

BRUCE FOR SEATTLE MAYOR HARRELL

March 16, 2021

Dear Seattle Neighbor,

Today, I am announcing my candidacy for Mayor of the city where I was born, grew up, and have served throughout my career as an attorney, father, youth mentor, small business advisor and city council member.

I am running because we need a Mayor to meet this moment of unprecedented challenge and opportunity, a Mayor with the lived experience to tackle big issues; a decisive leader fully committed to productive dialogue, planning and execution. We must rebuild the fundamental trust between city government and the people it serves. We need the highest standard of collaboration and vision. The stakes are too high.

In many ways, my Seattle Story is embedded in many of the issues we face today. I was raised in a red-lined Central Area home, the son of a Black father and Japanese mother, strong and loving parents who raised me to respect not only where we came from, but what was possible.

My mom and her family suffered discrimination and internment during World War 2. Their property and small businesses in Capitol Hill were seized by the government, forcing them to rebuild and recover.

My father's family came here, like so many African Americans fleeing Jim Crow laws of the South, to find meaningful economic opportunity. My dad found meaning—and friendships—in the Garfield High music program, performing with Quincy Jones, who later introduced him to my mom.

My parents worked hard—dad a lifelong City Light employee and mom at the library—she also taught me the importance of standing up for what's right and fighting for your community.

I graduated Valedictorian from Garfield High School and went to UW on a football scholarship, playing linebacker, and graduating with a passion for advancing the rights and opportunities of those too often left behind. I went to law school, worked in technology and telecommunications, and later represented working people who experienced workplace discrimination and helped minority entrepreneurs pursue their dreams.

In 2007, I ran for City Council, and was re-elected twice, serving both citywide and my home neighborhood in southeast Seattle. On Council, I was an outspoken advocate for police accountability and reform; the only council member to first meet with the family of Native woodcarver John T. Williams after he was killed by SPD, and the first elected representative to demand the use of body cameras.

As a former tutor and attorney to those incarcerated in our prisons, and because of my commitment to equity and opportunity, I sponsored Seattle's "ban the box" legislation to prevent discrimination in housing and employment for formerly prosecuted individuals. I supported the \$15 minimum wage and worked hard to address the structural inequities in our public schools.

I worked with colleagues to bring service providers, non-profit housing leaders and business together to dramatically expand affordable housing in Seattle and invest in shelter and services.



Since leaving Council in 2019, I returned to private practice to expand affordable housing for low-income Seattleites; mentor small businesses and community groups to address the ravages of the pandemic; and continued my work in education to improve access to everyone.

Now, in a moment of racial reckoning, a housing and homelessness crisis, and pandemic-driven economic downturn, we need a Mayor with the experience and skills to unite our city, heal divisions, and restore confidence in who we are and what we can accomplish together.

With your vote, here is my pledge to you:

WE CAN REBUILD OUR ECONOMY AND REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS CONSISTENT WITH OUR PROGRESSIVE VALUES

Now is the time for big thinking and creative genius to put our city back on track and help reach our collective potential. I will bring together unions, business and civic leaders, community voices and advocates, environmental and health experts, leaders in the arts, education, and philanthropy, to create the Seattle we can all be proud of.

Seattle has always been an example for the nation—a progressive city where higher wages fueled greater equity and opportunity, where entrepreneurs were welcomed and nurtured, where investments in our parks, libraries, transit and affordable housing showed what a city can do when focused on a bright, inclusive future.

The pandemic disruption has turned back the clock for too many—widening inequalities in wealth, pushing vulnerable people out of housing and depriving access to needed support. These devastations have impacted a generation of students, young workers, and families struggling to make ends meet.

Here are some bold ideas for recovery and equitable growth that harnesses the best of Seattle:

- **Help Small and Minority Owned Businesses:** Economic recovery will not happen overnight, and small businesses—especially those owned by women and BIPOC entrepreneurs, risk falling farther behind. We will protect short term, dedicated resources to help these businesses not only get back on their feet, but expand and take advantage of the opportunities ahead to create more jobs. The City of Seattle will establish new “business to business” partnerships to ensure that smaller businesses and BIPOC entrepreneurs enjoy the ancillary revenues and success of many larger businesses. I have direct expertise in developing these models.
- **Affordable Health Care for All:** No one in our city should live without access to health care. Cities like San Francisco have developed basic coverage models that provide access to those at risk of falling through the cracks of a costly, cumbersome, and racially inequitable system. Employees of small businesses, gig economy workers, young people, and anyone experiencing homelessness or economic disruption all deserve quality care. Let’s come together and build a system that shows our commitment to what we may call “Healthy Seattle.” Where the Affordable Care Act and county health services fall short, particularly in the areas of preventative health and post-COVID trauma and mental isolation illnesses, “Healthy Seattle” may be critically important for the survival of our most vulnerable Seattle residents and lower wage workers.
- **A Smarter Approach to Invest in Better Neighborhoods:** Seattle is divided into 7 Council districts, but we have yet to change our core neighborhood investment strategy. I will explore appropriating real resources—\$10 million dollars would make an impact—in each of the 7 districts to provide Councilmember with the opportunity to work directly with their communities to invest in specific localized priorities: small business recovery; homelessness solutions; parks and open space;



cleanliness; pedestrian and public safety strategies or cultural facility preservation. Each district has unique needs, and each Councilmember will work collaboratively with City departments to meet those unique needs working closely with community.

- **A Seattle Jobs Center:** Seattle must win the emerging jobs war. Using all available commercialized online job boards, state sponsored employment ads, executive search materials and every means to help employ every possible employee, and making sure we provide resources to re-tool and re-train job applicants seeking work, we will explore making sure Seattle is the facilitator of employing every available job applicant. Some employers have phenomenal programs for supporting returning military veterans or previously incarcerated residents. Seattle will provide a user-friendly infrastructure and be known as the city that values and promotes jobs, jobs and jobs. Our educational strategies will be closely aligned with our Seattle Jobs strategy.
- **Revitalize Arts, Culture and Nightlife:** Few sectors of our economy have been as hard hit as our city's dynamic—and critical—arts, music, food and nightlife economy. Let's re-imagine how we support these critical nonprofits and businesses—from preservation of historic buildings and venues, to exploration of sustainable revenue to support organizations that advance equity, inspire and teach, and provide a stage for the next Quincy Jones, Macklemore, or countless other creative voices in our community.

As your Mayor, I'll be a strong—and consistent—voice for small businesses and working people, protecting and improving equity, wages, and work standards and building upon my 30-year career helping diversify business opportunities in our city.

WE WILL PLAN—AND ACT—TO END HOMELESSNESS

The homelessness crisis devastates not only the lives of those suffering on our streets and in our parks, but it affects the safety and peace of mind for too many Seattle families. It is a crisis that has divided our city and shaken our confidence as a compassionate, can-do city.

We need a Mayor who will take immediate and decisive action, a relentless leader who will take ownership of the problem. I will own it. With the click of a button, you should know the plan and how it is being executed.

Currently, the City of Seattle is not using its most important and valuable asset...YOU. So many neighbors want to help solve the homelessness crisis, but don't know what to do. What is their entry point? We are a compassionate city and people are tired of seeing stalled progress and continued in-fighting.

My wife, a former United Way of King County CEO, and I have experience in raising significant, dedicated funding for health and human services. Seattle will be nationally known for our collective effort and my job as Mayor will be to create and lead this effort.

With your vote, I will:

- **Create a Dynamic Non-Profit Partnership:** Let's create a model where every resident and business can make tax deductible donations that go directly to homelessness and they can participate in community clothing drives, food distribution lines, clean-up work parties, resume drafting sessions, drug and alcohol treatment conversations and other activities that provide direct support to those experiencing homelessness. Our children will learn from our collective ability to show compassion.



- **Ensure Coordination and Accountable Planning:** I'll work with local and regional partners to develop an accountable, ambitious plan with transparency and benchmarks to expand and provide housing and services on demand to every unsheltered neighbor. This plan will be online and accessible to the public with measurable outcomes and defined deliverables, and establish progressive, dedicated revenue tied to meeting housing and cleanup goals, restoring taxpayer confidence.
- **Fund Restoration of Parks and Public Spaces:** Let's link progress in housing with restoration of parks, sidewalks and green spaces—with immediate funding and City personnel dedicated to trash and debris cleanup, neighborhood response, and de-escalating conflict while we bring housing and services to scale.

Our actions will be driven by our compassion as a city—not our anger and frustration at the problem. We will demand that every person be treated with dignity.

There are no quick fixes to this crisis, but we know strategies that provide immediate shelter, personalized case management, and long-term care and treatment work. Let's do this, together.

WE CAN—AND MUST—ADDRESS STRUCTURAL RACISM AND POLICE BIAS, ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY

Black Lives Matter is the most impactful civil rights movement in my adult life, and I stand in unity with those seeking justice and reform—as I have throughout my career in law and public service. This commitment is reinforced by my own experience growing up, and later raising two young Black men in our city and society. As an attorney, I would commonly ask potential jurors to recount their lived experiences when being interrogated by police officers, and I have seen tears in the eyes of many African Americans when reliving their trauma.

That is exactly why I was the sole drafter of Seattle's unprecedented "Bias Free" policing law which requires our City to daylight the information as to who is stopped by law enforcement, and why.

With your support, we will start 2022 with a baseline that Seattle must be different than what has occurred and continues to occur to countless African Americans at the hands of police officers. Our own officers will work with community leaders to change OUR narrative.

- **Our Race and Data Initiative:** With the assistance of experts in technology, the developer community, data mining and the use of test cases, for the first time in Seattle's history we will daylight and organize behavioral data to address how Seattle can address institutional and historic racism. Under this initiative, we will better understand who are denied jobs; what level of housing discrimination exists; who are treated unfairly in our court systems; who is most likely to be the victim of violence. We will not be afraid to examine our City's frailties as this will be a first step in healing as a city.
- **Beyond Training and Reform, A Pledge:** In addition to state-mandated reforms in training, techniques, and conduct, I would like every sworn police officer in Seattle to watch the 8 minutes and 46 seconds of George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis and voluntarily sign an open letter stating: *The Inhumane Treatment of Fellow Human Beings Will Not Be Tolerated In Seattle*. To further this mission, I will work to personally recruit officers looking to be internal change agents, heroes within the department to help coach, train, love and inspire our officers to be the department we all deserve;



- **Budgeting that Ensures Training, Proper Response, and Needed Staffing:** We need to move beyond arbitrary and divisive public safety budget debates and align the needs of our entire community with the mandate of ending bias, improving response times, and reducing crime. We need the right kind of personnel to respond—like social workers and addiction specialists when an armed officer isn't needed or appropriate. Accountability and training—and appropriate staffing for our growing city—require resources and reforms. We can do both.

The “us” vs “them” conversation is not working. We must start from the common baseline that every human being deserves respect and dignity.

We all deserve safe streets and communities. We know the difference between peaceful protest and criminal destruction of property. We need real talk. We need leadership.

As Mayor, I'll never lose sight of the goal: a Seattle police department that is responsive to community needs, that protects all people and neighborhoods without bias.

TOGETHER, WE CAN BRING SEATTLE BACK—STRONGER AND BETTER

I believe in our city and the people who live here. I don't make excuses for failure and will take ownership of our issues. I believe that all of us, regardless of race, gender expression, income or circumstance in life, deserve every opportunity to live with dignity in a supportive, loving community. Even though I was known as a hard hitter on the football field, I am not afraid to speak of love and kindness. I believe in the transformative power of positive, collective action.

It would be an honor and privilege to serve as Mayor of our city—where I was born and raised, where Joanne and I raised our kids, and where I will go to work every day with a passion and commitment to help you and your family thrive.

Thank you for your interest in Seattle and our shared future. Please reach out to me anytime with your ideas, priorities and concerns. All of us can—and must—play a role in building the Seattle we all deserve.

Sincerely,



Bruce Harrell
Candidate for Mayor

Learn more about my campaign and ideas for Seattle's recovery at: BruceForSeattle.com

On Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @BruceForSeattle

