

FAPAGOW 2009 Candidate Survey
Seattle City Council

1. What is your vision for the City of Seattle?

My goal is to keep Seattle stable and moving forward in these challenging times. As Council President, I led my colleagues in creating and carrying out an action plan for Seattle, based on our principles of economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, social justice, and community. I want to continue this work – and keep the Council connected and accountable to the public. I am convinced that we can work together to strengthen neighborhoods, foster economic recovery from the current crisis, and make Seattle a leader in becoming a more sustainable city in our fragile world.

I will continue to be a strong leader and to deliver results. In the next four years, I want to:

- Bring Seattle back to economic health, ensure that those who are left out and left behind have the human services they need, support local business and our regional economy, and protect Seattle's environment through holistic and creative solutions to environmental issues. That is the blueprint for a sustainable future for Seattle.
- Continue to implement our neighborhood plans, growth management strategies, and transportation choices that make Seattle a safe place to walk and bicycle.
- Keep our communities safe and healthy, by supporting our parks and libraries, working for better public health, housing, education, and human services, and ensuring that our police and firefighters have the support they need.
- Continue my regional leadership work, on the Sound Transit Board to get light rail to Northgate and across Lake Washington to the Eastside, to keep moving on the Viaduct and bridge replacements, and for salmon recovery and the health of Puget Sound.
- Restore faith in government by listening and responding to citizens, valuing and supporting our diverse communities, and preserving open, accountable government and a City Council that develops superb public policy to keep Seattle vibrant, functioning, and resilient.

2. What are the top 3 goals that you wish to accomplish in your tenure?

1. Economic recovery – use City resources to stimulate the economy, maintain human services, work with small businesses on a Buy Local campaign, and prepare the ground for Seattle's leadership in the next economy – the green economy.
2. Transportation – keep light rail projects moving as we build University Link, start work on light rail to the Eastside, and begin planning for the extension to Northgate and beyond; implement Seattle's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans, and make sure that road projects like SR 520 emphasize transit connectivity and environmental responsibility.
3. Hunger and food policy – Implement the Local Food Action Initiative to ensure that Farmers Markets are supported, expand community gardens and other local food-growing options, protect farmland through the transfer of development rights, promote local and organic food and work against child obesity, and bring together public and private efforts around hunger and malnutrition into a coordinated strategy to end hunger in Seattle, as announced in a joint news conference with United Way on April 24.

3. What is your opinion on the replacement of the viaduct?

I support the Bored Tunnel project to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct. While I personally believe that the surface transit alternative could have been successful, the tunnel liberates the waterfront and handles transportation, and a decision has been made and it is time to move on into implementation.

4. What strategies would you offer to generate revenue without raising property taxes further?

I do not see the need for any additional sources of revenues for the foreseeable future. Because Seattle was careful during the last good times, and put away \$30 million in a rainy day fund and spent other revenues on one-time investments rather than creating a bow wave of unsustainable ongoing expenditures, we are well-positioned to withstand this recession, if recovery begins by next year. Setting public safety and human services as our priorities, we can continue to sustain vital services while cutting or postponing things such as fleet replacement, major maintenance, and secondary programs. However, we should take advantage of this crisis to take a tough look at how our budget can be made more efficient, lean, and cost-effective, and the Council will be doing outcome-oriented reviews of major elements of the budget in order to ensure our long-range financial health.

5. What are you going to do to mitigate funding reduction for social, health and human services?

I have worked with my colleagues and the Mayor to ensure that uniformed public safety personnel and human services programs are protected in the 2010 budget, and I am pleased that the Mayor's budget reflects this commitment. I am confident that we can maintain these programs in the City budget in 2010, and I will continue to treat them as priorities in future years. The real challenges will be at the state and county levels, and I will support efforts to keep those levels of government committed to these issues as well, but I am less sanguine about our abilities to do that.

6. In light of federal cuts to youth programs, how do you see the City alleviating urban issues?

I am hopeful that the new Administration will restore such cuts. I am committed to ensuring that the City fully funds youth programs and addresses urban issues through our budget process.

7. What strategy would you offer to maintain civil rights while implementing homeland security requirements?

I support maintaining the current Seattle policy concerning inquiries about immigration status. Local governments should not be enforcing immigration laws. Our police should not be placed in a position of authority over an issue that is not within their jurisdiction. Requiring local police to deal with these issues may ultimately increase crimes, as immigrants, even those legally in the country, may be afraid to call for police assistance for fear of this leading to an immigration problem. This is one example where local government can take a strong stand in favor of civil rights. We must continue to ensure that our civil rights are respected as we design sophisticated and effective systems to address homeland security, and I believe that the Seattle City government is well-positioned to do that effectively.

8. What have you done or what are you going to do to increase the participation of minority and women business in government contracting?

I have always been committed to strong participation by WMBE contractors in contracting for the City, and have recently been appointed to the Sound Transit Board, where I can make similar contributions. I have supported WMBE preferences and goals, special outreach procedures, and other mechanisms that would make it possible for contractors to fully participate in contracting. I will continue to both actively monitor and proactively advocate for WMBE contracting preferences and to ensure that contracts are distributed on an equitable basis.

A key strategy to strengthen WMBE businesses is to effectively use community based institutions such as Impact Capital and Community Capital, and provide funding from federal stimulus funds for small business assistance. I will work with other organizations that represent ethnic minority neighborhoods to design programs through the City's Office for Economic Development to ensure that communities have the opportunity to identify their own needs and the most effective ways to meet them. I also support micro-lending programs that will help the smallest businesses to get started, and have sponsored legislation to increase the threshold for the city's Business and Occupations Tax to exempt small businesses from the City's tax.

9. What are you going to do to strengthen and demonstrate your commitment to affirmative action?

Under current Washington law, public agencies are not allowed to formally engage in affirmative action programs. I will continue to support, advocate for, and sponsor personnel actions and policies that will increase the number of minorities employed in government entities. I will also continue to support programs that increase the ability of minority populations to compete for employment, such as the City's small grants program for technology access (I led the successful effort to increase funding by 30% in the 2009 budget). And I will work with the School District and Community College network to coordinate City services with educational institutions and provide city support and assistance to help the School District improve the performance of Seattle Schools.

10. What City initiatives would you create to help minority business development in the area?

In addition to the strategies noted in the previous answer, I will work to continue to fund programs like the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund to support small business development in that area (I sponsored and moved through the Council the legislation that funded the RVCDF in 2002).

11. What kind of collaborative work would you initiate to have the city engage our communities more?

I am actively engaged in developing strategies to increase the outreach efforts for City programs and services, in coordination with community based organizations that can guide City involvement in reaching diverse communities. These strategies will be part of the City Council's program on Open Government, which I launched early this year and which has a major focus on connecting the City Council to populations that do not often participate in City government.

12. How does the Filipino community fit in your vision?

I played a lead role in securing funding for the renovation and expansion of the Filipino Community Center, in partnership with Councilmember David Della. I have a long history of commitment and effective work to support the Filipino community, from advocating for appropriate treatment for Filipino veterans of World War II to supporting culturally sensitive services through programs like ACRS and ICHS, whose Director, Teresita Batayola, is on my campaign Steering Committee. I have a deep respect for the contributions of the Filipino community to Seattle, support the continuation of our Sister City partnership with Cebu City, and look forward to continuing work with the community in my next term.

13. What else would you like us to consider about you in our endorsement process?

I've demonstrated my ability to be innovative and responsive. I've made decisions that affect many lives – about public safety, transportation, health care, and education. I've been willing to make tough choices, to take votes based on what I believe in -- and to stand up for the people of Seattle. My experience and effectiveness has brought me a wide range of endorsements:

- King County Democrats and all Seattle Democratic Legislative Districts;
- Recommended by the Alki Foundation of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Endorsed by the Seattle Fire Fighters Union and the Seattle Police Officers Guild
- Endorsed by the King County Labor Council and all SEIU Locals
- Endorsed by the Sierra Club and Washington Conservation Voters
- Rated 'Outstanding' by the Municipal League

I have the support of leaders in Seattle's minority communities, like Councilmember Bruce Harrell and Larry Gossett, Representatives Eric Pettigrew, Phyllis Guttierrez Kenney, and Bob Hasegawa, 'Uncle Bob' Santos, Vicki Asakura, Maria and Teresita Batayola, Ruth Woo, Bettie Luke, and David Okimoto. I very much appreciated the support of FAPAGOW in my 2005 campaign, and would very much value your support again in 2009.