



SIERRA
CLUB
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2009 Seattle City Council Questionnaire

Leadership and The Environment

The Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization, with approximately 700,000 members nationwide, 32,000 in Washington State. We work to elect candidates who will lead the fight to protect our communities and the environment.

Candidates supported by the Sierra Club include those who champion protecting our clean air, water, and wild places; speak out against environmentally destructive measures; and work to protect our natural heritage.

1. In a brief personal statement, please respond to the following questions:
 - What is your greatest environmental accomplishment?
 - What environmental issues are your top priorities?
 - On what environmental issues will Seattle lead other West Coast cities, under your tenure? How will you advocate and achieve that goal?
 - How have you publicly engaged on these issues?
 - Where does environmental protection rank in relation to your other City Council priorities?
2. Have your positions ever differed from those of the Sierra Club? If so, please explain.

Seattle is Washington's largest population center, biggest tax revenue generator and the progressive epicenter of Washington. Our city needs a voice to match this prominence that will be heeded in Olympia and heard across the West Coast.

3. As a City Council Member, how will you re-establish the City of Seattle's presence in and value to the decisions of government bodies such as the Washington Legislature, the Governorship and the Port?

Transportation

The **transportation decisions** being made now will affect the shape of our region for decades into the future. Our previous excessive investment in capacity for single occupancy vehicles has caused sprawl, loss of natural places, increased air and water pollution, and released CO₂ and other greenhouse gasses that change the climate, acidify the ocean and alter ecosystems. New research demonstrates that auto-dependent landscapes are also correlated with poor health. Furthermore, cars are an inefficient way to move people and goods, as evidenced by the traffic jams surrounding Puget Sound. If Seattle is to lead the state toward an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050, we must drastically reduce our reliance on single-occupancy vehicle transportation. Sierra Club, therefore, supports implementing a number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction strategies, including increased gasoline taxes, directly taxing VMT, weight-based vehicle fees, and taxes on long-term commuter parking.

1. Will you press Olympia, WSDOT and other entities to analyze greenhouse gas impacts in all major transportation investments? Will you support only those major transportation investments in Seattle that reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
2. Reducing single occupancy VMT is one of the best ways we can reduce our transportation related problems. What are your ideas for reducing VMT?
3. Are you willing to remove parking on major arterials to accommodate Bicycle Right of Way (BRT) lanes? Why or why not?
4. In Seattle, peak hour busses are standing room only and irregular, light rail service is limited and major arteries are clogged with SOV's. How will you address the stretched transit system that Seattle residents face daily? Please discuss your vision, including specific policies such as bus rapid-transit and congestion pricing. How will you realize this vision?

Planning to replace the **Highway 520 Bridge** is underway. Sierra Club supports a solution that expands transit service across Lake Washington and into surrounding areas while protecting adjacent natural areas & neighborhoods. We strongly support variable tolling to reduce congestion and pollution, pay for transit, and reduce VMT. In order to adequately address environmental concerns, the final bridge replacement proposal must:

- a) Protect the Arboretum (e.g. no interchanges that dumps traffic through the Arboretum)
- b) Make transit service integral to the bridge design
- c) Transit operation throughout the day, not just at peak commute periods
- d) Toll both SR 520 and I-90 using variable toll schedules. Revenue above the lowest base toll rate should be used for transit.
- e) Include transit capital investments and operating expenses in the proposal
- f) Design new 520 facilities for ease of conversion to integrated light rail operations in the future
- g) Be mindful of salmon runs in any construction near water especially around the Ship Canal.
- h) Design for the movement of people and goods, not increased vehicle capacity

1. Do you support Sierra Club's goals on 520 reconstruction? If not, how do you differ?
2. Should the 520 replacement bridge accommodate high capacity transit (light rail or bus rapid transit) from day 1?
3. How should increased transit be funded? How can we best protect transit funding when transportation funds are going into the Viaduct's Deep Bore Tunnel?
4. Of the current west-side mediation options (A, K & L) which do you view as the best way forward? ¹ Why?
5. WA Legislature has required the City to weigh in on 520 plans. As a City Council Member, how will you influence the planning & approval process?

The City of Seattle, the WA State Dept. of Transportation and the Business / Civic Stakeholder Committee have worked to find a viable replacement for the **Alaskan Way Viaduct** and identify necessary re-designs to the adjacent street grid. However, the State is moving forward with the Bored Tunnel option. Billions of dollars in critical funds may be spent on untested technology to promote single-occupant vehicle transport in a time of recession, state budget crisis and global climate disruption. Sierra Club considers it crucial that any viaduct solution reduce vehicle miles traveled, enhance alternative transportation modes and implement environmental improvements.

1. What is your view of the State's proposed Deep-Bore Tunnel option?
2. If you hold a negative view of the Tunnel option, what actions will you take to prevent its implementation? If you hold a positive or nuanced view, what actions will you take?

Smart Growth & Land Use

Unregulated development and suburban sprawl poses one of the biggest regional threats to native wildlife (from habitat loss), water quality (from storm water pollution), and climate (from increased VMT). If Seattle continues current land-use practices in the face of population growth, these environmental stresses will reach critical levels. Building compact cities with effective mass transit is the obvious solution. However, increased density raises other issues: Access to affordable housing and support for mixed-income neighborhoods; neighborhood workability and character; access to open spaces and public services.

1. Discuss your vision for reforming Seattle's land use practices. Please consider the following in your answer and take as much space as you need:
 - How do you propose we accomplish both increased density and affordability in city neighborhoods? How can we best foster the creation of mixed-income neighborhoods?
 - How would you resolve objections to increased urban density?
 - How will we integrate land use and transportation planning?
 - Do you support up-zoning districts near transit corridors -- those carrying buses as well as rail -- to allow mixed-use multi-family development? How far back from the lines is this appropriate?
 - How should we expand and maintain progressive transportation infrastructure including: good sidewalks, bike lanes, transit, and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes that encourage walking and transit use?

Puget Sound / Storm Water

Puget Sound is in trouble. The largest contributor of toxics to the Sound is **Stormwater Run-off**. Vehicles release toxic substances from oil leaks, brake linings, and tire wear, including oil, asbestos, copper and zinc. The impervious surfaces of urbanized watershed then carry the pollution as stormwater into Puget Sound without any treatment or filtering.

The **Low Impact Development** (LID) approach to land and stormwater management emphasizes conservation and use of on-site natural features integrated with engineered, small-scale hydrologic controls which mimic natural hydrologic functions. LID design minimizes impervious surfaces, protects/ enhances native vegetation & soils and filters stormwater at its source. The progressive City of Portland has adopted a "Green Streets" policy requiring this natural draining be incorporated into all city re-paving projects.

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is in the process of revising the **Stormwater Code** and Directors' Rules. The three most significant revisions may include: 1) Revising how the Stormwater Code is enforced. 2) Incorporating requirements to install green infrastructure. 3) Changing thresholds and performance standards for development projects.

1. Discuss your vision for reforming Seattle's stormwater management practices. Please consider the following in your answer and take as much space as you need:
 - How would you promote the use of LID to improve hydrologic function to clean urban stormwater? Should Seattle adopt a Portland-like "Green Streets" policy?
 - Options for preventing toxic pollutants (e.g. pesticides, fertilizer, industrial chemicals) from entering Seattle's stormwater. Would you focus on creating toxics reduction incentives or restrictions? Would you focus on increased stormwater retention and decreased flow? Should we treat residential and profit-oriented industrial areas the same?
 - How can we promote the creation of green roofs in Seattle?

- If your ideas would cost money, how would you propose to fund them?
2. Stormwater Code revisions are expected to go into effect before the November elections, but City Council must continue to engage DPD and SPU to strengthen Seattle's approach to stormwater pollution.
 - Will you make natural drainage the default option for all streets undergoing major maintenance?
 - Will you support incorporation of the Green Factor into the multifamily zoning code?
 - Will you reduce or eliminate parking minimums that encourage driving?

The **Puget Sound Partnership** issued the Action Agenda in December 2008 identifying the strategies, policies, and investments we need to make in order to restore Puget Sound to health by 2020.

1. What are three important steps you think the City of Seattle should take to achieve a healthy Puget Sound by 2020?
2. Restoring Puget Sound will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, but will provide an opportunity to create new Green Jobs. In Seattle, how do you think necessary funds should be generated?

Grocery Green Bag Campaign

Seattle uses over 800,000 plastic grocery bags each day. They float beneath the surface, break up into plankton-sized pieces, concentrate toxics and get eaten by fish. Marine life gets poisoned, tangled and their stomachs clogged. Paper grocery bag production pollutes watersheds and transportation of the heavy bags release greenhouse gases. Both types of bags go against Seattle's Zero-Waste initiative and contribute needlessly to climate change and regional pollution.

In 2002, Ireland adopted a plastic bag fee which reduced use by over 90% and prompted a cultural shift away from disposable grocery bag use. "Free" grocery bags externalize the costs of pollution, litter and carbon emissions. But appropriate fees internalize environmental costs and prove to be an effective mechanism to minimize unnecessary waste.

1. Do you support for the Bag Fee & Container ballot measure and will you **publicly** endorse the measure in your City Council Primary Campaign?
2. Please explain the motivation for your answer to the previous question.

Green Buildings & Energy

Buildings contribute over one-third of our nations greenhouse gas emissions. Building energy loss can be reduced with weatherization and other power saving policies. The Sierra Club supports retrofitting existing structures, laying down strict **efficiency standards**, and promoting **intelligent architecture** (e.g. daylighting, efficient fenestration) in new construction.

Mayor's Green Building Task Force is reviewing these issues as it targets an initial efficiency increase of 20% and in January 2009, released draft recommendations.

1. What are your opinions of the GBTF recommendations? As a Councilmember, how do you plan to act in relation to the GBTF?
2. Discuss your vision for reforming Seattle's green building policy. Please consider the following in your answer and take as much space as you need:
 - Should Seattle require a home energy audit at the time of sale?
 - Should city funding be used to establish a public/private weatherization loan pool?

- Should Seattle provide financial incentives for homeowners to weatherize their homes, such as subsidizing the cost of an energy audit or providing rebates for work completed?

Another source of excessive energy waste use in buildings and homes are light fixtures that remain perpetually on. **Light Pollution** affects natural wildlife behavior patterns and research is now studying cumulative adverse affects on people. The progressive city of Flagstaff, AZ has regulated light pollution and become an International Dark Sky City.

1. Would you support a reduction in business building light use, after working hours? How would you effectively implement this (e.g. mandatory actions, incentives, education)?
2. How else would you suggest reducing after work energy consumption?
3. How would you reduce light pollution and energy waste in residential areas?
4. How would you implement light-use reductions in Seattle government buildings?

Seattle City Light

1. As the state's largest publicly owned utility, Seattle City Light (SCL) has an important role in state and regional energy policy. Is SCL doing enough to advocate clean energy standards, efficiency, renewable resources, and climate protection? If not, what else should it be doing?
2. The City has made ambitious commitments to reduce global warming pollution. What will you do to support the achievement of those commitments? How would you respond to a politically attractive rate decrease if such a decrease might jeopardize long term investments in clean energy and climate neutrality? How would you offset the high cost of electricity to low income households?
3. How would you encourage more robust public participation in decision-making on City Light issues from rates to resource planning?

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