SHSC 2019 online candidate survey questions

What is your name?
Logan Bowers

1. For which position are you running?
Seattle City Council District 3

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

Seattle is home to far too many people who lack for basic human needs, District 3 included. Our county has over 12,000 unhoused individuals, but only 6,000 shelter beds. We need more shelters and services that meet the needs of unhoused individuals and help them transition to permanent housing, because everyone deserves the dignity of a safe and reliable place to live. In the short term, as we increase the number of shelter beds, we also need to be providing services such as toilets to meet the daily needs of our unhoused neighbors. Too many youth in our community are living with food insecurity. We need to provide more programs for youth nutrition and school meals, so Seattle’s children can be fed and prepared to learn. Medical care, including mental health treatment, is unavailable to many people and families. We need to work with the state and medical providers to find a solution to provide everyone with affordable, accessible medical treatment and preventative care.

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

My spouse, Jerina, is the primary reason I am able to run for office. She is now doing the management and administration of the small business we own together. Jerina is one of the smartest people I know and I am grateful for her support and encouragement. We have been a great team for almost two decades now but she is not
the only one who has helped me get to this position. I grew up with working-class parents, my mother was a public school teacher and my father was a union member. They raised me with values of hard work and empathy, and I am humbled by how hard they worked to provide me with the opportunity to go to college. I understand how fortunate I have been. In our society, hard work is not rewarded equitably. Today our city is more segregated than it was in the civil rights era and the gap between wealthy and poor is growing. Because I am able, I am obligated to do all I can to reverse this.

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?

It is the responsibility of government to care for and protect the most vulnerable in our community. People are vulnerable in different ways -- due to economic circumstances or how they might be treated due to their race, ethnicity, age, or ability. There are voices that are underrepresented in neighborhood groups and during public comment at council meetings. It is important to hear these voices as important stakeholders in city policy, and I have attempted to seek out these voices and perspectives throughout my campaign. As the owner of a cannabis business, I heard the concerns of the community after legalization and I advocated for the state legislature to vacate marijuana convictions, because for decades low-level marijuana arrests and convictions have unjustly harmed communities of color. On the council I will look for opportunities like this to make an impact on the lives of those impacted by government policy.

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?

First, the council needs to finally appoint a permanent director for the Human Services Department, which has been missing for over a year now, so that the agency can have leadership and a long-term vision for success. I would ask HSD to ensure that it is connecting people who need low-cost or free health services with appropriate providers, and help enroll people eligible for insurance subsidies in health plans. I am optimistic about Washington’s Cascade Care public option which is set to launch in 2021. I will work with my colleagues on the council to lobby the state legislature to provide for health care subsidies for Cascade Care, so everyone in the state can have health coverage. If the state cannot pass such subsidies, I will work with fellow councilmembers to create local subsidies, because everyone deserves to have their health cared for.

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?

As a councilmember, I will support legislation to bar any city agency or contractor from sharing information with ICE/CBP, absent a proper warrant. I will ensure that the council follows up on its legislation to be certain that city employees are trained to follow that law so that the mistakes that King County made will not be repeated in Seattle. Seattle should not collect or keep any information related to the immigration status of its residents, and Seattle’s police and justice system should not be co-opted by the federal government’s overreach.
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?

As a renter myself, I know that most renters work very hard to afford their monthly rent. Just cause protections should be strengthened. I’m glad that the state recently-passed SB-5600 for eviction reform, but Seattle should go further because the system is still designed to favor landlords. Tenants need to be able to maintain their housing during their appeal and have more rights within the appeal process. While SB 5600 may allow a Court to grant a stay, that decision is discretionary. The City should pass mandatory tenant-protective measures that allow a tenant to catch up with payment obligations under a payment plan. Cities have an obligation to protect tenants and ensure they have access to stable housing, which is why I also support regulations that give tenants more rights to retain their housing and prevent discriminatory or predatory behavior by landlords, and the state should grant cities the authority to stabilize rents and prevent rent gouging.

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?

We need to move to a progressive taxation system. The recent ruling at the appellate court gives us hope that Seattle will be able to legally enact an income tax or capital gains tax on high earners. This would be my ideal solution. At the state level, we were close to seeing a capital gains tax passed this legislative session. I hope that with further support from municipalities we can see this enacted next session. Regionally, Seattle needs to partner with the county and surrounding cities to address the regional issue of homelessness, and I will advocate for those councils to pass high-earner taxes to support homelessness response as a partnership.

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?

I intend to liberalize Seattle’s zoning to allow more childcare throughout the city. Currently, childcare centers are commercial uses that are banned in most neighborhoods, so most parents live in a “childcare desert” where they must travel out of their neighborhood to find reliable care. This is bad for both parents and children. I will also work towards making the Seattle Preschool Program a birth-to-Kindergarten program, with special focus on 0-3 years, where there is a greater shortage of care, and increase the Child Care Assistance Program eligibility cutoff above the current 300% of the federal poverty level.
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?

The first step is for the city, the SPD, and the PAO to start listening to community feedback like the Community Police Commission and incorporating their concerns into their policies and practices. This requires that the council properly exercise their oversight of the police department and strengthen police oversight and accountability functions. The current council failed to properly implement recent accountability reforms, and so the SPD remains under court oversight. The problem of victim-defendants requires training and awareness at all levels of the justice system, from responding officers to prosecutors, defense attorneys, judicial officers, and agency leadership. As a councilmember, I would lean on the expertise of subject-matter experts like the Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence to create policies to address this issue.

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?

One of the historic land uses in our city was the corner store. Small groceries would stock some staples but a lot of food that catered to the tastes and preferences of the immediate community. Now, however, these types of uses are illegal in most of the city. If we want people to have access to healthy, culturally appropriate food, we need to allow for businesses to locate near their customers. Seattle’s Fresh Bucks program matches money spent from EBT/SNAP at farmers’ markets. This pilot program is one
way to expand the benefits for low income families but it needs a more reliable funding source and should be available in more locations.

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?

Some national politicians have embraced hate and discrimination as their platform, which has given cover to people with prejudice in their hearts to commit violence against historically marginalized populations, including immigrants, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals. This is disgusting behavior from positions of leadership. As a councilmember, and one of the leaders of Seattle, I will make clear that such attitudes are not tolerated in this city. Seattle must recognize and prioritize hate crimes and bias crimes in enforcement and prosecution. I will ask the Seattle Police Department to do outreach to affected communities to learn what they need to feel safe and supported by law enforcement. The department needs to regain the trust of Seattle’s communities in order to be effective. SPD needs to demonstrate openness to learning, and be responsive to feedback, from the city’s diverse communities. My role as a councilmember is to provide strong oversight of the department, and demand that its officers build trust in communities by acting professional, courteous, and unbiased in performance of their duties. While on council I will also fund the expansion of community policing programs and full staffing for the department.

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?

The District 3 representative is elected by the residents of the district but must work for a just city. One of the advantages of the system is that it ensures that all parts of the city are represented but it can lead to fragmentation if the councilmembers take an adversarial approach. My philosophy is that all councilmembers are accountable for a just and equitable city regardless of the district they represent. I am an effective advocate and my track record leading teams demonstrates this. I have been able to successfully work with state lawmakers to create just regulations for the cannabis industry. I achieved this by being willing to discuss all aspects of an issue with a wide variety of people and find common ground.

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.