-scooters and electric bikes. These will give commuters more options for their first and last mile. We can also create contracts with providers to ensure ride, bike, and scooter sharing is available throughout the city—not just areas deemed most profitable—so that our expanding transportation system becomes more equitable. Plus, the city can benefit greatly from the licensing on e-scooters. The Mayor’s safety concerns can be mitigated by technology: in areas with more pedestrian or mixed pedestrian/car traffic, you can slow the top speed of scooters down to ensure safety or riders. We need to lead on these new micro-mobility solutions, not stonewall. It gives us another essential use for protected bike lanes, gives commuters great first mile/last mile solutions, and it gives the city more revenue. Let’s do a pilot program and then implement this quickly.

To get people out of their cars and into other forms of transportation, at a minimum, our bus system must move quickly and avoid our worst traffic conditions. Changes, from pullouts to signal prioritization, bus-only lanes, and other basic improvements, will get buses moving more quickly and save time and money in the process.

Lastly, let’s complete the streetcar expansion that will better connect D3 to the rest of the city. I believe we need to expand all types of mass transit. The streetcar will benefit short-distance downtown travelers and tourists who want to see where they’re going. However, I think future projects need to be more attentive to maximizing the use of funds to better connect communities with limited transit access. What is the cost of these upgrades/expansions and how many more people will they move?

Finally, on transportation we have to get the basics right: potholes. Most bike-riders ride on our arterial streets, not in bike lanes. Potholes are extremely dangerous to bikes and their riders, harm cars, and mare our commercial corridors. If we can’t get the basics of our public infrastructure right, we can’t win the support of the public for these other infrastructure projects.

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 hope to implement two key strategies: filling the “missing middle” and reopening empty living spaces that aren’t currently being used.

The MHA Upzone promises to produce much-needed affordable housing, but we need to be doing more. Currently, in areas not zoned for single family houses, only townhouses and large apartment or condo buildings are being built, but we also need “light density” options to fill the missing middle of housing, like duplexes, triplexes, and small multi-family buildings with single floor living for ADA accessibility and for seniors to age in place. We must incentivize ADUs and DADUs so that we can further build out density, especially in single family neighborhoods. We must all share in solving this intractable problem of housing affordability, and the solution is density in all of Seattle’s neighborhoods.

We also need to take empty apartments and hotels—which exist throughout the city—and incentivize property owners through programs like Economic Opportunity Zone tax deferral so that those empty units can be occupied again.

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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 come 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?

We should direct and focus new growth along transit corridors across the city, building more housing—including affordable housing—and giving residents access to greater social, educational, and economic opportunity through transit access.

Every neighborhood will need to do their part, taking on new housing and new residents as we grow. I believe that if we advocate and incentivize “light density” in every single neighborhood in Seattle, with duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, as well as expanded ADUs and DADUs, we can both create more affordable housing for all.

I also believe it’s critical that we protect our historic neighborhood communities. District 3, my district, is home to both Capitol Hill and the Central District, and I’ve witnessed the challenges that LGBTQ and African American communities have dealt with as they face relocation because of rising housing costs. We must ensure that historic residents—where possible—can stay in their homes by robust renter protection with legal support and financial support to help bridge an emergency, and when we can’t keep them in their homes ensure that they can stay in their community by supporting community preference in affordable and low-income 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?

While Seattle continues to grow and economically prosper, we need to be mindful of what makes us an attractive destination for businesses and improve and innovate to maintain our status as a great place to live, work, and do business. In addition to building strong partnerships and apprenticeship programs with our schools and universities—which develop lifelong learners and excellent employees—and investing in transportation and infrastructure projects that make it easier for people, services, and products to get around, I will work with businesses as stakeholders when we consider new policies.

Small business in particular is subject to the same affordability and tax challenges of our residents. We have to streamline regulations and permitting and limit tax increases to keep our commercial corridors prosperous and support them through great wraparound programs like business improvement areas (BIAs). Let’s also support burgeoning businesses owned by women, people of color, and the LGBTQ community so that we can connect them with resources and capital, and commit to helping them thrive.

On the City Council, I’ll be an honest and collaborative partner with current and future businesses, just as I am now on the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce. I believe in trying to work together, and while we may not always agree, I’ll consider the perspectives of all stakeholders in my district. Both the city and our businesses can accomplish more by working together, rather than by being combative. By committing to be a cooperative partner and seeking mutual success, I believe Seattle can remain a wonderful place for business to call home and thrive.

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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.

In District 3, we deal with a variety of public safety concerns. Just a couple of weeks ago, in a highly publicized event, a nineteen-year-old lost their life and two others were injured in shootings a block away from my house in the Central District. As director of the Broadway Business Improvement Area, I frequently work to clean our streets of needles, clean up graffiti, and address other potential threats to public safety.

First, we have to start to building community, connecting neighbors to the city agencies responsible for environmental design, lighting, street speed safety, and holding the city accountable to commitments.

Next, we must continue programs to engage youth and avoid an “incarceration first” approach to juvenile justice issues. Those incarcerated as kids are much more likely to be imprisoned as adults, and I believe passionately that there are diversion programs to support kids in making healthier choices and keeping communities intact.

Political figures often talk about not wanting to criminalize homelessness and extreme poverty. Nobody wants to do that. But ultimately there has to be a cost for criminal activity so that we don’t compound the trauma; crime has real victims, and in Seattle we often speak about the rights of the offender over the rights of the victim. The criminal justice system should be based on solutions that work, like L.E.A.D., but ultimately there has to be some deterrence for crime. Healthy, safe neighborhoods are essential for a strong civil society.

District 3’s neighborhoods are vibrant and dynamic, but to keep them that way, we must reduce crime and make sure people feel safe and protected.

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

First, we must invest in community building, from after-school activities to connecting neighbors with one another to strengthen community.

I also believe we need more community policing—meaning police officers who work in the same neighborhoods and know the local residents. I want to reduce crime, hold perpetrators accountable, and protect the residents of our neighborhoods **while** avoiding the creation of an overwhelming police presence that breeds distrust. Different ethnic communities have very different relationships with the police—I’m conscientious of this and know we absolutely must take it into account if we’re going to create a truly safer city. That said, all communities—black and brown communities especially—deserve to be safe too. Let’s create a conscious, purposeful system that addresses the historic imbalance between communities of color and the SPD and ensures safety for all.

Seattle needs to continue to use and expand upon the L.E.A.D. program and more frequently implement drug and mental health courts so that people who commit crimes get the help they need. To get help, people need to want help, and many are not yet ready to engage with these methods. I want to continue to improve our rehabilitation efforts, rather than just throwing folks in jail where no real progress will be made.

The majority of our unsheltered neighbors are not committing crimes, but some are, or are being targeted by criminal elements. As such, I also believe we need to implement the strategies and plans mentioned above to reduce homelessness and help get neighbors in need off the streets and into supportive housing.

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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?

My opponent might as well have a sign on her door at the City Council that says “DO NOT ENTER”. Many current councilmembers say that over the last three and a half years or more, they’ve met with her only two to three times—no more than once a year! In the district, community groups like the ones I lead and represent have tried reaching out to her to work on efforts that have significant impact on our neighborhoods, only to receive zero response or interest in listening and problem solving—let alone securing resources or assistance. Similarly, invitations to our councilmember to engage with citizen groups, non-profits, or small businesses all go unanswered. We’ve all read the reports that say she serves and reports to a small group of unaccountable Socialist Alternative leaders, yet feels no responsibility to meet with or represent the constituents of her district. This must change; it isn’t the way our democracy was designed to work.

It’s time we had a councilmember who will listen to us when the cameras aren’t rolling and work to enact policies that benefit all of us in District 3. We know she fights against Amazon and other employers, but we need someone who will fight for us—the residents, working people, and families of District 3—one of the most diverse districts in the city. In my work, I’m on the ground every day creating healthy, safe neighborhoods and working across organizations to support residents and small businesses alike.

I will work with my fellow councilmembers, with citizen groups, non-profits, businesses small and large—whatever it takes to move our city forward and solve or mitigate the many problems we face and the opportunities we’ve failed to take.

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

The City Council uses our tax dollars, so we need to make sure the city is working to effectively address the issues that are important. We need to make the hard calls and demand effectiveness in contracting, or even bring services in-house if they are more efficient and scalable. We need to improve audits and improve transparency. We must enforce business, vehicle, and pet licensing so that we create an even playing field and collect the revenue necessary to move Seattle forward.

We can have both progressive leadership AND accountability. Let’s make sure that all the funds we currently have allocated are being used well. Let’s work to make city bureaucracies more efficient. Let’s give residents easy access to all city programs and services through an enhanced 3-1-1 network. Let’s collect on unrealized fees and rentals from a robust 5G rollout and expanded micro-mobility solutions.

We can use the money we have better and with more accountability. And we can lead on innovative solutions that provide long-lasting revenue for the programs we so desperately need.

Revenue

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

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

Utilities, property taxes, sales tax, business and occupation taxes, hotel and hospitality taxes, parking tax, pet licenses, and sales tax.

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

Until the city has completed a comprehensive review of current programs and services and made a plan for the future, I can't say if Seattle has enough revenue to meet our needs. Should the time come to pursue new revenue, I'll work with all stakeholders, from advocacy groups to large businesses, in order to create a progressive funding plan, allowing everyone to pay their fair share to address critical issues, without vindictive motivations and a go-it-alone mindset.

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?

While doorbelling, I met working parents who just had their first child. Shortly after their son's birth, they had to start taking vacation days because they could only afford to put him in childcare 4 days a week. Now they've exhausted their vacation time and have to take time off without pay or pay the high cost of childcare for that additional day, which has put considerable stress on their collective finances. In this city, childcare is unavailable and unaffordable for too many families—and that's unacceptable.

On council, I'll prioritize subsidized childcare so people don't have to choose between their jobs and their kids. As someone preparing to raise children myself, I know how difficult and intimidating it can be to be a working parent. Currently in our city, childcare is expensive and hard to find. We need to expand access to affordable and effective childcare that allows parents to work comfortably, knowing their kids are being taken care of in a safe and instructive environment. I'd listen to those in need and work with childcare providers, labor organizations, and my colleagues on the City Council in order to make a real difference for workers and kids.

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?

When considering new labor laws, I will try and truly understand the needs of the people we are serving-- like the young family above in need of affordable child care, and who hopefully were able to take advantage of paid family leave and other other benefits for working people. To help shape these policies, I will work with unions, businesses, issue advocates and other related stakeholders to design and implement new policies that work for all. There is a healthy balance to strike. I'm the product of a long line of labor leaders and have run a Chamber of Commerce, so I see this balance clearly but it will take all stakeholders at the table to address this sufficiently. Seattle has been a national leader

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pioneering innovative labor laws that improve our workplaces and economy for employers and employees both, let's stay on that path.

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?

My opponent demonizes leaders in innovation, business, and technology, rather than working to build the productive partnerships that harness creativity and promote the best ideas that can help carry our city forward. If I'm elected, I'll work to keep Seattle on the forefront of job growth, business productivity, and positive change, adapting new technologies and partnering with innovation leaders to pioneer new ideas. My door will always be open to businesses of all kinds, large and small, as we seek to build a city where all can prosper.

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?

Seattle needs to do a better job partnering with business as we grow, and building mutual trust and dialogue even in tense situations where we may not agree. Both businesses and workers are part of our community—whether they're fresh faces or old neighbors—and we need to treat them as such.

There are areas—MHA, affordable housing generally, transportation and transit, density and upzones to name a few—where there has been good collaboration and partnership between Council, labor, businesses, and others. We know we can tackle tough, often divisive issues when we work toward common goals with an open mind.

Where these relationships have historically broken down is around issues where Seattle may have an important role to play in showing leadership for the region or state, and business feels singled out or targeted. Regardless of future Council makeup, Seattle is a progressive, forward thinking city and I believe we will continue looking for ways to express our values and commitment to equity, tax reform, and leveling the playing field for working and low income people, closing unacceptable gender pay gaps, and addressing structural inequality in our society. As a council member, I will pledge to always be collaborative and inclusive in these conversations, lead the honest conversations necessary to find shared incentives and meet common goals.

I know that businesses around Seattle are willing to work with the City Council, so long as there are councilmembers who are collaborative partners, engaged representatives, and good-faith negotiators. I'm willing to bridge the gap—not burn the bridge—so we can more effectively respond to growth and build a better city in the process.