

## 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
<b>Nick</b>		<b>Licata</b>

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

**Seattle City Council Position #6**

3. Are you the incumbent?            x Yes  No

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

**39 years**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**39 years**

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

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#### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:            People With Nick Licata

Address:                      2518 South Brandon Court

City/State/Zip:              Seattle, WA 98108

Campaign Phone:            206-453-9168

Campaign Fax:              

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Campaign Website:         <http://nicklicata2009.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)
<b>Seattle City Councilmember</b>	<b>Elective</b>	<b>1998-present</b>	<b>President, 2006-7</b>

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

Office Title	Year of Run
<b>Seattle City Council</b>	<b>1979</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?

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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 public office because I want Seattle City government to be a responsive, open and innovative government offering the public the best opportunity to improve their lives in each of the following issue areas. Although the specifics may change, the major challenges that Seattle faces have been around for awhile: 1) sustaining a growing economy while retaining Seattle's quality of life that attracts people and business from around the nation if not the world; 2) improving transportation into and out of the city so that goods and people can circulate with minimum congestion; 3) providing public safety so that our criminal justice system rehabilitates people and not recycles them in and out of our jails; 4) and finally meeting the needs of those who are most dependent on public services, whether it be housing or health care, so that they can lead productive lives and contribute to Seattle's vitality.

In each of these areas I have pursued solutions that meet the following three principles I believe good government should follow to guide and shape its decisions: 1) decision making should be as open and as transparent as is practical, 2) the distribution of public resources should be allocated in a manner that takes into account that the greatest needs of each community is given due consideration, and 3) that the expenditure of public funds should be subject to a cost-benefit analysis so that, while allowing for experimentation, the public can be assured that their tax dollars are being used wisely and in a manner that produces measurable results.

I will briefly touch on each of the above areas; during my interview I will gladly provide more information on how I have and will apply these principles in addressing each subject area.

- 1) We need to support growth management objectives by increasing our in-city population through transit oriented development and by providing for greater open space and parks.
- 2) Because the budget provided for the bored tunnel option to replace the Viaduct now matches the estimated project cost, there are reasonable grounds for moving forward with it.
- 3) The city and county must continue their programs providing non-incarceration treatment of offenders and potential offenders to allow for ample time to determine if a new jail facility is needed.
- 4) A new housing levy would be most cost-effective if it addresses that portion of the population in greatest need of low-income housing.

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

My most important personal traits that relate to my being an effective public servant are that I believe in cooperation rather than divisiveness, in the pursuit of obtainable goals and in the strength to have the courage to address grievances that others ignore. Last year I wrote an article for a national magazine on how my personal life experiences have shaped my ability to be an elected official. I have attached an abbreviated version of it for any of the committee members who wish to read it. I concluded the article by saying that I drew three lessons about working with others from living in a cooperative for 25 years:

**First Lesson: Learn to expect the unexpected and accept it, don't fight it.**

**Second Lesson: The more room you make for others, the more room there will be for you.**

**Lesson Three: Make allies, not enemies, by talking.**

These traits have allowed me to be an effective Councilmember serving in a small legislative body.

I also have two complimentary traits that I have developed during and since my college years. I enjoy doing detail-oriented, analytical work. I did analytical work while a graduate student understanding and then critiquing the methodology of academic studies to determine their reliability. This training has enabled me to probe a little deeper into the assumptions being used in the studies that are presented to the Council to help us shape our policy decisions. I ask questions and expect direct answers, not vague ones. And I continue asking them until I and other Councilmembers have the information we need to make a good decision.

Also for fifteen years I did the detailed work of an insurance broker reading, understanding and then explaining difficult to read insurance policies to businesses and professionals in a manner that allowed them to understand what they were signing. This has allowed me to ask for and enjoy reading primary research material and also to help explain it to others. For example, on the issue of building a city wide streetcar network, I referenced the issue of the cost-effectiveness on South Lake Union Streetcar Operations agreement and cautioned the Council to avoid future significant financial obligations, in which due course the Council agreed to include cost-effectiveness as a criteria for future lines.

Other examples of this type of detailed research on issues has been recorded and shared with the public through my newsletter, Urban Politics, which is the longest running political newsletter in this region. All 277 back issues are available on my Council website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/council/licata/up00dex.htm>

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.

I am particularly proud of the work I have done in public safety. I was chair of public safety for 4 years during that time I was able to push forward a number of objectives: increase the number of police, increase citizen access to police data, initiate pedestrian safety techniques, and strengthen civil rights and civilian oversight of the police department..

I pushed through increasing funding for additional Police officers for the first time since the late 1970s. I did it by involving the public to determine what the City's highest public safety priority should be. I held a city-wide, geographically-based public meeting, and it resulted in a clear expression of Seattle residents, neighborhood groups, and neighborhood chambers, as well as the Downtown business community, for more police officers. This approach created a broad, deep base of support. Success in obtaining funding was thus rooted directly in citizens' desires.

I initiated regular public police reports on crime statistics and trends to the Public Safety Committee. Before this practice, there was no regular reporting of statistics to the Council or to the public. Although information was available on line it was not user friendly. For the first time the public and the Council could see what types of crimes were occurring in different parts of the city in a simple and comprehensive manner.

In the area of pedestrian safety, I lobbied the Council, the Mayor and the state legislature to allow the city to initiate a pilot program of installing red light cameras to catch vehicles running red lights in critical intersections. I lobbied for the state legislation and once passed I got the Council to pass its own legislation allowing for the installation of the cameras. I worked with the Mayor's office and the Seattle Police Department to roll it out to the public. It has proven to be a successful program and has since expanded to more intersections.

At the suggestion of the former Police Guild's President, I set up the first ever public hearing before contract negotiations began to allow the public an opportunity to address the Council on what kind of civilian oversight functions they would like to see the City pursue in the collective bargaining agreement. Since then I have passed legislation incorporating it into our municipal code. I also have recently passed legislation that codifies the rights of citizens to parade without having their rights infringed upon by the City. I passed this legislation after the City lost a lawsuit on this matter.

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 received a M.A. from U.W. in 1974 in sociology and although originally I expected to move out of Seattle I found myself engaged in community activity. I joined the University Community Council because I felt that students should consider themselves part of the broader community. I became an officer and was involved in negotiations with Safeco Insurance company in locating their officer tower in the University District. We settled with them and both sides came away gaining something. From that experience I learned that pursuing a clear agenda with the flexibility to have an open dialogue can lead to success without losing sight of one's objectives or principles.

I repeated that approach when I was on the Council and helped negotiate a compromise between neighbors and the Arboretum Foundation that allowed the Foundation to adopt a new master plan but also assured the community that the Arboretum would not see as much new office and building development as was originally planned.

When I see that there is a structural problem in our government or in our economy I have worked with those affected to address these problems. I helped lead the Coalition Against Redlining banking practices in Seattle. As a result I testified before Congress and helped write both state and federal legislation culminating the Community Reinvestment Act, barring redlining practices.

I took that same approach in supporting changes in the City's approach to impounding the vehicles of those who have had their license suspended for non-payment of fines. Government policy can make the difference between citizens with little money sinking, or alternately staying above water as productive members of society. In 1998 I voted to pass a law that allowed the City to impound vehicles for those with non-dangerous violations.. Because I had voted to pass the law, I felt a responsibility to monitor its impact.

In 2004, I moved to amend that law because my research indicated the law affected two classes of people: 1) truly dangerous drivers who presented a public safety threat, for whom I believed the law must continue; and 2) people who lived on thin economic margins, and the loss of their car could make the difference between being a productive member of society and being homeless. I believed in amending the law as it affected them and was successful in that effort. As a result many citizens who were unable to pay off their fines because they could not get to work were able to do so.

Other civic activities that I have engaged in are listed below.

In the mid seventies I published Seattle's People's Yellow Pages, the first widely circulated guide to social services and community organizations, selling thousands of copies to social service agencies around the city. From the profits I started a community newspaper, The Seattle Sun, which had a circulation of 25,000 and lasted about 10 years. Some of the writers went onto become full time journalists and are still working today.

In the eighties as an officer of the International District Rotary Club I helped lead the effort to bring women into the men only institution. Working with other members of that club, we filed a suit against the International Rotary and allowed women into our club. We were the first club to do so without being expelled from the International. Our amicus brief was part of the U.S. Supreme Court decision which finally allowed women to join the Rotary.

In the nineties I helped form Citizens for More Important Things which successfully won a ballot issue on restricting the amount of public funds that could do to the construction of a public facility for private use, in this instance it was the Safeco Field stadium. The state legislature met in emergency session a week later and overturned the vote through identifying other public revenue streams.

Since 1998 I've been on the Council and have devoted my time and energy to shaping public policy from within City government.

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

There are three major duties of the City Council:

- 1) Allocation of public resources through management and approval of the City budget and all City spending.
- 2) Setting the legal structure of the City through approval of all city laws.
- 3) Monitoring and holding the Executive branch of government accountable in implementation of policies, and spending approved by the Council.

I believe and have striven to have these functions occur in a manner that is as transparent as is possible. In addition it is important to include the public in decision making. While perhaps not essential in the short-term for completion of government purposes, it is essential for the long-term health of civic life in Seattle. While it is more time-consuming it leads to better decisions in the long-term and policies that are more likely to stand the test of time, and less likely to need to be amended in following years.