

# Community Police Commission Mayoral Nominee Confirmation Questions 2016

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- 1) Community participation, vis-à-vis the Community Police Commission (CPC), was part of the Settlement Agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ). It is described as a process by which community input can be integrated into the implementation of police reforms mandated by the DOJ Consent Decree. What steps do you plan to take to ensure that a diverse set of community voices continue to be meaningfully engaged in the context of CPC's work?

*The Community Police Commission work is centered on the mission of bringing together a group of community leaders that broadly represent the diverse residents of the city; to leverage their background, talent, ideas, and experience to help implement the DOJ's Settlement Agreement with SPD. To ensure meaningful engagement with the public and adequate representation, I recommend the following steps:*

- a. Members of the CPC should fully represent the diversity of Seattle's residents. CDC members should be a balanced representation of different racial and ethnic groups, including from LGBT, youth, faith, and business communities of large and small. A Large percentage of members should have expertise in issues and communities that typically have higher interaction with SPD- homelessness, mental illness, public safety, and underrepresented communities.*
  - b. Stay connected and foster relationships with partner organizations, communities, and public agencies. Be accessible and relevant. Create trust and respect among stakeholders so that the CPC is a place where many can turn to voice concerns, or seek counsel and resolution. Such relationships can openly invite conversation and outreach opportunities.*
  - c. Be the bridge that connects SPD with the community. The CPC formal work is policy reform and recommendations. However, policy change is not enough to change perception. As the community liaison, the CPC is in a great position to help foster a positive relationship between SPD and the public. Community gatherings or open forum meetings between officers and neighborhoods are great opportunities to share insights and concerns, to build trust and relationships.*
- 2) Describe what you believe effective community engagement looks like.

*Effective community engagement is understanding and identifying the stakeholders involved or most affected by the issue at hand. Once stakeholders are identified, direct outreach and engagement with each stakeholder, specifically with underrepresented communities, is crucial in determining their concerns, perspective, and recommended outcomes. In hard to reach population areas, the CDC should engage with other community organizations to gain access and gather information. After stakeholder outreach is done, research, data analysis, and case studies should be looked at to understand further the best course of actions. Transparency, information sharing, and setting expectations are also crucial components of effective community engagement.*

- 3) What area(s) in police reform do you see needs the most attention and why?

*I believe the area of reform that is most needed for our city is better engagement, interaction, and outreach between the department and its residents and businesses. In particular, better relationship building with at-risk youth, and immigrant and minority business owners. Young adults are very impressionable and easily influenced, yet they are the building blocks of our future and society. By creating positive relationships with them from a young age, you can set the foundation of how they will view and react to police figures in the future.*

*Nationwide, 28% of main street businesses are owned by immigrants. These businesses are the foundation of communities and neighborhood. More public safety measures and outreach are needed to support these businesses. Since many of these business owners are immigrants, cultural and language barriers are key factors that SPD need to take into account when conducting outreach. More culturally sensitive officers should be recruited, hired and retain to work in underserved communities. Officers need to improve the quality of the communications with shop owners and present accessibility rather than reproach.*

- 4) It has been said that there are negative perceptions of SPD in the community, especially within communities of color and other underrepresented communities (e.g., LGBTQ, gender non-conforming, etc). What approach would you take to either agree or disagree with those sentiments?

*Since 2014 and through the work of the CPC, Police reform has begun to take shape in Seattle with great stride made towards Police reform and accountability. Perception has begun to shift, but there is still strong feelings and animosity. I agree that more work can and should be done to engage and connect with underrepresented communities. To build positive relationships and create trust:*

- a. *Improve relationships between officers and underrepresented communities through boots on the ground approach*
  - b. *Have a reward system and program between officers and teens rather one of punishment*
  - c. *Show accountability by following through on reform efforts- show results and make it public*
- 5) What direct experience and engagement do you have working with racial, ethnic, and other diverse communities across the City? Give an example of work you've done in diverse communities that you think is relevant to the work of a CPC commissioner.

*As the Executive Director of the Ethnic Business Coalition(EBC), a non-profit committed to developing, promoting, and improving the long-term growth, sustainability, and success of immigrant and minority-owned small businesses in the State of Washington.*

*I've worked to increase the access of immigrant and minority-owned small businesses to marketing, financial, and advocacy services and resources, and provide them with a greater voice, profile, and representation in the region.*

*The EBC support immigrant communities in the city of Seattle including Chinatown-International District, Pioneer Square, Capitol Hill, The Central District, Rainier Valley, Martin Luther King, South Park, Othello, West Seattle, and White Center.*

*Our work focuses on both the businesses themselves as well as public policy and legislation. We help business owners to navigate complex governmental and business barriers, broaden their access to information, equity, and customers, and advocate for policies, regulations, and standards that help underserved and underrepresented ethnic entrepreneurs create profitable and sustainable businesses*

- 6) Tell us about any legal training and/or public policy advocacy experience you have with public safety matters.

*In 2015, the Chinatown International District and Little Saigon was faced with an influx of medicinal marijuana shops in the area. In Little Saigon within a one block radius, there were three shops opened next door to family restaurants, temples, bus stops, and grocery stores. The marijuana shops created a number of public safety issues related to underage buying, theft, burglary, muggings, gunshots, and an increase in homelessness. I convened and worked with the District's community organizations, SPD, The Office of the Mayor, the City Attorney's office, and The Liquor Control Board to advocate for legislative change to close or revoke the business license of the dispensaries. Within six months of our work, two of the dispensaries have closed and the third to be close by July 2016.*

- 7) Tell us about what legal training and/or public policy advocacy experience you have with *police reform and/or accountability matters*.

*I do not have specific legal training in police reform and accountability matters but have been a strong advocate for small and minority-owned businesses in the City. I have worked on many public policies such as Minimum wage, Labor laws, Affordable Housing, Public Health codes, to ensure the voice of ethnic communities are well represented and the impact of these policies are taken into consideration.*

- 8) The CPC's charge is to represent a broad range of community perspectives and to engage communities directly, to get critical feedback, and to then recommend changes to SPD's procedures, policies, and practices. What areas of its mission do you see the CPC can improve on?

*Ensure that it is adopted and are enforced is the hardest part of any policy recommendations. The public's trust is built upon the knowledge that their voice is heard through the recommendation and that it is counted by seeing results of that recommendation being implemented. In the past three years, the CPC have made great and difficult strides with their reform recommendations. The challenge is now ensuring that it is implemented. I believe in the years to come, the CPC will need to spend a considerable amount of time to ensure that SPD adopts its reform recommendations.*

- 9) What is your definition of "community" within the context of the CPC's mission, purpose, and work?

*A "community" of individuals with diverse background, experiences, and ethnicity working together to give voice and representation of "communities" who have felt neglected underserved and underrepresented. Together working as a "community" to build a stronger, reliable, and trustworthy city in which we can all feel safe to work, live, and play.*

- 10) Tell us about how you work with people who may have differing ideological or philosophical opinions than you.

*I have been known as a person who can effectively communicate without isolating and a good listener. I believe these are skills that are important in building cohesive working relationships. Rather than being offended by differing ideology or opinions in my working peers, I see it as a learning opportunity. It is an effective way to reflect on my opinions and open my eyes to new ideas. However, if I truly believe in my convictions, I*

*will present information and facts to support my opinions and work with others towards a resolution that has the best interest of the public.*

- 11) What constituency or constituencies do you see yourself representing as a CPC commissioner? What particular training, experience or background allows you to represent those interests effectively with respect to policing and public safety matters?

*I grew up in an immigrant family whose parents operated a small Vietnamese restaurant in Little Saigon since 1991. Little Saigon was my childhood playground while my parents ran their business seven days a week for 14 hour days. Through the years, I have seen the changes in the ID, in a place where I once was safe to run freely, but now is apprehensive to walk alone in the dark. I now own and operate 5 Vietnamese restaurants with locations throughout Seattle. I understand firsthand the many challenges and hurdles small businesses and, in particular, ethnic-owned businesses face every day. The growing homelessness issue, gentrification, youth unemployment, and inefficient allocation of resources are pressure points that inevitably encroaches upon neighborhood businesses, making it a challenge to operate a successful business. To have a thriving neighborhood in which residents feel safe and engaged, you need to have successful small businesses. Neighborhood businesses are the key to creating a sense of community and belonging. Public safety affects small business as much as it does its residents, a business cannot open its doors and successfully operate if public safety is a persistent problem.*

- 12) Why are you interested in serving as a CPC commissioner?

*The CPC represents a great opportunity for citizens to get involve and help shape SPD's work; accountability system; reporting practices; training and mentoring programs. The immigrant and minority business communities traditionally have been underrepresented in these policy conversations. My interest in serving is to:*

- a. Give voice and representation for minority and ethnic owned businesses.*
- b. Foster engagement and outreach between SPD and the business community to help change perception and build relationships.*
- c. Guide policy and reform change that makes policing more accessible for minority and ethnic owned business communities.*