

## **Lorena González responses**

Below are the unedited, full-length answers from Lorena González submitted in response to the *Georgetown Gazette's* questions. González is the Seattle City Council President and is running for mayor. A version of these responses was edited to fit the *Gazette's* October print edition. For more, see her campaign website: [lorenaforseattle.com](http://lorenaforseattle.com)

Early voting begins Oct. 15 and the general election is Nov. 2.

### **Georgetown Gazette: About half of Seattle's unhoused residents live in RVs or other vehicles. As mayor, how will you address this population and the related parking issues in neighborhoods like Georgetown?**

**Lorena González:** I'll be taking office in midwinter and will move to rapidly assess encampments and who we can move immediately into vacant hotel rooms and other spaces. We need bold leadership to take an all-hands-on deck approach that leaves no solution off the table. We need to expand our emergency response to the crisis, and my plan does that starting day one. But if we are going to truly solve this problem, we also need to address the underlying causes that force people into homelessness in the first place. My administration will take swift action in the first 100 days on all fronts.

First, we need to build a lot of housing fast. Finding the funding to rapidly build permanent housing, with services, for Seattle residents experiencing homelessness is my first priority. Leadership matters in Seattle's homelessness crisis

Second, we need better services for unhoused Seattleites. I will push for more wraparound mental health services, treatment for addiction, skills and career training programs, and a pilot universal basic income program so Seattle residents experiencing homelessness can restart their lives on sound footing.

Third, I will provide the leadership we need in the mayor's office — and have long lacked — to work with the council to tackle the skyrocketing cost of living and housing in Seattle. We need to limit rent hikes in unsafe, unhealthy and unlivable housing, require four months' notice for significant rent increases, provide rental assistance to Seattle residents who need it the most, and allow more multifamily housing to be built throughout the city.

The only way we can do this is if big corporations and the very wealthy finally pay their fair share. I will work with the Council and community leaders to start rebalancing the tax code so it's not just regular Seattleites footing the bill anymore.

You can read my full plan to tackle the homelessness crisis at [lorenaforseattle.com](http://lorenaforseattle.com)

**Gazette:** During your tenure on the City Council, what actions did you take or support that most improved Georgetown's quality of life? Looking forward, what do you think Georgetown's most pressing issue is now and how will you address it?

**González:** I'm proud to have supported the Georgetown South Park trail as a councilmember to create greater walkability, bike-ability, and quality of life for the area. Georgetown and other south Seattle neighborhoods have fewer green spaces than more affluent areas of the city, and we need to continue to work to close this equity gap.

Displacement is another critical issue in the area. My housing plan focuses on policies and priorities that recognize and focus on what people and communities need to heal, stabilize, and thrive. We need to ensure that as we continue to develop our city, we are creating more affordable housing with, for, and in BIPOC communities. I have long supported the Equitable Development Initiative and as Mayor will work to increase and stabilize this funding

**Gazette:** How do your plans for the Seattle Police Department better protect and improve public safety?

**González:** As a civil rights lawyer for more than a decade, I worked tirelessly to get justice for victims of police violence and racially biased policing across Washington and Seattle. As Mayor, I will work to address our city's public safety challenges while ensuring that we have true public safety where our Black, brown, and indigenous community members do not have to fear police violence.

Right now we are asking the police to do too many things. Studies show that 50% of police calls do not need armed sworn officers to respond. My administration will scale up the Community Service Officer program to improve response for non-violent crimes, including property crimes. Community service officers can be hired and trained faster than police officers and are less expensive for the city and more responsive to neighborhood safety concerns. We will also increase funding for programs like Health One Mobile units, so that appropriately trained professionals are responding to behavioral health emergencies.

Scaling up these units will allow our police force to shift their focus to more serious violent crime. And I will hold them accountable to do that job effectively and in a manner that respects the civil rights, dignity and liberty of all Seattleites.

**Gazette:** The City Council enacted law last year to tax corporations and high-earning individuals. Do you support this measure and why?

**González:** I not only supported it, I proudly co-sponsored the legislation. In order to tackle our city's biggest problems, including homelessness, we need big corporations which have made record profits during the pandemic to start paying their fair share of

taxes. The JumpStart Seattle tax we passed last year was a good start, and I will work to advance more progressive revenue measures as Mayor.

**Gazette: What is your favorite Georgetown small business? As mayor, what will you do to support it and those like it?**

**González:** Fonda La Catrina is one of my favorite restaurants in the city! I have released an economic development plan focused on small businesses and workers. Part of this plan includes revamping the Office of Economic Development as a center for resources, tools and technical assistance for small businesses. By doing this we will serve local businesses with tools they need to find capital and technical assistance, with attention to removing barriers for new entrepreneurs from low-income communities.

We will also ensure immigrant businesses have in-language, culturally competent guidance, help protect local ownership and family businesses transitioning to the next generation, whether in fragile neighborhoods like CID or unique industries like fishing and maritime.

**Gazette: Would you drink a glass of water or eat the fish from the Duwamish River?**

**González:** No, I would not. Environmental racism has had severe impacts on the health of South Seattle communities along the heavily polluted and heavily trafficked Duwamish River valley. The life expectancy for residents of Georgetown and South Park is 8 years shorter than Seattle and King County on average and 13 years shorter than residents of Laurelhurst.

As mayor, I will partner with Seattle For A Green New Deal leaders and direct resources to their community-based priorities for clean air, clean water, and environmental justice. My team will work to create thousands of stable, high-quality jobs by retrofitting homes, restoring the Duwamish River and the Salish Sea ecosystems, and building green infrastructure, and we will modernize our industrial infrastructure and prepare to build technology for the green economy.

I'm proud to have the sole endorsement of every environmental group that has endorsed in the Mayor's race – Sierra Club, Washington Conservation Voters, and 350 Seattle – because they know that my record and my platform make me the best candidate to address these issues.

**Gazette: What should we know about you that we haven't seen or heard about already?**

**González:** I believe that I am the best candidate for Mayor of Seattle because of the strong diverse progressive coalition I have built. I'm proud to be endorsed by national leaders including Rep. Pramila Jayapal and Senator Bernie Sanders, state leaders like

Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, the King County Labor Council and most of the city's labor unions unions, Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, environmental groups including Sierra Club, and the King County Democrats and every Democratic committee that has endorsed in this race.