

Responses from Andrew Grant Houston

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?

My plans to ensure that there are adequate shelter bed and housing options starts with constructing 2,500 tiny homes. This builds on CM Lewis' "It Takes A Village" plan and recognizes that currently 3,500 Seattleites are unsheltered on our streets. I also recognize as an architect that the true solution is permanently affordable housing and permanent supportive housing. However, even if we cut every piece of red tape at the City, it would take 3 years to construct these homes.

Lastly, the long-term solution to ending homelessness means preventing people from falling into homelessness in the first place. So we must allow more housing across the entire city (ending exclusionary zoning) along with raising the minimum wage so residents can afford more homes.

By starting with publicly-owned land held by Seattle and King County to site tiny homes, I will ensure all neighborhoods provide services like First Hill does. I recognize as a housing activist that there are many "NIMBY" types who are always in full support of housing and services—just not in their neighborhood. I've already done some work to push back on this as a board member of Futurewise, helping to pass HB1220. This bill requires cities to plan for permanent supportive housing and shelters across their entire jurisdictions; in this way, I understand where power lies to push our agenda forward and ensure every neighborhood provides housing for all income levels and all needs.

Providing adequate counseling starts with recognizing that we both need to be investing more funds into our contracts with mental health providers as well as ensuring those contracts provide living wage and supportive services to prevent the burnout of caregivers. I would love to simply say I support universal healthcare, which I do and have advocated for at the state level this year, but that is not enough. So working within the existing system, I plan on diverting police funds into crisis response teams, recognizing that the correct response for those in crisis is not always a person with a gun.

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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?

My plan to increase workforce housing in First Hill is two-fold: a progressive income tax to fund housing and apprenticeship programs, and land-use reform to end exclusionary zoning.

Our new ability to pass a 1% income tax (what I am calling the Just Transition Tax) will raise up to \$400 million a year that will go to four things:

- 1. Green Apprenticeships**
- 2. A Green Building PDA**
- 3. B&O Tax Relief**
- 4. \$100M in the Equitable Development Initiative**

Through these four moves we will: replace regressive taxes with progressive ones (B&O); fund community-led development in Black and brown communities (EDI); expand the construction workforce we will need to build the housing (Apprenticeships); and create more social housing while educating our entire workforce on green building practices (PDA).

Still, through land-use reform we can take advantage of our regressive tax system to fund more permanently affordable housing and workforce housing. This is because all construction materials pay sales tax, so when we allow more housing in other neighborhoods the increase in sales tax can fund more city-subsidized housing as well as other services needed. In addition, all this new housing will either build on-site affordable units or pay a fee-in-lieu through Mandatory Housing Affordability. In this way market-rate projects will then increase the number of affordable homes we have on the whole.

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?

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I would say the road to recovery for First Hill is similar to other neighborhoods in that we must ensure that people can be safe in public space. I am always inspired by the work of Jane Jacobs, who coined the term “eyes on the street” and recognized that crime goes down when people are out and about and know their neighbors. I think our recovery needs to also recognize that many of the crimes that have occurred in the past year were crimes of poverty. That is why I’m focused on creating public safety alternatives that center on providing resources and preventative care to residents so that these crimes never happen in the first place.

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 3rd Primary to go on a FHIA guided tour to learn how the PRAP has benefitted the neighborhood thus far?
- 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?

Yes, I will commit to going on a guided tour and learn more about the PRAP.

Yes, I will work to encourage more developers to implement the PRAP. In respect to my own plans, I would recommend looking at my Parking to Parks and More Plan. I am also a supporter of the Lid I-5 Initiative and the desire for First Hill to establish an elementary school.