



2025 General Election Candidates' Survey – Seattle Mayor & City Council

Historic Seattle is conducting a candidates' survey of those running for Seattle Mayor and City Council Positions 8 and 9 (both at-large) and for District 2. Please limit responses to 200 words or less for each question. If you can, please submit your responses by **Friday, October 17, 2025**, to Historic Seattle Director of Preservation Services, Eugenia Woo, at eugeniew@historicseattle.org.

Responses will be posted on our website on a rolling basis as we receive them and shared with our constituents and the public via our eNews and social media.

Please answer the following five questions:

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

The Smith Tower – because it is *the* iconic downtown building. It's architecturally distinct from all other buildings on the Seattle skyline, it's a fixture of my daily life as I work downtown everyday, and it just says *Seattle* to me.

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?

Historic preservation is key to maintaining the character of our rapidly growing and changing city and preserving important moments' of our shared past. The urban landscape can showcase the past and accommodate future growth through careful planning.

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?***

Seattle is in a housing and affordability crisis. We need to build more affordable housing units, and the Office of Housing isn't getting money out the door fast enough. At the same time, one of the things that makes Seattle so special is the older, historic buildings that have charm and personality to them. I believe that we can walk and chew gum at the same time by expanding our affordable housing supply while also preserving the character of historic buildings. I would be open to tax breaks for developers that are focused on 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?***

I never assume that I have all the answers to a particular problem or that I, as an outsider, understand the needs of a community better than community members themselves. So in answer to this question, I would first survey community leaders to find out what strategies for the preservation of significant places and spaces have already been proposed or considered by the community and which, if any, have significant support. Once I know that, I would evaluate whether or not those strategies are legally viable through legislation. If so, I would convene a stakeholdering process to craft legislation that is responsive to the needs of the community and meets its preservation goals.

5. There are hundreds of unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings in 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 has been actively working on encouraging property owners to upgrade URM buildings? What incentives can be made available to make retrofits more affordable?***

Yes, I do see the urgent need to seismically retrofit URM buildings! According to a [presentation](#) from the National Development Council, the City of Seattle has 1,147 unreinforced masonry buildings—approximately 21.6 million square feet. The problem is that retrofits are very expensive and there are no current URM-specific incentives in place today.

In 2018, a multi-stakeholder group called ASAP! (Alliance for Safety, Affordability, and Preservation) was formed with the goal of developing technical standards for upgrading URM buildings and proposed the transfer of development rights (TDR) and “retrofit credits” as potential financing mechanisms.

In November 2024 an ordinance was passed to adopt the 2021 Seattle Existing Building Code standards for URM upgrades and credit building owners that met those standards. Meeting the new standards, however, remained voluntary because no new funding mechanism was ever adopted. It now appears that the state legislature is considering another study of tax incentives for upgrades and an updated inventory through HB1810.

This [document](#) from the National Trust for Historic Preservation Research & Policy Lab lists other financing mechanisms beyond incentives such as: dedicated funds from the Housing Levy, a bond issue, local improvement districts, loan pools, city credit to guarantee private loans, or foundation grants.

If re-elected, I commit to working towards a solution that will enable more URM building owners to retrofit their buildings without breaking the bank.

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 10 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).