



# 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:**

**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.

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## BASIC INFORMATION

<b>Candidate Name:</b> Dan Strauss	<b>City Council District:</b> 6
<b>Party Affiliation:</b> Democrat	<b>Phone Number:</b> 206-569-8775
<b>Email Address:</b> ballard206@gmail.com	<b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/seattleforstrauss/">https://www.facebook.com/seattleforstrauss/</a>
<b>Website:</b> seattlefordanstrauss.org	<b>Twitter:</b>

## CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

<b>Political Consultants:</b> Dean Nielsen
<b>Campaign Manager:</b> Andrew Orlebeke
<b>Fundraiser:</b> Katherine Bobman
<b>Money Raised to Date:</b> \$56,000
<b>Are you participating in the Democracy Voucher Program?</b> Yes
<b>Total Democracy Vouchers Collected:</b> 1,542
<b>Money Raised Outside of Your District Vs. Within Your District:</b> 62% of vouchers in district, 46% of overall funds in district
<b>Fundraising Target for Primary Election:</b> \$75,000
<b>Fundraising Target for General Election:</b> \$75,000
<b>Total Doors Knocked On:</b> 1,000
<b>Please list all endorsements you have received:</b> SEIU 1199, King County Young Democrats, Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers, former State Rep. Jessyn Farrell, local community leaders

## ISSUE Questions

Homelessness

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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?

**Implement known solutions today, the city and county needs to act today. Permanent supportive housing for the homeless is the best solution, morally and financially. More affordable housing is needed--that's one reason progress is slow. We have been providing interventions to homelessness only to have people ultimately return to the streets. Permanent supportive housing is effective - 97% of people served by permanent supportive housing stay housed, and prevention programs have proven successful at preventing homelessness.**

**While we build this housing, we need to create temporary and emergency housing to bring the people on the streets into a warm, dry, and safe place – today. This means providing services, temporary emergency housing, and making sure people have four walls, a door that locks, and access to the services they need.**

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

**My first look for additional resources will be through the current budget to identify inefficiencies and dedicate that money to addressing homelessness. We need to assess and address the current spending of city government and take a critical look at how and what departments are spending their funds on. We need to have outcome measurement tied to both city and contracted projects. For example, the City of Seattle is already spending \$90 million annually on homelessness and the Puget Sound Business Journal estimates that the region is spending a billion including health care, law enforcement, and other costs not directly associated with homelessness response.**

**Another area I will look for efficiencies is through collaboration with the region. The homelessness and housing crisis is not Seattle's problem alone - this is a regional problem. If our partners - King, Snohomish, Pierce counties, and municipalities in these counties - step up to do their part, the financial burden on Seattle will be significantly reduced. If we continue to allow the region to make this Seattle's problem alone and require Seattle to solve everyone's crisis, my estimation is that new funding would likely be needed to build the amount of housing our region has underproduced. We have increased revenue coming from MHA, from the state Housing Trust Fund the City lobbied for will help, and King County has increased their affordable housing beyond the minimum required.**

**I don't make policy decisions in a vacuum. I won't commit to denying or requiring new revenue until I see the numbers, ensure existing funds are effectively spent, and programs are tied to outcome-based performance measurement.**

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

**Get moving. The City has had the roadmap for over five years and has not moved fast enough. The Mayor must lead departments implementing this work. The Council must support her work and do their part by communicating to their districts on the how, what, when, and why the chosen solutions are being implemented.**

## 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:

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

**If elected I would attend the budget advisory meetings to have an in-depth and regular understanding of our spending outcomes and gaps. My metrics for success are building the projects promised, today. We do not need to spend money on studies we already know the answer to. For instance, we can use creative solutions such as using the buses we have today to create the promised rapid ride lines. We don't need special buses to provide the frequency of service a rapid ride provides.**

**I am worried that spending on transportation projects that were promised by the levy have ballooned to the point where our customers, the taxpayers, will only get a fraction of what they were promised. Recently, the council has voted to increase oversight for major capital projects, so that the Council receives regular updates on the progress of capital programs, including SDOT transportation projects. Using this legislation, I plan to hold SDOT accountable.**

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

**I have been and remain a strong supporter of ST3, but my district cannot wait 16 years to have improved transit! We need expanded bus routes and more frequent buses now, so that anyone can walk to a bus stop, wait no more than 10 minutes (during the day), and get where they are going without getting stuck in traffic. I would also like to work with our federal delegation and Sound Transit staff to see if there are opportunities to secure federal funding to speed up construction of the light rail line.**

## **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 will push to permit additional duplexes/triplexes as well as Attached and Detached Accessory Dwelling Units. These types of housing preserve neighborhood character while significantly increasing density.**

**We also have to increase funding for affordable housing and displacement prevention under the laws currently in place.**

## **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?

**MHA helped with directing growth to our densest areas – the upzoning of urban villages and urban centers will help target growth to places with the transit and commercial resources to support it. But the reality is, because of Seattle's geographical constraints, every part of the city will have to take new growth. We need to create robust transit service so that we can grow our density without overloading parking on neighborhood streets. When we do this, we will see greater acceptance of creating more density outside of urban villages.**

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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?

**I will focus on attracting and retaining middle income families and promoting diversity. Middle-income families and people are still one of the primary drivers of commerce, and as Seattle becomes more expensive to live in, these families are leaving Seattle. We need to build more housing and more transit to make sure that everyone who wants to live here, and take advantage of the world-class amenities Seattle offers, can do so.**

**Diversity is the source of much of our innovation – we need people with all different perspectives and from different walks of life coming here and making Seattle home. That is the best version of the dynamic city Seattle can be.**

## **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.

**People do not feel safe using public resources such as library and public space such as parks because we are using our civic assets as de facto homeless shelters. We also know people living on the street are regularly victimized by predators. We need to create the emergency and temporary housing options to move people off the streets today while permanent housing options are created. We can do this within a six-month timeframe if there is political will. We also need to expand programs like Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion and focus their work in the business areas throughout my district. LEAD only came to the North Precinct last Fall, and we need more of their work in my district.**

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

**Create performance outcomes for all city spending with regular reporting. Government is notoriously slow to respond to changing conditions and the way to fix this is knowing the effectiveness of spending as we spend. The city has increased funding for the Seattle Police Department by \$100 million in three budget cycles, the largest three-year increase in Seattle's history. Officer salaries are also increased and the Mayor proposed a bonus program for transfers and new hires. That being said, it is essential that as these new officers come online that we monitor and allocate resources correctly.**

## **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?

**One of the foundations of my campaign is district representation. I was the first candidate in this race to promise to open a district office, and I will prioritize constituent services so that if my residents get stuck in the gridlock of city bureaucracy, my staff will be there to get them through the roadblocks and get them the outcomes they need. I will be accessible and be an advocate for District 6 in City Hall.**

**Council must be vigilant on its oversight responsibility. Overruns on transportation projects, bloated city budgets and inefficient spending are not acceptable to me.**

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

**City contracts and spending needs to be tied to performance outcomes. These outcomes are: graduating people into housing; providing interventions that lead to people remaining connected to the mental health or chemical dependency services they need; and reducing recidivism. When these performance outcomes are met, it will be an effective and efficient use of our tax dollars.**

## 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.

**There are more than 15 major sources of revenue. The principal sources of the general fund are property taxes, sales tax, B&O tax, and utility taxes. Other funding sources include the admissions Tax, court fines, business license fee and parking meters.**

**The utilities are ratepayer-funded, in accordance with state law. In addition, various voter-approved levies provide funding for dedicated purposes.**

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

**Seattle's most critical issue is also a regional issue. We need everyone doing their part to create the needed solutions. We need to assess and address the current spending of city government and take a critical look at how and what departments are spending their funds on. We need to have outcome measurement tied to both city and contracted projects. The City's budget has grown over the last number of years and we need to take a hard look at the amount of middle management in departments and the amount of dollars spent directly linked to outcomes. I don't make policy decisions in a vacuum. I won't commit to denying or requiring new revenue until I see the numbers, ensure existing funds are effectively spent and are tied to outcome-based performance measurement.**

## 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?

**Affordable childcare is another priority of mine. As you note, there is a deficit of affordable childcare in Seattle, and that is bad for everyone – families, businesses, and children. One potential policy is to increase the exemptions allowing developers to increase the floor area ratio exemptions if they include affordable childcare in their building.**

**Another would be to offer property tax exemptions for including affordable childcare. Louisiana has a program which offers low-income families a tax credit for enrolling their child in a child care center and to businesses for contributing to child care programs for its employees.**

**These programs are not cheap, but the impact they can have on the economy is significant, and we need to make sure that any parent who is looking for affordable, high quality childcare can find it.**

**Like in many areas, the city can and must do a good job for its employees – if elected, I support a child care center at City Hall and a nearby city properties.**

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## 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 believe that government should be a collaborative process, and I will always be available to hear your ideas, thoughts, and concerns about proposed legislation.**

## 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?

**Regular and standing meetings. We need to remain in contact, whether there is a big issue to tackle or nothing to talk about more than our latest weekend. We need to have a strong relationship that is built on regular communication about everything, not just city policy. Additionally, I will make sure the business community is at the table for any discussion of Seattle's major issues. We are blessed to have a vibrant business community here – Market Street in Ballard has never been more active and dynamic – and I promise to always be available and open to ideas and input from you.**

**Councilmembers need to take seriously the concerns that the business community brings to the public discourse. For example, the report the BIAs published, "System Failure," has not gotten enough attention at the council level. Councilmembers need to engage with the BIAs and dig deeply into these type of studies to guide public policy decisions. If elected, my local BIA won't need to publish a report to get my attention - I'll be meeting with them regularly.**

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 think that the answer to this question depends entirely on the situation. What I can promise is that I will listen to you, take your concerns seriously, and work to address them. The issues facing Seattle are significant and will require the cooperation and collaboration of every part of Seattle society.**