

Hi, my name is Kelly Blucher. I'm a candidate running for Tacoma City Council position two. A little bit about myself. I am a mom of three, lived in Tacoma for about the last seven years and grew up just on the northeast Tacoma side, the boundary there between Federal Way and Tacoma. I'm running for city council because I'm a candidate with lived experience, having gone through things like homelessness, addiction, struggled for affordable housing. I just really thought it was time that we have a candidate that really represents the voice of our people. I'm certainly very known advocate in the community, advocating a lot around child care, affordable housing, of course, homelessness and certainly early education for our children. I think it's really important that we provide safe spaces and walkability and for our children to really learn work and thrive and stay in our community. I'm super excited to be downtown today, riding the link and supporting sound transit.

What do you think is the most pressing mobility concern in your district?

Well, certainly, I think some barriers that we have in our district is is not having enough bus routes. So the time that it's really taking for people to commute back and forth to work. I know, And certainly in the end, the constituents that I've spoken with recently, a lot of the reason that they're not riding the bus is maybe that two hour or two and a half hour commute. And when you pile that on top of having children at home, that's a very long commute. And you don't have that kind of time as a working family. I'd say some of the other barriers are certainly and this is getting better, you know, as far as, you know, utilizing your bike and having your bike on the bus. But I've seen that improved in recent years. I know I have a lot of my son's friends at school are utilizing that method now where they're able to put the bike on the front of the bus and things like that, ADA accessibility. Now, that is not necessarily as far as riding the link or riding the bus, but it's really getting to that point. You know, we don't have enough ADA accessible curbs or sidewalks in our sidewalks in Tacoma. Let's be frank, a lot of them are in terrible condition. So that is that's really challenging for people with disabilities to be able to make that commute as well.

I would say I'm really proud of the fact that in in Pierce County, especially during the pandemic, we've been able to give out quite a few free bus passes, which is really enhanced ridership. So I would say offering, you know, one of the things we can do to fix and have more people ride the bus and the link is to continue to offer out those free passes. I mean, wouldn't it be amazing if someday, you know, riding this, riding this transportation source is free for all? I mean, that would be amazing. It would help with our climate. It would help with accessibility. Certainly a whole lot of things.

What do you think is the most important transportation project in Tacoma currently?

Well, certainly, I think the biggest impact that we're going to see right now is the link going up into our hilltop community. I think that's going to be wonderful for businesses. I think that's going to be wonderful for the people that live around that area as well, to really get back and forth between downtown and hilltop. I think that's going to increase a lot of accessibility, especially, again, let's focus on people with disabilities. You know, the hill, we have a huge hill to go up and down. That's been such a challenge. So really giving our our community that ability to move around town. I think it also impacts the schools, such as Stadium High School. I know it will with my son and several of his friends who we're

going to have that ability to come downtown and ride the link around and get to some different shops as well. You know, and I know Downtown on the Go has for a long time focused on downtown, and now they're starting to expand. And I think when I'm seeing the ADA sidewalks being put in all over, that is amazing to me. I think it's amazing not just for people commuting back and forth, but for scooters and skateboards and bikes and all of those things as well.

Pierce Transit is considering going to the ballot to ask voters for a 0.3% sales tax increase for public transportation funding. If Pierce Transit were to go to the ballot in 2022, would you support the measure?

You know, I think any tax increase right now is going to be a really challenging things to to bring to voters, this is gonna be a challenging thing to pass with voters. There are certainly those controversies out there as far as like car tabs, We're concerned that revolves around sound transit that we had so much pushback on. I certainly support free rides for youth, free rides for seniors, increasing stops, we need that. We need that a lot in several of our communities. I think it's great that we do bring it to the voters and let the voters have the opportunity to vote on that. And I also think we should have a huge campaign around that. And what does it mean and be very transparent and authentic about rider usership, how we can increase rider usership.

You know, I think that's one of the things that we fall short on so many times in both, you know, city council government and government as a whole is how are we really pushing out that authenticity that, you know, what's going on to to really convince voters that this is what we need? And I think it's more than convincing. You know, we really do want to increase things like public transit ridership. We need to I mean that for me, our climate has is being so devastated right now by having so many vehicles on the road. And when we live in a wonderful city like Tacoma and have this beautiful downtown area, we need to figure out ways to utilize it more to keep people with jobs, working in Tacoma or to keep people working in Tacoma and of course, to give our children, you know, more access to public transportation to go around the city . Because let's face it, Tacoma has everything that we need. And I think that's a wonderful thing.

So, again, I think it's going to be hard to to ask people for a higher sales tax. We always we already have one of the highest sales tax in the nation. So, um, I would love to look at it, to see what the voters think and certainly to look at other opportunities as well, where we can fund these programs sustainably, sustainably, and make sure that they are there continuing on.

Is there anything else you want to tell us about your goals around transportation?

Yeah, well, you know, I think it was the experience that we just had was amazing, you know, having the youth on here from SOTA, utilizing the link to get back and forth for classes. I think having our having our kids, for me, our children, is where it all starts. So many of us are accustomed to single occupancy vehicles. And and that's our main mode of transportation. But I think really educating our youth and having them utilize our public transit system is really going to be a key to reducing the number of cars on the road. I know my family is a great example of that. My son is is now looking at, you know, not purchasing a car, but is familiarizing himself with riding the city bus. How we refer to that. So I just think

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that we really need to educate our children, have more people ride the bus. This has been an amazing experience today. And for me, I love the I love this method of getting around and being able to to see our city, meet people. And certainly I work I work in this area.so that's something that I should even look at, is really utilizing utilizing the bus to commute to and from.