



## **First Hill Improvement Association Questionnaire for City-Wide Council Candidates**

First Hill has roughly 14,000 residents and over 30,000 employees, bounded by Union Street to the north, Broadway to the east, Main Street to the south, and IS to the west.

### **Homelessness on First Hill**

**First Hill has hundreds of shelter beds, housing for formerly homeless individuals (with more under-construction at the 1400 Madison project), and various services that support homeless individuals.**

- **What are your plans to ensure that there are adequate shelter beds and housing options available to those who are unhoused?**
- **What is your plan to ensure that other neighborhoods throughout the city provide the services that First Hill already does?**
- **How will you plan to provide adequate counseling to help unhoused people transition into housing?**

There are a few demographics to consider when assessing how to mitigate the homeless crisis. Some of the largest demographics include those suffering from mental health or addiction issues, people who faced a financial emergency and who don't have family or friends to fall back on, and people escaping from a dangerous living situation.

Earlier this year, the federal government partnered with uber and lyft in order to provide rides to vaccination stations. With that same concept of thinking, we could partner with companies like Airbnb or VRBO (short term) to help assist in placing vetted members of the homeless community into housing and expanding shelters that have the means to handle more complex issues. Seattle has a 6% tax on Airbnb properties and spends nearly 600k of city money to monitor vacant buildings. Long term I would want to utilize this same concept with a city interface to negate costs for these property owners. This program could be utilized all over the city and other states who have implemented similar plans such as Oregon, have shown that allowing people to integrate back into society verses isolating them into shelter can yield better long-term results and stability.

I am very convinced in my many years of working with non-profits and running my own, that our homeless crisis is a result of a mismanagement of priorities, funds, and exclusionary practices from many non-profits (not all) operating in Washington. Auditing the effectiveness of such programs and ranking them is a key component of my platform. The amount of time and energy it takes to be homeless is a huge factor in why it gets prolonged. Having resources available on a centralized platform and in a localized area to access them could profoundly impact this humanitarian Crisis. Transparency in this sector could save a lot of unnecessary spending. Housing first options are not only humane but have demonstrated huge savings compared to the costs and upkeep of having people sleep on the street.

Eating a healthy diet is also critical to mental health and stress management. While the intention is good to provide people with food, the low quality and low nutritional value of this food that is donated plays a large role in perpetuating illnesses such as depression, anxiety, focus, and overall happiness. I'd like to expand programs that prioritize healthy eating as well as allocating more community gardens, mutual aid locations, and fruit orchards around the city.

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/09/gut-feeling>

In terms of receiving the extra forms of support, I heavily agree that access to telehealth is imperative. I'd like to ensure that every person has access to heal the trauma incurred during their time unhoused. Providing vouchers and direct referrals (would prefer to remove the requirement for a medical referral altogether) to these professionals as well as cellphones, iPads, and computers to access is critical and a top priority.

## Affordable Housing

**Thousands of people commute to and from First Hill on any given day and workforce housing is needed to reduce traffic and commutes.**

- **What is your plan to increase workforce housing in First Hill and other downtown neighborhoods?**

There are two main priorities I have for this plan.

For jobs that can be done remote I would like to incentivize companies to promote a work from home environment with a mileage tax for large employers who require employees to commute (Like Amazon). Reducing our climate emissions needs to be a #1 priority. Commuting by car emits the most output of CO2 in our city.

The affordability of Seattle is impacting not only earners in the middle class but workers who make less than 80k a year. As a mortgage lender it was very common to see someone making 100k a year and still struggling to save money after taxes, insurance, and basic costs of living were subtracted especially for families.

One way to address affordable housing would be to incentivize/re-zone parts of the city focusing on Co-op styles of ownership. An individual would be able to buy an equitable stake in a space and reside at 50.01% of the cost. The other 49.9% of the equity would be funded through fractional shares of equity from other members of the community that would mimic the role of a Real Estate investment trust. While they may have claim to equity, they would not have claim to inhabit the residence. As the appreciation of the property increases, so does the return on value to the stakeholders.

Fractionalizing real estate is imperative to help those obtain equity instead of continuing a cycle of living paycheck to paycheck. Applying this strategy to an apartment complex, these owners of equity and those who reside there would be able to set a fair rental price vs a single landlord or company by an equitable voting system. They could assign their own requirements to occupy spaces like an apartment complex, such as removing the need for a credit check, deposits, pet rent. Additionally, renters would now have an affordable way to build equity, wealth, and be able to borrow against or sell their equity in desperate times. Blockchain is imperative to this type of framing in our housing system, as outdated technology and excessive paperwork has limited innovation in this sector.

In addition, by upgrading our technology, we would finally have a space in which people could access critical resources and information that facilitates necessary financial literacy skills and rights of a renter or property owner. Unionizing renters in this space could also put housing back into the hands of the people instead of large real estate investment firms who continually gentrify low-income communities and push people out with rising rents. Creating our own public version for affordable rentals with a cap on rent in order to be posted and incentivize landlords who sign up, could also mitigate rising prices in our city.

## Post-COVID 19 Recovery

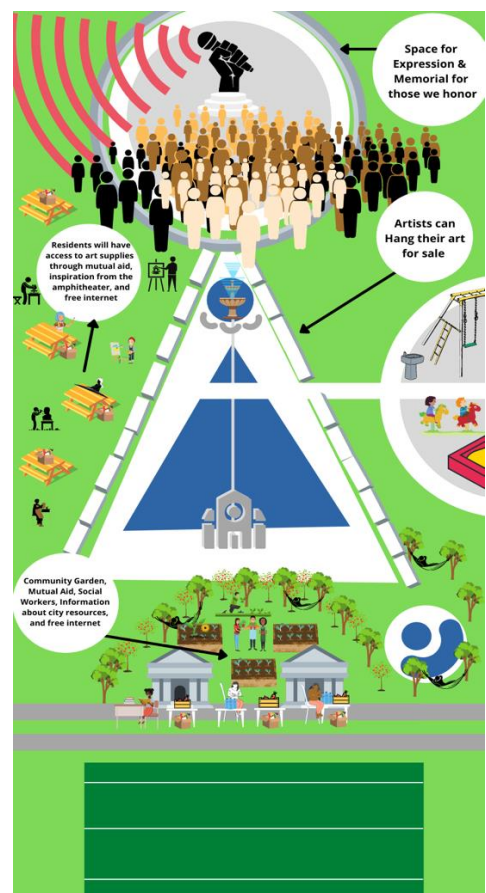
Over the past year, multiple small businesses, many of them owned and operated by People of Color, have experienced break-ins, assaults, thefts, and arson.

- What is your Road to Recovery for First Hill?
- How do you plan to support small businesses that have seen increases in crime?

In order to fix the rising crime rates in our community, we must first identify the psychology behind it. First and foremost, getting people off the streets and into housing is imperative to reducing crimes involving property damage, break ins, theft, etc. I believe it is a lack of connection to the community that propagates violent interactions from individuals. Violence is a method that gives a feeling of control or power over a person's life. This can be the result of maltreatment in early adolescence from family or community, trauma, and is amplified by poverty. People who feel they do not have a voice on how they wish to live their lives, people who feel owed due to mistreatment, people who are trying to survive and don't have an adequate platform to access basic necessities. Mental Health services like therapy and easy (non- bureaucratic) methods of access is critical to healing our community.

I propose the following:

- 1) Streamline and clean up our technology so small businesses can access the same resources that a larger business who may be better equipped to handle paperwork requirements or whom have access to corporate lawyers can compete. Small businesses should have first priority as they were really hit hard from big corporations taking advantage of stimulus packages last year. A great example would be to provide all the forms needed to acquire relief upfront in more simplified terminology and interface. Blockchain would also allow small businesses/self-employed individuals to substantially reduce a reliance on hiring an accountant, streamline payroll, and reduce fees associated with a merchant account. Monetary savings and time would be greatly enhanced.
- 2) Provide "expression zones" in which people could create art, music, ideas, access internet/technology, access social workers, and designated conversation areas in which the public could converse on different topics and engage with their community. People need an outlet. Please see design ideas. Each space depending on the location should have a unique theme. Some ideas I had include drum circles, meditation spaces, yoga or exercise areas, artist spaces, live music, conversation tables, outdoor comfortable workspaces with internet, opinion/speech stage. The yellow lines would represent roads used for alternative methods of transportation like **electric golf carts**, bicycles, scooters, etc. I'd like to connect our beautiful city together and provide alternative transportation methods, resources, support, and access to resources.



## **First Hill Open Space and the Public Realm Action Plan**

**Our neighborhood is vastly underserved with access to open space. That is why our organization, alongside SDOT, the Parks Department, and SDCI created the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan (PRAP) in 2015 to address the lack of open spaces due to inadequate availability of land and high land values.**

**Will you commit, before the August 3<sup>rd</sup> Primary to go on a FHIA guided tour to learn how the PRAP has benefitted the neighborhood thus far?**

I would love too!

- **Will you pledge to support First Hill through the continuation of policies that encourage private developers to implement the PRAP? Do you have any policy ideas that can overcome the challenges associated with new park development in First Hill?**

I would like more resources about PRAP and what specific policies would like to be continued. I feel the research I've done online does not give me the full picture of critical frameworks and intentions that brought this idea together. Based on what I have researched, it does seem we have the same goals for the city and would like to expand them further with proposed recommendations above. One policy idea would be to buy more parking lots that would add more land access to the initiative and incentivize alternative forms of transportation.