



EVERETT CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Information

Name: **Sam Hem**

Candidate for: Everett City Council, District 1

Campaign website: <https://electsamhem.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?

The buffer zone ordinance helps balance compassion with accountability, but it must be paired with broader strategies that address the root causes of crime and disorder. I support combining this policy with expanded access to treatment, housing, and crisis response services, while also increasing community policing focused on visibility and trust. This approach will help create a safer environment for residents, businesses, and visitors in downtown Everett.

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

Creating safe spaces requires a balanced strategy that ensures accountability while also providing compassion and support. I would prioritize strengthening community policing, improving lighting and infrastructure, and expanding access to housing and treatment services. By engaging nonprofits, neighborhood groups, and local businesses in these efforts, the City can create a downtown where everyone feels welcome and secure.



Economic Vitality

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

To attract new businesses, Everett must provide both opportunity and ease of entry. Streamlining permitting processes, offering start-up incentives, and promoting the unique culture of downtown—its arts, history, and waterfront—will position Everett as a destination for entrepreneurs. Partnering with Everett Community College and local unions to build skilled workforce pipelines will further strengthen downtown as a hub of innovation and opportunity.

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

Our local businesses need stability and predictability, and the City can play a critical role in providing that foundation. By expanding grant and low-interest loan programs, supporting workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities through partnerships with unions and schools, and investing in infrastructure like parking, sidewalks, and broadband, we can make it easier for businesses to operate and grow. In addition, sponsoring downtown events that consistently draw foot traffic will help sustain small and large businesses alike. Most importantly, the City must actively listen to business owners and keep open lines of communication so that policies reflect their real needs and experiences.

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?

Public spaces are the heart of our city, and they should reflect pride and vibrancy. The City can invest in cleaner sidewalks, brighter lighting, and improved landscaping while also encouraging the installation of public art. By activating spaces with community events, farmers markets, and cultural programming, Everett can create an atmosphere that attracts families, encourages social connection, and makes downtown a true gathering place.

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.?

Accessibility is essential for downtown's success. My priorities include improving pedestrian safety through better crosswalks and lighting, expanding bike lanes that connect to transit hubs, and strengthening regional transportation links with Community Transit and Sound Transit. Parking should be managed in a way that balances the needs of drivers while promoting multimodal options, ensuring that everyone—whether by car, bus, train, or bicycle—can easily and safely access downtown.



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?

Downtown Everett's historic buildings are vital to our community's identity and economy. They connect us to our past while offering opportunities for modern reuse that can drive growth. I support incentivizing preservation through tax credits, grants, and flexible zoning that makes it easier for developers to adapt historic spaces into restaurants, offices, or cultural venues. Preserving these buildings honors Everett's history while strengthening its economic future.

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.

The Everett 2044 Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity to prioritize growth in the downtown core, where density supports both housing and businesses. I support zoning policies that encourage mixed-use development, affordable housing, and walkable neighborhoods while also protecting green spaces and historic character. City resources should be directed toward infrastructure upgrades that support this density, including utilities, roads, and broadband, to ensure downtown remains both livable and vibrant.

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?

For over 22 years, I have worked to strengthen communities through labor advocacy, coalition building, and policy leadership. As a labor leader and Everett resident, I bring a record of results—negotiating contracts, expanding workforce training, and advancing policies that benefit working families. My commitment is to make downtown Everett a safe, thriving, and welcoming place where residents want to live, businesses want to invest, and visitors feel proud to gather.