



Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Seattle City Council, Position 8 - Alexis Mercedes Rinck

1. What are you most proud of in your time in office?

Although I've been in office for less than three months, I'm incredibly proud of what my office has already accomplished:

- Within my first week in office at my first council meeting, I successfully authored and passed two amendments to Seattle's State Legislative Session Priorities at full council. One to increase funding for affordable housing and another to support new statewide progressive revenue options.
- Recognizing the imminent threats to our immigrant communities, I swiftly coordinated with King County and regional partners to establish an Immigrant and Refugee Working Group. I co-convened the first meeting of this group during my first week in office alongside King County Councilmember Jorge Barón with the purpose to align government and community partners, understand pressing concerns, and promote information sharing. With the Trump Administration intent on harming our most vulnerable communities, regional collaboration is essential to fighting back.
- The Trump Administration poses a clear and present danger to the people of Seattle and the values we hold. That's why I led the effort to establish a dedicated Select Committee on Federal Administration and Policy Changes to respond in real time to the attacks on our city. As chair, I am committed to ensuring Seattle remains proactive in defending against harmful federal policies that threaten critical programs, funding, and the rights of immigrants and vulnerable communities.
- I also worked closely with Councilmember Moore's office to introduce amendments to the less-lethal weapons legislation. While both Councilmember Moore and I ultimately voted against the bill, we fought to add accountability measures to mitigate its potential harm. Though only some of my top-priority amendments were adopted, I'm proud of our work in exposing major flaws in the legislation, particularly its impact on protesters' First Amendment rights.



- As Chair of the Sustainability, City Light, Arts & Culture Committee, I successfully supported the unanimous passage of our Transportation Electrification Strategic Investment Plan. Across the committees I hold seats on, I continue to highlight the experiences and needs of working people. I remain committed to amplifying the voices of working people and advocating for policies that support them.
- Lastly, my office has established monthly policy roundtables. We have already held our first labor policy roundtable, and our transportation roundtable will meet soon. My office is committed to finding various ways to engage with experts, advocates, and neighbors to ensure that we represent the interests of the people.

2. What are your top three priorities to achieve in your next term?

1. Reinvigorating our housing development pipeline to accelerate the creation of desperately needed housing.
2. Protecting our city from federal policy changes that threaten social services, individual rights, and critical funding.
3. Enacting new progressive revenue options to close our budget shortfall to prevent severe cuts that would most impact those who rely on essential services, and invest further into our city services to ensure Seattle can truly be a city that works for everyone.

3. How will you boost housing options, particularly for working class Seattleites?

- As a proud supporter of Prop 1A I believe social housing represents a vital tool in tackling our housing affordability crisis. This crisis affects not only those at the lowest incomes but also those at and above the median income who are struggling to find stable housing. Social housing provides a financially sustainable solution, ensuring stable and affordable homes for a broad range of incomes. With Prop 1A passing decisively, I have already begun to work with the Seattle Social Housing Developer to expedite bringing new housing online.
- While I'll delve into the specifics of the comprehensive plan in question four, one thing is clear, this plan presents a crucial opportunity to create housing for people at all income levels. The only way to meet our growing demand is by increasing the housing supply, and that's exactly what this comprehensive plan must accomplish. No other proposal on the table offers a greater singular impact in addressing our housing supply deficit.



- I plan to introduce legislation offering height, FAR, and other density bonuses to affordable housing projects developed by community organizations and non-profits. This builds on the foundation laid by Councilmember Morales with the 'Connected Communities' legislation. The goal is to create affordable workforce housing and foster equitable opportunities for a diverse range of communities.
- To support increasing our supply of housing, we also need to ensure our permitting processes are not creating undue strain and adding unnecessary delay to development timelines. The Council is expected to take up legislation to update these processes and timelines this year, including those related to housing development. I strongly support this effort and will engage stakeholders, including labor, to identify the best ways to ensure new housing comes online fast.

4. Goldilocks questions on the neighborhood growth centers in the Mayor's One Seattle housing plan: about right, should be more, or should be less? And why?

We must do more to address the housing crisis, advance racial equity, and meet our climate goals. The Mayor's proposed plan needs to go further, which is why changes must be made to the neighborhood centers. We cannot repeat our history of zoning and land use that has concentrated development in South Seattle and fueled displacement of Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and communities of color. With that in mind, removing any of the proposed neighborhood centers in the north end of Seattle to add additional neighborhood centers to the South is unacceptable. I support preserving all neighborhood centers in their current locations and intend to advocate for a greater focus on these centers as we introduce amendments. While the FEIS statement limits our ability to add more than what is currently proposed, I strongly support efforts to enhance the neighborhood centers, allowing for more housing and amenities.

Some specific changes to the Neighborhood Centers I support include expanding the proposed centers from 800 feet to at least ¼ mile. I also want to increase the number of Neighborhood Centers where possible to create lively, walkable community hubs throughout Seattle by reintroducing previously studied options in the FEIS. Additionally, I recognize that these Neighborhood Centers present a great opportunity for improved accessibility, especially in areas where Neighborhood Residential areas fall short. By design, these centers provide access to many of the services and amenities needed in a 15-minute city as well as vital transit access. These neighborhoods should be open to



all who wish to live there, not just wealthy homeowners.

Here are some of the additional changes to the Comprehensive Plan I support:

- Promote equitable development and develop an anti-displacement strategy that focuses on community wealth building for Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and communities of color.
- Allow more homes near transit to give people more choices in how they get around their neighborhoods and make transit a convenient option for more people. Specifically allowing ¼ mile around bus stops, and ½ mile around light rail stations.
- Create development incentives such as floor area ratio bonuses, for both stacked flats and family-sized homes. This also includes removing the 6000 sq ft requirement for stacked flats.
- Push for removing and/or reducing where possible all minimum parking requirements for residential and commercial spaces.
- Change the transit routes to focus on stops and not on the arterial the route follows.
- Allow corner stores on all lots rather than just corner lots and remove any parking requirements for such spaces. As well as an expansion of the types of business these corner stores can be such as bookstores, laundromats, and more.
- Allow for more family-sized homes in middle housing by increasing the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for fourplexes and six-plexes and by changing setback requirements.
- Align Seattle's middle housing standards with the Department of Commerce model ordinance.
- Create density, floor area, and height bonuses for affordable rental housing, social housing development, and homeownership.
- Support technical assistance and land use incentives for homeowners interested in redevelopment.

5. What is the most effective approach to improving public safety over the next five years? Additionally, how do you plan to improve public safety for transit operators and riders, and boost ridership and transit accessibility?

Public safety on our transit systems is a top priority and requires a thoughtful, community-centered approach. We must ensure that our transit systems are safe and welcoming for both operators and passengers. This can be achieved through increased



staffing of transit-specific safety personnel trained in de-escalation and mental health crisis intervention, as well as through partnerships with social service organizations that provide immediate support and resources for individuals in need. I am committed to working with community organizations, labor partners, and city agencies to expand these services, improve safety on public transit, and ensure that both riders and transit workers feel secure. Recently, the City Council received a presentation from transportation agencies and partners on transit safety, where I raised a critical issue: When bus drivers call for help, they often do not know whether a responder will arrive in a timely manner— if at all. This is unacceptable. Transit workers and riders should be able to trust that if there is an act of violence on transit, a responder will come. This is a solvable problem that demands the attention of elected officials.

Further, it is important to highlight that our communities are safest when we are all healthy and housed. Physical assaults and drug use on public transit are symptoms of larger issues that our city must address, such as the lack of mental health services, housing instability, and inadequate addiction support. Rather than simply criminalizing these behaviors, we need to invest in solutions that address the underlying causes. The onus cannot be placed on transportation agencies to solve the housing crisis or the fentanyl epidemic. It is incumbent on elected officials and community leaders to work together to invest in solutions that get our neighbors healthy and housed.

As a transit rider who chooses not to own a car, I am well aware of the challenges our city faces in providing carbon-free (and car-free) mobility options. This experience fuels my commitment to expanding and improving our transportation system for everyone in Seattle. I deeply respect the essential role that transit workers play in making our city more accessible, connected, and equitable. For riders today, I believe reliability, frequency, and safety must be top priorities.

I am committed to creating a safe, multi-modal transportation system that truly serves everyone. My focus is on building an integrated network that prioritizes walking, biking, rolling, and public transit, making it easier for people to get around the city. This includes expanding public transit, electrifying our transportation infrastructure, adding sidewalks, creating safer bike routes, and improving accessible pedestrian signals. I will work to ensure that transit-oriented development is equitable and benefits all communities while exploring progressive revenue options to fund public transit improvements that align with community priorities for safety, mobility, maintenance, and livability.