

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
Dorsol	E	Plants

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

Seattle City Council Position 4

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

2 years and 1 month

5. How long have you resided in King County?

2 years and 1 month

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Campaign To Elect Dorsol Plants

Address: PO Box 811

City/State/Zip: Seattle, WA 98121

Campaign Phone: 206-355-7900

Campaign Fax: _____

Campaign E-mail: dorsol.plants@gmail.com

Campaign Website: www.dorsolplants.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)
Precinct Control Officer	Elected	Feb 08 - Present	Lead my Precinct Caucus

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.)

I am running for office because, at this moment in Seattle's history the City Council has a great potential to make positive changes for the people of Seattle. Currently we are a city that has become locked in process, has stumbled over communication, and has been hampered by a government that is not completely open with the people it serves. I realized this while working as a Case Manager at a homeless shelter and as a neighborhood activist fighting to strengthen my community and question the inevitability of the municipal jail. In order to do the things that are necessary to make our neighborhoods safer and more affordable, fix our traffic problems, preserve our schools, and end homelessness, we must first have a system that communicates. I know this is true because I have seen firsthand how good communication can save time, money, and lives while serving in Iraq. In a time of budget cuts and fiscal crises, we need a City Council that doesn't take a backseat to the Mayor, but is instead a strong and acting legislative body in its own right. This Council would be one that is completely open—not simply careful to comply with the letter of laws, but actively reaching out to involve a broad spectrum of citizens. A Council that doesn't just look at its own direct responsibilities, but also monitors and advocates to agencies such as the King County Council when they make decisions that aren't in the best interest of the people in Seattle. In recognizing the needs of our City and the present City Council, I feel I would best fit the bill. I will bring a fresh, dynamic perspective to the council, one that is open and looking for new and better ways to do things. I will be someone who uses the latest in technology to not just improve lives but to improve the way that government functions and receives feedback from the people of Seattle.

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

There are three traits that I will utilize above any others as a member of the City Council.

Listening: What we need on the council is someone who is willing to not just talk, but listen to the problems that everyone is facing in Seattle. As a counselor and case manager I use this skill every single day. I have found that before I can work to help someone, I have to first hear where they are coming from. Listening for me isn't just the act, but also the mentality that one brings. Good listening enables a person not to simply hear the problem, but also to hear what those being affected have to say about it, provide empathy and room for constructive criticism, and find the common ground that is always there.

Dedication: As a combat veteran, I have held on to one valuable lesson from the Warrior's Ethos. It is one simple but powerful statement: "I will always place the mission first". For me seeking the office of City Council isn't about a chance at achieving a prestigious position or getting to have my way in city politics, but in accepting a lifestyle of public service. I have always believed that the most powerful example of leadership isn't the ability to tell someone what to do, but the ability to come alongside people to achieve goals. I will come at this role from that perspective, someone who will always put the people of Seattle first.

Advocacy: I have always believed in standing for what I believe in. It's not enough to say quietly in our homes that we believe and support a cause. We must take up the banner of the cause and stand up for it. I have done this my whole life. Even before I was eligible to vote, I pledged my body and my life to protect and defend the ideals of our country. As I came to discover that the real need was for Americans to protect our rights at home in our own communities, I dedicated my time to working for and verbally testifying on behalf of one of the most vulnerable and forgotten populations in Seattle. I will bring this experience to the Council and not just legislate from my office, but become a strong and visible presence working on behalf of Seattle.

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.

The first of many accomplishments I am proud of is my service in the US Army and my deployments to Iraq. While I have some personal hang-ups from my time spent there, and in fact feel very strongly that I went through the same trajectory that the country did—belief turning to disillusionment as emerging evidence did not fit the stories we were told. Yet, despite this, I am proud to have served my country and to have fought beside the amazing men and women that I served with. The reasons for the invasion may have been entirely wrong, but we did remove a dictator who held weekly "Murder-Rape" parties, we provided food and water to some of the poorest in the world, and allowed a whole generation of women to know they could step out of the shadows and be recognized as human beings.

Secondly, I am proud that after months of diligent work with two of my fellow co-workers we were able to get the Family and Adult Service Center included in the City's budget. It was the first time our agency was included in the budget, and with the growing demands of the economic crisis our services were needed more than ever. I believe our real success was not simply mobilizing the homeless advocates in the city, but empowering the members of our shelter to testify on their own behalf. Because of this effort we were included in the Real Change Newspaper as one of their Real Change Agents, a title that I am proud to have attained.

Thirdly, I am immensely proud to see just how far the "No Jail" cause has grown. The issue first started while I was serving as chair of the Highland Park Action Committee. Initially our neighborhood, which was slated for two potential jail sites, was dismissed as a NIMBY organization. Realizing that a jail would negatively impact all neighborhoods in Seattle, we began to reach out to every neighborhood selected as a potential jail site, forming an alliance with our northern neighbors in Haller Lake. Together we worked to demonstrate that what we were saying was not, "Not in my Neighborhood" but "Not in Anyone's Neighborhood." From there we started working with the Real Change newspaper and launched a petition to place I-100 on the ballot. Other groups throughout Seattle have taken notice, and the issue has grown into a huge movement of people working to question the effectiveness of incarceration for petty crimes and to end Racial Disparity in jails.

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.

During my work as the Chair of HPAC I spent time working with and building relationships with other neighborhood organization to foster opposition against the jail. This is something we need on the council: a person who can get differences set aside and bring a bunch of different people and organizations together for a common purpose.

As a Counselor and Case Manager I've learned to work with individuals who are suffering from mental illness or PTSD that makes it difficult for them to trust others. I've learned how to establish a relationship of trust that opens the doors of communication that may have been closed for years. Good communication and trust-building is a skill that is helpful with all people and all groups. This will be extremely useful on a Council that is suffering from communication problems. We need someone who is used to working together and building trust amongst a whole group of different government agencies and the people of Seattle.

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

There are to me two facets of a city councilmember that I feel are two of the most important things the council should be doing. The first of these is serving as an Advocate for the people. Its well known and understood that a Seattle Councilmember makes city law and regulation, but when it comes to issues affecting Seattle but not directly under the Council's area of control, their answer tends to be "talk to someone else". Councilmembers, however, are representing the population of Seattle so that when something happens, like King County Metro announcing that they are cutting service, someone needs to stand up and ask important questions such as why, how long, and how do we get it back. As a City Councilmember, I'm not going to just accept the City as my area of influence and ignore the County, Olympia, or even D.C. if what they are doing hurts the people I represent in Seattle.

The second duty I feel very strongly about is that of a Public Servant. City Councilmembers are more than just legislators, but public examples of their views for Seattle. As a councilmember, it would do no good for me to approve the bag tax, but fail in my own life to use reusable bags. How can I expect the people of Seattle to use alternative means of transportation if I am going to City Hall every day in my own single-occupancy fossil-fueled car? It was very telling for me that neither the Mayor nor the City Council issued an immediate outcry or moved to take appropriate measures during the snowstorm of last year. While countless people waited for hours at bus stops and others like my co-worker suffered serious injuries falling on the ice, the City only approved the use of existing salt stores after the fact. I believe very strongly in being someone who practices what I preach, and that is how I intend to act as a City Councilmember. Much like what is stated in the US Military's style of leadership, never ask or expect someone to do anything you wouldn't or are unwilling to do yourself.