



2009 Seattle and King County Candidate Questionnaire

Seattle Parks Foundation improves, expands, and creates parks and green spaces, building a more vibrant community. As an independent 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization, we are interested in how our city's parks and green spaces are managed, funded, and supported by local and regional governments. Since 2001 we have completed 28 projects and raised over \$28 million, and successfully advocated for nearly \$200 million in public funding for parks, trails, and green spaces in Seattle and King County.

As a candidate for a local office, we seek your positions on issues relevant to parks and green spaces in Seattle. While the Parks Foundation does not endorse candidates, it is in the interests of our Board of Directors and organization to know where candidates stand on the issues pertinent to our mission. Answers will be made available to the public.

Please take a few moments to fill out the questionnaire below and return by July 21th to Todd Burley at todd@seattleparksfoundation.org or Seattle Parks Foundation, 860 Terry Ave N, Seattle, WA 98109.

Thank you for taking the time to provide more insight into your campaign during this busy season.

1. What are your priorities, especially as they relate to parks and green spaces in Seattle?
 - Ensure effective implementation of the Parks for All Levy.
 - Identify and support adequate funding for operations and maintenance of Seattle Parks in the face of difficult budget challenges.
 - Work with the Superintendent, Parks Board, and Parks Foundation to identify future challenges and opportunities for parks acquisition and development.
 - Develop a great downtown parks system, including improving safety and activating existing parks, creating a great waterfront park when the viaduct comes down, and implementing the Bell Street boulevard plan and other green streets-like projects.
 - Provide athletic facilities and other opportunities that support active recreation and healthy life styles.
 - Use community centers as opportunities to promote local healthy food choices by supporting teaching gardens and healthy food choices to complement recreation opportunities.
 - Secure additional funding and a coordinated approach to environmental education.
 - Improve the quality of our trail system and the health of our natural areas and greenbelts by better tree maintenance -- strengthen partnerships with private organizations and non-profits to assist with maintenance.
 - Keep the zoo and aquarium in good financial condition and increase their focus on environmental education and stewardship along with species survival.
 - Support effective staffing and good working conditions for parks employees.
 - Increase the number and effectiveness of volunteer opportunities in the Parks Department.
 - Implement the Parks Strategic Action Plan.

These are a lot of priorities, but all of them are important to the people of Seattle, and I believe that the work we do in parks and open space is one of the most important ways that city government can provide great opportunities to our residents, protect and enhance our natural environment, and support growth management by ensuring that our increasing urban population lives in healthy and livable communities.

2. What do you see as the main issues facing Seattle's parks and green spaces, and what is one innovative idea or change you think would help address these issues?

While all of the above priorities are issues that merit work, the critical issue for Parks in the near future will be finding the budget resources to operate and maintain existing facilities and parks and to

manage the new parks, open spaces, and facilities that will come on line as a result of the Parks for All Levy. All this will have to be accomplished in the face of a challenging City budget situation and a perception among many decision makers that Parks is not a high budget priority, despite being the only City service called out for a specific dedicated amount of funding in the City Charter.

Maintenance and operations issues were key concerns in designing the Parks for All Levy, and that proposal was carefully drawn up to invest in renovations and improvements that will actually reduce future operating costs and to carefully select other projects with operating costs in mind. As a result, the Levy will have a much smaller impact on the Parks operating budget than the Pro Parks Levy did.

Nonetheless, the Parks operating budget will be increasingly stressed, particularly in the 2010-2012 period when the impact of the recession on the City budget will be greatest. With limited opportunities for additional funds, and cuts likely, the City Council is developing a new approach to realizing efficiencies in City budgets, performance oriented budgeting. The goal is to identify specific outcomes and match budget allocations to those outcomes, instead of assuming that next year's budget is simply this year's plus cost increases and new programs. In 2008, the Council pioneered this approach on a small Department and was able to realize significant savings without major service reductions. In 2009, we will apply this approach to the Parks and Human Services Departments, and continue on to all large Departments in future years.

While this is a difficult exercise to do fairly and effectively, this kind of approach has the potential to realize significant savings in current operations by streamlining operations and eliminating duplicated services and management layers. The challenge will be to carry it out with respect for the wisdom and experience of employees and with careful attention to avoid unexpected consequences and harm to important services. In the 2010 budget, we hope to be able to realize some savings in the Parks Department that will cushion the expected budget blow – in future years, savings in other areas of the City can potentially assist in ensuring that Parks does have adequate resources to carry out its mission.

3. How would you help preserve public funding for maintenance, improvements and additions to parks and green spaces in Seattle?

Commitment is the key word. Parks must be seen as a priority. With that as a basic framework, then effective stewardship of the budget and careful attention to balancing the needs of Parks with other critical services will, hopefully, enable us to continue to have a Parks Department that is innovative, resourceful, and meets the needs and aspirations of the people of Seattle.

4. What is your vision for Seattle's central waterfront?

We have an extraordinary opportunity to create a wonderful and active urban space that will be Seattle's front door to the world. I will strive for a great green space that is balanced with excellent urban design and facilities and programs that ensure that the space is active and safe. I want people to be able to touch the water and enjoy Elliott Bay, and to have a seawall that is well-integrated with the open space and provides appropriate ecological space for migrating salmon and restoration of a healthy ecosystem in the nearshore. The connection with the water must be based on sound science and careful design. Connections to the Market and other upland areas should provide maximum pedestrian access, good vistas, and well-used green spaces. All of this should be developed based on the significant visioning and design work that has already taken place and with full and effective participation of the public and key interests, and with a carefully designed stakeholder process that has a clear mission and timeline to ensure that decisions are made and implemented.

5. Please describe any work you've done – professional, political or volunteer – related to parks.

As a Councilmember, I have made Parks an important part of my work, have served on the Parks Committee, played a major role in developing the Pro Parks Levy, and was one of the key players in ensuring that the Parks for All Levy was created and moved to the ballot and ultimate approval. My

commitment is based on my experience and background as an environmental educator and organizer, which includes:

- directing Seattle YMCA Earth Service Corps;
- co-founding Sustainable Seattle;
- being a founding Board member of Bike Works and the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance;
- serving on the Discovery Park Advisory Council;
- being involved in numerous volunteer activities such as the Neighborhood Matching Fund projects to renovate the Madrona Playfield, creek stewardship work in Carkeek Park and Thornton Creek, and environmental education to reduce pesticide use (including creating the first King County Household Hazardous Waste Round-Ups and founding and directing the Master Home Environmentalist program); and
- being a volunteer soccer referee and baseball coach for my children's teams.

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