



## 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:** *Elana Pirtle-Guiney*

**Campaign Contact:** *Eva Rippeteau*

**Phone #:** *503-803-3151*

**Email:**  
[contact@elanaforportland.com](mailto:contact@elanaforportland.com)

**Candidate Signature:**  
(can be electronic or signed).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elana Pirtle-Guiney".

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### 1. Do you want United for Portland's endorsement and support?

Yes

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

Ending unsheltered homelessness or, more realistically, making it rare, brief, and one-time, requires a "yes and" approach – not "my approach" or "yours," but all of it. But here are my priorities:

A. We should spend money on shelter types that we know are most successful in moving people to permanent housing. Mass shelters make a lot of sense for short term sheltering like after a natural



disaster, but just aren't as successful in moving people to permanent housing. We need to focus our resources on TASS sites, other tiny-home village style locations, and motel-turned-shelters.

B. We need more low- and no-barrier shelters, and also substance free spaces.

C. We need resources and data available to every outreach worker in real time on their phones, and accessible in a single phone call to City and County employees in any position, within six months, and we need as many touch points between a peer, outreach worker, social worker, or mental health provider, and Portlanders who are homeless, as possible, so that it is easy for someone to say yes to shelter.

D. Punitive measures can actually make it harder to move someone to housing, and should be used very rarely and only when no other options are available. Jailing someone who is homeless leaves them homeless with a criminal record. Fining someone who is homeless leaves them homeless with debt. These measures make it harder to get people permanently housed and stable in the long run.

**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?**

We cannot meet our housing needs, maintain the UGB, and have sufficient greenspace to be a healthy city, unless we build more densely and build up. That doesn't mean the end to single family homes and neighborhoods that are primarily still detached homes or townhomes and duplexes, but it does mean that our housing mix has to change over the next twenty years.

Portland should lean into our vibrant neighborhoods and their individual characters. We already have neighborhoods full of different styles of homes, duplexes, and small apartments. Even the neighborhoods we think of as full of single family homes on big lots have duplexes and subdivided lots. Building denser just means adding another style to the already vibrant mix. We can maintain the culture of each of our unique neighborhoods while building apartment buildings with commercial first floors along more main streets and giving Portlanders more opportunities to find the services they need or meet friends for dinner or coffee right in their community. And on our quieter streets we can provide opportunities for more Portlanders to own homes by ensuring townhomes, garden apartments, and smaller plexes can be built on empty lots in any neighborhood.

The reality is that our zoning and planning cannot be designed for how we live today but instead need to allow us to build today for how our neighborhoods will work in twenty years. This will absolutely lead to some growing pains – it means investing in a transit system that we don't have the riders to support yet, building more commercial space that we will need in the future even when there are empty storefronts today, and rethinking what our dense main streets are to include a more expansive list.

We also must ensure future housing has a healthy mix of ownership types: rentals, homeownership, permanently affordable homeownership through land trusts, social housing, and affordable rentals, are all important parts of our housing market.



**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?**

We have to start by asking what a safe community means – because the answer is different for different communities within Portland.

We have historically thought of our public safety system as a police, medical, and fire system but this list is too narrow. We have slowly expected police to address more and more community concerns, and this has not made us safer. In fact, it has left community members in N and NE Portland with slower response times for break-ins, street racing, and other calls that need a police response, and it has left community members in crisis, our homeless neighbors, and many people of color, feeling less safe.

We need to reframe our public safety system as having three distinct branches: fire/medical (response from firefighters or our county ambulance services), response to crisis (Portland Street Response, Project Respond, and others), and response to crime (sworn police officers, Public Safety Support Specialists). Then we can determine who takes point on what calls, what the call volume is, what that means staffing levels should be, and whether policy changes are needed for each branch to be effective.

Additionally, we must address wait times at 911. I have heard many reasons for the delays including staffing levels, intensity of calls, and contract provisions. We need to get everyone around the table to determine the solution, and I'm ready to pull together this conversation with all the relevant bureaus and unions because the status quo is just plain unsafe.

In a safe community *any* community member can walk down the street, get to work, and send their kids to school, and know they will make it to their destination without physical harm, and when you call 911 you know you'll have your call answered immediately and have a timely, appropriate, safe response. All of Portland deserves that.

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

Portland has a number of economic drivers, including manufacturing, tourism, sports and apparel, and tech. We should continue to support a diversified economy, and also look for opportunities to overlay sustainability in the places we already excel.

We have benefited from our creative economy, and it has gotten unaffordable to take a risk for many creatives in our City. Our creative class drives much of our tourism. It creates the conditions that lead people to want to come to Portland, helping us attract other businesses as well. And it builds community and creates a culture that many people stay in Portland for. We should invest in affordable commercial spaces that ensure we don't lose this part of our economy, and take advantage of the need to replace (or remodel) the Keller by building a vibrant arts and theater district downtown.

We have industrial work in our city, much of it close-in compared to some other cities, and this will lead to more and more conflict between industrial users and residential neighborhoods. But our industrial job



base is the engine for our traded sector economy and our wealth generation, and part of the job base for high wage jobs that don't require a college degree. We must maintain this job base. We need to plan now for the natural turnover of manufacturing companies, and have a strategy to attract and grow clean tech manufacturing and good green jobs with high wages to our industrial sites in the future.

And we have specific sectors we know we excel in – our tech, footwear, sportswear, and sports goods startups, among them. Industry clusters create space for job growth and expanded opportunity, and we should lean into the sectors where we have a natural advantage and a large enough cluster to create opportunities for home-grown companies to sprout.

**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?**

I am a relational leader. I sit down with people even when I don't agree with them because the more I understand their perspective, the better policy we can create. I treat my colleagues with respect even when we don't get along. I have strong relationships with Legislators who never voted for a bill I worked on, and stakeholders who I have sat on opposite sides of the table from over and over again, because of how I work through conflict. A constituent who I have yet to meet emailed me the other day to ask for a lawn sign. They said their kid had worked in the State Legislature and that I had a reputation as a person who could work well with people who brought a range of perspectives to the table, and that was the leadership they were looking for. I am proud of working in this way.

I believe in access, and will meet with constituents and interest groups alike. I do think it is critical to reserve days to be in my district where it is easier for constituents to meet, and not just work out of City Hall where interest groups can work more efficiently but some constituents may be less comfortable.

I know disagreements are inevitable on Council because I have worked in legislative settings. And just like I did in past jobs, I will pick up the phone and call colleagues when we don't see eye to eye, I will look for ways to create better policy with their input, and, ultimately, I will try to build a majority for the policy solution that is best for District 2 and for Portlanders' future.

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

Portlanders do not believe they are getting their money's worth for our taxes. I hear it while canvassing over and over. The conversation starts something like this: "We have some of the highest taxes in the country and there are potholes on my road/no one answered when I called 911/there's graffiti everywhere/our schools are still failing too many kids/too many people are homeless." And they're right, the services we are getting aren't cutting it. So I ask them if they would think their taxes were too high if our streets were paved, public transit was reliable, our city was clean, our schools were great, and people could find shelter. With one exception, the answer has always been that no, they wouldn't mind our tax rate then.



Our taxes, with many layers of government and ways of collection, are complicated. Small business owners and families that are unsure if their income will exceed the thresholds to pay our many local taxes do not have an easy place to get advice on what to do. In fact, resources to support small businesses navigating city code are lacking in many areas. And with multiple new taxes over the last few years we are still awaiting results from our investments.

But before we consider cutting taxes or changing what they fund we should start doing our work better.

This next Council must create a culture of accountability, using committee hearings to hold discussions about program goals and what it will take to meet them, setting performance measures for all Bureaus (the State has key performance measures for State Agencies, and many other governments have systems of tracking outcomes that are reviewed with every new budget - the City should too), and moving faster to implement solutions to the challenges our City faces.

We have raised revenue to expand affordable childcare, build a sustainable economy full of high wage jobs, support families at risk of eviction so they don't become homeless, and build more affordable housing. Rather than give those resources away, let's use them to build the strong, equitable, sustainable, resilient economy that Portlanders want, that will lift all families up, and that will attract continued investment.

**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).**

Yes! A few groups have asked what I think the most important job of the next City Council is, or what I would do week one, month one, month six, on the job.

With all of the many challenges facing our city there are many answers to choose from. But I think the most important thing this Council must do, what the entirety of Week 1 must be devoted to, is setting up a system that will actually meet the goals Portlanders were voting for when they passed charter reform. Portland wants culture change at City Hall. Portlanders want accessible City Councilors, accountability, and leaders who will make decisions today based on our needs now and in twenty years and *explain why they made those decisions*. People feel disconnected from the City.

How we write the rules for the new legislative Council, what the norms are for how we do business, will determine if we meet Portland's expectations.

That's why I think it's so important to elect at least a few City Councilors who have worked in legislative settings, at least a few who have written (not just voted to pass!) public budgets, at least a few who have done the work of building coalitions, working with constituents, and building majorities, to pass legislation. I've done this work, and I bring the combination of a fresh start on working with our partners at the County and the State with the experience to know how to get the job done.

And, since I asked, I think Weeks 2-4 are all about determining what the space is where we can get to a majority vote on the interconnected issues of affordable housing, homelessness, public safety, and

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supports for Portlanders in crisis, and assigning some of this work to committees to hammer out the details on. Week 5 is determining who can start work on the budget. Week 6 through Month 6 are about passing (or amending) proposals from committees, doing the regular work of oversight and accountability at bureaus that is long overdue and part of the normal functioning of a transparent government, and working with community leaders to make sure Portlanders know how to engage with City Council and to start to change the culture so people feel like they can connect with their City.