

**SECTION I**

**BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION**

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Mike		O'Brien

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

**Seattle City Council Position 8**

3. Are you the incumbent?  Yes  No

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

**I have been a Seattle resident since birth (1968).**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**same as above**

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

**CAMPAIGN CONTACTS**

Campaign Name: O'Brien for Seattle

Address: 604 N 45<sup>th</sup> St.

City/State/Zip: Seattle, WA 98103

Campaign Phone: 206-629-8879

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

Campaign E-mail: info@obrienforseattle.com

Campaign Website: www.obrienforseattle.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)

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?
- 

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 think this is a critical moment for our city, a time for us to choose whether we want to continue running our local government as we have been, or to make bold decisions that will take us in a new direction. I see evidence all around me that people are ready for serious change, for trying new policies that will allow us to create the future we want for our city. Yet I consistently hear from our local leaders that because of the dictates of 'political reality', we cannot make these changes. Adhering to this vision of political reality may be politically safe, but it will not make use of Seattle's amazing capacity for innovation or solve any of the current problems that seem intractable because our leaders are reluctant to try something new. I want to be a leader who will redefine political reality and seize this opportunity to set Seattle on a path to be equitable, inclusive, environmentally vibrant, and economically sustainable.**

**Specifically, I will have the political will to create enough housing in Seattle so that all people who work in our city can afford to live in our city. I will make the transportation investments that meet both our mobility needs and our climate change goals. And I will make investments that support our communities and our education system so that our schools can focus on educating and we don't need to build more jails in the future because we are failing our youth.**

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

**I am passionate, dedicated, visionary and courageous, but done in a way to build relationships, even while disagreeing, as opposed to burning bridges.**

**I always strive to remain open to all sides of policy arguments and hear out everyone's perspective so that we can work together to figure out the best solution for the public good. Rather than presuming to know the answer to every question, I try to bring all the relevant voices to the table and create a respectful atmosphere where consensus can be reached.**

**When I find a cause that I believe in, I put everything I have into supporting it. For example, I quit my job last year to advocate full-time for public transit (Proposition 1).**

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.

**As chair of the Sierra Club, I ran head first into "Political Reality" when the RTID/Sound Transit package was created and almost all elected and civic leaders, including many environmental organization got behind the package. The unified support wasn't because everyone thought it was a great package – most didn't like it. They got behind the package because most believed that the package represented this political reality: you need to spend billions of dollars on roads to get investment in light rail. I helped lead the fight to oppose this package, holding a vigorous public debate with many leaders who were traditional allies. It took all the courage I had to stand up, day after day, and fight for what I knew we were capable of – a smarter transportation investment that improved mobility and could reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The pressure to go along with the status quo was immense, but by being willing to fight the status quo, we showed that not only was there a better way, but that the public agreed. This chapter was finished last fall when I collaborated with many of the people we were fighting in 2007 to bring back a mass transit system without road expansion which passed with overwhelming public support. Having the courage to fight for the best that we are capable of in a manner that allows for collaboration later is a skill often lacking in elected officials.**

**For all of 2008 I served as one of 29 citizens on the Viaduct Stakeholder Advisory Committee. This was a diverse group of citizens representing business, freight, labor, environmental, and neighborhood interests, brought together to provide guidance to the departments of transportation on the values we wanted reflected in the process. The collaborative process was quite time consuming, but very valuable. At the end, I personally had a much better understanding of other people's perspectives, and I had immense respect for everyone and their willingness to invest their time to make the city better for all. At the end of that process, the departments of transportation advanced two recommendations that largely met our stated goals. Collaborating with people who do not always start in the same place as you and**

**reaching a consensus is a valuable skill in all aspects of life, but especially so in public office.  
(Our leaders ignored our recommendations and picked something else, but that is another  
story.)**

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.

**1998-2008 – I was Chief Financial Officer at Stokes Lawrence, P.S., a \$10 million, 80 employee firm in Seattle. At Stokes I honed my financial and analytical skills to make sound decisions within financial constraints. I also developed skills to communicate these recommendations in a meaningful way to an audience (law firm partners) that often had little training in financial analysis.**

**2000-present – Various volunteer positions at the Sierra Club’s Washington State chapter, including co-chair of the political committee (2003-2006), state board member (2004-present) and chapter chairperson (2006-2009). I worked on strategic planning at the highest level of the organization, on down to grass roots organizing with our membership and the public on the streets.**

**2006-present - I am a founding board member of Seattle Great City Initiative (now just “Great City”) – an organization of environmentalists, neighborhood leaders, business people, and citizens working together to enhance our quality of life, help preserve our region’s natural beauty, and make Seattle a model of economic and environmental sustainability. As a member of the executive committee I work collaboratively with diverse interests to move the organization and public policy toward a common goal of a better city for all of us.**

**1998 – present – parent of an 8 and 11 year old. Skills learned include negotiation, motivation, leadership, and delegation. This is an ongoing process I have yet to master.**

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

**The City Council's job is to represent the people of Seattle by enacting laws and approving resolutions that create public benefit. It also has the responsibility to approve the budget. Its greatest responsibility is to ensure that city policy serves the needs of our citizens and keeps us moving in a healthy direction.**

**The hardest part of the job, though, is being a leader. “Leader” is not just a word. It does not mean ignoring the public, rather it means actually articulating a vision for the future and then explaining that vision to the public and taking the actions to get us there. When I hear our elected officials talk about “political reality”, I think that is political speak for “what I can do if I want to get re-elected in four years.” A councilmember’s job is not to get re-elected – it is to make Seattle the best Seattle possible, both today and on into the future.**