



EVERETT MAYOR CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Information

Name: **Scott Murphy**

Candidate for: Everett City Mayor

Campaign website: <https://electscottmurphy.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 Mayor 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?

I believe the service provider buffer zone ordinances reflect an important step toward improving public safety downtown. When too many services are concentrated in one area, it can unintentionally create challenges for businesses, residents, and public confidence. By dispersing services more evenly across the entire city, we reduce strain on the downtown core while ensuring people still receive the help they need. The intent is to reduce over-concentration, spread out services, and lessen impacts on local businesses, residents, and public safety in one small area. Spreading these services more evenly across the City is a step in the right direction.

While managing concentration and spreading out services from the core is important, this also doesn't solve all of the concerns. To be effective, we need to maintain a convenient public transportation system which allows individuals to easily move to other parts of the City for services. At the same time, we need to recognize ease of walking and access to downtown from the transient and homeless population that continues to impact our downtown core.

A successful approach requires strong public safety measures, including police presence and visibility and it also requires involving downtown businesses and property owners to determine the level and type of police services that are necessary to address the problems. Everett police



need to clearly understand the issues that the downtown businesses and property owners are experiencing on a daily basis. We need to ensure that City personnel are really listening to the concerns of downtown businesses and residents.

Finally, the challenges of homelessness and the transient population are front and center in the downtown core. These issues affect visitors, employees, and business and property owners on a daily basis. Until a comprehensive plan with real solutions is in place, our downtown will not earn the respect as a safe place to live and do business. A coordinated plan is a high priority!

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

Downtown Everett must be safe and welcoming for everyone, visitors, employees, business owners, our youth, residents, and families who enjoy our shops, restaurants, and events.

Public safety starts with a visible, well supported police presence and proactive initiatives that prevent crime before it occurs. Successful programs in other cities show that dedicated downtown patrols, foot and bike officers who build trust with business owners and the public, and strong partnerships with social service providers all contribute to real safety and a greater sense of security.

A safe space must include strong public safety presence, well-lit streets, consistent enforcement of laws, ongoing communications with property owners and businesses, and accountability from all partners. By fully staffing the Police department (one of my highest priorities), and having a clear and coordinated plan, I would strengthen our partnership with the DEA by defining what services the police department will provide downtown, including proactive patrols, and policing strategies.

In addition, I believe that a robust downtown economic development plan which focuses on increasing the number of active businesses will help to revitalize our downtown. Key to this is a complete review of current city and county owned properties to ensure that they are being utilized to their highest and best use. There are many city and county owned properties which are currently under-utilized.

I believe it is critical for the Mayor and those working at city hall to make a commitment of listening to the issues and providing an effective and meaningful response. As Mayor, it will be a high priority for me to schedule quarterly meetings with the Downtown Everett Association to review progress, listen to concerns, and make mid-course adjustments when needed.

Accountability is important and all parties need to meet their responsibilities.

My goal is to make downtown safe, welcoming, and with new business and commerce that brings people to downtown Everett. Together, downtown Everett need to have a reputation and publicity that is positive. Negative publicity keeps people away! By combining strong public safety efforts and developing a plan working with the DEA that can be assessed on a quarterly basis, I am committed to an outcome that provides downtown environment where individuals feel safe day and night, businesses thrive, and the public has confidence in the heart of our city.



Economic Vitality

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

The City and DEA should strive to make downtown a more attractive location for new businesses by continuing with the fundamentals, safety, cleanliness, and reliable services. But we must go further. With Everett serving as the County seat and home to major government offices, Everett and downtown should be marketed as a safe place for parking, shopping, recreational programs, personal planning/business, dining services, and places to meet.

We should build on Everett as a safe, welcoming, and enjoyable City to visit. Expand police presence through walking and bicycle patrols downtown, creating a visible sense of safety that discourages crime, loitering, while encouraging pedestrian foot traffic.

In addition, proactive code enforcement needs to be in place. This will help to ensure an attractive and desirable downtown for both local businesses and residents.

Finally, I believe our downtown parking restrictions should be re-visited to better align with the habits of shoppers with input from downtown businesses. For example, 30 and 90 minute time limits are frequently not long enough in certain areas of the downtown. A full two-hour time limit is warranted in some areas to facilitate more individuals wanting to do business downtown.

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

Everett should support existing businesses, large and small, by focusing on strategies that strengthen both safety and economic vitality. Public safety is the foundation! When residents and visitors feel secure, businesses have the opportunity to thrive.

One strategy to help existing businesses would be to provide stronger connections between the downtown, Everett Station and the waterfront. This can be accomplished by reviewing and updating Everett Transit routes periodically to facilitate easier movement around the city.

Also, as previously noted, having a fully staffed Everett Police department will allow us to expand police presence by having officers on the streets and bicycle patrols downtown, create a visible sense of safety that discourages crime, and loitering while encouraging pedestrian foot traffic.

Equally important is supporting growth through smart economic opportunities such as tax incentives, streamlined permitting, and tenant improvement grants to help local businesses expand and to spruce up their exteriors.

Safe housing and retail together are critical for a vibrant core. By encouraging mixed-use development, housing above shops and restaurants, Everett can ensure a predictable customer base for local businesses. Destination businesses, restaurants, breweries, cultural venues, and entertainment options, give people more reasons to choose Everett over competing retail places.



The City must strive to create an environment in Everett, where businesses not only stay but grow, attracting both new investment and repeat customers.

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?

Improving Downtown Everett's public spaces requires a commitment to safety, purpose, and accountability. Any decision to create or expand public gathering areas must begin with meaningful outreach and engagement that includes downtown businesses, property owners, employees, residents living downtown and in mixed use properties, and police and fire.

The challenges of homelessness and the transient population are front and center in downtown, affecting visitors, employees, and business and property owners on a daily basis. Until a comprehensive plan with real solutions is in place, our downtown will not earn the respect as a safe place, and the recognition it deserves. This is a high priority!

Public areas cannot become overnight encampments. Drugs and crime activity drive away businesses, shoppers, and visitors. The City must ensure parks, sidewalks, and gathering places are patrolled day and night, keeping them safe, clean, and welcoming. Just as important, ongoing investment in maintenance and appearance will prevent deterioration and preserve pride in these spaces.

Executed properly, every new or expanded public space must have a defined economic and community benefit. Early discussions should include downtown stakeholders, the public, residents, and the DEA. The Mayor's office must lead with transparent planning, public meetings, and careful analysis of all costs, including construction, ongoing operations, and the 24/7 maintenance costs including public safety.

If new spaces are approved, quarterly meetings with the DEA and stakeholders should review conditions, address concerns, and adjust management plans as needed. Accountability must be shared by all including Everett leaders, public safety personnel, businesses, and property owners alike.

We should build on Everett as a safe, welcoming, and enjoyable City to visit. Expand presence through officers on the streets and bicycle patrols downtown, creating a visible sense of safety that discourages crime and loitering, while encouraging pedestrian foot traffic.

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.?

Improving accessibility to downtown requires a comprehensive approach, but parking must remain the top priority. The City should contract with a reputable professional firm for a comprehensive parking demand and location study and with a complete scope of work to be fully explored. The study should be conducted with a committee and partnership with downtown



property owners, the DEA, the Everett Chamber of Commerce, residents living in the core, and citizens with planning commission expertise and familiarity with long range planning. This study should identify both current unmet parking needs and long-term demands, incorporating information from multiple reliable sources including Everett's Planning and Economic Development Departments, the City's Comprehensive Plan, Snohomish County Growth Management's population forecasts, light rail projections to Everett, and other relevant studies and data. The plan should look ahead to 2050, and provide realistic strategies for growth. Public and private development solutions must be fully considered. Plans for aligning parking expansion with housing, business, and transportation investments to support future growth.

Beyond parking, the City must also explore other types of access. Studies should be completed by firms with expertise in identifying "safe" bicycle connections to downtown. Priorities include north/south and east/west routes linking neighborhoods to downtown.

For the pedestrian experience, priorities include upgraded lighting, sidewalk repair, safer crosswalks, and attractive streetscapes that encourage walking and support local businesses.

On public transportation, Everett Transit should take the lead on coordinating with Community Transit to strengthen connections so riders can easily access the downtown core from all parts of the city and from outside the city.

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?

The DEA is a Main Street organization and Historic preservation is an important part of maintaining that designation. The Main Street designation allows the DEA to facilitate various fundraising strategies such as the tax credit program. In addition, Everett's downtown historic buildings are important to our community's identity. They connect us to our past, and offer unique architectural character that modern construction cannot replicate. Preserving these structures strengthens civic pride and supports small businesses that thrive in distinctive, historic settings.

The City should explore approaches that have proven effective elsewhere, such as tax incentives and grants to help property owners offset the costs of repairs, and historically appropriate exterior improvements. Public/private partnerships are also important. Support for authentic historic appearance through exterior restoration programs, design standards, and technical assistance. This can include repairing or replicating historic materials, restoring original windows and brickwork, and preserving architectural details.

Finally, while historic preservation is important, it is also worthwhile to note that not every older building should receive a "historic" designation. These decisions must be made with thought and care and should take into account the points of view of various groups throughout the City.



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.

Everett is expected to experience significant growth over the next twenty years, with perhaps as many as 38,000 new housing units needed across the City. This expected growth represents a sizable increase in Everett's expected population. I believe that Everett's downtown core should be the primary recipient of higher density to help facilitate the expected growth coming in the next 20 years and beyond. The downtown core has the infrastructure, utility investments, retail and shopping opportunities necessary to accommodate significant growth of residential units. City zoning changes will likely be needed in order to facilitate this growth. The city will need to maintain flexibility to ensure a successful and attractive re-development of many parcels within the downtown core. Input from the DEA, residents and local businesses will be needed to ensure a successful implementation.

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?

I am rooted in the City of Everett and have been a proud resident for over 33 years. My wife Kippy and I have been married for 35 years and raised our three children in Everett.

I believe Everett is a wonderful city with tremendous potential. I also believe that our best days are ahead but only if we tackle a number of serious issues currently facing the city. These include:

1. Homelessness in Everett has increased 95% during the past 7 years (according to the Snohomish County Point-In-Time Count). In the past year, the homelessness counts have increased by 18% in Everett while the rest of the County was down 39%.
2. Public Safety and Crime Issues-Our city has been chronically understaffed in the police department for the past 8 years. Our city continues to grow and we must properly staff not only our police department but also our fire department and EMS services.
3. The City's current financial picture is not good. We simply have to get our City back on solid financial footing!

I have an extensive track record of involvement in the community, including volunteer board leadership positions in a number of non-profit organizations, such as:

1. The Community Foundation of Snohomish County (Board Chair)
2. The Everett Public Schools Foundation (Board Chair)
3. Providence Hospital General Foundation (Board Member)
4. Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Snohomish County (Board Member)
5. North Everett Little League (League President)

In addition, I have significant experience with the City of Everett, business, construction, economic development and property development issues, having served as:



1. Executive in construction industry (President and COO of Goldfinch Bros., 16 years)
2. Everett City Council Member (9 years from Jan. 2013 to Dec. 2021)
3. Everett Planning Commission member (3 years)
4. Board Chair and member of the Everett Public Facilities District (8 years)
5. Co-Founder and Board member for a local community bank
6. Co-Founder and COO for a building products company (Founded AD Systems in 2010 and sold to a Fortune 500 company in 2018)

Every organization needs the right leader, with the right skills at the right time. The City of Everett is no different. I am ready to lead our city in a positive “forward looking” way. Working to solve our current challenges while also committing to improve our economic opportunities and quality of life amenities so that Everett can be a City where everyone thrives and has an opportunity for a bright future!