



**Our Mission: "To champion a healthy, vibrant urban core."**

## **2009 City Council Candidate Questionnaire**

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### **CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

#### General:

1. Do you believe the City of Seattle's relationship with the State Legislature is strained? If so, how would you improve relations between the City, legislative leadership and the Seattle delegation? Yes. The City needs to build stronger relationships with our legislative delegation. This means not just asking them to support our initiatives, but partnering with them on mutual priorities and developing stronger connections and ties with them on a regular basis, not just at the beginning of the session. Recognizing that there are differences of perspective and interest between Seattle and non-Seattle legislators, Seattle needs to sit down with non-Seattle legislators and leaders and work to develop rapport and mutual understanding – which will include Seattle support for their priorities in developing a common agenda.
2. Data from the Puget Sound Regional Council shows that between 2000 and 2006, the City of Seattle experienced a net loss in jobs, while major suburban cities in King County experienced employment growth. What do you believe is the cause of this trend and does it concern you? Employers have found that they experience a more business-friendly climate in other locations. That concerns me, and it is why I have endorsed a major initiative to examine and improve Seattle's business climate as part of my Economic Recovery Strategy.
3. If a member of your family was considering moving to Seattle, would you recommend they consider living in a neighborhood in the Center City? Why or why not? Absolutely. In fact, I look forward to moving to the Center City myself at some point in my trajectory. Seattle's Center City is a great place to live, with excellent housing, employment, recreation, and cultural opportunities. It has good connections to other places, and will have even better ones when light rail is fully implemented. There are still issues that need work, such as public safety, getting a public school into the Center City, and developing more open space (such as on the Waterfront) and a

community center (for Belltown and the Denny Triangle), but we are working hard to move the Center City in the right direction, and I am committed to continuing that effort.

Transportation and Access: The success and vitality of the Center City is dependent on a reliable transportation system that provides a wide range of alternatives for commuters, residents and visitors to access and move through downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Urban cores across the country that have robust transit systems will maintain a competitive economic advantage over places that do not. When implementing any transportation project in a highly dense urban area, the impacts on the urban form - whether from a new light rail line or a new or improved road - must be considered so that the end result achieves the transportation objective while maintaining livability and quality of life.

1. Eight years after the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake, the state legislature overwhelmingly voted to approve the replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct with a bored tunnel. Do you support the Bored Tunnel project to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct? Yes. 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.
2. What is your vision for how the waterfront (from the properties along the eastside of Western Ave to the edge of the piers, between Yesler and the Pike Street hill climb) should be programmed and what process would you employ to select a design and development approach? This should become a great and lively urban park, with many different opportunities for enjoyment and recreation and a variety of amenities (such as restaurants and other activity centers) that will activate the waterfront and ensure public safety. We should get there via a carefully designed public process that builds on the planning that has already been done, adjusts it to the reality of the selected transportation alternative, and moves steadily towards final decisions without getting bogged down.
3. The Bored Tunnel project requires new transit service in the SR 99 corridor, completion of Mercer Street, widening of the Spokane Street viaduct and a new off-ramp from Spokane Street to ensure mobility for people and for freight. Do you support these proposed improvements and do you believe they are essential to maintain mobility for people and goods to, within and through the Center City? Yes.
4. The removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct will eliminate several hundred existing parking spaces under the existing viaduct. As part of the Bored Tunnel agreement, the city has proposed constructing a new parking structure that could accommodate at least 300 vehicles to mitigate the loss of short-term parking. Do you support this investment? I would prefer that this investment be done as a private venture or a public-private partnership. I am open to City involvement, but believe that an exclusively city-owned facility would be the last resort.
5. Do you support tolling highways within the Puget Sound region? If so, what should the toll revenues be used for? Yes. For transportation improvements such as the SR 520 replacement project, bicycle and pedestrian connections to intermodal facilities, expansion of the streetcar system, and to create a permanent maintenance and improvement fund that will avoid having critical

transportation infrastructure projects dependent on finding new resources that may be limited in the future.

Urban Environment: The DSA is a strong advocate for clean, safe and attractive public spaces for everyone in the Center City. We support the implementation of best practices to reduce street disorder and reduce the number of people living on the streets, suffering from substance abuse and battling mental illness. The Center City is home to the King County jail, over 150 human services providers, a significant percentage of affordable housing and emergency service centers. These facilities provide important public safety, health and human services and also require unique strategies to ensure they help create a positive urban environment.

1. Currently, Seattle trails many of its peer cities when it comes to the number of uniformed police officers per capita. The neighborhood policing plan calls for the hiring of 154 new officers over the course of several years. The City's 2009-2010 budget called for the hiring of approximately 40 new officers. Will you support full implementation of the neighborhood policing plan and the hiring of 105 new uniformed officers through 2012? Yes
2. A recent Journal of the American Medical Association study concluded the 1811 Eastlake housing for chronic alcoholics has saved tax payers \$4 million in avoided emergency service costs during the first year of operations. Do you believe the 1811 Eastlake housing project is an effective and appropriate model to deal with chronic alcoholics in our community? Very much so, and I would like to see additional creative ways of managing these kinds of intractable human service issues developed.
3. DSA members and residents are voicing significant concerns over the level of street disorder in public spaces in Downtown. This includes drug and alcohol use, loitering, panhandling and aggressive solicitation in parks and on sidewalks. What strategies would you propose to reduce street disorder in public spaces in the Center City? The key is enforcement of existing ordinances, which will require coordination of the work of the Council, the City Attorney, and the Police to enforce aggressive panhandling, parks exclusion, and similar ordinances. City officials should meet with advocates for the homeless population to clarify the City's mandated, consistent protocols to address the aggressive panhandling problem, and make the case that this is not about homelessness, but about inappropriate social behavior. In places like Westlake, people loitering may appear threatening, but often no crime is being committed, and police intervention is not possible. One way to address this might be to enact a no smoking ordinance for certain dense gathering areas of downtown. This would promote public health, create a more people-friendly atmosphere, and simultaneously address some of the loitering behavior. These type of actions must be complemented with assertive human services programs, which identify the needs of people and implement creative ways to get them off the street (the 1811 Eastlake model). The city should also review the effectiveness of the Alcohol Impact Area, and determine whether there are additional steps that can be taken to address problems through this mechanism.
4. Many of downtown's streetscapes (sidewalks and other areas within the public realm) lack planters, trees, street furniture and other amenities that are necessary to create high quality public spaces and a positive pedestrian experience. Other cities (see Michigan Avenue in Chicago) have made direct investments in capital improvements, such as new planting strips, planter

boxes, trees and green spaces and partnered with other entities, such as business improvement districts (BID's), to cover maintenance costs. Will you prioritize city investment in improved streetscapes within business/retail districts? Yes. I have championed the Growing Vine Street improvements as well as the Green Streets projects, which are great examples of such streetscape improvements.

5. The City of Everett just announced a plan to spend up to \$8 million on pedestrian and streetscape improvements in their downtown, funded by parking meter revenue. Other cities across the country have adopted similar models. Do you support dedicating a portion of the city's parking meter revenue (payments and/or fines) collected within the Center City to streetscape improvements within the Center City (and replicating this model in other neighborhoods)? And would you support selected advertising in the public right-of-way to fund such improvements? I am very chary of the idea of dedicating parking meter revenue to specific purposes. If the purpose is a good one, the City should spend the money from the general fund budget to implement it, without setting up a system that could have unanticipated consequences. I support dedicating advertising revenue, and believe that is a very creative alternative.
6. Do you support the concept of "Good Neighbor Agreements?" Yes.

Smart Growth and Economic Development: The future vitality of the Center City is dependent upon new housing that is served by frequent and reliable transit, competitive tax rates, abundant green space and high quality public spaces.

1. What should be the Office of Economic Development's top priority for the next five years? Supporting the retention of existing businesses and attracting new businesses by becoming a one-stop resource center for businesses to use when they contact the City. In this model, OED would facilitate access to information, programs, and technical assistance such as information about federal loan programs (CDBG loans, micro-enterprise loans, etc.), existing City department programs that encourage energy conservation, run-off reduction and solid waste disposal reduction through rebates, incentives, and facility planning/design advice.
2. Do you support the proposed expansion of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center? Yes
3. Do you support additional investment in infrastructure improvements (including energy and transportation) to grow the Life Sciences sector in the Center City? Yes
4. Do you believe community benefit agreements are an appropriate condition on development projects? Land use decisions should not -- and generally legally cannot -- be conditioned on community benefits agreements. Voluntary community benefit agreements are a great way to bring together developers and communities and ensure successful projects. Negotiated community benefits agreements can be incorporated into discretionary City decisions, such as street vacations, under appropriate circumstances.
5. Will you initiate reconsideration of the city's 2008 citywide incentive zoning decision? Would you support examining incentive zoning policies on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis in conjunction with action on legislative

rezones vs. adopting one policy citywide prior to consideration of legislative rezones? I do not support revisiting the 2008 incentive zoning decision, but I believe that there is enough flexibility in this decision to support specific provisions that vary neighborhood by neighborhood, and I support taking into account the needs and opportunities in each neighborhood as incentive zoning is applied.

6. South Lake Union and South Downtown are two key neighborhoods in the Center City that are subject to legislative rezones that could come before the City Council within the next few years. What is your vision for the rezone of South Downtown and South Lake Union with regard to additional height and density? These are both excellent opportunities for increased employment and housing, and I support rezoning. Specifically, I support the proposed North Lot legislation in Pioneer Square, and would support additional rezones that have the same elements of compatibility with the historic character of Pioneer Square. The City has committed to developing South Lake Union as an Urban Center, and I support legislation that would create additional height and density that would realize that vision.
7. Significant height and density around new light rail transit stations is important to providing affordable, close-in housing for citizens working in Downtown and is critical to ensuring that the City and region maximizes its investment in light rail. What is your vision for rezones of areas surrounding light rail stations, particularly in South Seattle? Transportation and land use must be integrated if we are to make good use of our transit options and keep our growth management commitments. I moved the first legislation through the Council that created Station Area Plans for increased housing and job development. I retrospect, these plans need updating as they do not take adequate advantage of the transit opportunities, and I support proceeding with the updating process to provide for additional housing and employment. As with the original neighborhood plans, these updates must be done in consultation with the affected communities, and should be done in conjunction with the neighborhood plan updates. The updates must include amenities that the communities will need to make the increased densities also livable communities.
8. How will you spur creation of more workforce housing in close proximity to the Center City? Through incentive zoning and cutting costs of development so that there is a greater opportunity for developers to build workforce housing and still make a profit. I would like to see a cost reduction alternative to incentive zoning, which would commit the City to specific steps such as expedited permitting that would reduce the cost of development, in return for which the developer could commit to reducing the cost of the housing.
9. Will you support elimination of the employee head tax? Yes, I am introducing legislation to repeal it.
10. Will you support a code change to extend the current lifespan of Master Use Permits so that once economic conditions normalize commercial and residential projects are not forced to resubmit applications for MUP's that may have expired? Yes, I have included that in my Economic Renewal Strategy, and the Council is currently considering legislation for this purpose.