

# CASE

## 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 24<sup>th</sup> by 5:00p.m.*

To submit your completed questionnaire, or if you have any questions, please contact Michael McIntyre at [Michael@casecampaigns.com](mailto:Michael@casecampaigns.com)

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### 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

<b>Candidate Name:</b> Pat Murakami	<b>City Council District:</b> 3
<b>Party Affiliation:</b> Democrat	<b>Phone Number:</b> 206.383.3384
<b>Email Address:</b> <a href="mailto:pat@patforseattle.org">pat@patforseattle.org</a> (yes, .org)	<b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/patforseattle/">https://www.facebook.com/patforseattle/</a>
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://patforseattle.com/">https://patforseattle.com/</a> (yes, .com)	<b>Twitter:</b> @patforseattle

## CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

<b>Political Consultants:</b> Mario Christoph Brown & Associates
<b>Campaign Manager:</b> Caesar Robinson
<b>Fundraiser:</b> Adam Tradii of Mario Christoph Brown & Associates
<b>Money Raised to Date:</b> \$80,000+ - with several fund raisers coming up.
<b>Are you participating in the Democracy Voucher Program?</b> Yes.
<b>Total Democracy Vouchers Collected:</b> \$53,500+ (a fair number haven't been certified yet)
<b>Money Raised Outside of Your District Vs. Within Your District:</b> 43% from District 3, with an even higher percentage in vouchers, but I've maxed out at this point. 6% from outside city limits, which is lowest percentage of all candidates.

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**Fundraising Target for Primary Election: \$150,000+ with plans to out-pace the incumbent, Sawant. I have been released from the Democracy Voucher limit because of Sawant's fundraising total.**

**Fundraising Target for General Election: \$75,000 if my opponent is doing Democracy Vouchers; more if my opponent is Sawant, again asking to be released from the Democracy Voucher limit.**

**Total Doors Knocked On: 6000+ with most residents not home. I have an army of volunteers and will walk all Precincts prior to the August 6 Primary.**

**Please list all endorsements you have received: Just starting to ask for endorsements. In 2017 I was endorsed by the Seattle Times, 2 Democratic LDs and the Berniecrats of Washington, among many other groups, community leaders and individuals.**

## 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?

Audit the effectiveness of all agencies receiving city funding to address homelessness, funding only those that are producing measurable results.

Charge a foreign investment tax of 15%, which has been very effective in Vancouver, B.C. As an example, with a foreign investment tax, a recent sale to a European investment firm would have resulted in \$111 million in tax revenue and provided funding for 370 affordable housing units. To make this tax work, it would be assessed at the rate of 3% per year over a period of 5 years.

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

I believe we can achieve these objectives without increasing taxes on Seattle residents or businesses. Most of the funding the city has allocated to addressing homelessness has gone to pay for overhead for the over 100 agencies that are tasked with solving the problem, with very little trickling down to the clientele the money was intended to help.

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

The City Council needs the political will to hold agencies accountable and to put the interests of Seattle residents and businesses before the interests of outside mega-developers and investment firms. I have the determination to effect positive change and convince fellow Councilmembers of the wisdom of changing city policy to better serve those in need. Our priority must be the people in need living on our streets in extremely unhealthy conditions, rather than ineffective agencies.

## 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?

The city already provides summaries of progress on each project being funded by the levy. Datasets are available for public review. However, they are not as user friendly or accessible as they could be. A huge problem is our state law requiring jobs over a certain dollar amount to go out to bid. If SDOT employees could do all the work themselves, it would cost less than having a contractor complete the work, and levy dollars would go further.

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

Traffic congestion on Broadway (a multi-modal mess), better mass transit serving Eastlake, and adequate transportation for increasingly denser corridors, such as Jackson Street. In an ideal world, I would create a dedicated bike boulevard on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue (with signage listing the businesses in each block on Broadway), move the streetcar next to the sidewalk and open-up the traffic lanes. I'm concerned about the environmental impact of the steel and concrete work that would be required to accomplish that, so instead I would host a community meeting of businesses and residents, inviting creative solutions to the problem on Broadway. We need to request King County Metro to provide additional buses during rush hour to serve Eastlake. Jackson street needs a streetcar using virtual track to serve the many new apartment dwellers.

## 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?

Modify the MHA legislation. We must remove the option of the completely inadequate in-lieu fees which will never provide enough funding to build affordable units, providing that the fees are ever collected in the first place (no over-sight is in place for fee collection). We collect only \$5 to \$22 per square foot in fees when construction costs are \$300 per square foot, resulting in insufficient funds to build units of housing. By the time we've generated enough in-lieu fees to build a single unit of affordable housing, the cost per square foot will likely be greater than \$300. Developers should be required to build on-site inclusionary affordable units, across the affordability spectrum, in every new development, and those units should remain affordable for the life of the building.

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We need oversight of any development that took advantage of the MFTE tax break to ensure units are truly affordable and remain so for the duration of the tax break.

I would also charge a vacancy tax on all vacant residential and commercial units. This would immediately result in lower rental rates in the owners' effort to avoid paying a tax on a unit that isn't producing any revenue.

MHA, as it exists, disproportionately negatively impact low-income people and minority communities, without improving housing affordability.

## 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?

First, we should take a coordinated regional approach to growth. We should return to the Neighborhood Plans which allowed for adequate growth in every neighborhood, taking neighborhood needs into account. The plans allowed for the development of urban villages with the businesses and services that specific neighborhoods desired. Implementation of the Neighborhood Plans would result in more pedestrian activity, reducing the strain on our inadequate mass transit system.

Second, much of our growth comes from large corporations moving into the area and hiring large numbers of employees from out of the area or state. We should coordinate with the corporations and our high schools and colleges to train our students to be the workforce the corporations need, thereby reducing our population growth and reducing the stress on housing stock.

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, I would never be antagonistic toward Seattle-based companies that are providing living-wage jobs, I do believe it is important to take a regional approach to growth. Amazon occupies 20% of the commercial space in Seattle; the highest concentration of a single employer in any large U.S. city. It is critical to have a balanced, healthy, diverse economic base. We don't want to return to the days when a downturn in production at Boeing caused us to have billboards asking the last person to leave Seattle to turn out the lights should Amazon hit a slump.

Given the City Council legislation in recent years that has strained many employers and driven other firms outside city limits, it is vital that the new City Council bring all interested and vested parties to the table to discuss proposed legislation and find a way to create win-win results.

I will propose legislation to protect legacy businesses from being priced out of Seattle. I have multiple clients that are leaving Seattle for a myriad of reasons, with unsustainable increases in their rent being the primary reason for their exit. One client that has been based in Seattle since their inception is leaving soon because a California equity firm bought the building where they are located and is raising their rent by over \$250,000 per year (with no leasehold improvements). Existing tenants should be granted long-term leases at the current rent with small, incremental yearly increases to ensure legacy businesses remain in Seattle.

## Public Safety

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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.

I am including public health in this response, because public safety and health are important and related issues for Seattle. Gun violence, gang activity, open-air drug sales and consumption, needles, unsanitary conditions, spread of avoidable diseases, rat infestation in the areas of RVs and tent encampments, and property crime are all important concerns in District 3.

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

We must invest more on our first responders, increasing the SPD and SFD budgets over the next 5 years. Our city has grown significantly, but our infrastructure has not. Fire and police feel they are stretched too thin. Exhausted, over-worked employees can't give their best.

Additionally, we must provide residential treatment programs and mental health services to get people out of tents and RVs and into stable housing. If needles and trash weren't everywhere we look, we would all feel safer; business store fronts would appear more welcoming and we could restore pride in our city. This means addressing crime with diversionary options, and when that fails, prosecute the crimes.

## 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?

Everyone that visits with an elected official should be required to provide their name, employer and the city where they live. That information should be available online for anyone to review. The same should be true for anyone testifying at City Council hearings. Too often an organization receiving funding from the city has their staff show up to testify in a specific way, giving the appearance of broader public support for a specific stance.

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

I will evaluate and set spending priorities with input from engaged community members, businesses and interested parties. I will try to become chair of the Finance and Neighborhoods committee on the City Council, because I am committed to strong neighborhoods and have the experience and education to read financial statements. I will ensure we spend our city funds effectively and efficiently, reviewing our budget in full detail. I will create expert volunteer review committees to audit the results of the programs the city funds. We must demand measurable results.

## 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.

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Our current sources of revenue are: taxes, license fees, fines, fees for services, regulatory fees, property tax levies, charges for utilities, and grant revenues from state or federal agencies.

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

Yes, I do believe Seattle has enough revenue...we simply aren't allocating that revenue effectively. We have an extremely top-heavy city budget, allocate funds to unnecessary duplicate programs, don't have adequate oversight of all fee collection, and don't spend our revenue wisely in all cases. To add to our revenue stream without further burdening the residents and businesses of Seattle, we can and should charge development impact fees and create a foreign buyers' tax.

## 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 will incentivize the creation of new child care providers in the locations where parents work - in the Downtown Corridor and Urban Hubs - making it easier for parents to drop off/pickup their children and providing them with the opportunity to visit their children during their lunch breaks. I also want to bring the SUN program from Multnomah County to Seattle in each elementary school in the city. This Seattle Public Schools/City of Seattle partnership program would provide after school care, tutoring and activities at a nominal cost to parents, as well as other resources and multi-generational programs for the surrounding community.

## 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?

Before voting on any new law, I would invite true representatives from labor and business for their genuine input on how a proposed law would impact them. The labor and employee representatives will be from a wide-range of industries (for example the Secure Scheduling ordinance was not welcomed by many restaurant employees that wanted flexible schedules and the ability to call a co-worker to cover a shift). And I will invite businesses - small to enterprise in size, and across a wide-range of industries - to ensure I have the greatest variety of views, sharing of concerns and opportunities for suggestions, to enact the best legislation possible.

## 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?

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I would support the business community in every way possible. Businesses provide jobs for Seattle residents - they shouldn't be viewed or presented as the enemy. I will work with Seattle businesses to ensure we have a healthy and vibrant economy.

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?

I don't see the addressing of our challenges and supporting the business community as being mutually exclusive. The more businesses that depart from Seattle, taking Seattle-based jobs with them, the worse our homelessness problem will become. Unless we address the problems on our streets, which are causing potential customers to avoid our Downtown Corridor and other retail hubs, businesses will suffer.

It is vital to address our social challenges without putting additional burden on our businesses, such as increasing taxes. Our current City Council appears to relish the opportunity to increase or create new taxes. I want to fund effective programs by improving efficiencies and redirecting the bloat in our City budget to those effective programs.