

Friends of Seattle

- Endorsement Questionnaire -

INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Friends of Seattle's Mission

Friends of Seattle is a civic organization for a new generation and a new future. We are a community of ordinary people uniting to make Seattle the green, urban city we need. Our mission is to be courageous when no one else will. We have fun, but our work is serious: to hold our elected officials, civic leaders, and fellow citizens accountable to a principled vision for Seattle, which we call progressive urbanism. We propose policy reforms, lobby elected officials, and endorse candidates for office.

To learn more about Friends of Seattle, visit www.friendsofseattle.org.

Friends of Seattle's Past Endorsements

In 2007, Friends of Seattle endorsed “no” and “no” on the March advisory vote for the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement. That fall, we endorsed Tim Burgess, Sally Clark, Jean Godden, Bruce Harrell, and Tom Rasmussen for City Council. Last year, we endorsed the Parks and Green Spaces Levy, the Pike Place Market Levy, and the Sound Transit ballot measure.

To learn more about our past endorsements, visit
http://www.friendsofseattle.org/2008_endorsements.php,
http://www.friendsofseattle.org/2007_city_council_endorsements.php, and
http://www.friendsofseattle.org/media/No-No_Press_Release.doc.

Schedule

Monday 6/22 6PM - Questionnaires due to Sean Howell at howell4change@gmail.com
Monday 6/22 - Interviews begin
Monday 7/13 - Interviews done
Friday 7/17 - Decisions completed, endorsed candidates offered
Monday 7/20 - Endorsements announced publicly

Instructions

There are six YES/NO questions. There are another 9–17 open-ended questions for you to answer, with the exact number depending on your YES/NO answers. Please be very brief in responding to these questions, writing no more than 100 words. We're interested in understanding your positions and learning your basic ideas; long, detailed responses aren't necessary. Please type your responses into this document in the appropriate spaces, and when finished, email as an attachment to Sean Howell at howell4change@gmail.com.

If you would like to schedule an endorsements interview, please email Sean Howell at howell4change@gmail.com.

We will publish your questionnaire responses on a publicly available page on our website, and we will ask our members for feedback on your candidacy. Further, we will video-record your endorsement interview and will publish it on YouTube.

In the interest of full disclosure, please note that one member of our endorsements committee has volunteered for Richard Conlin's campaign and made a financial contribution to that campaign. At least two members have done the same for the McGinn for Mayor campaign. Also, one member has already participated in some endorsement interviews as a board member of the King County Conservation Voters. However, no one has been paid for this work, all have pledged to be open and keep Friends of Seattle's mission foremost in mind, and we are running a transparent process where information is made widely available to our members and the general public.

GENERAL

Friends of Seattle's Mission

- How does your candidacy support Friends of Seattle's values, goals, and mission?¹

Qualifications

- Please describe any professional accomplishments that demonstrate your effectiveness as an elected official (if you are an incumbent) or would demonstrate your effectiveness as an elected official (if you have not yet held office).

Representing Seattle

Seattle is the most populous city in Washington and is the state's economic engine. At the same time, Seattle cannot address many of its problems without working with King County, regional entities (Sound Transit and the PSRC), and the state government. Yet many observers believe that Seattle's interests are represented inadequately at those levels. For example, the Muni League has criticized the 40-20-40 rule for allocating new Metro transit funding.² Further, transit advocates note that the state's current tax system disadvantages transit.³ And the Legislature refused to allocate federal stimulus dollars for road projects in Seattle.⁴

- As an elected official representing Seattle, how would you work with King County, regional governmental entities, the state legislature, and the governor to ensure their budgets and policies address Seattle's needs?

City Council Committees

- [Only City Council Candidates] If you are elected, which issues would you like included in your portfolio as a committee chair?

ISSUES

¹ <http://www.friendsofseattle.org>

² <http://www.munileague.org/about-us/press-releases/Metro%20Report.pdf>

³ <http://seattletransitblog.com/2009/04/19/the-gas-tax-and-the-state-constitution/>

⁴ <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123578330128898253.html>

Waste Reduction

Rather than build an expensive new transfer in Georgetown to handle the growing volume of trash generated in Seattle, the City of Seattle adopted a “Zero Waste Strategy” centered on reducing waste.⁵ As part of that strategy, the City Council adopted a 20-cent “green fee” for disposable shopping bags.⁶

- Do you support the green fee? Why or why not?

Alaskan Way Viaduct

Governor Gregoire signed a bill ordering the Washington State Department of Transportation to design a bored tunnel to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct.⁷ This bill contains language allocating cost overruns to Seattle citizens, although some question whether the language has legal significance. Notwithstanding that provision, the City of Seattle committed \$930 million and the Port of Seattle \$300 million to finance the tunnel.⁸ Although the exact tax consequences of these commitments are not totally clear, it is safe to assume that the Port’s contribution would result in higher property taxes for Seattle property owners, and the City’s pledge would be funded with increases in property taxes, City Light utility rates, and possibly other taxes and fees.

- Do you support the plan to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct with a bored tunnel? Why or why not?
- If you support the tunnel, what would you do to address the cost-overruns issue?
- If you oppose the tunnel, what would you do to prevent its implementation?

Transit

The City of Seattle already contributes to local transit. The City put together the financing package to construct the South Lake Union streetcar line, and the City and King County Metro share the ongoing operating costs for that line.⁹ Further, the Bridging the Gap tax package finances some Metro bus service within Seattle, and Bridging the Gap also pays for street improvements designed to expedite bus travel.¹⁰

- If elected, how do you intend to improve the in-city transit system?

Bicycle Infrastructure

⁵ <http://www.seattle.gov/council/newsdetail.asp?ID=7530&Dept=28>

⁶ <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/newsdetail.asp?ID=8695&dept=40>

⁷ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5768>

⁸ <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/newsdetail.asp?ID=9257&dept=40>

⁹ http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stcar_slu_money.htm

¹⁰ http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/btg_transit.htm

The City of Seattle has adopted a Bicycle Master Plan, which provides a vision for improving bicycling facilities in Seattle.¹¹

- Do you support the Bicycle Master Plan? [Yes/No only please]
- If you support it, do you have ideas for improving the plan?
- If you support it, how do you suggest the City fund the plan?

Pedestrian Infrastructure

The City Council is considering whether to adopt a draft Pedestrian Master Plan.¹²

- Do you support the Pedestrian Master Plan? [Yes/No only please]
- If you support it, do you have ideas for improving the plan?
- If you support it, how do you suggest the City fund the plan?

Land Use and Multifamily Housing

According to U.S. Census data cited in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, about half of Seattle's households live in multifamily housing.¹³ Further, according to the Plan, approximately 40% of Seattle's total land area is set aside for residential use—35% for single-family residences but only 5% for multifamily dwellings.¹⁴ That 5% dedicated to multifamily housing tends to be concentrated in “urban villages” or along arterial streets, which are noisy and dirty. However, “backyard cottages” (also known as “detached accessory dwelling units) are also allowed in single-family zones in Southeast Seattle.¹⁵

- Would you support legislation to allow backyard cottages to be built in all single-family zones? [Yes/No only please]
- Would you ever support a contract rezone or a broader rezone allowing for more housing to be built on a site? [Yes/No only please]
- If you support the basic concept of rezoning, what criteria would you use in deciding on specific locations where more housing should be built?
- If you support the concept of rezoning, what criteria would you use in deciding where more housing should be built?

¹¹ <http://www.seattle.gov/Transportation/bikemaster.htm>

¹² http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pedestrian_masterplan/

¹³ http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/cms/groups/pan/@pan/@plan/@proj/documents/Web_Informational/cos_004508.pdf

¹⁴ http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/cms/groups/pan/@pan/@plan/@proj/documents/Web_Informational/cos_004508.pdf

¹⁵ http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Alternative_Housing_Choices/Overview/

Many newly built townhouses in Seattle are architectural atrocities, and site plans tend to be car-dominated. Most townhouse developments are exempt from the City of Seattle's Design Review Program.¹⁶ It is also difficult to find attractive new condos and apartment buildings. To address some of these problems, the City Council is considering a package of revisions to the zoning code.¹⁷

- Do you support the proposed revisions to the multifamily housing zoning code? [Yes/No only please]
- If you support the revisions, do you have ideas for improving the proposed revisions?

City Governance

- Do you support the "Vote Clean Seattle" plan,¹⁸ which is supported in principle by the City Council,¹⁹ to create a system for publicly funded campaigns in Seattle? [Yes/No only please]

CREATIVE RESPONSE

- If you have additional thoughts on how to improve Seattle's city government or to make Seattle a more livable and sustainable city, please note them here.

¹⁶ http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/planning/design_review_program/Overview/

¹⁷ http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/Planning/Multifamily_Code_Update/Overview/

¹⁸ <http://www.votecleanseattle.com/seattle.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.seattle.gov/council/newsdetail.asp?ID=9481&Dept=28>