



2949 Fourth Avenue, S.
Seattle, WA 98134

Phone (206) 767-1150
Fax (206) 768-1848

SPOG Candidate Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below on a separate document and return via e-mail, fax, or U.S. mail. A representative from the Seattle Police Officers' Guild will contact you directly regarding your potential endorsement. For questions, contact SPOG staff Sarah Scott or sscott@seattlepoliceguild.org (206) 767-1150.

Name Richard Conlin

Phone 206-954-2322

Address PO Box 22318

Fax None

Seattle, WA 98122

E-mail conlin2009@gmail.com

Current Position Seattle City Council, Position 2 Candidacy Seattle City Council, Position 2

1. What are three priorities that you will focus on while in office?

Taking care of the basics – public safety, human services, parks, libraries, streets, and utilities. These are the things that City government has to deliver efficiently and effectively in order to have a livable city.

Working towards economic recovery. I created a Committee of the Whole on Economic Recovery, and led the Council through the process of creating a 19 point plan to do what we can to ensure that Seattle is in the forefront of recovery, instead of lagging behind as we have in the past.

Keeping moving on improving our transportation system. With light rail now in operation, we have to keep working to get it extended to Northgate and across the Lake to Bellevue and Redmond while keeping the bus system going and replacing the Viaduct and the 520 bridge. And ensure freight mobility and a good network of bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the City.

2. How do law enforcement concerns/issues fit into your campaign?

Public safety is the number one responsibility of local government. If the City is not safe, then nothing else can be accomplished. While the most visible current problem involves youth violence and gangs, and these are important issues that we must work on, there are a number of other law enforcement concerns that are also significant. I am concerned about our downtown environment, where aggressive panhandling and other problems have created a difficult situation for residents and the hospitality industry. I would like to see officers given the tool of an aggressive panhandling ordinance that the officer can enforce directly. There are other neighborhoods that have hot spots where concentrated efforts may be required to ensure public safety, and I would look to those more expert in law enforcement for guidance in developing any new strategies and tools that would be required to move things in the right direction.

3. In your opinion what is the basic role of city government?

The core task of City government is to foster livable neighborhoods and a thriving economy while protecting and enhancing our natural environment. All of the work that we do should be directed to those goals, and our regulations and budget should be shaped by how effective they are in meeting those objectives.

4. In your view, what are the most serious issues facing law enforcement officers at this time?

Ensuring support from elected officials and the public for their work in carrying out their responsibilities.

Having leadership that creates a strong and effective Department that is organized to meet public safety objectives while ensuring that officers have the support and working conditions that they need.

Creating a long-term strategy that challenges the cycle of youth violence and gang activity and that can be kept in focus even when gang activity diminishes so that we can prevent its reemergence in the future.

Continuing to work on the important issues around domestic violence and ensuring that law enforcement and support for domestic violence victims have adequate funding and are given priority.

5. Describe your knowledge of the police staffing needs in the City of Seattle and should it be a priority issue?

The current plan for increasing the number of officers is premised on having an adequate number of officers to fully implement the new community policing strategy and to effectively manage the transition to the new beat structure and work schedules. That plan should be complete in the near future, unless the economy does not recover and the City's budget problems become more severe. At this point, thanks to the effective management of the budget over the last few years, the City has weathered the storm of the recession with limited direct impacts, and the Rainy Day Fund is likely to provide enough flexibility to manage the 2010 budget without severe cuts.

I am aware of concerns that even this staffing expansion will not be enough to provide for effective law enforcement, but further expansion will have to wait until better budget times, when it can be considered.

6. Describe your feelings about the issue of police accountability and your knowledge of the Office of Professional Accountability?

The City has made great progress on the issue of police accountability, and the system that is in place should work effectively to protect both the public and officers. Seattle's hybrid system has multiple layers and a series of checkpoints – perhaps even more than is necessary. I voted against the original proposal for the OPA Board because, although I believe in a strong accountability system, I was concerned about the issues of overlap and diffused responsibility when an Auditor, OPA Office, and OPA Board all have roles, in addition to the internal investigations and discipline process. The adoption of the 29 point improvement program recommended by the Mayor's panel last year should be the last step in developing lines of

accountability, although I understand that there are still some issues that are not yet implemented. In the future, I would consider streamlining the processes to provide better coordination and a clearer line of authority and responsibility.

7. What changes, if any would you like to see in the Seattle Police Department?

I fully support the implementation of the recent SPOG contract and the changes included that will provide for more efficient deployment of officers to better respond to the hot spots of criminal activity. I would like the new chief to continue to implement a strong community policing system and to build confidence and strong relationships between command staff and officers. I look forward to the continued implementation of the staffing increases that are necessary to provide a more effective response and deployment system for the Department.

8. Specifically what can the city do to combat youth and gang violence?

I support integrated human service and police programs to break the culture of support for gang activity, stop gang recruiting, and ensure that those who engage in criminal activity are brought to justice. The Youth Violence Prevention Initiative must be designed with best practices in mind to attain this goal. We must ensure that police resources are deployed effectively to guarantee that those who break the law will be identified and arrested, and we must also challenge the roots of gang activity by starting with middle schools, preventing youth from becoming gang wannabe's, and ensuring that they have the education resources, employment opportunities, and social support from mentors and organizations that will move them in the right direction.

9. Why do you want our endorsement? Specifically address how you will use it in your campaign.

I very much appreciate the work that the officers in SPOG perform for our City. You are on the frontline in creating and fostering the kind of City that our residents expect and deserve to have – a City where all of our people are safe and can go about their daily lives in confidence that public safety will be preserved and that criminal activity will be dealt with. I would proudly feature your endorsement in my campaign literature and forums throughout the campaign.