

# Michael HARRIS MAYOR



**It's Time to Right the Ship**

## Right the Ship Platform

*No New Taxes/Reform of Seattle's B&O Tax - Hands-On Approach to Curbing Our Homeless Epidemic - Real Action on Climate Change - Unique Ideas on Resolving District-to-District Funding Inequity in Our Schools - Innovative Ideas to Create More Affordable Housing - Fighting to Keep Seattle a Sanctuary City - Bringing the Sonics Back to Seattle! - Reinvigorating Seattle's Efforts to Bring Film and Television Production to Our City - Pragmatic Action to Raise the Minimum Wage - All-of-the-Above Approach to Fixing Seattle's Transportation Problems and Ending the "War on Cars" – Bi-Partisanship and Re-Claiming the "Radical Center"*

### No New Taxes

The answer to every problem is not a new tax. I oppose an income tax. I oppose the regressive, job-killing soda tax just passed by the City Council, and pledge to put the cap back on that bottle as Mayor. I oppose any new taxes. City Hall is already bloated and inefficient. Today Seattle has the highest sales tax burden of any city in the United States, with a healthy stream of revenue. In this robust economy we can address the challenges facing our city by being smarter, more engaged and more efficient. We need to do better with what we have.

### Reform of Seattle's B&O Tax

The Seattle Business License tax — sometimes called the Gross Receipts tax or Business and Occupation (B&O) tax — needs to be reformed. Seattle's B&O tax currently is applied to the gross revenue that businesses earn, rather than the net income, and it's creating undue burdens on our business community. We need to right the ship on our B&O tax and continue to do everything we can to help keep Seattle on its current, historic boom, and keep the city an attractive place for our current corporate residents, draw new businesses and jobs here, and most importantly, to create a better environment for small enterprises and innovation to awaken and thrive. Taxing net income instead of gross receipts is an easy, important step we can do now to give businesses large and small a following sea, and to keep Seattle on a steady course of growth.

### Homeless Epidemic

Seattle's homeless crisis is now an epidemic. Mayor Ed Murray declared a State of Emergency on the homeless issue a year-and-a-half ago and despite millions of dollars spent – more than any other city in the U.S. – nothing substantive has been accomplished. It's both a public safety and a humanitarian crisis that we cannot look past or ignore. It's a shameful state for a booming city like ours. I will reform our governmental programs and approach to the homeless issue and eliminate programs that are redundant or ineffective. Looking past people is not an option anymore. It's not who we are and what we stand for in Seattle. Homelessness impacts every citizen of this city. It's been addressed with perhaps good intentions, but mostly just lip service, press conferences and inhumane half-measures that just shift the problem from one location to another around the city. We do not need to pay for a homelessness "czar." We already have a czar on the payroll to address homelessness — *our current Mayor*. As your next Mayor I will personally engage, listen and partner with local non-governmental organizations working on the front lines of this issue, our corporate citizens and law enforcement to work towards an effective, sustainable solution to the homeless epidemic in Seattle. I pledge to personally meet every week with our police officers, non-government organizations, advocates of all kinds working

directly on the issue — and we won't confine it to a conference room. We'll go to the streets and into the camps, and we'll see and hear what needs to be done. Just as I did recently when I volunteered to participate in Union Gospel Mission's Search and Rescue program, which goes out every Tuesday evening from 7pm to 2am into homeless encampments throughout Seattle – and there are many – talking to people, learning about them, helping them with food and blankets and other necessities, “putting a face” on the souls too many of us in this prosperous city look past. Not me when I'm Mayor. I will roll my sleeves up on day one and get to the hard, challenging work towards curbing the homelessness epidemic.

## Safe Injection Sites

Safe Injection Sites, also known as Safe Consumption Sites or Community Health Engagement Locations (CHELs), are wrought with controversy – good people on both sides disagree about their efficacy, medical and legal ethics, and impacts to neighborhoods. Safe injection sites have been tried in San Francisco and Ithaca, NY. Boston Healthcare for the Homeless runs a site, but illicit drug use is not allowed on the premises, instead treating users afterward. Approximately 90 other cities worldwide operate safe injection sites, with Switzerland doing it for some 30 years. The longest-running and best-known of these in North America is Insite in Vancouver, BC, which has been open since 2003. All told, the data is mixed – safe injection sites save lives, undoubtedly. Insite reports zero deaths in their facility since it opened. In 2015 and 2016 medical professionals there performed 768 overdose interventions and seven percent of those who used the facility entered detox in that time frame, half of which finished the program. *The Washington Post* reports that in the two years after Insite opened, “overdose deaths in the surrounding community dropped by 35%.” The data demonstrates that these sites, when accompanied with appropriate services, reduce overdoses and fatalities and, if services are appropriately coordinated, provide access to treatment for those that are suffering from addiction. HOWEVER, across the board, only about 2% who enter these sites ever get clean. And the property crime rates rise in these neighborhoods – while already high in most cases – because users still need to get the drugs. Based on a harm reduction model, as opposed to an abstinence enforcement model, safe injection mitigate the problem by preventing death by overdose and the spread of disease through dirty needles, while attempting to funnel addicts toward detox and treatment, if they decide to get clean. The bottom line is – the jury is still out. In February, Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine directed the Seattle/King County Public Health department to set up two pilot safe injection sites – and I believe this was premature. As the next Mayor, I will revisit the directive, digging deeper into the issue and the latest data and empirical observations of Insite in Vancouver and other cities who've experimented with safe injection sites. We simply need to know more, and that takes more than one brief and timid visit to Vancouver like our soon-to-be-ex-Mayor made to learn how to do this right. Safe injection sites may in fact be a very good idea – but as with everything in Seattle, we can always do better.

## Tiny Houses-Shipping Container Houses

I support tiny transitional houses on approved city sites and in areas outside the city with access to public transportation. There need to be priority for these facilities for veterans and there must be time limits and coordination at these locations with services to help people navigate to access services and transition towards permanent housing.

## Dignity for a Day-Day Labor Program

We will implement a day worker program for the homeless. They will be offered work cleaning up garbage, or maybe even being trained to fix potholes, in the city and working in our city in exchange for a daily wage, a shower and a meal. After the city is cleaned, we can match day workers with local businesses in need of projects that can be completed with day labor. Similar programs in Albuquerque, NM and Denver, CO cost under \$400,000.00 per year.

## Eliminate Wet Houses

I support closing all wet houses and diverting public funds going to these programs to programs like the Dignity for a Day-Day Labor program.

## Affordable Housing

Seattle should be a place where people can live, work and play. That means that people who work in Seattle must be able to live in Seattle. We have to work collectively, with developers as part of the conversation, to provide more affordable housing options in the City of Seattle.

## Human Trafficking

As a port city on the Pacific rim, Seattle and the Puget Sound region has one of the largest sex trafficking problems in the United States. I will make it a priority to ensure that the Seattle Police Department has the resources it needs to combat the human trafficking happening in our city. This is an issue with not enough awareness and understanding. I will increase the profile of this issue and I will take a leadership role in advancing awareness and education on this issue so that all residents and citizens of Seattle are more aware of the signs of human trafficking so that we can all fight this horrific practice together.

## Bi-Partisanship and Re-Claiming the “Radical Center”

Donald Trump is an embarrassment to the United States of America. We must all, collectively, denounce that style of leadership in the most strong and severe terms. We must all work and strive to talk to one another and work together on a bi-partisan basis, left and right, conservative and liberal. My administration will strive to reclaim the “radical center,” where the best ideas prevail and solutions are found.

## Sanctuary City

I'm proud that Seattle is a Sanctuary City, a place that recognizes that immigrants are part of us. Immigrants make us better, make us stronger, make us the vibrant, innovative city that we are. And we've actually been a Sanctuary City longer than most people know — and I'm proud to be a part of that, as well. In the mid-1980s I worked as a volunteer with the University Baptist Church in the 1980s helping refugees and immigrants fleeing war-torn regions of Central America to seek refuge in Seattle, many facing possible death if they were deported back to their home countries — not unlike Syrian refugees today. Under my Administration Seattle will always welcome refugees, and we'll remain strong in the Resistance and use all legal means available to protect immigrant communities and the individuals in those communities that are being persecuted by the United States Immigration and Custom Enforcement Agency.

## Climate Change

Our great City of Seattle has a hard-earned reputation since its founding for being a trend-setting, innovative, progressive place. We need to do more to be a paradigm and a leader on the issue of climate change, the issue of this time in history. Under my leadership, the City of Seattle will join with other cities in America and around the world and pledge to power the city entirely with clean energy sources by 2035. If Atlanta can do it, so can Seattle. We can start by converting the city fleet to all electric vehicles.

## Education

I support providing equitable resources to all schools in Seattle. The gap in the resources available for children from different neighborhoods is simply unacceptable. Every child deserves the opportunity to live up to his or her potential and should not be limited or disadvantaged because of the resources of the school the child attends due to circumstance. As Mayor, I will work tirelessly getting our children the State-Mandated Funds they are due until funding equity is achieved for all schools city-wide.

## Sonics/Arena

My father, Chris Harris, was the first English-born player in the National Basketball Association (NBA). In my family we call him "the trivia question." I love the NBA! I was born with a basketball in my hand. The Sonics were stolen from us and we lost a piece of our economy and cultural identity. I WILL BRING THE SONICS BACK TO SEATTLE, on our terms. I've long supported any option that doesn't ask for direct public money, and that advances the economic development of our city and truly gives us a fighting chance to return our venerable franchise here.

We began with three competing options — two plans to renovate KeyArena and one to build a new arena in SoDo — and as with basketball itself, competition proved to be a good thing. The process was yielding new information every day, positive and negative, and new mitigations and opportunities that to me were exciting. Seattle found itself in the 4th quarter of this important debate and in my opinion and that of so many others in this town, the SoDo option had the lead and the ball — largely because it played the game right. Over time it adequately addressed concerns about potential impacts to our longshoremen, and offered to mitigate any potential negative impacts to KeyArena, an important civic asset. Good people got behind the SoDo project, and it was clearly the preferred option for both the NBA and NHL. The only ask the SoDo group made was for reasonable tax breaks from the city, and reform of our B&O tax that I already support. There couldn't be a better spot for an arena. The best place for Seattle to grow isn't an already-congested Lower Queen Anne but to the south, to SoDo, where undoubtedly the building of a world-class facility like this would be a boon to our economic development — and perhaps even yield additional housing, both for our middle- and low-income residents, maybe even our homeless. The mass transit and traffic infrastructure is there. All things were in place. And then... Mayor Ed Murray took the ball and ran home. In a clear rush to create a "legacy" before depositions on his sexual abuse lawsuit may force him to resign, he expedited and corrupted the process, negotiated in extremely bad faith with all parties, and then pushed through perhaps the worst plan on the table, the Oak View Group (OVG) proposal to renovate KeyArena — which involves significant public funding, constricts an important neighborhood in Seattle, offers no real economic development to the city or an opportunity to address other pressing issues like housing availability, and most importantly, offers no real chance of bringing the NBA back to Seattle.

On the day of his decision to send the OVG KeyArena proposal to City Council for a vote, Murray went on live radio to explain himself, sharing a litany of shocking things — first, when asked if being a lame duck Mayor has changed the way he governs now, Murray said yes, "it means I can be more open and honest now." He corrected himself immediately saying that "well, I've always been open and honest." He hasn't been, by many accounts, among other things being accused in a statement from the Seattle Group that he withheld "critical financial portions of Oak View Group's proposal from the public... raising serious questions about the integrity of the decision-making process and the ability of the public to make a fair and equitable comparison." I agree.

When asked about the concerns of the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood and others about traffic congestion, Murray dismissed them outright, saying that Lower Queen Anne is now, according to him, a walking neighborhood and people will simply go to games by foot. All Sonics fans live within walking distance of KeyArena, by that logic. Then in an extraordinary moment of self-importance, he said that he was resolved not to let anyone try to disempower him to make executive decisions he's entitled to while he's still in City Hall, comparing himself to Barack Obama and how our former President wasn't allowed to get a hearing on a Supreme Court nominee. Murray went on to make a particularly inexplicable comment, saying that as a gay man that he came into office "with a lot of stereotypes" and that he felt that by making this decision now that he believed would be the fastest track to bringing back the NBA and getting an NHL franchise, that this would "dispel some of those stereotypes." In other words, the debate about sports arenas in Seattle somehow was about his sexual orientation. It's not. We are *post-orientation* in Seattle, and that is best conveyed by one bumper sticker symbol -- =, the equal sign. *All of our residents are equal*, gay or straight, and no particular group should be more equal than others, and certainly no critical economic development decision should ever be addressed in the context of who we are or who we love. Lastly, in perhaps the most telling comment Murray made on that live radio show, he recounted a brief, impressionable discussion he had with the current NBA Commissioner Adam Silver who told him to forget it, "we're not coming to Seattle." And our elected leader of this great city accepted that call. He went with a KeyArena proposal with a business plan that claims it doesn't need pro sports to pay for itself — but in fact it very much does. In just one chat with the Commissioner of a professional sport our Mayor admittedly doesn't care about, Murray quit. He gave up on getting our Sonics back. As the next Mayor and a person deeply connected to the NBA and a huge fan of the sport, and as someone who understands what we lost when another flawed Mayor dribbled the ball off his knee and allowed 40+ years of NBA history to be stolen away to Oklahoma City, I WILL NEVER QUIT ON GETTING OUR SONICS BACK TO SEATTLE. And I won't quit on the SoDo Arena. This game isn't over.

## Minimum Wage

Income inequality is a major issue in our city and in our society. Income inequality contributes to our homeless crisis and is creating a vacuum in the middle that risks turning Seattle into a commune for the wealthy. While I do not support new taxes, I do support the concept of increasing the minimum wage over time to ensure that those who work earn a livable wage. I am concerned that city leadership did not engage with local business enough to establish the minimum wage. I would be open to a discussion, in particular, with the restaurant and hospitality industry to talk about perhaps pro rating the minimum wage with gratuities so that businesses are not unnecessarily burdened and wage earners are not perversely harmed from a well-intentioned policy.

## Law and Order and Policing

We have to acknowledge that we simply are not yet a post-racial society. Institutional racism exists. I support alternatives to incarceration. I support body cameras for all officers to increase trust, accountability and transparency of police interactions. We have to be committed to community policing to create more positive, consistent engagement between law enforcement and all communities in our city. We must also continue and enhance community oversight of policing as part of an overall approach that maintains dialogue and communication between the Police Department, City Hall and all of the communities and residents of our city.

## Transportation

I support an all-of-the-above strategy with respect to transportation. We must increase and expand public transportation access with a specific priority to expand access to public transportation to areas in and around our city that have the affordable housing where people in the middle and on the lower spectrum of the economic ladder are being pushed to live. Pedestrian, bicycle and non-motorized transit should be encouraged as part of our overall efforts to be a leader in the fight against climate weirding and climate chaos. However, we have to be realistic. Americans and Seattleites use their cars and we must acknowledge that fact in our transportation planning. We must fix potholes and do so in a timely manner. Our geography is constrained and our transportation infrastructure is already over-burdened. Bicycle lanes are great, but so are electric cars. We must repair, maintain and rebuild infrastructure (AKA Ballard Bridge, Magnolia Bridge) We currently have a sound financial footing to make long-term plans and investments in transportation infrastructure.

## Southern Resident Orcas Task Force

“The Whale Guy” can’t have a platform that doesn’t include enlisting City Hall’s full support for the recovery of the Pacific Northwest’s totem species, our endangered Southern Resident killer whales. As Mayor of Seattle, I will assemble and empower a task force of the region’s top marine scientists and advocates to identify and address the most promising and productive ways we as a City can help the orcas, including providing support to new and ongoing salmon habitat restoration projects – *no fish, no blackfish* – and protection against potential vessel impacts. Through efficiencies and other cost-saving efforts we will find significant funds that will match gifts from our corporate residents, perhaps even the Port of Seattle, and we will right this ship. Seattle is the only major city in the lower 48 U.S. States that has resident killer whales. The orcas are to many our spirit animal, part of our soul as a community. But they also represent a big chunk of our regional economy – whale watching alone generates close to a quarter-million dollars a year in economic impact here. It’s time we returned the favor. Save the whales, save ourselves.

## Economic Development

The City of Seattle is booming — It seems we have more tower cranes than trees. That doesn't mean we can't promote and encourage the development and enhancement of industries in Seattle. The city should provide technical support, counseling and coaching to assist and support local small businesses. Buy Local campaigns are wonderful and healthy for our economy. We have emerging businesses to help grow, and old businesses we need to grow again. Through my three

decades of experience in the television and film industry, I've sadly seen my hometown take a back seat to other cities in luring shows and movies. We are getting our clocks cleaned by Vancouver and Portland — even New Orleans. Our own Amazon has some of the best studios in the world and are starting to create tremendous, Oscar-winning original content. Google is planning a major expansion in South Lake Union with oodles of world-class production facilities. We have some of the best industry talent here, and of course, the most beautiful city on the planet to shoot.

There's no reason why we can't become a major player again. All it takes is, as we say in the business, *action*.

Michael  
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**MAYOR**  
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