



## 2024 Portland City Elections Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to fill out United for Portland's candidate questionnaire. Any candidate seeking our endorsement or support must fill out this questionnaire.

The endorsement process and all responses will be made public on our website.

**Please return this questionnaire via email to [doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com](mailto:doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com). Please return it as a Microsoft Word document or as a PDF file by 8/30/24.**

All questions are open-ended, and an opportunity to tell us about your thoughts on key issues facing our city, as well as discuss your leadership style. This will be shared on our website, and we ask that you take the time to tell us what you really think and what voters should know about you. There are no right answers to these questions, and we don't want you simply telling us what you think we want to hear.

If you need further information about any of the items covered in the questionnaire, please give United for Portland Executive Director Doug Moore a call at 503-729-5175 or email [doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com](mailto:doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com).

Candidate Name: **Michelle DePass**  
Campaign Contact: **hello@depassforportland.com**  
Phone #: **503-705-1607**  
Email: [michelle@depassforportland.com](mailto:michelle@depassforportland.com)  
Candidate Signature: (can be electronic or signed)

---

**1. Do you want United for Portland's endorsement and support? Yes, I do.**

**2. What's your approach to ending unsheltered homelessness in Portland?**

Unsheltered homelessness is the visible symptom of larger systemic issues facing our city. And at the heart of it, everyone in the city deserves to be safe in their communities, in their neighborhoods, and on the streets.

There is a vulnerable population that is often visible and unsheltered due to mental health crises, drug addiction, and/or inadequate access to resources. Supporting this population is going to take strong collaboration with the county as we implement care systems that support each person living on the street. This is a social services concern that is often met with police interactions when it can be met with trained and compassionate care (Portland Street Response, for example). I am in support of sobering centers and deflection systems that keep people safe without also including the criminal justice system. And I am in support of training our first responders to address the addiction and mental health episodes often experienced by this population.



We need to provide a continuum of care for everyone who is in need of housing.. There are those visible unhoused people, and also a good number of people in Portland who are working and living on boats or in cars or campers, whose housing needs also need to be addressed. This is what housing experts call “supportive housing”. These are people who have some income (not a lot), that need support to stay housed. And then there are the young families we want to attract to Portland. We want to be a city like others around the country that are attracting young families; professionals who will end up owning businesses, working in various industries, and for whom housing affordability is a decision point whether they come here to Portland, or choose another jurisdiction. We need a more robust social safety net and more housing available and affordable to people at all income levels. I’d like to see the city’s budget spent on prevention, rent assistance programs because this helps families with children, and also more robust buy-down (down payment) programs that could be sponsored by major employers such as Portland Public Schools, Legacy Health, Nike, Adidas to both house working people, and as a recruitment strategy for strong talent to Portland.

**3. How do we create housing sufficient to meet future needs, not just current needs? What mix of housing does that look like to you?**

There is a continued need for housing in Portland. City council can work to effectively streamline the process for housing development. [The State of Housing Report](#) tells the story about affordability and the demand for housing at all income levels. We hear from developers that the permitting process is the worst in the country in terms of time and responsiveness. We can’t both say we need more housing, and then have a system that makes it nearly impossible to build housing. The problem may be fixed with the new form of government and it will not be overnight. Our challenge as leaders is to understand the system supply chain, and where we can insert ourselves in making change.

As an anecdote, I used to be able to walk into the Permit Center in the early 1990’s and leave with a building permit. This was for tenant improvement projects under \$125,000. That same permit adjusted for 2024 dollars would take many weeks. We also need to think out into the future. Portland *will* come back, and we need to anticipate the Portland of 2124; what the demand for housing will look like, how and where families will live.

**4. When you think of public safety, what does that mean to you? What will you do to ensure public safety for all Portlanders as a member of the city council?**

Public safety means no matter who you are, what your address is, or what you look like, you have access to city resources that support your well being in Portland. It means a well staffed and well trained police force that works for the people, not against the people. It means shorter response times for emergency medical services, and it means well funded programs for our city’s most vulnerable populations. Public safety also means there is a strong and continued vertical alignment between the city, the county, and the state stakeholders who determine the budgets and resources for these programs. I want every person in Portland, every business district and neighborhood to have access to our public safety services and I want to restore trust between our communities and the people in service to their wellbeing. I will



work with our public safety bureaus to be responsive to the needs of the community, to make us proud, to make themselves proud of their work.

I recognize the need for strong collaboration to ensure public safety for all Portlanders. I am prepared to have difficult conversations regarding the budgets, training requirements, and guidelines for the public safety programs in our city. My vision is of a safety system that serves all Portlanders, is responsive, that is trained for today's needs on the street - to address mental health, and drug addiction.

**5. What do you see as Portland's economic engine, and what do you believe it should be for the future?**

Portland is a dynamic city that has a lot to offer to both the people who live here and the people who love to visit. The economy in Portland is driven by small business owners who keep the city's offerings unique, weird, and delicious. We are not the Portland we all know and love without the ability to create and maintain jobs for people who live here. It is also a city that is structured against small business growth and development and as a city councilor I would work to support small business owners navigating the complexities of starting their business. I also support Governor Kotek's three-year moratorium on new taxes and fees but that is only one step in supporting business growth and development within the city. I also want to work with Prosper Portland and the Port of Portland to work with and encourage mid-sized businesses, especially green businesses. Yesterday, I met with a company that builds electric engines for boats, which, with our industrial waterfront, makes sense as far as locations go. As I see it, councilors will need to attend to our neighborhood business district, our mid sized tech and innovation and maker firms, and work to retain our Intels, Nikes, and Adidas..

**6. Tell us about your leadership style. How will you work with constituents and interest groups? How are you going to address the inevitable disagreements in a brand new council of 12?**

As the current Vice Chair of the Portland Public School Board, I have significant experience working in a collaborative space with myriad groups of people. My work includes impactful interactions with the general public, educators, students, faculty, and my board member colleagues. And throughout my time on the school board, I have been professional, collaborative, and hopeful about the work we are doing to champion the communities within our city. I understand the complexities of working on a board with various stakeholders and I enjoy the conversations and collaboration it takes to get the important work done. I am prepared to continue working as a professional collaborator on the Portland city council. As for leadership qualities, I am a listener. I am open to meeting with people even if, and especially if I don't think we'll agree. We have a lot to learn from others, and I am curious, and interested in hearing people's thoughts. I have demonstrated this leadership quality on the school board, and am prepared to lean in to hear from constituents from Day One.

**7. What would you do to align Portland's taxing and spending with our city's needs and values?**

The new City Council will need to look at the outcome of our current taxing and spending to 1) make sure this align with our stated goals of development and equitable growth, and our stated love of small



businesses. This NY Times column, [36 Hours in Portland](#), although from 2015, lists out the things Portlanders, and visitors enjoy, and almost all of them revolve around small, mom and pop businesses. This is part of our brand and what makes Portland, Portland. We need to understand how taxes impact those small businesses, and the process to start a business to encourage growth, not stunt it. For larger corporations we also need to understand how the taxing system impacts where they choose to operate in our city. The city has a role in being a good neighbor, but also encouraging larger business to do business in a way that benefits Portlanders, our neighborhoods and our workforce.

**8. Is there an issue, topic, or policy we didn't ask about, but is very important to you? If so, feel free to ask and answer your own question(s).**

Climate and sustainability - this is a topic I deeply believe in and it is directly related to the economic and social changes we need to see in Portland. Housing, social services, and affordability are also dependent on being a city that can continue to grow in sustainable and efficient ways. Portland city council, in my opinion, has the opportunity to create city tax incentives and cut red tape to provide development that is sustainable and affordable for our most vulnerable community members. And it is important we continue to create city infrastructure that will hold up with the continuing emergence of climate related issues.