

SHSC 2019 online candidate survey questions

What is your name?

Dan Strauss

1. For which position are you running?

Seattle City Council District 6

2. What do you know about the unmet basic human needs in the district you would represent?

Both of my parents are social workers, and I grew up learning the importance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The base level of Maslow's pyramid is physiological needs, and there are thousands of people in Seattle, and many in my district, who are not having all those needs met, and in particular sleep and shelter. That's why my priority for addressing the homelessness crisis is to get people experiencing homelessness off the streets and into enhanced shelters with four walls and a door that locks connected to the services they need. This gives people a place to keep their belongings, a place to sleep without fear of assault or robbery, and the opportunity to have routine in their lives. We can do this in 6 months if there is the political will for it. In the intermediate term, we need to build permanent supportive housing and move people into more permanent dwellings, but getting people off the streets is the first step.

3. What has afforded you the privilege and power to run for office, and how will it impact your role in this position?

I am a white, cis-gender male living on native land with a strong, cohesive family which has always clothed me, fed me, housed me, supported me and given me the opportunity to succeed. I am extremely privileged and I try to be cognizant of how privileged I am, but I simply can't recognize all of the ways it has affected me. That's why I continue to ask questions and work to elevate other people's voices. I have been

privileged to have access to politicians from an early age, and to work, unpaid, in legislative bodies during my education. These experiences have informed my ability to operate in legislative work, and I was only able to have these experiences because of a supportive family and student loans. My role as a Councilmember is to listen and actively work at all times to lift up historically underrepresented and marginalized communities, from hiring, to mentoring, to introducing legislation designed to correct historical injustices perpetrated by society against community. I have a history of asking how to best support community, following through with my part, and stepping back to ensure I do not occupy space unnecessarily.

4. What experience do you have in listening to and amplifying community voices? In what ways do you base your policies and priorities on the needs of those who will be most impacted by them?

I have dedicated my life to public service because too many times throughout history policies have been made by people like me - white, heterosexual, male, cis-gender - for the benefit of people like me. I want to change this. My specific experience has been serving in the Lower 9th Ward after Hurricane Katrina to rebuild the community with the highest percentage of black homeowners in the nation, to serving community members daily at the soup hour all four years of college, to supporting co-workers experiencing racism, sexism, and overt discrimination the Washington State Legislature. I will ask with every policy we consider on Council, "does this get us closer to a city in which everyone, regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or income, has the opportunity to live affordably and access the opportunities that Seattle provides?" That is and has always been my guiding principle for policy making, and it will continue to be so on the Council.

5. The cost of health care increases every year. Recent federal policy changes have threatened the long-term sustainability of Medicaid — such as attempts to reduce funding or turn the program into a block grant — and have aimed to undermine the viability of private health insurance markets — such as eliminating the individual insurance

mandate from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or not defending the ACA in court. Given so many barriers being placed at the federal level, how would you work to improve health care access at the local level to ensure stronger and more vibrant communities?

I fully support universal health care, and if the federal government won't do it, we have to take matters into our own hands. I am intrigued by the idea of a west coast compact for universal health care - the risk pool would be large and diverse enough that everyone would be covered and the cost savings would be significant. In the meantime, I would like to cover gig economy workers in Seattle by extending the City's health and benefits plan to them. Additionally, King County is currently working on a proposal to provide health insurance to people who do not qualify for existing plans and I will ensure Seattle supports and partners in this work.

6. Federal policies over the last few years have created a climate of fear for immigrant and refugee communities across the country. Even Washington State, long a welcoming environment, is no stranger to these challenges, as the recent Department of Licensing scandal showed. This climate of fear impacts immigrants and refugees of all statuses, and new research shows this fear is driving immigrants away from health and human services programs they are legally eligible to participate in. What would you do to leverage local systems and resources to bring immigrant and refugee communities back out of the shadows?

I support Seattle being a sanctuary city, and will stand with community and official efforts to publicly condemn the federal government's treatment of these vulnerable populations. This issue has personal resonance for me - when my grandfather and my great grandparents nearly did not make it out of Germany alive, they faced difficulty being able to immigrate to the United States due to immigration quotas and other immigration barriers. Throughout my life I have supported immigrants, refugees, and

residents here and I will continue this work. I ask how best I can support and follow through. Sometimes this means providing housing, sometimes it means showing up at immigration hearings, sometimes it means providing support for specific policies. Whatever the action is, I stand with our neighbors, and support the requested action with money, time, and resources.

7. Over half Seattleites and over 40% of people in King County are renters. Currently in most of Washington State tenants can be forced to move with only 20 days' notice and even within the city of Seattle, there is no guarantee that a landlord will renew a tenant's lease. [For King County Candidates] As part of the King County Council, will you enact just cause protections to give tenants stability? [For Seattle Candidates] As part of Seattle City Council, will you expand just cause protections for renters with fixed term leases who are up for a lease renewal? [For both] What are your plans and strategies to protect renters?

Yes, I will expand just cause protections to renters up for lease renewal. Seattle has relatively strong tenant protections, but one of the issues with tenant protection legislation is that the people who need it most are often unaware of their rights. I support including a copy of the just cause eviction ordinance with every lease, translated into several languages, so renters know their rights. Another step which I support is creating one website and one phone line for renters to access - there are currently many different such resources in the county which offer varying types of help depending on the situation. This is a confusing system for people to navigate - offering a single website/number would simplify people's efforts to get assistance considerably. The premise of this very question was an experience I had just this year. I had planned to move at the end of my lease which I believed to be at the end of March, but because I had been prorated two weeks to move in at the beginning of my lease (in February), my lease expired in February. I was forced to make the decision to renew or move - in 8 days. While I planned to move out because this unit is over one-third of my income, I decided to stay another year because I was unable to find alternative options within 8

days. The heart of this question is not what I experienced, but the premise is. I will fight for renter protections as a Councilmember.

8. In 2018, the consulting firm McKinsey and Company conducted an extensive analysis of the current crisis response and homeless housing programs in Seattle and King County. They found that our region dramatically under-invests in housing and other system-wide responses, while the numbers of people experiencing homelessness grows. They found that between 2014 and 2017, the number of households accessing homelessness services grew by an average 11 percent a year, while funding grew by an average 2.4 percent a year. The McKinsey analysis estimated an additional investment of between \$360 and \$410 million per year for at least ten years is required to make and maintain progress in solving homelessness. Such added resources would bring our community in line with sister cities and counties addressing homelessness and affordable housing crises. What are three specific revenue options (local, regional, and state) you would use to generate the necessary funds to fill the gap between current local, state, and federal dollars, and the housing and service system investments required to do the job for Seattle and King County residents experiencing homelessness?

The first thing we have to do is develop better coordination between the City and King County. One way we could go about that is the establishment of a King County-Seattle Inter-Local Agreement (ILA) on homelessness, which establishes a taxing authority for homelessness. This system of regional governance should be scalable to include both Pierce and Snohomish Counties, because we are experiencing this crisis on a regional level. Much like Sound Transit addresses our transportation on a regional level, we must address housing and homelessness on a regional level. On the City level, we may start with setting up a Public Development Authority to address our portion of the regional solution. I am open to understanding what additional tax streams are able to be utilized and I am always conscious of our state's upside-down tax code and how it

impacts our residents. I don't make policy decisions without reading the proposal; with that said, I would like to learn more about a vacancy tax and a rideshare tax proposal. Many of the residential units in our city are sitting vacant. A vacancy tax would levy an additional fee if a housing unit sat vacant for more than a given amount of days in a row. There is interest in looking at the feasibility of adding a small amount to every rideshare journey in Seattle could be used on homelessness services. Still, I will need more information before making a final decision on these proposals. Finally, we may have to consider a levy. Levies are regressive, and they are not an ideal way of raising revenue; however, due to Washington's upside-down tax code, a property tax levy may be the least regressive way of raising the funds necessary to address homelessness. The state needs to better address mental and behavioral health funding and needs to address chemical dependency with the funding for additional secure-detox facilities. Overall, the state needs to address our upside-down tax code so that individual tax proposals across the state do not increase the tax burden on everyday people.

9. Seattle and King County are in the midst of a child care crisis because child care is expensive and unaffordable for many working families. At the same time, some child care providers cannot afford to pay workers a living wage and stay in business. What ideas do you have for solutions?

Affordable childcare is one of my priorities and I want to pass legislation incentivizing developers to include childcare facilities in their developments. I also support more options for people who do not work a traditional workday or who work more than one job and will expand the program to subsidize childcare for low and middle-income families, potentially by switching the eligibility criterion from 300% of the federal poverty level to a metric tied to area median income. Another idea is expanding the Seattle Preschool Program to be a birth-to-5 program rather than just preschool - Seattle has a greater shortage of options for kids in the birth to three cohort than the four to five years old cohort and the opportunity cost of spending all of our money on preschool is high. I am interested in finding out more about requiring childcare space to be built in new commercial buildings, or expanding the Floor Area Ratio exemptions childcare space receives.

10. Survivors of gender-based violence frequently enter the criminal justice system due to their victimization, but criminal justice responses are woefully inadequate and problematic for most survivors for a variety of reasons, especially Black, indigenous, and other survivors of color, refugee and immigrant survivors; and gender non-conforming survivors. What specific solutions will you bring forward for addressing issues of gender-based violence in our city? What mechanisms would you employ to shift the structural oppression and racism, specifically in criminal justice institutions?

I will support community-based organizations on the front lines of this work, as well as the Victim Defendant Project and the work of the Coalition to End Gender Based Violence. I will work to ensure that survivors of gender based violence have access to the legal resources they need. In addition, it is important that these resources are accessible and usable for members of all communities - LGBTQ+, marginalized communities, and others alike. I have worked on this last issue at the City - when the Seattle Public School District offered NOVA students access to healthcare at either Garfield High School or the World School, we recognized the inappropriateness of this offer. I helped secure seed funding for the Nova teen health center, which provides LGBTQ+ youth access to healthcare where they are, not half a mile away or in a school (which can be intimidating). I will ensure that all survivors of gender-based violence have a place where they can go and be treated compassionately, respectfully, and safely. Washington State has woefully inadequate mental health resources. People who suffer from discriminatory violence, and gender-based violence in particular, are often traumatized and in need of mental health assistance. I will work to expand mental health resources in Seattle, so survivors can get the help they need, and to coordinate existing resources in the mental health, chemical dependency, domestic violence, sexual assault, and related fields so that service providers have the knowledge and training they need to serve survivors adequately and holistically. For shifting structural oppression and racism in criminal justice institutions, I support expansion of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, which only came to District 6 last year. LEAD encourages law enforcement to develop relationships and build trust within communities and direct frequent offenders away from jail and into diversion programs. I support

diversion programs from incarceration. For those who do serve time, I support programs to clear their record so that they can continue their lives without having past encounters with the judicial system hang over their head. I also support community policing in general - police officers need to get out of their cars and walk around and get to know their communities. Only then can trust be built between law enforcement and the people they are serving.

11. Describe how you would represent your constituents to ensure there is a pathway to emergency food services for all who need it. What policies and investments would you support so that residents across Seattle and King County have equal access to adequate, culturally appropriate, healthy food?

I am passionate about expanding the Fresh Bucks program, which significantly increases purchasing power for fruits and vegetables for food stamp recipients. The program is well-designed and effective, and I would like to significantly increase the size of this program so fresh, nutritious food is accessible to more low-income people and families. I will work with the County and other municipalities to expand the program outside the city limits. I will also work with food banks across the city to ensure they are receiving both the capital and operating support they need to succeed. As stated earlier, I served food at a soup kitchen everyday during college and food access is incredibly important to me. For people on a fixed income, having free access to healthy food makes a large impact on their budget constraint, and in turn, their livelihood.

12. According to a 2017 FBI report, nationwide reports of hate crimes increased by 17% from 2016 to 2017; by 32% in Washington State, and 198% in Seattle. Within Washington State, 38% of reported hate crimes were in Seattle. The City Auditor analyzed data that reported hate crimes doubled from 2014 to 2016 and doubled again from 2016 to 2018. 54% of the crimes related to race/ethnicity and 32% sexual orientation. What are your ideas for responding to hate crime in our region without criminalizing communities of color?

One thing we should do is outlaw gay panic and trans panic as legal defenses. Using someone else's sexual preference or gender identity as a justification for committing crimes against them is the most loathsome and odious defense imaginable, and it should be banned immediately. People should not get an exemption from the laws of our society because they are bigots. As a City Councilmember, I will also have a platform to call out these crimes and express my and the city's unequivocal support for hate crime victims. As an adolescent I was picked on and bullied for being Jewish, and as an adult working in Olympia I experienced antisemitism. I have no patience for hate crime or bigotry.

13. As a city, we have moved to district representation. However, the needs of our residents are not necessarily most efficiently and effectively addressed by district. Nonprofit services most often cross multiple districts and people who make use of the services interact with providers throughout the city. How will you work to represent both the needs of your district as well as Seattle as a whole?

As a district representative, I am accountable to the needs of my constituents, and I have based my campaign partly on prioritizing constituent services and opening a district office so I can meet people in our community. I am ultimately a representative of the City of Seattle as well, and the decisions I make will impact the entire city. I will take into account the effect of a piece of legislation on my district and on the city as a whole. I will work with other district representatives and the city-wide representatives to understand what our city-wide needs are. Additionally, having served as staff for a different District 7 and providing services to residents with less than responsive representatives, I already have experience in balancing the needs of the city outside the district I serve.

14. Will you support an automatic annual inflation adjustment tied to the CPI-W for the City's human services contracts so providers can maintain current levels of service as costs of doing business increase?

Yes, absolutely. Human service providers are among the most underpaid members of our society and I will work to increase your wages across the board, including supporting an annual inflation adjustment. My parents were direct service providers and my entire life I have been aware of how the people on the front lines of providing service are underpaid. If our direct service providers cannot care for themselves, how can they care for their clients? This is a personal issue for me.