

## 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
Richard		Conlin

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number): Seattle City Council, Position 2

3. Are you the incumbent?                    x Yes    No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city? 27 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?    27 years

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

---

#### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:                    People for Richard Conlin

Address:                                PO Box 22318

City/State/Zip:                    Seattle, WA 98122

Campaign Phone:                    206-954-2322

Campaign Fax:                        \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign E-mail:                    [Conlin2009@gmail.com](mailto:Conlin2009@gmail.com)

Campaign Website:                    [www.richardconlin.com](http://www.richardconlin.com)

#### 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)
Seattle City Council	Elective	1998-present	President, 2008-2009; Chair, Environment, Emergency Management, and Utilities Committee, Special Committee on Open Government, Committees of the Whole on Economic Recovery and SR 520; Vice-Chair, Growth Management Planning Council
City Light Rate Advisory Committee, Alternative Resources Committee	Appointive	1981-1982, 1984-1985	Co-Chair, Rate Advisory Committee
Ingham County Board of Commissioners, Michigan	Elective	1973-1977	Chair, Finance Committee

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

	<b>Year of Run</b>
<b>None</b>	

## 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?

- 
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.)

**Seattle works best when we work together. I have the experience, the commitment, and the knowledge to work with all of Seattle's communities to create and implement a positive vision for our future. I want to continue to use my excellent analytical and accomplished leadership skills to strengthen our democracy and meet the needs of the diverse communities of Seattle.**

**My goal is to keep Seattle stable and moving forward in these challenging times. As Council President, I led my colleagues in creating and carrying out an action plan for Seattle, based on our principles of economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, social justice, and community. I want to continue this work – and keep the Council connected and accountable to the public. I am convinced that we can work together to strengthen neighborhoods, foster economic recovery from the current crisis, and make Seattle a leader in becoming a more sustainable city in our fragile world.**

**I've demonstrated my ability to be innovative and responsive. I've made decisions that affect many lives – about public safety, transportation, health care, and education. I've been willing to make tough choices, to take votes based on what I believe in -- and to stand up for the people of Seattle.**

**My job is to listen to people, resolve conflict, and make decisions based on a set of core values. We reach our goals by making well thought out decisions and asking tough questions on all issues, including the billions of dollars in transportation projects that will change the face of our city.**

**I will continue to be a strong leader and to deliver results. In the next four years, I want to:**

- **Bring Seattle back to economic health, ensure that those who are left out and left behind have the human services they need, support local business and our regional economy, and protect Seattle's environment through holistic and creative solutions to environmental issues. That is the blueprint for a sustainable future for Seattle.**
- **Continue to implement our neighborhood plans, growth management strategies, and transportation choices that make Seattle a safe place to walk and bicycle.**
- **Keep our communities safe and healthy, by supporting our parks and libraries, working for better public health, housing, education, and human services, and ensuring that our police and firefighters have the support they need.**
- **Continue my regional leadership work, on the Sound Transit Board to get light rail to Northgate and across Lake Washington to the Eastside, to keep moving on the Viaduct and bridge replacements, and for salmon recovery and the health of Puget Sound.**
- **Restore faith in government by listening and responding to citizens, valuing and supporting our diverse communities, and preserving open, accountable government and a City Council that develops superb public policy to keep Seattle vibrant, functioning, and resilient.**



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

I was inspired to run for City Council because of my deep commitment to our communities. I served in leadership posts on my community council, and as a founder of Sustainable Seattle, I helped shape Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. I base my work on bringing together the core values articulated in that plan – environmental stewardship, economic opportunity, community, and social justice. We must weave those together to create a positive future while valuing the heritage and commitments that have made Seattle such a wonderful place.

I live by a set of principles that guide me in making good, well thought-out decisions for the people of Seattle. I am a consistent and experienced city council member who is thoughtful and positive. I work well with a variety of constituencies including labor, environmentalists, developers, neighborhood activists, city staff, communities of color, and regional partners.

One of my core strengths is my ability to build win-win solutions by engaging with people, listening to them, identifying their core interests, and negotiating to find ways to resolve conflicts. When I take on an issue, I identify what's required, involve people, and avoid the pitfalls that lead to endless process. I get things done in a timely and systematic manner. I involve all constituencies, creatively develop solutions, find the right answer (not the hasty one), and follow through by doing the hard work, obtaining support, and ensuring implementation. I have earned the trust and respect of a wide range of constituencies throughout the City.

When issues become contentious I work to find solutions that benefit the City as a whole while meeting the legitimate interests of the various stakeholders, whether they come from business, the neighborhoods, or labor. I believe my style of leadership is critical to preserving the things we love about our City and its neighborhoods.

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.

**Northgate Settlement.** The Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (NACP) was adopted before I joined the Council, but implementation was slow. Conflict between community members committed to a pedestrian-friendly urban center and interested in daylighting Thornton Creek and the mall owner interested in improving the auto-oriented shopping mall was intense. Twice the mall owner proposed a plan, and twice other stakeholders immediately sued. As I worked on the other 37 neighborhood plans, I realized that Northgate must be included in our process. I began by securing investments -- a new community center in the 1999 levy, a new library in the 1998 bond, a park in the 2000 parks levy, and a community garden. I also sought ways to improve transportation and resolve the community conflicts. We were making some progress when Mayor Nickels, in early 2003, proposed a plan that he had negotiated with the mall owner. The community was outraged, and I was alarmed. While some of the components of the Nickels plan were positive, it had fundamental flaws, the biggest being the lack of community support that made more years of litigation likely. I immediately began a process of consultation with the community to explore alternatives. I also opened dialogue with the development community and with my colleagues on the Council. By late spring, we had an alternative package that had full community support and the commitment of 5 Councilmembers, but most of the development community was not willing to sign on. We organized media, developed support from the Northgate Chamber of Commerce, and continued to work with developers to find alternatives. Under tremendous pressure, I held the coalition of 5 Councilmembers together. Finally, the Mayor's office offered to negotiate, and we sat down and hammered out a compromise. The community got its key agenda items -- a coordinated transportation plan, a daylighted Thornton Creek with housing on the South Lot, and an agreement with the mall owner that their second project would be a built-out-to-the-street, pedestrian-friendly development on Fifth Avenue. The mall owner got an agreement to allow the first development phase that was their primary interest. With some careful shuttle diplomacy, we got all sides to agree and to join in a Northgate Stakeholders Group to work on future developments. Since then, all the projects and plans have been moving forward, and the Stakeholders Group has been able to work in harmony as a roundtable for further conflict resolution. On June 6, 2009, we cut the ribbon on the newly daylighted Thornton Creek, making a beautiful park surrounded by an excellent urban development. We've already opened the new community center, library, and Maple Leaf Community Garden, and the voters have now funded light rail to Northgate and beyond. The Northgate example required me to creatively problem-solve, work closely with a variety of constituencies, hang tough

when I had to and keep a majority of my colleagues with me, and ultimately forge a win-win solution that everyone now takes ownership of. It's also taught me the need for persistence and for taking a long term perspective.

**Neighborhood Plan Approval and Adoption Process.** When I was first elected to the Council, I was asked to lead the committee responsible for 37 neighborhood plans that had been developed as a way to resolve the conflict over Seattle's acceptance of growth targets under the GMA. The neighborhood planning process was a brilliant success, involving 20,000 people (including myself as one of the initial leaders of the Central Area Plan), with all neighborhoods agreeing to accept their growth targets and coming up with a list of recommendations as to how to make their neighborhoods work with the increased population. Unfortunately, there had been little planning for how the plans would become approved and implemented. Working closely with the Executive, I developed the Approval and Adoption process, which involved creating a matrix of plan recommendations and having each Department comment on how they could implement them, with the Council then adopting this as a work plan for the City -- following a public hearing, tours, and other involvement opportunities for plan leaders, as well as conflict resolution around controversial plan recommendations. With some creative problem solving and patient listening, I was able to steer all plans through the Council with unanimous votes. In the meantime, we worked together on implementation strategies, ultimately devising a package that included the library bond, community center levy, and parks levy -- all based on the neighborhood plans, and all approved by the voters for a total of almost \$500 million in investments. The package also included an early implementation fund for each plan to jumpstart 3 or 4 specific projects, tripling the neighborhood matching fund, and creating neighborhood development managers to coordinate future work. And we developed a formal stewardship structure to ensure continued public involvement. I continue to be committed to implementing neighborhood plans, and initiated the process that led to the Bridging the Gap Transportation Levy that funds many transportation elements of the plans. As we move into the update process in 2009 and beyond, I will work closely with my colleagues to ensure that neighborhood plans are honored and that citizen participation continues to be a key component of the City's relationship with neighborhoods.

**Zero Waste Strategy.** Before I ran for City Council, I worked on recycling and waste reduction strategies and programs. When I became Chair of the Committee that oversees Seattle Public Utilities in 2006, the City was facing important decisions about our next set of strategies for dealing with the mile long train of waste that we send to eastern Oregon every day. SPU had proposed that the City construct a new transfer station adjacent to the rail line to facilitate this. The adjacent Georgetown community was very concerned about this -- but recognized that simply opposing it was not enough, and that the real problem was that we keep recycling, but still increasing the amount of waste we landfill. Working together with community members, the environmental community, and experts in waste reduction strategies, we developed a new set of solid waste policy goals and programs that would start shrinking the train, instead of making it easier to expand it. The Zero Waste strategy includes a comprehensive set of implementation steps, from increased recycling and composting of the food and construction waste streams (the two largest components of the remaining waste), to a long-range approach that includes product stewardship and banning or restricting some products. For the first time, the strategy commits Seattle to not just increase the percentage of waste recycled, but to actually *reduce* the amount of waste disposed of by capping the amount of waste Seattle disposes of at 2006 level. Our goal is to break the perceived tie between generation of waste and economic growth (which assumes that a City's growth necessarily creates an increasing waste stream) by treating waste as a resource, based on the evolving science and technologies that have created design-for-disassembly, extended producer responsibility, and other innovations that introduce efficiency into our society's use of materials. I persuaded the City Council and the Mayor to go along with this proposal, and the Zero Waste Strategy began implementation in 2008. The coordinated strategy includes a specific timeline that moves us to full implementation by 2013, and includes rebuilding the two existing transfer stations with a goal of using them to facilitate recycling and waste reduction. And the Council and Mayor agreed that we did not need to site and build the third transfer station -- saving ratepayers \$70 million. The evolution of the Zero Waste strategy demonstrates how political leadership can bring together science, innovative approaches to economic and environmental health, and community engagement to develop win-win-win approaches to complex public policy choices.

These three examples reflect my core values and my leadership style. I strive to achieve policy goals that are consistent with my commitment to civic engagement, environmental sustainability, and social justice. I believe that my success rests on my ability to facilitate cooperation among constituencies with diverse interests as well as my careful attention to the details of policy implementation.

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.

**I have been involved in civic life since my teenage experiences as President of my County Teen Democrats organization and activity in the civil rights movement in Virginia. I was involved in the first Earth Day in 1970, and in 1971-72 was Co-Chair of Michigan's Sixth District Citizens for McGovern. I was elected to the Ingham County Board of Commissioners in 1972, serving for two terms. In my second term, my colleagues chose me as Chair of the Finance Committee (at the age of 26), where I was responsible for developing and monitoring a \$16 million budget. I left politics to raise my family, and spent two years as a Lecturer in Public Administration at the University of Botswana, an invaluable cross-cultural experience.**

**I arrived in Seattle in 1981, started a newsletter for the Northwest Energy Coalition (then NCAC), and was selected as a member of the City Light Alternative Resources Advisory Committee, where I wrote the report on renewable resources. I founded an energy conservation business, and managed two contracts for Seattle City Light and Bonneville Power Administration, supervising seven employees; the business was based at the Phinney Neighborhood Center, and a percentage of the income went to the support PNA programs. I was a member of the City Light Rates Advisory Committee, a Water Department advisory committee, the Discovery Park Advisory Council, and the Mayor's Environmental Priorities Project Advisory Committee. I was one of the founders of Sustainable Seattle, the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance, BikeWorks, and the Positive Futures Network, where I served for a year as the first publisher of YES! magazine. I am a graduate of Leadership Tomorrow (1991).**

**I have been Chair of both Public Safety and Land Use for the Madrona Community Council, and a founding member of the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Union Neighborhood Planning Team. My three children are all graduates of Garfield High School, and I was active in the PTSA's and as a soccer referee and baseball coach.**

**Prior to my election to the City Council, I worked for 13 years as Director of the Community and Environment Project of Metrocenter YMCA. My major projects including founding and directing Seattle YMCA Earth Service Corps, a program to engage teens in environmental education and action; the City Light Study Group, a project that brought business and low income advocates together to monitor city light rates and financial policies; Sustainable Seattle, a volunteer network dedicated to promoting the long-range environmental, economic, cultural, and social vitality of Seattle and King County; and the Master Home Environmentalist, a nationally recognized program to combat childhood asthma and other indoor pollution issues. I also founded and directed the King County Household Hazardous Waste Round-Ups, and was contracted by King County to manage publicity and education activities for the Household Hazardous Wastemobile.**

**I have been chosen by my colleagues to serve as President of the City Council. I also serve as Vice-Chair of the Growth Management Planning Council, and as a member of the Sound Transit Board and the Sound Transit Board Finance Committee. I represent Seattle on the WRIA 9 Salmon Recovery Committee (Green-Duwamish Watershed), and the Regional Water Quality Committee. I Chair the Council's Environment, Emergency Management, and Utilities Committee, Vice-Chair Parks and Seattle Center, and serve on Energy and Technology. As President of the Council, I have created a Special Committee on Open Government, which I Chair, and I also Chair Committees of the Whole on SR 520 and on Economic Recovery.**

**This variety of civic, work, governmental, and political experience has given me both the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding to make me an effective Councilmember on a wide variety of issues. All of these activities have reinforced my faith in the collective ability of communities and groups of people to effectively engage in building a better society, and my commitment to civic engagement as a way of life.**

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

**The key duties of the City Council include:**

- 1. Engaging with citizens to educate them about city government and civic life, listen to them about issues and concerns in the community, and partner with them to address community concerns and foster and enhance our democratic society.**
- 2. In partnership with citizens, creating and sustaining the civic spirit of Seattle and developing a vision for Seattle's future.**
- 3. Serving as steward of the public resources entrusted to City government, the Comprehensive Plan, our natural environment, and the community institutions that make Seattle's character.**
- 4. Managing the City's budget and workforce to ensure that resources are used effectively deployed, that the budget is balanced, and that the workforce is treated with dignity and embodies the spirit of public service.**
- 5. Overseeing key City functions, including police, fire, courts, and emergency preparedness; land use, community development, transportation, and neighborhoods; city utilities, including electricity, water, sewer, drainage, and solid waste; parks, community centers, and libraries; housing, health, and human services**
- 6. Working with the region to find ways to cooperate around common regional issues, including transportation, the environment, growth management, health and human services, and other regional services.**
- 7. Ensuring that Seattle government is open, transparent, and accountable, with decisions made in public, access to decision makers and information, and proactive work to ensure that communities that are less well represented or do not have access through traditional channels can participate.**