



Andre Stackhouse Urbanist Questionnaire 2024

Washington Governor

What are your policy priorities regarding the climate and decarbonization, and how does the Climate Commitment Act fit into that?

Global climate change needs to be treated as one of the greatest and most imminent destabilizing forces that must be addressed within our lifetimes.

This means reaching certain aggregate milestones as a global society in terms of net carbon neutrality as well as decarbonization and sequestration as means of addressing the significant amounts of carbon that have already been released into the atmosphere.

Addressing this from a policy standpoint begins with recognizing two important points:

1. From a climate perspective, it is always preferential to not release CO₂ into the atmosphere in the first place than it is to decarbonize or sequester CO₂ that has been released already.
2. The majority of CO₂ emissions are released into the atmosphere by a relatively small number of corporations

From this we can conclude that serious attempts to address this crisis through policy must focus first and primarily on regulation of corporations and that while improving standards on things like individual and family homes and cars is limited as an approach to addressing climate.

System-level solutions on government, commercial construction, mass transportation, and corporate practices have the potential for significant impact while simultaneously improving the lives of individuals hence making these solutions also the most politically durable, despite the resistance of special interests.

We must also recognize that a transition to a sustainable carbon-neutral energy system and economy will impact the lives of millions. Job displacement, fluctuating prices, and increased regulations will be unavoidable but what we can control is how we treat those who are impacted.



Universal healthcare, a guarantee to housing, and tuition-free college provide a three-legged stool which will ensure that no matter what happens to your job as we decarbonize the world, that you will be taken care of and given the opportunity to pursue new opportunities. Only then can workers and voters fully embrace a transition to a green future.

For more details on each of these policy proposals go to www.publicstackhouse.org/platform.

How do you plan to leverage the governorship to reduce homelessness in the state and increase housing affordability?

Universal healthcare, a guarantee to housing, and tuition-free higher education provide a 3-plank stool that enables folks to keep a roof over their head, receive the medical care they need, and pursue employment through education. They provide a core nexus to my platform which you can read at www.publicstackhouse.org/platform.

Homelessness must be seen as symptomatic of deeper societal issues. Solutions therefore must not narrowly attempt to address homelessness as an isolated issue but instead offer a suit of solutions which alleviate the pressures that ultimately push folks into housing insecurity and homelessness.

The first thing that needs to happen is Washington must stop criminalizing homelessness. This does not mean legalized litter, legalized harassment, or legalized vandalism. What it does mean is that we would end treating normal behavior, like sleeping, as crimes when done in the context of homelessness. It should not be illegal to sleep in your car or even on the streets if you don't have a home. The state's response ought not to be to arrest or incarcerate such an individual, but instead to offer them pathways to healthcare, higher-education, gainful employment, and permanent housing.

The next thing Washington needs is a guarantee to housing including temporary housing for immediate relief and emergency situations, as well as transitional housing to move folks into permanent housing. Regardless of one's income or employment they must be eligible to be accepted into a housing guarantee program that puts them immediately onto a path towards permanent housing. This program must be safe and preferable to the streets to encourage participation.



Third, Washington needs to increase housing supply across all sectors in order to meet the living demands of its residents. This includes market-rate, social, cooperative, and public housing. These options should be available to folks of all incomes and living communities should be mixed-income to ensure they do not become neglected "housing projects." Home-ownership should be an attainable pathway for all who desire it made possible through a combination of increased supply, strong wages, and non-predatory financing and equity-building plans made possible through a public banking system.

Last, Washington needs to ensure a healthy rental sector for folks who do not wish to pursue home-ownership. There must be a healthy relationship between landlords and tenants maintained by a healthy respect for renters rights and property rights and an economy which supports cost-of-living expenses to ensure rents are not a financial hardship for tenants. Long-term vacancy should be discouraged especially as it contributes to housing instability and rent inflation - long-term vacancy should be taxed at an increasing rate the longer the vacancy.

Would you sign into law a bill implementing or allowing for rent stabilization?

Why or why not?

Yes, as a general heuristic, if the state legislature were to pass a rent stabilization bill I would consider my role as executive to sign such a bill unless I had reason to believe that it either was poorly vetted and may have unintended negative consequences (e.g. a significant reduction in housing supply), or if it had poison pills, loopholes, and favoritism that effectively prioritized the needs of landlords or otherwise created any kind of "crony capitalist" partnership between the state and landlords (I am opposed to public funding of private interests).

To my understanding rent stabilization should include many policies that should be considered perfectly fair expectations for any landlord-tenant relationship like sufficient advance notice, limitations on the rate at which rents may be raised, and billing transparency.

There are many other regulations of the real estate and rental markets that have great potential to make life more affordable and manageable for renters and some that are more controversial from an academic and political standpoint. Every policy lives or dies on its implementation so the



details always matter as does the public education and outreach, but fundamentally regulating the rental and real estate markets is a 100% appropriate use of state government.

Do you plan to work to expand state taxes during your time in office and if so, where would you begin?

For more details on my thoughts on tax reform go to www.publicstackhouse.org/platform.

Washington's tax code is considered the second most regressive in the nation despite our state ranking among the highest in terms of GDP per capita. What this means is that within a wholly American context, Washington has significant tax-revenue on the table that is potentially available without increasing taxes on the vast majority of Washingtonians.

This is in part due to our state constitution's notorious "uniformity clause" which in a nutshell limits taxation on anything considered "property" to a "uniform" tax, which is also called a flat tax, which is also called a regressive tax. This is made even worse by our state's reliance on sales taxes with no income tax at all. Even within a flat tax structure, broad-based consumption taxes are significantly more regressive than income taxes.

Washington needs to raise taxes to maintain core services and will also need to raise them in order to implement the full platform of public services that I propose. This is best achieved through comprehensive tax reform and should be considered through two political pathways.

1. What improvements to the tax code can be made through standard legislation?
2. How would we structure taxes if we were able to amend the state constitution in doing so?

To the first, Washington should first consider revenue-neutral rebalancing of the tax code that reallocates funding from regressive taxes like the sales tax to more progressive ones like the capital gains tax. These transitions should be framed as tax cuts for the majority of Washingtonians and the public services they fund should be emphasized.

A more significant restructuring would bring into consideration changing taxes like the state sales tax into a value-added tax or transitioning property tax into a land-value tax both of which may raise more progressive revenue while encouraging spending and development.

Making our state's tax code truly modern and progressive will likely require amendments to the state's constitution which I would advocate for as governor. Taxes like an income tax or wealth tax will likely require both a constitutional amendment and court victories in order to make



happen. I would advocate for a revenue-neutral switch from a state sales tax to a state income tax even at a flat rate. I would advocate for a progressive income tax as long as it is structured in a way that is expected to withstand legal challenge.

Last, I still support negative-externality taxes such as taxes on things such as gambling, sugar, caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, carbon, and political spending which may be structured as consumption taxes. These taxes should serve two purposes 1) To discourage spending on these sectors by increasing prices and 2) To raise revenue which funds reduction programs on these forms of spending and consumption. As much as possible, taxes should be set to target the economic cost of that negative externality and therefore be setting a price on that externality which brings this externality into the economy and makes it no longer unaccounted for -

How do you view the issue of preempting local control to allow construction of uses that have often gone unpermitted, including denser housing and emergency and transitional housing?

This should be incentivized as much as possible by higher governing authorities like the county and state.

While housing and urban planning are state-level issues, ultimately cities play a huge role in the design and planning of people's lived day to day experience. As much as possible housing issues should be addressed at the local level.

Do you think Washington can build its way out of traffic congestion? If so, what does that look like to you in your role as Governor, and what steps would you take to reduce traffic congestion? If not, why not?

The only way to build a locality out of traffic congestion is to reduce the amount of traffic. Widening roads to accommodate more cars results in more drivers, more parking, and more



inefficiency. Yes, good design can help mitigate traffic volume to an extent, but it will never scale as long as the solution to moving more people is more cars.

Alternatively, there are two approaches to reducing traffic congestion.

1. Reduce reliance on cars by providing other transit options
2. Reduce the need for transit by enabling more daily activity to happen in or near the home

To the first point, I am proposing that Washington commit to a transition to 100% fare-free public transit to incentivize maximum use of existing public transit. While our current transit system does not meet the needs of many Washingtonians, a point-of-service cost like fare creates an artificial barrier for many and makes busses less efficient at their primary task of moving people. Revenue for transit can be raised quite effectively through taxation alone and does not require fare to work.

To the second point, businesses should be incentivized to offer work-from-home options when possible reducing the need for transportation and freeing up commercial real-estate. Mixed-use zoning should incentivize local amenities like groceries, coffee shops, parks, and libraries.

To both points, communities should be incentivized to create walkable and bikeable communities with high-density housing developed near public transit arteries.

What policies do you plan to implement to ensure better mental health treatment availability in our communities? Please elaborate on your views of community-based treatment centers and coercive or carceral treatment, and what options you would seek to prioritize. Second, what funding mechanism would you use to build out mental health services in our communities?

As executive director of Whole Washington I have spent the vast majority of my time as a political organizer working to make universal public healthcare a reality in Washington state. Mental healthcare is healthcare like any other and therefore should be guaranteed and free at the point of service.



Many areas lack the infrastructure necessary to provide for the healthcare needs of their communities. Community-based clinics can be an amazing resource to meet the basic needs of the otherwise underserved. These clinics must be better funded - under a universal single payer healthcare system like The Washington Health Trust (SB.5335, I-1471) these clinics could receive reimbursement for services currently provided for free to the uninsured.

These services should be funded through a combination of employer payroll taxes and capital gains as opposed to through private insurance premiums. By creating a public insurance plan from the state of Washington, we can give employers a more reliable, cost effective, and simple way to provide health coverage to their workforce.

What is your vision for expanded rail in between Portland and Vancouver and how will you help Washington achieve it through federal funding and budget writing? *

Rail should be expanded between Portland and Vancouver and as much as practical investments should be made towards high-speed rail.

Rail is a significant investment - as much as possible federal funds should be acquired to help with the costs.

Investments in transit expansion must be viewed as non-negotiable and so while taxes and prices may fluctuate, investments in transit must remain consistent. Even where there are setbacks, we cannot allow transit to be deprioritized. It must be treated as a long-term project that we will see through to the end.