



2023 General Election Candidates' Survey – Seattle City Council

Historic Seattle is conducting a candidates' survey of those running for Seattle City Council Positions 1 - 7. Please limit responses to 200 words or less for each question. If you can, please submit your responses by **Tuesday, October 17, 2023**, to Historic Seattle Director of Preservation Services, Eugenia Woo, at eugeniaw@historicseattle.org.

Responses will be posted on our website at www.historicseattle.org and shared with our constituents and the public.

Please answer the following seven questions:

1. What's your favorite historic place in Seattle and why do you think it's important?

Hotel Sorrento and the Queen Anne Boulevard both encapsulate Seattle and its history, and have become even part of the history of our family. For example, our wedding reception was held at Hotel Sorrento. Also, the Queen Anne Boulevard is a beautiful park and offers all Seattleites a 360 degree view of Seattle, Puget Sound, and the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges, depending on what part of the hill you're on. It's part of the history of Seattle that I want to protect.

2. The City of Seattle is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. What role does historic preservation play in planning and land use beyond designating landmarks and historic districts?

Part of a city having a specific and unique character is keeping to an aesthetic even in new buildings. As part of planning and land use, the City Council can work with developers to keep existing facades while updating the buildings themselves to be more modern and green while achieving the Comprehensive Plan's goal of community and environmental stewardship. In addition, the City Council can work with existing organizations like Historic Seattle to create design guidelines for new constructions in specific neighborhoods, like Pioneer Square and other historic neighborhoods.

3. There is a significant relationship between historic buildings and affordable housing (including naturally occurring affordable housing) that has existed in Seattle for more than a century.

They are the fundamental building blocks of most of the city's neighborhoods. ***What programs or incentives would you create to promote the preservation of affordable housing in conjunction with rehabilitating historic buildings?***

As noted in different publications, cities need older buildings to be able to have more affordable housing. However, Seattle has some unique challenges in this regard: some of the most recognizable historic buildings in Seattle are slowly sinking into the Seattle mud-flats after they were built post-1880 earthquake. Part of the challenge in refurbishing historic buildings is to strengthen their foundations and make them stronger against seismic events. I absolutely believe that we should promote preservation and rehabilitation for historic buildings, though I will work with concerned stakeholders on specific programs or incentives to achieve both preservation of affordable housing and rehabilitating historic buildings.

4. BIPOC (black, Indigenous, and people of color) communities need greater investment in preservation of the places and spaces that are significant to them, and this can be directly tied to growing generational and community wealth. ***How would you work to identify potential strategies and implement them?***

First, I'd make sure to meet with representatives of those communities and listen to better understand the nuances of the challenges of preserving their places and spaces. Together with them, I will work with them to identify potential strategies. I will also work with my fellow Councilmembers to adopt these strategies, particularly in regards to land use and communities. Seattle's strength is in her diversity, and we need to keep that at the forefront.

5. Many successful preservation projects involve adaptive reuse—rehabilitating and converting older buildings into new uses such as a former warehouse into housing, office, hotel, etc. ***How can the City help developers choose preservation over demolition? Please share with us how adaptive reuse contributes to reducing climate impacts and increasing resiliency of older buildings.***

Adaptive reuse serves multiple purposes: it can provide affordable housing and it keeps a specific aesthetic that marks Seattle's overall character as a city and increases the attractiveness of the project. By retrofitting older buildings for green and seismic resiliency, it will also increase buyer / renter access and interest along with contributing to the neighborhood.

6. The cultural spaces which many people feel define Seattle are increasingly at risk of redevelopment. The global pandemic made many of these places even more vulnerable. ***Do you feel that it is important to preserve these places, and how can we accomplish this?***

Yes. Cultural spaces that Seattle is known for—Pike Place Market, Occidental Park, and other historic buildings and parks—bring in tourists and businesses, while also serving Seattle residents. There are many ways we can accomplish this—we can pass legislation and funding within City Hall, we can also work with existing business and/or non-profit organizations dedicated to protecting and preserving these spaces.

7. There are hundreds of unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings in the Seattle. Seismically retrofitting these historic buildings is a green investment, but more importantly an investment in community and public safety—saving housing, offices, restaurant, retail, health care, cultural venues, and places of worship. ***Do you see this need, and how do you plan to support it, particularly since the City of Seattle is actively working on a legislative mandate for property owners to upgrade URM buildings?***

Yes, I absolutely see this need. When I chaired the Queen Anne Community Council's public safety committee, we covered not just crime and security but also fire/rescue and importantly emergency preparedness. Unfortunately, our emergency preparedness posture is not where it needs to be. I would incorporate this aspect by listening to all stakeholders to ensure the legislative mandate to accomplish this great need which ensures the historical preservation of these beautiful buildings.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our questionnaire! We greatly appreciate your dedication and service to our wonderful city!

Historic Seattle's mission: saving places to foster lively communities

We pursue our mission through education, advocacy, and preservation. Our community programs raise awareness and appreciation of Seattle's architectural and cultural heritage among the public, while we advocate for preservation to policy makers and citizens alike. Historic Seattle is also in the business of acquiring and rehabilitating historic properties through our status as a preservation development authority (chartered by the City of Seattle in 1973). We own 11 historic properties including Washington Hall, the Good Shepherd Center, and the Cadillac Hotel, among others. We are also a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation (founded in 1996).