



## EVERETT CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Candidate Information

Name: **Ryan Crowther**

Candidate for: Everett City Council, District 2

Campaign website: <https://www.ryancrowther4everett.com>

### Background

As part of our mission to support a vibrant downtown core, the Downtown Everett Association provides leadership and awareness to the issues impacting our downtown community. We've created this candidate questionnaire – which aligns with our [mission](#) – to help voters understand the 2025 Everett City Council candidates' vision and priorities for Downtown Everett. The Downtown Everett Association does not endorse candidates; we encourage the community to read the candidates' responses below to learn how they would support a thriving downtown.

All candidates were invited to respond. Candidate responses are posted in their entirety. Typos and grammatical errors are their own.

### Questions

#### Public Safety

***Do you believe current policies, such as the service provider buffer zone ordinance, help accomplish the City's goals of promoting public safety in the downtown core? What other policies do you believe would help meet this goal, and how?***

If properly enforced, the service provider buffer zone policy represents a step toward strengthening the downtown core as a safe and welcoming environment for residents, visitors, and businesses alike. When the policy was adopted, the City emphasized education over enforcement—a compassionate approach. However, while education and support services remain essential, communities in and around service hubs like Andy's Place continue to experience high levels of crime and disruptive behavior. These buffer zones are a move in the right direction, but without active enforcement, their effectiveness will be limited. To truly reduce crime and nuisance activity in these areas, enforcement must accompany education. Prioritizing the implementation and enforcement of existing policies like the buffer zones is a more impactful first step than introducing new ones.

***How do you believe the City can create a safe space for all members of the downtown community? How would you prioritize these measures?***

Everett faces a critical challenge: striking the right balance between investing in public safety and making the strategic investments in infrastructure, talent, permitting, placemaking, and



more, that are essential to realizing the full potential of Downtown Everett. All of this must happen while navigating the constraints of a significant budget deficit.

Amid these competing priorities, public safety must remain the top priority for the health and vibrancy of our downtown core. Here's how I would approach that prioritization:

- **Strengthen the Everett Police Department** by investing in modern technology, equipment, staffing capacity, and workforce development initiatives.
- **Enforce existing public safety and code compliance policies** consistently and effectively to protect quality of life and deter nuisance activity.
- **Engage directly with neighborhoods, residents, and business owners** to gather input, track outcomes, and measure what's working.
- **Explore new accountability-focused policies** aimed at reducing recidivism and addressing the impact of repeat offenders on our community.

Building a safe, thriving Downtown Everett will require both vision and discipline—and that starts with making public safety the foundation.

### Economic Vitality

#### ***How do you believe the City can help make Downtown a more attractive location for new businesses?***

Residents, business owners, and visitors all deserve a safe, vibrant downtown—and the good news is, Downtown Everett is uniquely positioned for a successful future. We're already seeing signs of momentum: new businesses are opening their doors, community events are growing, and positive stories about Everett are increasingly finding their way into local media and social feeds.

But despite this progress, we continue to battle a stubborn and long-standing stigma: that Everett is a city defined by crime, drug activity, and chronic homelessness. These issues are real, visible, and persistent—and they remain the biggest barrier to downtown's full potential.

Before we focus on attracting new businesses, entrepreneurs, and investment, we must prioritize retaining and supporting the businesses that are already here—the local anchors and pioneers who have helped shape today's Downtown Everett. And when you speak with those business owners, their top request is strikingly consistent: **make downtown a safe, clean, and welcoming place—for staff, for customers, and for the broader community.**

Downtown Everett has all the right ingredients to become a thriving commercial and cultural hub: walkable streets, diverse housing options, nightlife, arts and entertainment, events, and—



most importantly—a growing pool of talent. But without a strong foundation of public safety, these assets are undercut. If people don't feel safe, they won't come downtown—no matter how good the restaurants, shops, or events may be.

The path forward is clear: to attract new businesses, we must first support and protect the ones already here. The success of these businesses is the most powerful marketing tool we have. Promoting their stories, improving the visitor experience, and restoring a sense of safety and pride downtown will do more to change Everett's narrative than any ad campaign ever could.

Downtown Everett doesn't need a reinvention—it needs a re-commitment to the fundamentals: public safety, community support, and a clear message that this is a place where people can thrive.

### ***How can the City support existing businesses – from small to large?***

A key driver of success for Downtown Everett's business community lies in strong partnerships—and the city's ongoing collaboration with organizations like the Downtown Everett Association, Greater Everett Chamber of Commerce, and the Small Business Development Center has already proven to be a valuable investment. These groups play a critical role in supporting local businesses through education, networking, resources, and advocacy. Continuing to uplift and empower these organizations will strengthen the foundation of our downtown economy.

The most vibrant and resilient communities are those that are connected—where business owners have access to support, mentorship, and a sense of shared purpose. By fostering these relationships and investing in the success of these business-serving organizations, the City of Everett can help create an environment where businesses not only survive but thrive.

However, one ongoing challenge that threatens this growth—especially for smaller businesses—is the city's permitting process. Delays in approvals have slowed the opening of new restaurants, cafes, and bars, and overly complex or costly requirements have hindered expansion plans for essential service-based businesses, such as plumbing and electrical companies. These roadblocks not only frustrate entrepreneurs but can dissuade future investment in our city altogether.

To become truly business-friendly, Everett must streamline its permitting systems and ensure they are efficient, transparent, and accessible. This means investing in the staff and internal capacity needed to process permits in a timely manner, while also maintaining educational support and outreach to help business owners navigate the process. At the same time, we must uphold business-friendly policies that encourage growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

By reducing red tape and fostering a collaborative, supportive business environment, Everett can position itself as a dynamic hub for businesses of all sizes—where local entrepreneurs feel supported and where new ventures are eager to set up shop.



## Public Spaces

### ***What steps can the City take to improve Downtown Everett's public spaces, such as streets, sidewalks, parks, and places where people spend time and gather?***

As the City works to stabilize its budget, continued investment in clean, safe, and welcoming public spaces must remain a priority. While maintenance and improvements come at a cost, the return on that investment is clear: when parks, sidewalks, and shared public areas are well cared for and thoughtfully activated, they become powerful engines of community pride, safety, and economic vitality.

Right now, many of our public spaces are underutilized not because they lack potential, but because they don't always feel clean or safe. Residents and visitors won't spend time in places that appear neglected or uncomfortable—no matter how centrally located or well-designed they might be. That's why public safety must be a foundational element in any strategy to improve and activate these spaces.

But this work can't (and shouldn't) fall solely on the shoulders of the City. The future of Downtown Everett's public spaces will depend on strong public-private partnerships. Empowering non-profits, community groups, local businesses, and individual citizens to help activate these areas through events, programming, markets, performances, and pop-up experiences will breathe new life into our streets and parks. By allowing and encouraging these groups to host community gatherings, outdoor classes, art installations, seasonal festivals, and more, we create a shared sense of ownership and vibrancy.

To support this, the City must continue to invest in the departments and staff that manage permitting, event coordination, and park maintenance. Ensuring that these teams are well-resourced will improve accessibility, streamline processes, and provide better customer service for those looking to bring ideas to life in public spaces.

Ultimately, activating and improving Downtown Everett's public spaces isn't just about aesthetics, it's about creating places where people feel a sense of belonging, connection, and possibility. With the right mix of safety, collaboration, and support, our public spaces can truly reflect the spirit and potential of Everett's future.

## Transportation

### ***How can the City increase accessibility to Downtown and help people feel more connected to our neighboring communities? What are your priorities in regards to bicycle infrastructure, public transportation, pedestrian experience, parking, etc.?***

As the county seat and a growing hub for commerce, culture, and community, accessibility is central to the continued success and livability of Downtown Everett. The way people move to, from, and within our downtown, and how easily they can connect to surrounding neighborhoods



and regional destinations, has a direct impact on economic development, public safety, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life.

With Everett continuing to expand as a regional destination, now is the time to prioritize thoughtful, multimodal connectivity between the waterfront and our downtown core. Whether someone arrives by car, transit, bike, or on foot, they should feel welcomed and safe every step of the way. This means investing in:

- **Pedestrian-Friendly Infrastructure:** Prioritizing well-maintained, accessible sidewalks, improved street lighting, clearly marked crosswalks, and traffic-calming measures to make downtown safer and more comfortable for people of all ages and abilities.
- **Connected Bicycle Infrastructure:** Expanding a network of protected bike lanes that safely connect downtown with neighborhoods, transit hubs, and the waterfront.
- **Public Transportation Access:** Working with partners like Everett Transit, Community Transit, and Sound Transit to increase the frequency, reliability, and coverage of public transit options, including improved access to the light rail stations south of us.
- **Wayfinding and Navigation:** Signage to help both residents and visitors navigate between key destinations—such as downtown, the waterfront, the hospital, and the college district—whether they're walking, biking, or driving.
- **Smart Parking Solutions:** As parking becomes more constrained, especially in high-demand areas, the City should explore new parking strategies that could include better signage to available lots, shared-use agreements, and encouraging structured parking in future development projects—to make the most of existing space without compromising walkability or urban density.

### Historic Preservation

***In your view, how important are Downtown Everett's historic buildings to its social vibrancy and economic vitality, and why? What would be your approach be to incentivizing the preservation of these buildings?***

One of the biggest reasons I chose to stay in Everett was the unique charm of its downtown, a character that simply wouldn't exist without its historic buildings. These century-old structures tell the story of our city's past, and a strong asset for its future. They give Everett a sense of identity and authenticity that can't be replicated with new construction, no matter how modern or efficient.

However, many of these buildings are in poor condition and costly to repair, making preservation a challenge. To support their revitalization, the City should treat historic preservation as part of its broader economic development strategy.



My approach would include:

- Financial incentives such as grants and low-interest loans for renovations and code compliance
- Support navigating state and federal historic tax credits
- Streamlined permitting for restoration projects
- Partnerships with nonprofits, developers, and arts organizations to creatively activate underused buildings

### Additional

***With the Everett 2044 Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations going into effect, describe your related approach to zoning, density, allocation of city resources, and the priority for growth in the downtown core.***

With Everett expected to welcome up to 65,000 new residents over the next 20 years, thoughtful planning around density and infrastructure is critical, and much of that growth will be centered in our downtown core.

Now that the Comprehensive Plan has been adopted, my focus will be on implementation. That means ensuring our zoning supports smart, mixed-use development, increasing housing options while preserving the character of our neighborhoods. It also means making strategic investments in infrastructure—transportation, utilities, parks, and public safety—to support higher density and maintain livability.

Downtown must be a priority for this growth, not only because it's well-positioned for it, but because a thriving urban core benefits the entire city. With the right long-range planning, community input, and resource allocation, we can make Downtown Everett a model for balanced, sustainable growth.

***Is there any additional information you would like to share about your candidacy that would be helpful for downtown residents, workers, and visitors to know?***