

October 13, 2017, Candidate Forum - Seattle Mayor

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Lisa K. Hutchinson

Certified Realtime Captioner

>>KAREN: Well, thank you very much. Just a little housekeeping note. We please ask that you silence your cell phones for the duration of our event today.

So, I'm new to moderating, so hopefully I'm going to work this out correctly. But I'm going to start with a question for both of you. As an influential leader and possible mayor, please describe your experience or knowledge with the disability community. Want to start with you, Cary?

>>CARY: First I would like to say thank you for doing this forum.

I'm really looking forward to learning, listening, and developing solutions together with you. So, I went to graduate school to study urbanism, urban design, urban planning, landscape architecture, and learned through that

experience just how much our built environment is not inclusive, not accessible to everybody. I realized that with this challenge of disability rights, that it's not just a matter of changing hearts and minds like with other civil rights issues. It's a matter of changing the whole environment. It's a matter of making the built environment, the place we all live in, and the culture of how we practice public life accessible and open to people with disabilities.

And so I have learned from that time forward just how to create a more inclusive public realm, how do we build a city that's really focused on everyone feeling welcome, and really understanding how little we are doing, how much more there is still to do to make the culture of our public life feel welcome to everybody.

You know, 1 out of 10 people are dealing with some sort of disability, and we don't talk about it enough, we don't ask for advice and input enough, and as mayor I would really focus on including people with disabilities, including your commission giving a seat at the table, so that we're always talking about inclusion, and accessibility, and making sure our city is open and welcoming and inclusive for everybody.

>>KAREN: Great. Jenny.

>>JENNY: Thank you. I want to join with Cary by

thanking you for putting this forum on. I think it's an incredibly important issue and one to pause and talk about all these questions in a thoughtful way.

You know, we really, I think, I agree with Cary that when we talk about civil rights generally, we sometimes think about those in terms of the fight for people of color, LGBTQ, or others, and we forget that people with disabilities and the challenges that they face in the range of things in their life, from just getting around in the areas that Cary has said, to employment issues, to dealing with daily life.

So your question went to my experiences that I have had in working with people with disabilities and being around them. You know, when I was a young child, one of my cousins was born and is disabled, and saw her family grapple with a lot of that, but really it was not until having close friends and trying to understand how the world treated them. When I was in law school, two of my good friends, I had one friend who had a hearing impairment, the other who had a visual impairment. And to see them go through law school, in a way where there were very little sensitivities and nothing but obstacles, impressed upon me that things that I had taken for granted in pursuing the career of my dreams, others could not, and so when I was United States Attorney, when we were doing both how did we

work as an office together, but also in recruiting, making sure that we were including people who were differently abled, and we hired the I think, the first legally blind AUSA in the country, and there was great resistance.

People said: You can't be a lawyer and do all of that. And I rejected that. So I agree, though, that we have to be very conscious. How does the built environment act as obstacles? How -- open meeting, this (pointing) is being captioned live, but that's not what happens in most city government meetings and we need to really work on that. And the only way it happens is to make sure we have people at the table to give us a fair assessment to say when we are not keeping up.

>>KAREN: Thank you very much, ladies. I realize I missed the first step in the process here, was that I was supposed to give you each an opportunity to briefly introduce yourselves. (Laughter.) So, if you would do that, maybe we'll start with you. Just tell us your -- a little bit --

>>JENNY: I'm Jenny Durkan and I'm running for mayor. I'm really glad to be here today and looking forward to having the conversation we're having. We're in a really critical time in Seattle. The city is literally changing before our eyes. And the explosive growth that we're having is felt by all of us. Seattle's not

affordable. There are transportation -- our transportation system is way overburdened and has not kept up with the times. And we have a problem with homelessness in the streets, and we have not lived up to our obligations on race and social justice.

But as we're rebuilding the city and the built environment, I think it's all the more important to be paying attention to the issues we're going to deal with today, because mobility and accessibility is a convenience for some of us, like I am fortunate to be fully body-abled, but it's not a convenience for people. It makes a difference as to whether they can get access to a meeting or a place, whether they can get their groceries or not their groceries, their whole range of services.

So I think that this gives us an opportunity, as we rebuild Seattle, to do it in a way that takes into account those who are not fully able.

>>CARY: All right. I am Cary Moon and I'm running for mayor because I believe in the potential of this great city. I think by working together towards a shared vision of what we can be, a city that's inclusive, that's welcoming, that's creative, that's affordable, and that's committed to the shared prosperity for everyone, we can pull together and become that future city. Right now we are on the wrong track. So I started my campaign not by

listing problems, but by listing solutions.

I put forward a concrete proposal for solutions to housing affordability, to how do we get ahead of the homelessness crisis, to how do we make sure people have access to reliable transit service, and to make sure we tackle the problem of wealth and equality and racial -- we talk about intersectionality.

We talk about compounded oppressions, and I want to recognize that people with disabilities who are also African American, LGBTQ, et cetera, have the worst position in our society, the most marginalized, and so we need to work with you, listen to you, to help solve these problems together. Thanks.

>>KAREN: Great. Thank you very much.

Our next question: The mayor officially speaks for both the government and the community. What are your thoughts on creating a disability equity toolkit to better evaluate the burdens and benefits associated with city programs, policies, budget decisions, and city services, much like the racial equity toolkit has done?

>>JENNY: It's a great -- oops, sorry. You looked at me, so I took that.

I think that's a great idea, and I will say it was not one I thought of until preparing for this, in terms of what do we do as government. And I think that that is

really the way to do. You know, when I was United States Attorney under President Obama, one of the issues we looked at was, the civil rights of the Department of Justice had a pending investigation of the City of Seattle on their compliance with ADA. And so we had to review the initial report which was by that time years and years old and had no action on it. And what stunned me about it was the level of inaccessibility in the city of Seattle.

Everything -- we think of curb cuts, but it's not just curb cuts. It's, how do you get into buildings? How wide are the stalls and toilets? What kind of toilets are there? Is there hearing accessibility? Is the room accessible? Are there -- you know, the list -- it was literally a report this thick on ways the City of Seattle had not complied with the ADA, in the view of the Department of Justice.

So what it says to me as a mayor, is we are making these very important budget decisions going forward on how we build our city as a more just and equitable place and a place that is more affordable.

We have to consciously be thinking of that, so I think that kind of toolkit would be an excellent thing to use.

>>CARY: I agree, it sounds like a fantastic idea and I would definitely work with you to figure out how to

do it.

I know we have a disability coordinator in the city, but that is simply not enough. We have got to be using these tools that you are describing, at every level of government. We have to make sure that all public meetings, especially City Council, have realtime transcription and have ASL folks there to do sign language.

We've got to look at how do we make our government processes more inclusive, and we've got to look at how to make sure all the development that's happening in the city, private development and public, is following the best practices for accessibility in the built environment. We should be looking specifically at public buildings. Maybe we need a design commissioner with expertise in ADA to be on the design commission.

But I think really we need to remember that ADA was a baseline and a starting point and we in Seattle need to be doing so much more.

We need to make sure we're looking at how we invest resources in a way that both -- makes every single aspect of public life in the built environment more accessible and inclusive. And we need to do this at every level of government.

It's one thing to have a commission, which is great, but all those thousands of decisions that get made

every hour in the city need to remember that there are goals we're trying to meet, and standards we're trying to meet, and need to make sure we're allocating resources in a just way, so, absolutely, having a toolkit that is used throughout city government is a great part of the solution.

>>KAREN: Great.

Of the homeless individuals in the 2017 One Night Count, 49% self-identified as having one or more disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires the city to provide accommodations to people with disabilities where they are needed. As mayor, what would you do to ensure that accommodations are made available to people with disabilities living in encampments, related to their rights?

>>CARY: So, I have come out fairly strongly that we need to focus our resources first on providing low barrier shelter, shelters that meet the need of folks who are experiencing homelessness, and create space for them before we invite them to come inside with outreach workers and a social service kind of approach to folks who are sleeping outside. That means we've got to look at how to figure out low barrier shelters that work for people with disabilities, how to do tiny houses in a way that they are accessible to people with disabilities, but fundamentally, let's look at the root causes.

I think, you know, with multiple compounding oppressions, disabled people are more likely to be living in poverty. They are more likely to not graduate from high school. They are more likely to be victims of sexual assault and other violent assault. We absolutely have to make sure we are addressing this bias throughout our whole society, from the police force to the school system, everywhere people with disabilities are, because we've got to make sure that these folks have every opportunity to thrive and prevent them from being pushed into homelessness. It's unconscionable that 49% of homeless people identify with having a disability. It's a multisystemic failure of our society.

Let's solve this problem at the root and invest upstream in social service, anti-bias training, and all the things that disabled young folks need to thrive as they come up through school.

>>JENNY: The question of homelessness as a whole is just heartbreaking, and I think that is one of the statistics in the One Night Count that really should set everyone back on their heels, that we have that many people on the street who self-identify -- because we know that's an under-count -- the amount of people who are willing to identify themselves as having a disability. So we know it's higher than that. And so a couple of things I think

we have to do.

One of the reasons we hear time and time again why government can not drive enough resources to really address issues is because they don't have sufficient data. And we rely on data like the One Night Count, rather than making sure that we are compiling and getting that data as the city does its programming in delivering homeless services and outreach. So it should not be anecdotal. Part of that toolkit, for example, that you have suggested really should be when we do the outreach, assessing whether someone has some kind of disability that either they need additional support for or that might qualify them for services.

A shocking number of people who are living in the state of homelessness, for example, are veterans, veterans who may suffer from PTSD or other types of disabilities. Many times they qualify for support and services and dollars and funding through the Veterans Department, but we don't get it to help them because they don't know and they don't have the capability for applying for that themselves.

So, I think we really need to build and hard-bake into our outreach systems the ability to really reach people with disabilities, see what kind of services they need, and then help and deliver those services in a meaningful way.

And I think the other thing we do have to do is

make sure that our shelter system is adaptive to whatever that range of disabilities might be, so that people have the real ability to get off the street and into both shelter, but then supportive housing. That we have -- we know we need more affordable housing for people who are experiencing homelessness, but we have little housing for people with disabilities.

>>KAREN: Thank you. The Seattle Police Department possesses a database of many citizens' disabilities and mental health diagnoses. Seattle Police Department maintains this will help them de-escalate situations. But at least in the case of Ms. Lyles, it appears to have done the opposite. Do you agree with the use of this database? And if so, how do you get around the security problems addressed by accessing this database on an app? How would you address disabled Seattleites who won't call the police, for fear of having their information added to Seattle Police Department's app?

>>JENNY: So, this is a great question. There are a number of issues that lie in this question. And when I was the United States Attorney and we were deciding how we would go about police reform, one of the issues we looked carefully at is: What kind of data do we collect and when, so we can judge whether police reform is working? And that raises a whole number of both privacy issues, health care

and HIPAA issues, and cyber security issues.

And I think before we move too much further, frankly, we need -- there's been ongoing dialogue between the Community Police Commission, the ACLU, and others, about what data is appropriate for the police to collect and keep, let alone how you store that data and how you access it. The database that exists now is not perfect, for those reasons, because no one -- there's good reasons why people won't want to put a whole health history or mental health history on a database that's accessible by an app on a phone.

So I think that we need to have a better discussion and dialogue about how we have enough information so that when police officers, or fire, and medics, or others are responding to a call, if there is someone that is -- that they respond to has a known health history or mental health history, that they can provide the appropriate tools and maybe call different people to the scene.

And even the database, if you look -- I have only seen the public reports, but knowing how the system is set up, those police actually did not have access to all the information they should have, because the way information is siloed. And what we also saw from that case is I think the terrible, terrible truth that we had a woman who had

been experiencing homelessness, but who got housing, but still had problems that she needed help with. She was suffering from some mental illness issues, she was a single mom, she was a victim of domestic violence, and from the public record, it looks as if the only time she was really connected with services was when she was arrested. And that's just wrong. We have to change that.

>>CARY: I agree with Jenny. It's just wrong. We have to change it.

The database I think is helpful in that it let's the police officers understand who might be in crisis, who is suffering with a mental illness or a disability, but we have to be incredibly careful with privacy around how it is used. So I would make sure, as mayor, that we have a very secure system that can not be accessed via an app, that can not be accessed by anybody outside of the police officers who are responding to the call, to make sure we are protecting the privacy of these folks.

But we need to know who is someone in crisis, so we can show up with an outreach worker, with a social worker, who can help them instead of cops with their hands on their guns. So we absolutely need the data. We just have to use it responsibly.

The deeper change we need to make in the police department is going to keep going for years and years and

years, because we need transformational change in the culture of the organization, and that's going to come through more training and alternatives to use of force, more training in anti-bias and understanding systemic racism, more training in helping people in crisis, and also it's going to mean different staffing.

We need to show up with social workers for a lot of the 911 calls. We need to make sure that we are staffing the police department in a way where they can spend time in community, establishing trust, and building relationships, so they know the folks that they are serving. I did a ride-along a couple weeks ago and was just sort of shocked at how much you feel like you are in a tank, separate, in a military vehicle, separate from the folks you are there to help. And we've got to get cops out of those vehicles, on the street, making connections in communities with people. And then finally -- (Applause.)

Yeah, we need to keep remembering the Community Police Commission is our guide. They asked for change in the police department. They got help from the federal government. They are on-the-ground eyes and ears. They need to be doing oversight. They need to be resourced, and they need to be empowered to guide this transformation ongoing in the police department.

>>KAREN: Thank you. In 2015, City Council passed

Resolution 31641 expressing their intent to accommodate people with hearing disabilities in all city facilities.

The resolution called for an assessment and plan for providing assistive listening technology in all city facilities used for public meetings.

To the best of our knowledge, that assessment never took place.

Will you commit to seeing this through and to incorporating hearing accessibility in all new construction projects and major renovations of existing spaces?

>>CARY: So, yes, I would do the assessment. And we need to pursue this as much as we can throughout how we run city government. We need to remember that we have limited resources and we have to really prioritize the most important investments. So I think we need to start with City Council and all public meetings over a certain size, over 20, 30 people, I don't know the right number, but focus our efforts there, make sure we have full-time staff available. I don't know if it's one person or 25 people who are ready to do sign language, ready to do realtime transcription. I think we need to just commit to: This is a value of ours. This is a priority. And we've got to figure out a way to get the biggest bang for the buck so that the most people feel included and at the table, listening, participating, as we can.

So, yes, and I would look forward to working with you specifically on how to do it, on how to roll it out, on how to implement it in a way that provides the biggest benefit.

>>JENNY: I also would move forward with this and talk to the City Council.

You can see in a very short period of time with forward thinking, you are able here to get realtime transcription. Certainly, a city of our size and sophistication, with the best technical companies in the world here, can do better for public meetings.

(Applause.)

>>KAREN: Great. Thank you very much.

Most of Seattle's downtown and neighborhood business districts lack loading zones for wheelchair accessible vehicles. In some cases, including city hall, there are no safe loading zones for blocks. What would you do to change this?

>>JENNY: I think this is a great question. It's one, actually, that some people from the community have brought to me during the course of this campaign. And again, it's one of those things, until someone tells you about it, if you don't need it, you don't notice it as much. And then when you are told about it, you notice it every time. And so after I had had this conversation and

then I went to city hall, I saw: Here it is, the building that is supposed to represent government and its openness to the people, and it is absolutely inaccessible to many of the people and has not even thought about how to let them in. And the best you could do is to go into the lower garage, which is a nightmare to get in. You have to push the button. If they even open the doors, the parking spaces are usually full. So I think we have to do better here. So I'm committed -- I think it goes back to this toolkit, and to sit down with members from the commission to start, to say: Let's identify those buildings and those spaces that should be the first prioritized, to say how do people arrive and how do we make sure that they are accessible, whether it's wheelchair-accessible or other types of disability.

And I believe, in my bones, that where government does its work has to be open to everybody. And that means really open to everybody. And so whether it's transcriptions, or places where wheelchair-accessible cabs or other vehicles can pull up, we have to make that work.

>>CARY: So yes, but I want to acknowledge my privilege. Able-bodied person, grew up white in America's middle class, and I really was late to understanding how much privilege I have, how many doors have been open for me, how many things have been easy for me, when other

people are struggling with multiple barriers. So I learned a lot around this issue when I was helping both of my elderly parents, who died in the past seven years. They were both in wheelchairs at the end of their life, and walkers for longer than that, realizing just how hostile the built environment is for folks using wheelchairs. So, yes, we need to prioritize these kind of drop-off spaces.

I was on the advisory board for One Center City which was the recent effort to rethink how we use street space in downtown Seattle, and we recognized very quickly that we need to make sidewalks more accessible, more inclusive, safe, and comfortable for folks at all, you know, levels of ability.

We need to make sure we invest in transit and biking, because we know that to accommodate all the trips that are happening in our city, we need to use these modes that have the highest efficiency, basically, the modes that let more people move through our city safely, conveniently, reliably.

But we also realize we need to really rethink how we use curb space, because in this current world, this issue you're talking about, as well as the increase in deliveries, people getting things delivered instead of going out shopping themselves, and the increase in Uber and Lyft and ride services, we need to be careful on how we

allocate the curb space, so we focused a lot of the effort on creating way more drop-off zones on every single block and way less parking, because that's the way our transportation system is moving, and we need to make sure we are designing our streets to accommodate the future.

>>KAREN: Thank you. After a delay of months, coordinated entry has managed to house very few single adults. It is also an extremely complicated system for caseworkers to navigate, yet alone laypersons with disabilities. How will you ensure that people are able to navigate the resources available to them?

>>CARY: So, this is a coordination around people experiencing homelessness and getting access to services, that's what you are referring to?

>>KAREN: Yeah.

>>CARY: Just want to be clear. So, yes, I think that effort was well intentioned for how do we make sure we are not duplicating services, making sure that everybody has access to the same information at the service providers, so that when someone walks in the door, we -- we can learn who they are, what their needs are, and find them the right spot. That is a really good intention.

But the way we developed the system in the city and the county I think missed the mark pretty severely. I think we did not spend enough time with service providers

understanding the intelligence with which they navigate on on their own and ask them for input for how do we make sure what you're doing already, that's working pretty well, is protected, but we give you additional resources and additional tools to be able to do an even better job. So I think we had a fail on that. I don't think we included the service providers in shaping that solution enough.

And then the next part of it is, it's kind of heartbreaking that -- you know, it's fairly traumatic to interview somebody and ask them to tell us everything that's going wrong in your life, everything that is a challenge for you, every single trauma you have been through, and then get to the end of this pretty invasive interview and say, "Yep, there's no housing for you. You're on a waiting list. It might be five years."

I think we have to be really mindful of that and work with folks experiencing homelessness, folks who do need services that they are not getting, and respect their privacy, respect their dignity, and make sure that we are not being overly invasive, that we're interviewing them in a way that feels safe and secure, but also, then, we have services to provide them.

If you make someone go through that level of interview, and then say "Sorry, there's no place for you," it's so demoralizing.

Let's focus on getting the space in very low income and tiny house villages and low barrier shelters, all the things we know they need. Let's focus on that first and not on alienating these folks who are in such desperate need of help.

>>JENNY: This question about coordinated entry is really a gray question. It points up a couple things about the crisis we're facing right now with people experiencing homelessness. Seattle is trying to focus its resources on this issue, but we really need a regional response. We need to partner better with King County.

And as people here may realize or may not realize, the coordinated entry program was designed mostly by King County with King County resources. Had input from the city, but is mostly maintained. And in the way we divide our resources, most of the treatment dollars for homelessness run through the county, so addiction services and mental health treatment go through the county, while the shelter and housing tend to go through the city. We need much more coordination between those two, both to cut inefficiencies and to make sure that as we're moving people out of homelessness, that we're also giving them the support that they need.

So, the coordinated entry system, while having imperfections, which it does, because I have sat with the

people who sit with the people trying to fill out these forms, only to deselect, has many flaws in it, part of it because the very people who are completing that information sometimes suffer from the disabilities that prevent them from completing it either completely or honestly.

So, we need to have a system that is a low barrier system, and we also need to make sure that as we are having these systems, we don't just put it in and then leave it in place. There needs to be a better feedback loop, so that as the people who are actually having to use it, and the social workers, and the mental health workers, and the caseworkers see there are problems. There is a formal way that we are getting their feedback to change the system so it works better for the people.

And time and time again, whatever the topic is, you will see government will roll out these programs that are supposed to make something more efficient, then it just lives on forever or it's just abandoned. And so I think we don't want to abandon it, but I think it needs improvement, and one of the improvements we need to have is the city and county need to work more closely together, and we need to have a formal process for getting feedback to the system so we're really helping the people that it is designed to help.

>>KAREN: So now speaking more about increasing

housing, what building and zoning changes would you propose, to make it easier for people with disabilities to gain access to housing?

>>JENNY: That is a great question. Well, the first thing I would do, before I would say what I would do, is I would sit down with the experts, like you (laughter), and I would say: Okay, let's assess where are we right now. What are the needs and barriers we've had so that we are constructing all these new buildings and affordable housing, low-income housing, and middle income housing. How do we make sure we have enough new housing that really is accessible for people with disabilities? And depending on what the disability is, you may need different types of design features and know what percentage need to be, for example, wheelchair-accessible versus ones that might have to be equipped for those who have either hearing disabilities or sight disabilities.

So I think we need a lot more information about what we have now and its inadequacies, which I know is a large amount, but also from the experts who are at the top of the field in designing for that city of the future, knowing what we need. So if I was mayor, before we decide which zoning and building changes we need immediately, I want to make sure what's working and what we need changed.

But it is clear that we in Seattle are facing an

affordability crisis. People cannot afford to live in this city. And if you are a person with disabilities, it is even worse because the amount of housing that you can even access is much more limited. So as we are building affordable housing, we have to be very conscious that we also add housing for people with disabilities who are locked out by multiple barriers. So I think it's not just building and zoning changes, it's very conscious that as we build whether it's through community land trust, or public housing, or the HALA dollars, we are thinking in terms of all types of people living in the housing.

We have talked in other forums about making sure, for example, we have artist housing and artist lofts, but that's an economic thing. Housing for people with disabilities literally is they either have housing or they don't have housing that works for them, so we have to be much more conscious about it.

>>CARY: So, we need to solve the affordability crisis. I started working on this years ago. I launched my campaign with bold, concrete solutions for affordable housing. It's absolutely a priority.

And one of the people I have met on the campaign trail was a young woman named Kai (phonetic) who has a developmental disability and her mom has a physical disability. They live in housing -- they make \$1200 a

month together, and they live in housing that costs \$900 a month. And she looked me in the eye and she said: We're counting on you. If you don't solve this problem, we are homeless.

And I hold that story in my heart every single day. We need to build a lot more affordable housing, period. We need to get the Housing Trust Fund at the state level back up to 200 million.

We need to look at the over 100 parcels of surplus city-owned land and bring that back into use, either for homeless low barrier shelters, or tiny house villages, or permanent affordable nonprofit or public housing.

We need to tackle the missing middle. There's all these solutions that we could be building in single-family neighborhoods throughout the city that are basically illegal or impossible. And we need to tackle the speculation that is driving up prices in our housing market so unnaturally quickly. Housing market is not supposed to work like this. Our housing prices are rising twice as fast as any other city.

There's something going on that's escalating demand and reducing supply both, and we've got to get deep assessment of that and put in the right disincentives to stop it. Unless we slow the rapid increase, the path is headed to be like Vancouver where no one can afford to buy

a house there.

The specific question: How do we make housing more accessible to more folks?

We need to do a better job with the city with technical assistance. When developers come in with projects, we have to say: Here are best practices to make accessible housing. Here's what we're going to be looking for as a city, and start at the very beginning and not wait until it's too late.

>>KAREN: Thank you.

And I would certainly be happy to talk to both of you, should whichever one gets into office, talk to you more about ways that we can link the housing that is being built with the people who need it.

>>CINDI: She built it.

>>KAREN: We know there are developers building accessible housing in the city. What we are missing is that link between making it -- connecting the people who need that housing type with the housing. So --

>>JENNY: I think she is volunteering. What do you think, Cary?

>>KAREN: (Laughter.)

Our next question. As a parent of an autistic teen, and it being an invisible disability, how would you end police abuse of our mentally ill and atypical

neighbors, especially young people and the disabled?

>>CARY: This is another one of those issues that is heartbreaking, and I think it starts with anti-bias training and a culturally competent police force. We've got to change the culture of the police force, and while we do that, we also have to change who is attracted to these jobs, because right now, because of the way we police, it's attracting folks with certain ways of operating in society. We need to make those folks feel less interested in police jobs and really attract the folks who are culturally competent, who want to serve their communities, who want to help people, and are less interested in guns and the militaristic attitude of it. We have to change who we are attracting into the jobs.

We have to reduce the barriers for folks from communities of color and from other communities so that they can be in community as a constructive force, and we need to do the anti-bias training for folks to -- just for the police officers to feel more accommodating and comfortable around everybody. This goes for also precinct-level management and higher-up management, we've got to shift the whole culture of the police department, because police officers should not be bullies. Period.

(Applause.)

We also need to tackle this in the school system.

I think throughout -- starting from the very early age, we've got to train kids in being welcoming and inclusive and supportive of their community, and this starts from a very early age. It starts pre-K.

We need more culturally competent teachers from the very beginning, through K-12, and we need to focus on a curriculum that where people understand one another and really understand: Oh, okay, he's differently abled. He's a great person. He's not like me, but I respect what he has to offer. And I trust him. And I know how to communicate with him. We have to build that competence in from a very early age. This is how we solve the problem long term.

(Applause.)

>>JENNY: So this question is one that is, I think, such an important one about how police interact with their community, but I would -- I would step it back just a few steps from that and say it's also a question about how we as a society deal larger on these issues. And there is a local journalist who wrote a very heartbreaking but eloquent piece about her older son who is autistic and every once in a while would have episodes. He's very much bigger than her and she -- one time when she was going to have to call the police to respond, and it terrified her because of the interactions that we have seen in other

parts of the country that have gone so devastatingly wrong.

And so in the Seattle Police Department, the good news about this is that when we were doing police reform, when I was United States Attorney and working with civil rights groups in this arena, we did a hard pull of data because we wanted to see where were those times when police officers were using force. What times of day? What shifts? What part of town? And the first response we got back was: "Oh, we don't have any data," which I knew was not true because I knew every time a police officer uses force, they have to fill out a form called A Use of Force form signed by a supervisor. They were but they were putting it in file drawers and shutting it.

We took all of that data for an 18-month period, hired database scientists and statisticians and found some very important facts. The first one was that in that 18-month period, the police force, the vast majority of police officers never used force once. Most people think that force is unavoidable every day for police officers. It's not true. Sometimes force is unavoidable. It's part of being a police officer and it never looks good.

The other thing we found is 70% of the time police officers were using force, they were using it against someone in mental health crisis or under the influence of drugs and alcohol. And that's why I insisted in the

consent decree model that would be based on de-escalation, both policies, trainings, and requirements, so that we could have a model where police de-escalated rather than escalated and be able to help, as you said, when they interact with people who are differently abled.

>>KAREN: Thank you. Our next question is one we've spoken today a lot about, sort of the segregation of services, that different departments might be working on accessibility issues, but not necessarily together. Our next question is: Many cities now have an office, a mayor's office on disability issues to address systemic disability-based issues.

What are your thoughts on having such an office here at the City of Seattle?

>>JENNY: I think it could be a very good idea. And I think, going back to your toolkit question, what we want to have is one unified system, rather than siloed approaches. So I would, again, want to work with the commission and with people in the community to see: What is it we really need? Rather than maybe just create something. And how can we perhaps partner with other commissions.

But the critical thing is that we do have a centralized place where the city is viewing all of the services it delivers on a daily basis, which range from

everything from, you know, garbage to electricity to fire to, you know, the whole ways that we are touching people, that all of those are viewed through the lens of what are we doing for the people in our city who have disabilities and are we serving them right.

>>CARY: So, yeah, I think it's a great idea. I would love Seattle to be a national, if not world, leader on this issue, because we have shared progressive values, we care about one another, we want everyone to thrive, we care about everyone's well-being, and if we can really focus this office that you're talking about on that issue, how can Seattle be a leader, how can we watch what's happening in other cities and adopt best practices throughout our city, how can we make sure we're using this, you know, disabilities toolkit throughout every single level of government and all our decision-making, I would love to see that. I would love -- I would be so proud for Seattle to be a leader in this, because more and more through this campaign, I've understood great ideas come from community and they come from city staff. They very rarely come from the mayor's office, and so we need an office that's ready to listen, learn, coordinate, and implement together, and it sounds like a great model.

>>KAREN: So, as mayor, how will you improve the training of police and first responders so they respond

effectively and respectfully -- respectfully with people with disabilities?

>>CARY: So, I haven't been through that kind of training myself, I'll just own that, but I think it's essentially important. It's part of what we've been talking about. We need the police officers to show up with the right tools, with the right staff. If they need to bring someone who's a social worker, or an outreach worker, or a mental health counselor instead of two police officers, we need to figure out how to do that and we need to do it.

I think the, you know, whatever the best practice training is in the world, I want to make sure we're doing that training in our police department, because I believe working with the police officers towards a shared goal of being the least violent, most skillful police force in the country, we can get them to be part of the solution, but they need training, they need encouragement, and they need the right management structure to become that police force. So I would look to you for what is that training, where is the best training in the world, and how can we make sure we're doing it here.

>>JENNY: So, I think the good news is that the training and policies and procedures have increased greatly in this arena in the last three years, because as part of

the consent decree process, they were looking broadly as to how police officers interact with community, how they recognize when people need a different approach and different assistance.

What I think needs to be done in addition to that is to take that training now and see it through the lens of dealing with people with disabilities specifically, because most of the training was geared toward people who might be experiencing mental health issues or mental health disabilities and recognizing the signs of those in training, and not as much training towards other types of disabilities.

So one of the other good features of the consent decree is it established and created this Community Police Commission, which deals with issues like this, so this is a issue that I as mayor would first look to the Community Police Commission to work broadly in the communities and with your commission to say, "Let's review the training as exists today and see what needs to be improved." And then have a way right now systematically, every time there is a significant force event, it goes back to a committee that looks at it from a mental health and public health lens.

I think we could also add to that lens is: Okay, you were ready for the person who might be in crisis, but you weren't ready for the person who might have this kind

of disability that itself is a different kind of barrier. So I would look first to the Community Police Commission to look at this issue and see if we need to incorporate better training.

>>KAREN: Thank you. Our next question: Do you support funding safe consumption sites?

>>JENNY: Yes. And interestingly, I was in a retirement community earlier and this question came up. And I think there is more support in this city for this than people understand. And the reason I support it is this. Is I was in the front lines of the war on drugs in the early '90s as a criminal defense lawyer, and what we did did not work. And we also were in the middle, in the late '80s and early '90s, of an epidemic of people dying with AIDS and there were other communicable diseases, so we started safe needle exchange programs.

At the same time, there was some of the same dialogue we're having now: You're condoning illegal drug use. You're supporting bad habits. On and on.

So you hear the same dialogues with people now. Some people are surprised. They say, "For a period of time you were the U.S. Attorney. Certainly you must be opposed to this."

I'm not. I think we need a public health response to the addiction opiate crisis we are facing in our

streets. And we have a system where we have proven that needle exchange programs work and save lives, but it makes no sense to then say, "Here's your safe needle. Now go into the park, into the car, into the doorway." You can't walk in downtown Seattle or any park or anyplace without seeing hypodermic needles and syringes.

We have to give people the ability to have a safe place, so that for me there would be two requirements. Number one is it has to be real that there is a health care person there that can protect someone's life and keep them from overdosing.

Second, there has to be someone there that can get them into treatment if they want it. Now, they may not want it the first, fifth, or tenth time, but really, at the end of the day, what we want to do for people that are suffering from addiction is give them a real opportunity to change their lives. And I think that these safe consumption sites or the community health sites are an essential part of harm reduction.

>>CARY: So this is an issue where Jenny and I completely agree. Yes, I support safe consumption sites. Yes, we need to make sure we have medical professionals there with folks. Yes, we need to make sure we have access to addiction treatment right there so when someone comes in, ready to kick the habit, ready to stop using, we are

there with services right now, because if we don't catch them then, it could be months before they come back with the same hope. So I think we really need to focus on implementation because this can be tricky.

We have needle exchanges that work really well in our city. It was controversial when they were first started, but they have figured out the right process to be good neighbors, and we need to make sure that we are relying on that expertise that's been developed in that system and apply it to this.

So that means, you know, communicating with the neighbors, telling them what's coming, committing to keeping people clean and -- sorry -- keeping the neighborhood clean and keeping people safe in the neighborhood around the site, and being really transparent around metrics, measuring what's going on in there, telling the community what's happening inside, and really building trust and transparency and openness with the neighborhood.

Because the resistance to this is mostly based on fear of the unknown. I think we've got to do really excellent community dialogue and public outreach to really make this work.

>>KAREN: Thank you.

Now we have a couple of questions about getting around downtown. Seattle passed a \$20 tax on car

registrations to improve Metro bus service. So Seattle has a huge voice in having accessible tunnel stations, yet often escalators and elevators are out of order. What would you do to improve service?

>>CARY: So, I think, you know, the congestion downtown is incredibly frustrating. The sidewalks that are closed off for construction without any sort of eye toward serving pedestrians. You might have to walk three blocks to get around to go, you know, 20 feet. It's really frustrating the way the city is privileging cars in the way it manages construction projects and not privileging pedestrians. So, I would change that.

Second, I would really look at how do we allocate the street space of downtown to make sure we are making it convenient to take the bus, to ride bikes, to walk, because those are the modes that we have got to be investing in if we are ever going to get ahead of this congestion and accommodate all the trips that people need to take in this busy city and booming economy.

We need to make sure that we're providing specific access for folks with disability to transit stops, so we have to make sure that when we are allocating our \$930 million from Move Seattle and our additional transit services you're talking about here, that we're focusing on serving areas where there are transit-dependent people,

serving areas that are close to schools, serving areas that are close to senior centers, and serving areas where people with disabilities are likely to be there because there's a venue that serves them. We've really got to prioritize how we spend the money and make sure we are serving those most transit-dependent and most marginalized first.

So, I would really look at how we're spending both those pots of money from those two different levies and work with you, make sure we are putting your needs first.

>>JENNY: We have to do a better job. It's an obstacle course downtown. The transit centers are sometimes only accessible by an escalator or elevator that doesn't work and you're basically saying: "We're closed for you. Get yourself to the next station," which can be miles away. And that's unacceptable.

When it comes to those areas that the city has control of, we have to work with those city agencies who are responsible, and there should be an hour-time turnaround for every one of those tickets, because there are not that many bus tunnel entrances and there are not that many places. And we have an obligation to keep them working because it's not just for people with disabilities. It's a safety issue for all of the public. And if we don't, you know, address that, so we should do it for the right reasons and we should also do it for the smart

reasons.

So, I think that for those areas the city controls, we have to come up with a way that those tickets are put in and a timeline that they have to be fixed, and if they are not, they are held accountable for it.

For the ones that are controlled by Metro or Sound Transit, we have to work collaboratively. It's one reason why I think serving on the Sound Transit board is important for the mayor to be able to work with the Sound Transit and the county executive and the county council and say: This is not working. It's in our city. It's not acceptable.

And get with them to have the same system so that when you have those breakdowns, it gets fixed. And fixing it doesn't mean you put an out of order sign on it. Fixing it means you get it working.

>>KAREN: Thank you. Our next question about downtown: Downtown is challenging for lots of people, but especially people with disabilities, because of the hills. People who know the tricks, the tricks, can use elevators and tunnels, but those are only available until 6:00 p.m.

Would you support a policy to keep this vital access open later, even in private business towers?

>>JENNY: You know, I think -- I talked, I think, with Cindy about this. I think it's a really intriguing idea as to whether you could get the same process for

people -- have a process by which perhaps there's a key card or even people on staff later, because it is. If you, for example, want to get from the waterfront up to Fifth Avenue, it's almost impossible because we're a city of hills.

And so I think either having access through the public buildings, or in the interim, if we can't do that, I think there has to be more thought given: Is there some way to have a -- the equivalent of a shuttle service that goes from those areas that are most used, you know, and get people up the hill, particularly in the rain. But at all times of the year. So I would be open to exploring both access, you know, access to building solutions for later hours, but also is there something that we can do that is, um -- that is a longer term solution than that.

>>CARY: As a mom who raised kids downtown, I know all the tricks, because I pushed kids around in a stroller for many years through downtown (laughter) up those hills, and I know where every escalator and every elevator is. So, yeah, I think we should make a map of all the tricks you mentioned and make it really clear for folks who, when you get your crutches because you broke your leg, or when you get a wheelchair for whatever reason, you get given a map of all the routes to get through downtown without having to navigate those steep hills on your own.

And I would really look at how do we enforce longer hours on all the escalators that are in private buildings, because if you're not part of the design community, you might not know that they probably got some sort of density bonus to build that, and it is a public resource, and there are rules about how often it needs to be open, and they are not all following the rules, so I think we need to do full enforcement of the deal that was cut. Whatever they got to build that escalator that's open to the public, make sure they are keeping it open at the hours that they committed to when they got the benefit.

>>KAREN: Thank you. Now I have a change. I have a yes-or-no question for you. So, are you captioning your campaign videos?

>>CARY: No, not yet.

>>JENNY: We're not either. And we should be.

>>KAREN: Okay. All right. On to another question.

What are some key things that we can do to improve voter access for people with disabilities?

>>CARY: I think we have to do translation into multiple languages. I think we need to make sure we're offering materials in video, in audio, and in written form, I think we need to really be more mindful of that, because there is so much barrier to participation in the civic

arena because we are simply not watching out for that.

So, I would absolutely work with your commission and figure out what are the most important things to do, and do it, because you're right, it is important.

We've got to have a much richer civic dialogue where people can express not only their vote, but also participate more richly in civic life. So, yes, we should be doing a lot better at that.

(Applause.)

>>JENNY: I agree with Cary on that. The right to vote is cherished. And it's one of the most powerful rights we have as Americans. And if we are excluding anyone from that right, we are excluding them from a fundamental part of participating in democracy. And even if it is not intentional exclusion, if it's an exclusion because we have not provided the right access, so I think the first thing we want to do -- again, voting usually goes through the county, county elections, is working with them to ensure to see what they are doing.

You know, are we providing enough Braille access? Is there enough for sight-impaired? Is there, you know, looking at it. But then we have to look at the issue of: How do we make it just easier? You know, we have to move to the ability for people to vote in the easiest fashion possible and looking at the broader range of barriers for

voting. So I would want to work with others and make sure that look at what we're doing now, seeing how we have to improve it, but making sure that the right to vote is a real vote, a real right.

>>KAREN: Great. Thank you. Do you think it is acceptable that the Seattle Channel does not provide closed captioning? And if not, what would you do about that as mayor?

>>CINDI: That's a repeat question.

>>JENNY: We talked about captioning generally, not this station specifically.

I would want to look at the Seattle Channel and find out why they don't have that technology in place and how quickly we could get it. Again, it goes to that access issue itself.

And the Seattle Channel exists so that the public can know and understand more about their government and how it operates. So, making sure that that is open to all people in Seattle, regardless of their disability, would be important. So I think that there is coming online, there is relatively less expensive technology that you can retrofit tech with to make sure you can add captioning without having to buy all new equipment. So I would want to find out what we could do to do it, because I think it's important.

>>KAREN: So, one of the things --

>>CARY: One of the things I have been asked is if there are any departments I would cut, and I always say I would cut the mayor's office, because the mayor office has grown probably by 50% in the last four years and it's overstaffed, so I would allocate at least two, maybe four or five staff that have been in the mayor's office towards this issue, to do realtime transcription and to do sign language interpretation, because I believe we need to commit to making all city processes -- city -- the Seattle Channel as well as City Council more accessible to everybody.

I would shift staff towards making that happen.

>>KAREN: Well, thank you very, very much to both of you for participating. It turns out that was our final question.

>>CINDI: And I just got her a water.

(Laughter.)

>>CINDI: Two-minute closing -- one-minute closing.

>>KAREN: We would love to hear from you, one-minute closing statement.

>>JENNY: Go ahead.

>>CARY: So, this has been a great conversation. Yet again, another reminder how much intelligence,

determination, and brilliance there is in this city, that if we can all channel our efforts in the same direction, we can achieve so much. That is the model of my mayor's office I want you to understand I am completely committed to. I want to make sure we are balancing power across race and class and gender and folks with disability in my mayor's office, and in city departmental leadership teams, and in every board and commission, because we've got to listen to folks. We have got to have all the different kinds of intelligence at the table if we're really going to build great solutions.

If you've known me around town for the past 20 years, there's probably something you know about my personality. I have a very soft voice, but I have a strong backbone and I'm not afraid to say difficult things to powerful people.

I think that's the change we need in the leadership in our city right now. We have power held in too few hands. We need to share power and we need a much more inclusive democracy in our city.

I am ready to make that happen and I would love your vote.

Thanks.

(Applause.)

>>JENNY: We are literally rebuilding Seattle.

The city changed overnight in growth, in many ways crushed the old Seattle, and we are building what we look like for the future.

If we squint our eyes a little bit and think about what that city's going to look like for the next generation and what neighborhoods will look like, we want to make sure that it is a city for all people, that it's a city where there is good transit, and around that transit there is housing for everyone, whether it's low income, middle income, or market rate, that it's accessible by walking, or biking, or anybody in a wheelchair, that they can come to transit and walk away.

That the neighborhoods are diverse and have small businesses and those businesses are available, those great arrival spots. That we're a city that has really tackled the tough issues around race and looked at it honestly and realized that not everyone in our city has had a fair opportunity or an equal shot. That not every kid has a school that gives them the same opportunity. We faced it. We've grappled with it. We've changed it. And we have fixed those problems and built that city that really is the leadership that our country craves.

That's the kind of mayor I would like to be. But it can only happen if we're all in it together. And that's why it's been so great to be here today. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>>KAREN: Let's have a round of applause for both
of our candidates.

(Applause.)

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Lisa K. Hutchinson

Certified Realtime Captioner