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1) Public Safety

The DSA’s core mission is to create a healthy, vibrant downtown for all. It is no secret that the pandemic took a heavy toll on downtowns across the country and Seattle is no exception. As we work toward recovery on all fronts, issues of public safety downtown continue to be one of the top themes we hear from stakeholders. How will you address public safety in downtown Seattle?

This question is quite leading. A ‘healthy and vibrant Downtown’ was far out of sight even before the Pandemic. We had a major shooting in broad daylight in January of 2020 where shots were fired on 3rd Avenue and no one was held accountable. I understand it is easy to just blame the pandemic for what has happened to Downtown, but I also remember what it was like before the pandemic in Downtown, Seattle.

Public safety is not just a Downtown specific issue—it is an issue all over the City. And while I understand that the economic majority including the groups led by Howard Wright III, who has ties and influence via the ‘*Seattle Hospitality Alliance*’, our King County Executive, and many others—there is no way to create a ‘healthy and vibrant’ Downtown when the only thing the ‘Stakeholders’ care about is the profit that comes from Tourism.

In my 27 years of lived experience, Downtown did not used to be like this. Businesses located in the Downtown corridor didn’t just rely on tourism. While they may benefit from the ‘*Tourist Season*’ — they also relied on people that lived in the Downtown area all year long. In 2019. 4 years ago when I first ran for election for Seattle City Council in District 7, there were already businesses closing due to crime, tax increases (LID), now even more. And this was **before the pandemic.**

In order to address public safety, we have to elect Leaders that actually care about the City and about Downtown. We need Leaders that are willing to speak out under pressure, that are reliable and that do not just ‘*flip-flop*’ last minute— or break the promises they make to the voting public during campaigns after they are elected. and not just their next term.

We also can't just keep talking, walking, spending, or studying our way around these problems. I mean we are 8 years into an emergency that has been described as so 'complex'— no one can solve it.

In my opinion, it was not and has never been *'that complicated'*. I would say there are a lot of people that have now gone out of their way to ensure that it is complicated.

There is so much talk about "We need a plan because this is a complex issue" . . . And I am living Downtown thinking, well at least I went to the work of proposing one— four years ago in 2019...

Everything *'complex'* is made up of things that are simple. Legos and bricks are a perfect example of this. A brick building might be complex, but one brick is quite simple. I believe we need to get things done and we need to *'table'* the *'tourism interests'* before we can actually *'attract more visitors anyway'*.

2) Investing in Downtown's Recovery

Given the importance of downtown to the overall health and vitality of our city and region, what actions will you propose to support downtown's recovery?

I would start off with actually enforcing the laws that are already listed in both the Washington State Criminal Code and the Seattle Municiple Code to make sure they match appropriately and also are feasible.

I have proposed actions. I have proposed solutions. There are a lot of non-profits that actually profit off of the problems the City of Seattle is facing.

If we want to pass laws for prosecution offenses— then someone is going to have to stand up to our King County Executive and force the King County Jail to actually arrest people for these crimes if they refuse voluntary treatment or do not meet the criteria for involuntary treatment due to lack of facilities and bed.

3) Fiscal Priorities

Given the fragile state of downtown's revitalization, do you agree that the City should prioritize existing spending before imposing new taxes or increasing existing ones? In a detailed manner, please describe how you would propose addressing the budget issues the city is facing.

Yes I believe the City should prioritize *'existing spending'* a long time ago. I do not believe this is a *'revenue'* problem but instead a *'spending'* problem. I and others in 2019 proposed that independent accounting firms conduct regular audits of every City Departments to ensure that tax-payer money is being spent in a way that delivers results, as opposed to just being shuffled around.

To be more detailed, I think we need to have Leaders that actually understand how accounting works, know how to balance a check book, and understand that it doesn't make sense to continue to spend money on things that don't work or have failed to deliver results.

I think the problems the City and District 7 are facing are at this point—pretty obvious. I don't think we should keep conducting these '*million dollar studies*'. I mean for those of us that live Downtown, we can just look out the window. That would open up quite a few million dollars.

I also think we need to stop partnering with a County Executive that is so out of touch with reality — they spend more time on '*photo ops*' than actually **getting things done**. I think tax payers deserve to know how their money is being spent.

For example, if we want to keep building bike lanes, then those using the bike lanes, or those supplying the bikes / scooters need to foot that bill. They profit off of it while the Downtown taxpayers and residents are footing the bill. And these **are not local companies**.

To be honest, it is extremely difficult for me to understand how we even have a '*budget problem*' when the City has only increased taxes, not in just one way—but a lot of ways.

Some people have no idea how to be financially responsible, so instead— they pay people to do that for them, trusting that those people know better. The reason I do not pay people for things I know how to do myself is because it would be cost-effective or efficient. I pay people when I **don't know how to do something**.

If we had financially responsible leaders, I don't think we would be having any 'budget' problem. We have a council voting on budget cuts, like defunding the police without even evaluating or considering the impact. Now I guess they regret it. But why did they wait until election year to say that?

To get re-elected? So they could what—repeat the same mistakes without actually admitting they made any? That just seems wrong to me. It believe it is both deceptive and dishonest.

4) Top Voter Concerns

What do you believe are the top three issues on voters' minds right now, and how would you propose addressing them?

I believe the top concerns of voters are public safety, homelessness, cleaner streets, and affordability. By addressing public safety and homelessness, we would be getting cleaner streets, and better economic development.

For those of us that actually live Downtown, it is just more and more taxes. The LID tax. Let's build a multi-million dollar '*shark tank*' or '*another stadium*' like that will attract more '*visitors*'.

And regarding the ‘*JumpStart tax*’. I mean what have ‘*JumpsStarted*’? Definitely not my car... It is a great name for a tax that has not actually started anything.

5) Return to Office

One of the most impactful things we can do to drive downtown revitalization is to get more people here - visitors, tourists, residents and perhaps most importantly, workers. A steady and consistent flow of employees downtown who are eating, drinking, shopping and engaging in recreation brings much needed support for our small businesses and public spaces. Do you believe that city workers should work in person three or more days per week?

That depends on a lot of other factors. I mean if we are talking about tourism exclusive businesses, they don’t operate much in the off season.

If we are talking about local businesses, then we have to address the public safety and homelessness problems.

Not a lot of people want to live Downtown anymore. We have some transient workers from large corporations but they rotate around.

As a female that lives Downtown, I no longer risk my life or put up with threats / offers to get raped and killed while walking. I drive even the shortest distances for my own safety.

I have had to protect my address for my own safety. This wasn’t really a choice but it has kept me safe. We could start by addressing the drug use and open drug markets, but as long as the current King County Executive is in charge of the KCJ, even KCJ won’t book people for misdemeanor crimes.

Right now, without going into detail, I can tell you even some service providers can’t work Downtown for their own safety. We don’t even have enough protection services available for that.

So right now—no. Not unless they get a City paid car, gas mileage reimbursement, and secure parking, I would not expect anyone to commute in person to work especially if they take transit. Downtown is a disaster. Those of us that live here, we see it. Everyday. We hear sirens. All day. We see people nearly dead at least weekly.

Until it is actually safe, and not just made to look like it is before tourism season or an election, I would not support this because I would never ask someone to risk their own safety without assured security.

6) Other

If there were any important details about your candidacy that you were unable to provide in response to the previous questions, please take this opportunity to share that information here:

One thing I will just add because I noticed it is why did the CEO of the DSA endorse the incumbent before the deadline even passed. I know the DSA is not going to endorse me, but just that itself to me and others I have spoken to says a lot about the organization itself.

UPDATE: I called Jon Scholes who did not return my call asking for an extension because he claims he *‘never endorsed Andrew Lewis’* — it is my understanding that he did before any other candidate and after the flop on the public consumption vote.