

2009 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Jennifer	S	Robertson

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

Bellevue City Council, Position No. 7

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No (no incumbent – incumbent Phil Noble died in June)

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

Since 2002

5. How long have you resided in King County?

Since 1968

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan? Partisan Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party: N/A

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Friends of Jennifer Robertson

Address: 10900 NE 4th Street, Suite 2300

City/State/Zip: Bellevue WA 98004

Campaign Phone: 206-919-5283

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POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)
Planning Commissioner (Bellevue)	Appointive	June 2003 - Present	Chair, 2007-2008
Light Rail Best Practices Committee (Bellevue)	Appointive	July 2007-July 2008	Co-Chair for duration of committee

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run
N/A	

SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
 - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
 - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
 - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

I am running for Bellevue City Council because I have a passion for promoting “good government.” I also want to help Bellevue continue moving in the right direction and I want to do everything I can to ensure that the City I know and love will be just as wonderful for my children’s future as it is today.

As a member of the Bellevue Planning Commission since 2003 and Co-Chair of Bellevue Light Rail Best Practices Committee, I have been intimately involved in formulating the future vision of Bellevue. I have been part of every major planning initiative in the City since 2003. As a member of the Council, I can help ensure that the vision we have so carefully crafted is implemented in the best way possible. I have four major focus areas for my candidacy, as follows.

Strong Neighborhoods. Bellevue is comprised of many different neighborhoods that are healthy and strong. Our neighborhoods, our schools and our job base are reasons people move to Bellevue and stay. Protecting the integrity of our neighborhoods is vital to the continued success of Bellevue and is one of my top priorities. This can be accomplished by many methods, the most important of which is making sure that the growth we are required to incorporate in our long term plan goes where it belongs, in the either the Downtown or the Bel-Red corridor. This will keep our single family neighborhoods protected from the negative impacts of such growth.

I believe that another way to keep these neighborhoods healthy is by ensuring that our municipal development codes promote re-development that is a positive force in neighborhoods. As land values have risen, there has been a proliferation of “tear downs” in our region. By working through both the first and second “neighborhood livability” initiatives for the City of Bellevue, I have helped to shape new regulations that ease the pain of growth and redevelopment on neighborhoods. These regulations include “bulk and scale” limitations on single family homes, greenscape requirements, tree retention, and revisions to height limits. In crafting these regulations, I was very careful to balance the needs of homeowners who desire to redevelop with the needs of the neighborhoods as a whole. The City Council adopted the regulations that I drafted, and these laws will help to keep Bellevue neighborhoods strong and stable.

Excellence in Emergency Services. Bellevue has excellent Fire and Police service. I believe we must keep it that way. Public Safety is one of the paramount obligations of local government. As our City grows, we must ensure that our public safety resources also grow as necessary to maintain our high level of service. As Downtown has grown and Bel-Red will grow, it is imperative that we grow our police and fire to meet the increased demand, including adding a Downtown fire station. This will not only protect Downtown and Bel-Red, but will also ensure that surrounding neighborhoods are not left vulnerable when police and fire resources that would otherwise be dedicated to these neighborhoods are busy servicing Downtown and Bel-Red.

Transportation. As Bellevue and the region have grown, our transportation needs have become more urgent. It is essential that we keep our people and goods moving. This means improving roads; increasing transit options; increasing pedestrian safety by building more sidewalks; continuing to add bicycle lanes; and ensuring that the placement and design of the new Eastlink light rail line works for both Bellevue and the region. One of the main impetuses for my campaign is to ensure that the Eastlink light rail be “built right” for both Bellevue and the region.

Jobs. Bellevue has evolved into a major employment center in the region. We have more workers in Bellevue than we have residents. This economic growth relies on smart planning policies and low taxes to bring in employers and new jobs. Having the policies in place to strengthen Bellevue’s role as an economic leader while retaining and enhancing Bellevue’s prosperity is a primary key to keeping Bellevue an integral part of the Puget Sound’s world class economy.

For the four major reasons stated above, I have devoted myself to serving the City of Bellevue, and I am ready to take my service to the next level as a City Council member. My experience as a Planning Commissioner since 2003, on the Light Rail Best Practices Committee, and as a municipal and land use attorney will enable me to help Bellevue in the best way possible.

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

Critical Thinking. With sixteen years as an attorney and a background in economics and mathematics, I have developed strong critical thinking skills that allow me to fairly and fully consider an issue before coming to a decision. Part of being a critical thinker is to also be open-minded to hearing and considering different perspectives or ideas. This trait is very important for a public servant to have as it results in better and more complete decisions.

Respectful. It is important that a public servant be respectful to all who she interacts with, whether staff, members of the public, colleagues, or interested organizations. I have always taken my role as a public servant seriously and am willing to respectfully listen to all views. There is an old adage that humans were given two ears but only one mouth for a reason. Listening to the public and fellow leaders is not only respectful but it also helps ensure a better decision-making process and ultimately, a better decision.

Leadership. Leadership is a difficult quality to define, but can take many forms. As chair of both the Planning Commission and Light Rail committee for Bellevue, my strength as a leader was demonstrated in my ability to find the consensus on a given issue and to articulate the issues that needed further discussion or required a vote to make a decision. At times, leadership can also mean holding firm to an ideal when disagreeing with the decision of the committee. There have been some instances where I respectfully disagreed with the majority decision on the Planning Commission. In holding true to my ideals, I had my dissent expressed in the transmittal memo to the City Council so that the Council would know the reasoning behind my dissent. In most cases, by standing firm and respectfully and clearly expressing the bases of my reasoning, I convinced the Council to consider my issue more thoroughly and more often than not, the Council agreed with me.

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

In the past six years, I have worked on several projects for which I am particularly proud. First is my work as Co-Chair of the Bellevue Light Rail Best Practices Committee; second is my work as Chair of the Planning Commission on the Bel-Red Corridor Update; and third is my work with my church to help create a new affordable housing project in Bellevue for homeless veterans and their families.

1. Light Rail Best Practices Report.

In 2007, Mayor Degginger appointed me to co-chair the Bellevue Light Rail Best Practices Committee (LRBPC). This was a year-long assignment. The Committee's task was to evaluate and study light rail systems and to create a set of guiding principles, land use code changes and comprehensive plan changes to shape the siting of Eastlink light rail in Bellevue. The LRBPC was made up of two Planning Commissioners, two Parks Board members, two Environmental Services Commissioners, two Transportation Commissioners and two City Council members (one was an "alternate" committee member).

I am proud of this project for several reasons: the hard-earned trust we developed with the public throughout this process; the collaborative and collegial relationships that grew between the LRBPC members; and the quality and thoroughness of the final product.

This was a challenging project because prior to commencing the work there were neighborhood groups and citizens who were already organizing against the project. It was our job to engage our citizens and neighborhoods in a productive way and to work together to establish the guidelines. Additionally, because no other cities had undertaken a project of this nature, we had no trail to follow in creating the set of "best practices."

At the beginning of the process, the citizens and neighborhood groups were very suspicious of the LRBPC and were concerned about how the LRBPC would respond to them and whether they would be allowed to have an input in the final guidelines. Throughout the course of that year, the public lost their apprehension of our process and felt listened to by the LRBPC. At the end of the year-long project, we had "buy in" on the end product of our work by the public. At our last meeting, these same members of the public expressed their appreciation for the openness of the committee and our work in incorporating their input into the final product.

In addition to the public trust that the LRBPC earned, the LRBPC developed into a cohesive team whereby most decisions were made by consensus. When there was a lack of consensus, the issues were resolved with respectful dialogue between the members. This is significant in that the members came from so many different commissions and had a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Moreover, most of the committee members had never met prior to being appointed to the LRBPC.

As Co-Chair of the LRBPC, I helped to set the tone for our work, helped make meetings more productive and provided an outlet for the public to be heard. Part of my approach as a leader and a chair is to make sure that everyone has a chance to provide input and to try to make most decisions by consensus. When there is a lack of consensus, my approach is to distill the issues and to state the opposing opinions and to have a vote on the will of the committee. This has been very effective in providing clear policy direction and making sure that we have covered every issue. This is the same approach I use when providing direction to staff or requesting additional information to assist the work of the LRBPC.

The work that the LRBPC did was groundbreaking in that no other city has attempted this type of project before, and the work product was both thorough and of excellent quality. The LRBPC also considered a huge volume of materials in an efficient and timely manner. During the first half of the project, it didn't seem possible that the committee would be able to complete the work within the twelve-month deadline. However, the LRBPC tenaciously worked through the materials, made site visits to other cities to experience light rail systems first hand, distilled the public comments, and created the set of "best practices" and recommendations based upon solid research.

Because of the thoroughness of the Committee's work, the public support for the Committee's work, and the high quality of the work, the Committee's recommendations progressed through the Planning Commission and the City Council with little controversy or revision. These recommendations and guidelines now form the backbone of Bellevue's approach to the development of Eastlink light rail within our borders.

2. Bel-Red Plan Update.

In 2007 while I was Chair of the Planning Commission, the City Council assigned us the task of establishing a new vision for the 900-acre area of Bellevue commonly known as "Bel-Red." This was an extensive project to redevelop a light industrial area into a transit-orientated urban village with 5,000 housing units in addition to approximately four million to five million square feet of retail and office development. The Planning Commission's work included the following tasks, for which I led the group as Chair: changing subarea boundaries; creating a new set of comprehensive plan policies; making revisions to land use codes; creating guidelines for stream restoration; establishing locations and guidelines for new parks; designing new rights-of-way, including a high capacity transit corridor; and planning for many other supporting infrastructure. The City Council also directed the Planning Commission to create a tool kit of development incentives to provide for infrastructure needs and affordable housing.

The process began with the review of a Steering Committee Report that provided three alternate visions for the Planning Commission to study. Like the LRBPC, this was groundbreaking work. This project involved a scale of public participation and study that was unprecedented in Bellevue. The Planning Commission was the lead committee to establish the new plan and all input was presented to and consolidated for Planning Commission consideration.

As part of that process, the other boards and commissions in Bellevue studied the project as it applied to their committee's focus (i.e. Arts Commission looked at arts issue for the project) and provided input to the Planning Commission. I had the opportunity to chair two meetings in which all of the boards and commissions of Bellevue (planning, transportation, parks, environmental services, arts, and human services) were communally impaneled. Additionally, the other boards and commissions held their own independent study sessions and provided input to the Planning Commission at our meetings.

In addition to engaging the other boards and commissions in Bellevue, the Planning Commission also extensively engaged the Bel-Red stakeholders and members of the public. Due to the extensive nature of the planned revisions, there was quite a lot of controversy in how the new plan would provide for existing uses and how the new vision and extensive infrastructure would be developed and implemented.

In working through the plan, I worked diligently to balance the needs of the existing landowners with the future vision, incentive systems and infrastructure plans. The resulting plan is the result of large scale collaboration and study. It is the largest transit oriented development in the nation and has earned the city national recognition for excellence in planning. This plan will provide for the future growth area for Bellevue, including affordable housing, and will change the face of Bellevue and the Eastside throughout the remainder of my lifetime.

3. Affordable Housing Project.

There exists a large unmet need for affordable housing in Bellevue and on the Eastside. I learned about the profundity of this need through my service on the Planning Commission. As a Planning Commissioner, I have supported policy changes to encourage the construction of affordable housing in Bellevue. As a resident of Bellevue, through my membership in St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, I have been able to have personal involvement with creating an affordable housing project in Bellevue.

In 2007, I learned of a pending financial challenge that my church faced. My husband and I had the idea to use some of the church's parking area to develop affordable housing. This would accomplish meeting the church's financial need, while creating a much-needed housing development that the church could support with its outreach ministries. St. Margaret's is the ideal location for an affordable housing project. Located at the corner of Factoria Boulevard and Newport Way, St. Margaret's is on a bus line and is within walking distance of a major employment center (Factoria).

We took this idea to our priest and convinced our congregation to pursue this project. As part of that process, I assisted the church in applying for a comprehensive plan amendment and rezone. Even though

not required by state law, I temporarily recused myself from the Planning Commission and did not participate in this process so as to avoid any appearance of impropriety. St. Margaret's was successful in obtaining the comprehensive plan change and rezone. I have continued to act as a public process advisor to my church in working through the funding issues with this project.

St. Margaret's has partnered with St. Andrew's Housing Group and this affordable housing project is very close to being fully funded. The project will serve homeless veterans and their families. This will be a great project that will provide much needed housing. It is a project for which our church and community can be proud.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

Planning Commissioner – appointed in June 2003 by Mayor Connie Marshall; re-appointed 2007 by Mayor Grant Degginger. Elected Chair by fellow commissioners 2007-2008.

Co-Chair Light Rail Best Practices Committee – appointed July 2007 by Mayor Grant Degginger. Served as co-chair for duration of committee.

Advance Bellevue Leadership Certificate – 2004

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church Volunteer (spearheaded affordable housing project) – 2004 – 2009

Somerset Elementary PTSA Board – Legislative Affairs/Advocacy Chair – 2005 – 2007; 2008 – 2009

Somerset Elementary PTSA Care and Share Committee – 2004 – 2005

Bellevue School District Classroom Volunteer, Recess Duty & Room Parent – 2003 – present
(Served as room parent for 4 years)

Bellevue School District Ski Bus Chaperone – 2007 – 2009

Girl Scout Volunteer (including three years as Troop Cookie Manager) – 2004 – present

South Bellevue/Mercer Island Cookies for Soldiers Coordinator – 2006 and 2007

Somerset Community Association (SCA) Volunteer – 2002 – present

Member of Covenant Review Committee for SCA – 2002 – 2004

Leader, Mothers & More, Bellevue Chapter – 2001 – 2002
(Also served as Membership, Treasurer, and Social Chair 1999 – 2001)

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

Bellevue is a Code City with a Council-Manager form of government. The Council acts as a Board of Directors that sets the city budget, establishes policies, and oversees the City Manager. The City Manager then is responsible for implementing the budget, priorities, and policies as well as running the day-to-day operations of the city.

As a member of the City Council, I would be part of that Board of Directors and I would help to establish the vision for the City, set policy, enact laws, and adopt the budget (including setting taxes and fees). My work on the Council will include studying all of the issues, listening to the public, passing clear and appropriate legislation, and providing clear policy direction to our Manager.

All of the duties of the City Council are critical to having a well-managed city. Having council-members who are engaged, experienced, approachable, and knowledgeable are important factors in having an effective council. Additionally, one of the most important duties of a member of the City Council is to be open and accessible to the public whom we serve so that a bond of trust can be established. This not only includes being available to meet with citizens, but also being open to hearing from the public on all relevant issues and having a mind that is open to hearing different ideas and perspectives.

In my opinion, having a fair and open public process is just as important as making a good decision. The more input I receive, the better a decision I can make. This is because a member of the public may provide information unknown to me or provide a viewpoint that I had not previously considered. This open-mindedness makes the end result better. If the public knows that I am open to really listen to their perspective, and that I will research and carefully consider an issue prior to making a decision, then the public will be likely to trust the result. These are the type of relationships that I have established through my work on the Planning Commission and Light Rail Committee while engaged with the public and this is exactly the type of approach I will continue on the Council.