



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. 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.

Candidate Name: Tony Morse
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Candidate Signature: 

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

Absolutely. United for Portland has correctly and appropriately identified Portland's need for leaders who are prepared to address challenges with rigor and seriousness, and I'm eager to earn the endorsement and support of an organization focused on building a better city through practical governance. The time for leaders who can collaborate is now, and the path towards an elevated version of Portland is paved with



pragmatic solutions. We cannot allow the rigid adherence to political ideology to get in the way of delivering solutions that Portlanders need and deserve. We can lead with our values in a way that doesn't interfere with our ability to build a stronger city through civil collaboration and good-faith compromise.

United for Portland's vision for leadership strikes a chord similar to part of what motivated me to run for Portland City Council. Portland is about to undergo a substantial and historic reconfiguration of its system of government, and I want to help it succeed. Beyond facing the serious and urgent policy demands at hand, our first city council elected under the new system will be tasked with forming a functional legislative body. I'm running because I believe I have the determination, legislative experience, and temperament to help the city achieve this monumentally important outcome.

It's critical to form working and lasting coalitions that are necessary to deliver enough votes to pass critical policy. I believe in compartmentalizing disagreements in the interest of working together on shared objectives, and I want to help make this a governing norm on our new city council. Portland's new city council must succeed if Portland is to address its many momentous issues, and I want United for Portland's help so I can be part of the solution that Portland is ready for.

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

Portland is healthier and safer when everyone has somewhere to live in security, peace, and dignity. Currently, affordable housing options are out of reach for too many people. Leaders have an obligation to deliver sound policy solutions that close the gap between housing options and housing needs. In order to craft policy that will improve the housing and homelessness situation in Oregon, it is essential to understand the three predominant factors that got us to where we are today.

First, we have an affordability and supply problem. There is simply not enough housing in Oregon to meet our needs, and that results in higher rents and higher home prices. Second, we have a fragmented and under-resourced homelessness services system. We lack sufficient capacity for shelter and shelter alternatives, and we lack a coordinated approach to helping people navigate the system for the type of housing support they need. And third, we've underinvested in critical supports for the most vulnerable among us. We are falling short when it comes to providing wrap-around services for people in crisis, and as a result addiction and mental health issues can place some Oregonians at higher risk of homelessness.



As to moving forward, every Portlander deserves access to housing, and no one should be forced to live on the streets. Building more housing will help us improve affordability and accessibility, and thoughtfully minimizing obstacles to residential construction will help us catch up with community housing needs. Meanwhile, people living on the streets need help now. And importantly, we have to realize that our addiction crisis is making our homelessness crisis worse. To that end, an effective approach to ending unsheltered homelessness should include:

- Streamlining the city's building permit process, and improving procedures for the approval of new residential construction to grow new housing.
- Expanding capacity of our homeless shelters and shelter alternatives.
- Prioritizing support for recovery housing programs to make sure people struggling with homelessness and addiction have safe and stable places to live and recover.

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 need to build more housing to catch up with Portland's needs. We need to remove barriers to construction, and we need to incentivize building. Our permitting system needs to be faster and easier to navigate. We must find ways to minimize touch points throughout the permitting process, and to ramp up our construction volume. We need to build more housing of all types, including market rate, middle housing, and affordable housing. Generally, Portland needs to create a culture of yes, where we find ways to facilitate more housing construction more quickly.

Beyond building, we need more rental housing, and we need to support additional resources for renters. Rental assistance plays a key role in safeguarding housing stability, especially in inflationary environments that result in higher costs of living. Rental assistance reduces the risk of homelessness, and improves economic resilience in our communities. The SHS revenue in Multnomah County remains underutilized, and this existing money could be spent to more impactful effect on renter assistance. Similarly, our policy framework needs to promote and preserve all housing development. That means building more housing, yes, but also opposing policy that leads to housing providers selling their rental properties. To that end, elected officials need to hear from housing providers when considering housing provider policy.



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?

Portlanders deserve to feel safe in their communities. Period. Prioritizing public safety helps provide everyone with a foundation for prosperity—we need to be committed to Portland being a safe place to live, work, and play. As a practical matter, that means ensuring that the Portland Police Bureau is equipped with the resources and support it needs to keep Portlanders safe. It is critical for Portland leaders to form and maintain good working relationships with the Police Bureau and the PPA, and to recognize law enforcement as a vital partner in building safe, healthy communities that thrive.

My vision for public safety includes law enforcement and behavioral health specialists working together in coordinated partnership to protect our communities, and working to ensure that those experiencing a crisis of any kind get the type of help they need and deserve. Specifically, I am very focused on making sure that Portland and Multnomah County have a robust and functional Deflection system in place to accommodate HB 4002's new drug possession and treatment framework. Police Officers have extensive contact with people who suffer from addiction, and HB 4002 tasks them with being the point of entry into Deflection. In that regard, it is absolutely essential that Police officers receive the training, support, and coordinated leadership they need and deserve as we depart from drug decriminalization and phase into HB 4002's Deflection framework.

My public safety priorities include stopping public drug use and reducing drug overdoses and drug overdose deaths. We must appropriately fund our public safety professionals, including the Portland Police Bureau and Portland Fire and Rescue. Portland Street Response plays a role in a safer Portland, but we should acknowledge that a strong public safety framework depends first on well-resourced and appropriately supported Police and Fire Bureaus. No Portlander should live in fear of gunfire, and we need to significantly reduce gun violence. Portlanders need and deserve expeditious 911 response times, and we need to make sure law enforcement has the resources necessary to protect our communities from property and person crimes as well as drug trafficking.

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

I grew up in a union home, and I'm a proud former union member. I worked nights and weekends at Fred Meyer during high school, and did so as a member of UFCW. I'm



also a former small business owner. I spent nearly a decade running my own business as a Portland Realtor, and I had the honor of serving the needs of Portlanders throughout our great city. Said another way, I know what it's like to earn a paycheck and write business checks. This combined experience has taught me that labor and business are partners, and the success of each depends on the other doing well. This collaborative mindset is essential for growing a vibrant and robust local economy.

Our business community drives economic activity and is directly invested in Portland's vitality. Portland businesses of all sizes pay taxes that fund essential services, and they provide jobs for workers who in turn shop, visit restaurants, and support arts and entertainment throughout Portland neighborhoods. At the same time, workers built Portland, and workers keep it running. Portland is a proud union town, and our city is the best version of itself when our working families thrive. Labor and business both individually and collectively propel Portland's economy, and together are the essential components of a powerful economic engine going forward.

As a practical matter, Portland needs to compete to bring more large employers to town. Two large additional private sector employers would spur significant economic growth and momentum, and create an environment ripe for the addition of more strong union jobs that pay family wages, provide full family healthcare, and offer the ability to retire with dignity. The addition of two large employers would offer the benefit of an economic multiplier, and would create secondary and tertiary economic activity. Leaders must get creative about making Portland a more desirable destination for large employers. Rehabilitation of Portland's reputation, strengthening public safety, addition of housing stock, and tax structure adjustments all play a role. We must create an environment that attracts more large employers—our city, workers, and business community depends on it.

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?

My general approach to leadership is in large part centered on communication and bridge building, and it is relationship driven. To that end, I often listen more than I talk, and that includes hearing from opposition and others who hold perspectives and positions different from my own. I take counsel and consider the advice of those with relevant expertise. I'm more interested in inspiring others than I am in telling them what to do. I strive to always approach challenging situations with emotional discipline and even temperament, and I prioritize keeping those around me calm, cool, and



collected. I think it's important to lead from the front and with a bias for action. It is critical to take responsibility when things go wrong, and to share the credit when they go well. I lean into the experience that I bring to the table, but I continuously strive to learn and do more.

Ultimately, any leader's effectiveness can be measured by how well they implement and execute courses of action. It doesn't matter how brilliant an idea is if it fails in its execution, and this is a guiding principle for me in any leadership role I take on. And importantly, I remain in continuous awareness of the need to compartmentalize disagreements that I may have with others for the purpose of advancing shared priorities. Disagreements should not get in the way of doing the work people agree on. In that regard, I prioritize forging strategic alliances to make things happen and deliver results. And in a legislative setting, such as the new Portland City Council format, strategic partnerships are an essential ingredient of effectiveness and success.

Charter reform has created a period of uncertainty as we transition to our new form of city government, and now more than ever we need leaders who can work well with a wide range of personalities and perspectives. To that end, the broad base of endorsements that I've earned speaks to my pragmatic ability to bring people to the table and keep them there. I'm one of very few city council candidates who have been endorsed by Portland City Commissioners Dan Ryan, Rene Gonzalez, and Carmen Rubio. I've earned endorsements from Oregon AFSCME and Oregon SEIU as well as Revitalize Portland and the Portland Police Association. I can convene, collaborate, and work effectively with others from across the spectrum of different points of view, and I'm ready to help deliver the practical solutions that Portland needs going forward.

As an example of my leadership style and approach, I would point to my work on the Oregon Fentanyl Education Bill as a measure of success. SB 238 (2023) was legislation designed to create and introduce lifesaving fentanyl prevention curriculum into public school classrooms. This is a cause very important to me both as a parent and as a person in long-term recovery who is passionate about solving the drug and addiction crisis. In my role as an advocate during the 2023 legislative session, I was well aware of the political tensions that culminated in the longest walkout in state history. To that end, I employed a strategy to move SB 238 through the building quickly to preemptively avoid political delays. Specifically, I recruited bi-partisan support including Democratic and Republican Co-Sponsors. Ultimately, the bill passed the House 59-0 and was signed by Governor Kotek well before the legislative session concluded. And if I can bring 59 people from across Oregon together, I can bring a majority of City Councilors from across Portland together to pass important policy.



As to working with constituents and other stakeholders, I believe that City Councilors are elected to serve all of Portland. That means that Portland City Councilors need to approach their work with a service mindset, and that means prioritizing availability and accessibility. Elected officials have an obligation to hear from all perspectives, including and especially from those they disagree with. To that end, I intend on actively engaging with constituents and other stakeholders that come from across the spectrum of different perspectives. I'm not looking for an echo chamber, I'm looking for an opportunity to serve all of District 4 and to help advance Portland as a whole.

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

I see Oregon's tax system at the state and local levels as one that forces leaders and policy makers to make difficult spending decisions. Government leaders are often forced to fund some programs and essential services to the detriment of others. Said another way, leaders are sometimes pressed to stretch dollars far beyond what many would consider reasonable. And as an unfortunate result, we see certain areas miss out on critical investments. Behavioral health has been one such area for a long time, and, accordingly, Oregon is struggling to manage a costly and lethal addiction crisis.

Focusing more specifically on Portland, and understanding that the government depends on tax revenue to deliver public services and public works projects, it's important to source revenue in a way that does not disproportionately burden working families or disincentivize critical business activity. We can and should acknowledge that this is a difficult balancing act, but these are the guardrails that should guide tax policy decisions. And importantly, we must approach these decisions aware of the fact that both individuals and businesses will continue to leave the city if tax burdens outweigh their tolerance for taxation. Clinically speaking, this is a limiting condition that policymakers must take seriously.

With regard to spending, I believe elected leaders have an obligation to use our tax dollars in a fair, responsible, and just manner that benefits our community. One important way to do so is to craft policy that protects and supports union jobs. Subsidized public works projects should have fair labor standards attached, and I believe very strongly in the right of workers to collectively bargain and have a say in their wages, hours, and working conditions. And by the same token, our spending should help strategically position Portland for strong economic competitiveness. As a



practical matter, that means our spending should encourage vibrant and healthy business activity.

All things considered, I believe Portland's current economic posture calls for three courses of action with regard to taxation and spending. First, Portland needs a Tax Advisory Group to identify improvements to our local tax structure that will strengthen Portland's economic competitiveness. We need a sustainable tax structure that provides us with the ability to spend on essential services consistent with our values, and it's time to evaluate how we can do better. Second, and effective immediately, we need a moratorium on new taxes and fees, as per the recommendations of Governor Kotek's Portland Central City Task Force. And third, we need more targeted incentives designed to stimulate economic activity, such as expanding the Business License Tax downtown tax credit.

Good policy—including policy related to taxing and spending—is often an iterative process of testing, scaling, and re-testing as we observe and measure outcomes. We need to be committed to a path, but also nimble enough to iterate and strive towards the consistency of a mindset and approach based on data-driven results. We have to be willing to try things and make adjustments as we aim for improvement.

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).

I'm running for Portland City Council because the city of Portland—the city I love and am committed to—has an addiction crisis and we need a recovery champion in City Hall to solve it. There are some great candidates running in District 4, but my lived experience as a person in long-term recovery, and my professional expertise with regard to addiction and recovery policy, offers something to voters that they can't get from other candidates. I've worked tirelessly on addiction and behavioral health policy in the state Legislature, and in my role as the Policy and Advocacy Director of Oregon Recovers, I've briefed Governor Kotek on the addiction crisis. As HB 4002 goes into effect, it's now more important than ever to elect a city leader who understands the issues presented by the addiction crisis, and is equipped with the ability to coordinate with Multnomah County.

Deflection forces Portland and Multnomah County closer together, and we need elected leaders in both governments who understand behavioral health in order to make the progress on the addiction crisis that our community so desperately



needs. HB 4002 and Deflection, moreover, will inevitably require adjustments, and I've been endorsed by State Senator Deb Patterson, Chair of the Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care. I'm also endorsed by State Representatives Rob Nosse and Travis Nelson, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Oregon House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care. I have a great relationship with each of them, and I'm ready to work with them on whatever improvements HB 4002 might need as we move ahead.

Portland's addiction crisis impacts every part of daily life, from homelessness and public safety, to community livability and the reputation of our city. Put plainly, widespread public drug use and the proliferation of overdoses prove the status quo must change. It is time for:

- A Coordinated Office of Addiction Response (COAR). COAR would combine elements from the City of Portland, Multnomah County, the state, and behavioral health partners under one roof to implement and execute a coordinated response to the addiction crisis. We must pivot away from the failing fragmented and siloed approach currently in place. We must collaborate to leverage resources to coordinate care and support recovery.
- Opening sobering centers with dropoff for emergency first responders, as this is an immediate need for Portland's addiction crisis response.
- Impactful utilization and wise spending of behavioral health funding. City leaders must hold our partners at Multnomah County accountable.

In closing, I'd like to underscore the experience I have working in policy and legislative environments. While candidates are often asked about their "why," they are less frequently asked about their "how." How elected leaders find a way to get something done is just as important as what they are trying to accomplish. Portland's new system of government will demand city councilors to hit the ground running and to set up a functional legislative body while simultaneously tending to urgent policy needs. While my lived experience allows me to approach the serious issues of public safety, addiction, and homelessness in a way other candidates in District 4 cannot, it is my professional experience of delivering results in a legislative environment that postures me to effectively lead in our new system of government on Day One. I'm eager and ready to help Portland be the best version of itself.