

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
Ross		Hunter

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

King County Executive

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

26 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

26 years

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Friends of Ross Hunter

Address: PO Box 4204

City/State/Zip: Bellevue/WA/98009

Campaign Phone: 425 637-7749

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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)
WA State House of Representatives	Elected	2003-present	Finance Committee Chair

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

Office Title	Year of Run

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.)

King County is a great place to live. We have beautiful mountains, sparkling waterfronts, vibrant cities on the Eastside and in the South end, and, of course, Seattle, with some of the most innovative and dynamic employers in the world. But the King County Council and the Executive have for too long ignored problems that make our governance incredibly painful and expensive.

It's time to seriously confront problems that have festered for decades. Sometimes the solutions make people uncomfortable, but as Gene Duvernoy of the Cascade Lands Conservancy says "We have one last chance to get it right."

We are on a path to not having housing that is affordable for the middle class in King County. Our current vision is one of denser, transit-oriented development inside the urban growth boundary and pastoral splendor outside it, but we are on a path of developing mega-homes on large lots. This will drive middle and low-income people to commute from far away – and we'll have to build the roads to get them here because transit won't be cost-effective.

As a region we try to provide the services that people need, but by letting the turf wars between cities and the county dominate the decision of who provides the service we wind up spending tons of money on overhead we could better spend on direct service provision. Jails are a great example – the cities are banding together to build a jail that the county should be able to build and run more efficiently. There are economies of scale here, but because nobody trusts anyone else the most inefficient and expensive method gets chosen.

Jails aren't sexy, but they have to be done. Doing them efficiently saves money that we can use for things we do want to do.

It's time for King County 2.0. It's time for a new regionalism that brings the 39 cities, the 33 water/sewer districts, the 20 school districts and all the other governments in King County together to confront problems like the housing/transportation model, how we handle stormwater runoff, how public health gets funded, and how the criminal justice system should really work.

My campaign will be about resolving these issues. As a region we share a vision for the future, but we don't agree on an implementation plan. I have a history of bringing people together to build things, resolve problems, and get projects on track.

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

I'm a very direct person who approaches problems directly, trying to resolve them as quickly as possible. I've taken on a number of intractable problems in the legislature and brought them to closure. In many cases these problems had languished for years. I've been described as a "no BS" guy, and I value this. I try to be relatively transparent on where I am on an issue.

The King County Executive's main impact on the region comes through leadership, which is a complex trait. I was the driving force behind this year's change in the definition of "basic education" in the legislature, something that hadn't been changed in 30 years. This took 4 years of work and the building of a large coalition both inside and outside the legislature. I built a team of capable legislators, a process that produced a quality proposal, and a bill that could move forward in one of the worst economic times of the last century. Building the outside pressure was equally important – I gave countless speeches all over the state, met with other legislators and produced compelling written pieces. During the legislative session all this prep work paid off – we were able to create a movement to get this done and apply pressure at the right times to move the proposal forward.

In addition to providing leadership, the Executive is responsible for developing complex policy, and must be able to make decisions that have long-term impact. I'm a quick study and able to both build long-term policy that works and explain it to others. For example, this year I re-wrote the sales tax policy in Washington around digital products, trying to make sure we don't lose all our revenue as software, music, and movies switch to digital instead of tangible formats. I was able to preserve this revenue while cooperating with the business community to fix enough related problems that I got their support on the legislation.

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.

This year we changed the definition of basic education in Washington. This definition creates the legal basis for how school budgets are funded at the state level. The new definition is fairer, less random, and more focused on delivering resources to places where they are needed, most especially a larger tilt towards disadvantaged and otherwise at-risk students. More children will be prepared to succeed in the modern world. This drives out billions of dollars, and is a very big change in the system. My ability to do this is an indication of my growth as a leader in the political arena. I built both internal and external teams, built support prior to the session, managed communications, delegated key parts to other people, and at the critical time I stepped back from being in the spotlight to allow other people to be the prime sponsors of the bill, which was critical to final passage.

Changing these formulas is similar to much of the work of the next few years in King County as we change the underlying relationships between cities and the County. We need to work out a new working relationship – King County 2.0. This will involve renegotiating tax policy, distribution of services, labor relationships, etc. Building a coalition of leaders in King County will be harder than in the legislature, as the egos are larger and in many cases the interests are more entrenched. If we don't do it we will fail as a community.

Another legislative project illustrates different personality attributes that will be important for the King County Executive in the next few years. I allude to the re-write of the sales tax code for digital products in my answer to question 2. This was a project unrelated to my core reason for being in the legislature, but was one that needed to be done by someone with my ability to understand complex issues. The legal issues surrounding the tax authority here are very, very complex, and many people have significant money at stake in the result. I had serious goals that I was unwilling to compromise on – preserving the tax base for the next few decades being the most important. I cut a hard deal with the business community that they felt was fair. They would have preferred a different bill, but this

was right at the edge of what they would accept. The Executive will need to negotiate many deals like this with the labor unions that must be bargained with, and the deals will need to be hard, but fair.

I was asked to take over a product team at Microsoft that had withered away to a shell, with almost none of the original members left. This was a huge rescue project. Key customers for the company used this product as core parts of their business and we needed to deliver. I was able to hire a great team, build a solid organization, and ship the a major upgrade within 12 months. This required learning an entire new product category – and customer base. The product was a great success, stabilizing the customer set and expanding into new markets with a project that was faster, more stable, and easier to support.

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.

1997-2002 Cub Scout Pack 435 - Den Leader, Cubmaster. I substantially improved a Cub Scout pack over the 5 years I was involved in it, and handed off leadership to the next generation of leaders.

1999-2002 Cascade District Boy Scouts of America. I was Vice-Chair of the district council for the scouts while my son was involved in Cub scouting. I helped develop several activities including a Bike Rodeo and a Scout Expo at Bellevue Square Mall.

2000-present Bellevue Schools Foundation Trustee. I helped with program design and fundraising for "Project Discovery," the Bellevue Schools Foundation effort to improve science education in Elementary and Middle Schools in Bellevue. As a trustee I help set the strategic direction for the foundation and with fundraising. I serve on the strategic priorities and marketing committees.

2002, 2006 and 2008 Steering Committee, Bellevue Quality Schools. I worked with the committee that managed the election campaign for the Bellevue School District levies in both 2002 and 2006. In 2006 I managed the messages for the campaign in addition to managing the speaker bureau, during the legislative session. We passed with over 75% of the vote. In 2008 I largely provided strategic direction for a half-billion dollar bond issue, the largest in the state to pass.

2004-present Hopelink board of directors. I have been asked to serve as a board member for the Eastside's largest human services organization. My role as a governmental representative on the board is to provide information about state budget process, and to learn how human services can be delivered effectively. I find this invaluable in my role on the Ways and Means committee.

2008-present Infrequent Housing for Humanity volunteer. I frame with my son, both because I find it a valuable service for the community and because it's a great bonding experience with my 17-year old son.

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

The King County Executive manages an operation with a \$5 billion annual budget, thousands of employees, and many, many different responsibilities that are crucial to the region. The ability to manage this operation, keep it on track, budget effectively, and deliver the maximum level of service for the tax dollars we collect is crucial. I bring the private sector management experience of being a General manager at Microsoft and the ability to create clarity of vision and measurable goals for units of the government that will help to resolve long-festering problems.

In addition to the day to day management of a very large operation, The King County Executive is the only broadly elected regional leader who can help turn the shared vision of the region into an implementable plan and work to actually turn the plan into action. This requires the Executive to have the communication ability to clearly articulate the vision, and the consensus-building ability to get local governments and other players to make compromises so that we have a plan we can follow. The region needs leadership on transportation, land use, budgeting, the overlap of services with the cities and other local governments, environmental issues like stormwater runoff that require an uncommon level of cooperation.