

Candidate: Nick Licata

Position: Seattle City Council, position 6

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- 1. Socially responsible development:** Seattle takes a strong stance in favor of environmentally sustainable development. Do you believe that Seattle also encourages socially responsible development? What does socially responsible development mean to you, and in the absence of any policy incentives, how does it come about? How can the City Council encourage it with policy?

Socially responsible development means ensuring that our city's growth has benefits for all its residents across several metrics that together make a city livable. Socially responsible development requires an understanding through all stages of development that Seattle needs more than growth for growth's sake.

The city must use development opportunities to pursue social growth in our community. That means ensuring that housing is affordable to people of all incomes. It means ensuring that the development takes into consideration the needs of all our residents to work and play. A truly socially responsible development will take into account all of these things and more.

In the absence of any policy incentives, socially responsible development necessarily must come from public action and public lobbying. The City Council can and should respond to these public calls for consideration of more variables that make a city livable when we approve new developments. The City Council can encourage this kind of public engagement by enacting policy incentives that reward development that includes these variables. In this way, the development community can, in time, become a partner with the goals of both our city's residents and the goals of socially responsible development.

One example of the Council responding to public action towards change is the recent passage in a Council committee of legislation that I've co-sponsored to create a construction careers initiative that will seek to "expand access to economic opportunity by increasing construction employment and providing career ladders for those historically facing barriers to jobs in the construction industry, including women, people of color, and otherwise disadvantaged individuals."

This Council action came about because the Construction Jobs Equity Coalition (CJEC) successfully made the case to Councilmembers that new city legislation is necessary to ensure that a portion of the thousands of construction jobs created by City-funded "Capital Improvement Projects" over the next decade go to the local residents and communities hardest hit by the economic recession.

- 2. Negative outcomes:** What trends accompanying growth and development in other cities, or in Seattle's history, do you hope Seattle will avoid in future development cycles? What brought you to live in Seattle? What aspects of growth do you believe bring about fear of loss? How can Seattle avoid negative outcomes?

Seattle is my home. I chose to live here because of the culture of the city. Nowhere else in the world is like Seattle. We have a vibrant arts scene, we have a diverse and powerful economy, and we have a beautiful location. But what makes Seattle truly exceptional are the people. I have never been anywhere else that is so filled with genuine, caring, intelligent, diverse, and hard-working individuals. I live in Seattle for the Seattleites.

But these qualities do not exclude us from the same trends and issues which challenge other cities. I have been a constant advocate of ensuring that as our city continues to grow, it does so for all of its citizens. Seattle is in an economic upswing. Often when growth is greatest, there is a risk of increasing already existing disparities. Our real estate market is one of the hottest in the nation. Our housing market is developing, but the housing stock is becoming less affordable. Avoiding negative outcomes means accommodate the needs of people of all incomes so they don't have to live outside of the city that they work in. As we add jobs, we can't delay investment in a transportation infrastructure that provides efficient and affordable access to the entire city. We need to make new public safety investments so that our growing population is safe from crime in our all of our communities as well as from unfair law enforcement practices.

To avoid these negative outcomes, city government officials need to represent and involve all of our neighborhoods equally in our decision-making. One new way to encourage this is by implementing public campaign financing, an idea I firmly support. We also need to ensure that we bring in people from all parts of the community when the plans change. When we leave the bubble of City Hall and really connect with the citizens of Seattle, we can best avoid these negative outcomes.

- 3. Process:** How do you rate Seattle's speed in response to demand for housing? How can Seattle improve upon existing planning policy and process (Comprehensive Plan; Design Review; Planning Commission; etc.)? What are the benefits and shortcomings of the "Seattle process"? If you would modify the planning or permitting process in any way, please cite positive and/or negative examples from other cities, or proposals envisioned by current and past council members. Are there any specific precedents from Seattle or other cities that you view as a model of civic and private partnership in the built environment?

Seattle has long put value in continuing to provide affordable housing. This has been evident in the voters' consistently expressed desire to help provide opportunities with passage of housing levies to support affordable housing. Seattle has a hard-working, productive, and creative non-profit housing community. We are consistently and consciously working to provide housing for the homeless residents of our city. There is still more to be done. I want to change homelessness housing policy in Seattle and

in the region that discourages new funding investments in new shelter. We've let too many people sleep outside for too long.

Unfortunately, regardless of the will of voters and the productivity of our non-profit housing development, these efforts have proven insufficient. The fault doesn't lie with the speed of low income housing development, it's that the need has always and - without a change in course - will always outstrip the resources necessary to meet that need. More people are moving outside the city and travelling long distances to work the same jobs in the city. This is especially true of families with children. Seattle's housing market is simply impractically high for a family attempting to live with a low-income.

In many ways our development problems are little different than many other places. We are reactive when we need to be proactive. Our public investment and our public policies incentivize growth in our city, but we seem to be consistently one boom behind when it comes to planning to address the impact of the booms.

The famous "Seattle Process" is much maligned. For each example of a delayed building permit stalling a project, there are several more examples of how the Seattle Process has served the objectives of socially responsible development. Seattle's model of neighborhood planning was internationally recognized and replicated. We need to recapture the spirit and courage that lead to embracing the then bold experiment of delivering genuine community engagement.

4. Built Form: What do you believe is the right mix of parking and building typologies in Seattle in the next 10 years? If you anticipate reduced car ownership and/or increased density, please discuss potential changes in how Seattleites access nature and the outdoors. Examples of building typologies include:

- Single Family
- Small lot/ADUs
- Rowhouse or cottage housing
- Townhomes
- Midrise developments (45' to 85')
- High rise developments

I doubt that there will ever be a single citywide parking and building typology ratio or mix for Seattle. Seattle is a big city with diverse history, levels of urbanization, and property values. Each area has their unique development challenge. There is no cookie-cutter planning template that can serve as silver bullet. But we can create planning policies that require that we consider differing ranges of ratios or mixes based upon best practices for areas within common land use zones.

In order to anticipate reduced car ownership we need to do more to incentivize the use of other methods of transportation. In order to reduce traffic we need to create a better infrastructure for public

transportation. The people of Seattle need more choices and they need more access. That is not to say that the car will cease being the principal form of transportation. However, with the advent of new car sharing services and by deepening our investment in public transportation infrastructure it is not overly optimistic to predict a reduction in car ownership and a subsequent drop in the demand cars place on our city's street and building planning and resource efforts as well.

Potential changes in how Seattleites access nature and the outdoors should be planned for in our municipal and public support of parks and open spaces as well as transportation options that efficiently allow the city mouse to gain greater access to the outdoor pleasures enjoyed by the country mouse.

5. **Affordability:** How do you define affordability, and in which neighborhoods and what mix should affordability be found? Please also discuss strategies you believe are effective at reaching affordability targets in these areas, and those you believe are ineffective. Please cite specific examples from other cities. Example strategies include:

- Preservation of older housing and retail, and other means to prevent displacement;
- Increased housing supply and microhousing;
- Incentive zoning;
- Seattle Housing Levy—please also discuss any specific changes to the program or amount that you'd favor when the Housing Levy is brought up for renewal in 2016; and
- Multi-Family Tax Exemption.

Affordability is when housing costs do not exceed 30 - 35% of income (depending on the definition used). Affordability in a neighborhood is demonstrated when people of a diversity of income can live within a neighborhood without spending more than 30 – 35% of their income on their housing costs. Citywide affordability, if realized, would mean people have a choice. All of Seattle's neighborhoods should offer choice. Our city is growing and with that growth comes increased wealth. People who have been living in our city for decades and those who come here and want to start their life are often priced out of Seattle. We have to do better. We should listen to the concerns of our neighborhoods and use this right-from-the-source information to plan better for our future.

Preservation of our existing housing stock is critical as well. For this reason I worked on – for nearly 5 years – passing legislation to create a rental housing inspection program to improve the conditions of renters living in substandard housing as well as encourage stronger maintenance practices so that fewer properties fall into irreversible disrepair and are less vulnerable to redevelopment so that we can be successful in preserving the existing rental housing stock. I continue to monitor program implementation. DPD is currently working with stakeholders to develop inspection standards, fee structure, and information and outreach elements for the program. Key issues will include how notice of inspections will be provided, what are tenant rights for refusing entry, and what issues or standards will the inspections cover. The work is scheduled for 2013 is nearly complete. The first registration requirements will take effect next year. Inspections will begin in January 2015.

We should consider all housing options from ADUs to micro units to high rises in finding solutions that work for all our residents.

When we rezone to accommodate growth, we should use incentive zoning policies to meet our affordability goals and our job growth targets. Much of our growth in the coming years is going to happen in places like the Urban Centers of the University District and South Lake Union. I worked to ensure affordable housing was available and practical for South Lake Union and I intend to meet the challenge of development in other areas with equal energy. But creating a livable area requires more than just an investment in affordable housing. There must be infrastructure to serve new residents to an area. This includes transportation, utilities, police, parks, communities and education opportunities.

I support the renewal of the 2009 Housing Levy in 2016. I would support an increase in funding provided by a levy renewal with a commitment to an investment priority towards meeting the greatest needs of the lowest income populations. Preservation is another important priority because it removes a property already providing low income housing from possible speculation forces, it preserves neighborhood character, and preservation is a more efficient use of finite public resources.