

THE ALKI FOUNDATION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES 2009

Councilmember Richard Conlin

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1. Why are you running for office?

Seattle works best when we work together. I have the experience, the commitment, and the knowledge to ensure that the Council makes a real difference in people's lives. We can strengthen neighborhoods, foster economic recovery from the current crisis, and make Seattle a more sustainable city in our fragile world.

2. In the past year King County has lost 20,000 jobs and the unemployment rate has risen from under four percent to eight percent. What are three specific actions that you, as an elected official for the City would pursue in the first year after your election to help reverse this trend and create a job-growing economy?
 - a. Create a one-stop service point as part of the reorganization of the Office of Economic Development. This would mean identifying adequate numbers of staff members as business advocates, and empowering them to work with businesses on both permitting and on effectively gaining access to City programs and resources.
 - b. Cap the head tax at the 2008 level and increase the B&O tax exemption to \$100,000. I hope to be able to do this in 2009, but will pursue it in 2010 if we don't achieve it this year.
 - c. Commit to a full 'competitiveness review' of how the City's taxes and fees compare to others and commit to a cautious approach to future tax and fee proposals.
3. As the economy has faltered, tax revenue has fallen on all levels of government, requiring cuts to government services and/or increased revenue to balance the budget. Where would you suggest the cuts take place? Do you support seeking additional revenue, and if so, where would you suggest looking for revenue?

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.

4. From your interactions with the business community, what would you say are its two most pressing issues? How would you address them?

Creating a positive business climate. In order to foster this, the City should bring the business community into initial discussions of policy issues that will directly impact the business community, such as utility infrastructure and major transportation project planning. The business community has often not had its input sought early enough to have a significant impact on policy and project development. When the DSA and/or Chamber have concerns about such issues, I will advocate for the business community's direct access to high level department personnel.

The City should also review permitting processes, regulatory requirements, and our budgets, to be more responsive and take a proactive stance towards economic development.

Controlling the costs that businesses pay for city services. I support capping the head tax and ultimately repealing it, keeping utility costs under control and not raising rates for the 2009-2010 time period, and reviewing other costs and taxes when and as possible.

5. In what areas has the government worked best with the business community? In what areas has the government not worked well with business?

The most successful government-business interactions have come in promoting mass transit and moving forward on major transportation investments, working on affordable housing and public safety, and promoting a healthy downtown through effective zoning and land use policies.

The least successful interactions have often involved what are perceived to be arbitrary and sometimes counterproductive actions that are taken without consulting the business community. This includes the long delays in acting on reasonable requests – such as the rezones in the Interbay neighborhood – as well as new policies that may include some consultation but end in proposals that include elements that come as a surprise to the business community. Examples of this were the proposals around incentive zoning or the preservation of industrial lands, both laudable goals, but the devil is in the details. The best way to prevent this is to fully engage, take the time to understand and communicate, operate in public with complete transparency, and take decisions in a timely manner.

6. Please list some of your key endorsements.

To date: Sierra Club, Seattle-King County Realtors, IFTPE Local 17, IUOE Local 609, 11th District Democrats, BUILD

7. What is your fundraising goal and how much have you raised to date?

Goal is \$180000, to date have raised \$75000

8. Why should the Alki Foundation recommend you?

I have been an effective, thoughtful, and responsive leader on the Council who has listened to the business community and delivered on many important issues. I pledge to continue to do so in my next term. One of my most important strengths is my ability to bring sides that are in conflict together and develop win-win solutions. I also have the institutional knowledge of the intricacies of legislative issues that directly affect the business community. I understand how important it is to carefully craft not just the major elements, but the detailed components of legislation. My experience on the council working on major transportation and utility issues has underscored my commitment to bringing all sides together to work toward solutions by carefully examining the impacts of policy decisions in order to avoid unintended consequences. Examples include the successful forging of a compromise around Northgate development, getting the neighborhood plans adopted, and moving forward decision-making on transportation projects, including creating the framework for making decisions on the Alaskan Way Viaduct after the disastrous voter referendum in the spring of 2007. A list of my major accomplishments since my last election is attached.