



## **Imraan Siddiqi Urbanist Questionnaire 2024**

US House of Representative, CD8

### **What is your top priority for the upcoming term, and how will you achieve it?**

"We are in one of the most critical times in our nation's history. There's a genocide happening overseas, the middle class is shrinking, and things haven't gotten any easier for us here at home. Our government and current leadership is funding weapons to Netanyahu's Israeli government which has killed 16,000 Palestinian children in the last 8 months, while 13 million American children go to bed hungry every night. With the blessing of our White House, every hospital in Gaza has been bombed to the ground, while 26 million Americans can't even see a doctor when they need it. With the support of Congressional Representatives like Kim Schrier, 300,000 Palestinian homes have been destroyed, displacing 1.7 million Palestinians while 3.7 million Americans live on the edge of homelessness.

As soon as I'm elected, I will seek to pull our hard-earned tax dollars from funding genocide and the billion-dollar-overseas war apparatus. Those dollars could fund housing for nearly every American that doesn't have it, tuition-free college, universal childcare and healthcare. Politics and policy making is a matter of choices. And I'm running to make the right choice—one that prioritizes people over power. I'm running to restore the safety and belonging for all people, where the average American doesn't have to choose between paying off crippling debt or the roof over their head.

### **How will you prioritize investments and policies at the federal level to support cities in the Puget Sound region in their efforts to reduce car dependence and traffic deaths and prioritize walking, biking, and public transit?**

Long car commutes, traffic deaths, congestion, and toxic emissions have become too commonplace. Once elected, I would uphold elements of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which would ensure safety, modernization, equity, and address our climate impact across the nation. Already the law has sent \$7.9 billion dollars to much needed improvements such as public transportation in the Puget Sound Area. Ensuring these federal grants are directly funneled to city departments of transportation like SDOT is essential to the vision for easy access to public transportation.

For instance, expanding the lightrail is essential in building a foundation for sustainable growth that combats urban sprawl. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) growth



projections through 2050 is estimated to be nearly 6 million people. In order to ensure our infrastructure is prepared to not only meet the demands of today but tomorrow, investing in public transportation to connect our communities is vital.

I'm also committed to funding transportation grants and moving investments towards pedestrian safety and oriented streets, while supporting improvements to bike infrastructure, and tackling sprawl. Transportation equity is health equity, and I will help design and demand an upgraded public transit system that not only connects and improves our neighborhoods but protects the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we call home, for generations to come.

**How do you plan to address the housing affordability crisis through federal policy, including increasing the supply of affordable housing near jobs and transit?**

"Housing is a human right and federal affordable housing policy has been insufficient to address housing needs. In most of America today, families are paying more than 50% of their income on housing, while big banks are breaking billions in profits. If elected to Congress, I support building millions of affordable housing units to solve the housing crisis. I'd make rent affordable by making Section 8 vouchers available to all eligible families without a waitlist and strengthening the Fair Housing Act. I'd also move to revitalize public housing by investing to repair, decarbonize, and build new public housing. If we expand and build new housing, we must make sure that current tenants aren't forced out of their homes. I will also work so that the wealthy few do not prevent new development, forcing gentrification and displacement in low-income and minority areas.

**How will you support urban growth that focuses on building up existing urban areas rather than sprawling out into wilderness and agricultural land?**

"In the case of building up in existing urban areas, I would first focus on prioritizing investments in infrastructure and services that center sustainable development. This includes upgrading public transportation to reduce reliance on cars. I would also emphasize mixed-use developments that integrate residential, commercial, and recreation spaces, creating spaces where people can live, work, and play without needing to travel extensively. I would also support creation of more affordable housing, full stop. To prevent displacement and ensure our diverse communities stay, we must increase the number of housing being built.

Supporting urban growth within existing areas requires a comprehensive approach that includes zoning reform, and community engagement. Zoning laws often hinder the



densification of urban areas, therefore I will work towards updating these regulations to allow for higher density housing, such as apartment buildings and multi-family units, in lieu of single-family homes. This change can alleviate housing shortages and reduce the pressure to develop on agricultural land and nature reserves.

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### **How will you work to address climate change and environmental justice through federal policy?**

I've been witnessing for years how corporations pollute our communities just to get tax breaks and gain record profits. We combat this by prosecuting them to the fullest extent at the federal level, making them pay their share, and redirecting those funds back into the things they sought out to destroy. Washington is leading in the fight for climate change. I would work alongside local environmental justice working groups to hear their priorities and bring those to D.C. so we obtain the investments for a just transition including sustainable jobs, resilient infrastructure, and successful economic development. The communities who've been hit hardest are the ones showing us the way to hold fossil fuel and private utility corporations accountable, protect our health and win locally made and publicly owned clean energy. Climate change is real and it's here. I'm working towards a future where we drink clean water, breathe safe air, and live in healthy communities. This includes supporting a Green New Deal with emphasis on a transition to renewable energy sources, investing in public transportation, and ending corporate greed.

### **How do you propose to improve public safety in urban areas without further contributing to mass incarceration and racialized oppression?**

One link we've seen in the research is how gentrification increases police presence. Policing is shown to be not only a tool of social control but also a part of racist "urban renewal" practices that target exponential economic development designed to benefit white and wealthy populations. True public safety comes from giving people a place to belong, not from targeting minorities and vulnerable communities to displace them from their homes. We want to drive economic growth and social stability by giving everyone a place to set down roots, raise their children, and grow old. This includes policies like affordable housing and implementing restorative justice practices.

I support ending cycles of violence in communities, especially communities of color, through enforced oversight of police and accountability. I'm disgusted by the ways our country has produced disparities in the criminal justice system, racially profiled my communities, and criminalized poverty. One solution I'm committed to exploring is equitable resource distribution. I propose investing in a program that funds local jurisdictions to create unarmed first responders and other mental health professions who can handle typical mental health emergencies or low-level conflicts that don't require a police officer.



**The conservative movement has orchestrated a takeover of the Supreme Court and many of the lower courts, installing partisans willing to legislate from the bench, eroding reproductive rights and protections for voters, workers, and consumers. What do you aim to do about it? How can we prevent judicial overreach?**

The current largest judicial body of our country is not only making us doubt the legitimacy of its function but we're seeing a blatant erosion of our rights. This is not only a threat to our democracy, but detrimental to our core values as a country. I've stood for civil rights time and time again, centering the disenfranchised, serving as plaintiff in the first case challenging Trump's Muslim Ban (*Sarsour v. Trump*). I understand the immediacy of these challenges. Once elected, I will hold these abettors accountable, put a stop to their breach of power, and enforce due process to stop the misconduct. I have a track record of speaking out, amidst controversy and fear of retaliation. I'm not afraid of calling it like it is and calling for judicial review for each Justice that steps out of line. More specifically, I would work with my colleagues to expand the lower courts, implement term limits, and enforce a binding code of conduct to limit this abuse of power.