



Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate -

Thank you for taking the time to provide your point of view on the following six questions. Your candid responses will help us to inform and engage the nearly 150,000 tech employees who live and work in the city of Seattle. This in turn will help you engage them more effectively as an electorate. Once we have processed responses from all the candidates, we will invite selected finalist candidates to meet with members of the WTIA Advocacy Committee to gain a more thorough understanding of your answers.

While the WTIA represents the interests of more than 10,000 tech companies in our state, the Advocacy Committee includes a sample of those companies. Each member of the committee is a subject matter expert who contributes time and effort to help steer the WTIA in achieving advocacy goals for the industry. The WTIA Advocacy Committee includes experts from the following organizations --

Accenture	Amazon	Big Fish Games	BitTitan	BoldIQ
Comcast	Expedia	F5	Facebook	Flying Fish
Flying Fish VC	Galvanize	Google	Impinj	Madrona Ventures
Microsoft	Moz	Nintendo	Sprint	T-Mobile
Tune	Uber	UW CSE	WSU	Zillow

Please send your responses to the following questions to WTIA Legislative Aide Ian Griswold
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- 1. Seattle faces many challenges associated with rapid growth. What are your top 3 priorities for the city and why? (500 word limit)**
 - Economic Development:** Small businesses are the cornerstones of our neighborhoods. We create jobs, support the local economy, and give back to our communities. Seattle businesses, regardless of size or sector, generate more than 60% of Seattle's General Sub fund dollars but it is my sense that the value of a healthy business climate is not currently acknowledged on City Council. As a small neighborhood business owner, I'll bring a fresh perspective and some common sense to City Hall to improve our business climate of keep Seattle the vibrant, dynamic, livable city it is. That means ensuring that our local businesses thrive, especially our most vulnerable immigrant and minority-owned businesses.
 - Affordability/Growth/Land Use:** My neighbors are struggling with Washington's regressive tax structure and it's difficult for my employees to find apartments with affordable rents despite their generous compensation and benefits. Seattle is a growing city and the City Council must steer that growth wisely yet boldly to maintain affordability and limit our carbon footprint. We must add density to our urban centers and villages and along transit lines to make our transit system more efficient. We can embrace growth without losing our quality of life if we also commit to maintaining our public assets such as parks, community centers, and roads and ensuring that public

safety resources keep pace with our growing, diversifying population.

- **Sustainability/Environment:** Less than ten years ago, when I was Chief of Staff to Councilmember Richard Conlin, Seattle was on the cutting edge of climate policy but protecting the environment has fallen off the agenda of late. Seattle will not make a dent in its carbon footprint unless it commits to incentivizing renewable energy technologies, energy efficient buildings and construction, and other forms of energy conservation. The City of Seattle must incentivize private sector water and energy conservation by expanding programs such as Envirostars (on which I serve as a member of the steering committee) and City Light's LED rebate program. Finally, we can do more to reduce pollution to our lakes, urban waterways, and Puget Sound by reducing reliance on cars which means emphasizing mode shift – transit, bike, pedestrian infrastructure. Increasing transportation choices and getting people out of their cars is also crucial for freight mobility. Our region is growing which means more trucks delivering goods (like grain and beer!) and more construction equipment on the road, especially in the most rapidly growing urban centers and villages. Our roads must work for all modes so we can work, play, and live in this increasingly dynamic region while reducing our carbon emissions.

2. Most of the world only knows Seattle as the Space Needle, Sleepless in Seattle, or the Seahawks. What will Seattle be known for on the world stage in 20 years? (500 word limit)

I had the opportunity to see Seattle through the eyes of another culture when I conducted my doctoral research for my PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology (UW, 1997) in Sao Paulo, Brazil where I spent 3 months in 1992 and a full year in 1994 - 1995. When I told people where I was from, they mentioned grunge music and Microsoft. If I were to return, Brazilians would probably agree with Americans that Amazon has been the homegrown, history-changing Seattle-based company. Indeed, Seattle's technology sector has contributed to enormous economic, cultural, and social change both here and across the globe and – if City Hall doesn't abdicate their responsibility – will continue to do so for years.

In Richard Conlin's last year on council, I staffed the \$50,000 budget request for the tech startup incubator because we believed that tech startups are as crucial to Seattle's future zeitgeist and timber or airplanes but these companies – facing enormous national and international competition for capital – needed a boost from the City.

Amazon's economic engine will have spurred tremendous population growth and tech industry expansion which, in turn, spur innovations and investment into other realms of civic life. Just as gold, timber, planes, coffee, software, online shopping, and craft beer have shaped the Seattle we now inhabit, waves of unpredictable innovation will shape the Seattle of tomorrow. I do not know enough about the nascent technological break-throughs happening today to predict what Seattle will be known for in 20 years, but I am absolutely sure that innovations from the technology sector will be among the top 3 indispensable tools in the world.

3. Seattle is seen as a progressive city. How have other progressive cities created successful partnerships with employers? How do you see that playing out in Seattle? (500 word limit)

I know that the WTIA engages community partnerships to serve both the technology industry and provide opportunities for Washington's workforce. That includes bringing together educators at the higher education level, working with academics to structure curricula to meet industry demands based on what tech employers see as crucial in today's dynamic sector. I do not know how responsive Seattle has been in facilitating this kind of collaboration based on the fact that the

startup incubator that Richard helped fund was met with a fair amount of resistance – and that was three years ago. However, I do know that the WTIA is working with Northwest Innovation Resource Center and the Bellingham and Spokane mayor's offices to provide training and resources for entrepreneurs in those cities. If elected, I would prioritize these types of community partnerships within the city to make sure startups thrive and are able to hire local talent. Please see question 5 for more on this issue.

4. Seattle has a booming economy, in large part driven by the tech sector. This creates opportunity and challenges. In your view, what is the role of the tech industry as a partner in creating a better city as we grow? (500 word limit)

The technology industry contributes to making Seattle a better place in three main ways: First, as the engine of Seattle's economy it is a crucial source of funding, both in terms of private capital and public revenue. Secondly, the tech industry is an important source of philanthropy. In April, the Paul G Allen Family Foundation and the Mayor's office announced a partnership to develop a housing and service center serving homeless families with children and Amazon has created a shelter in one of its South Lake Union buildings. These examples illustrate that, contrary to popular misconception, the tech industry plays an important philanthropic role in creating a better city. We must recognize, however, that tech companies must stabilize their revenue stream before becoming fully engaged in civic life so the City should do everything possible to aid tech startups and support the sector as a whole.

Finally, the innovation and creativity inherent in the technology sector could be applied in the development of solutions to Seattle's challenges such as traffic congestion or reducing our carbon footprint if the City more proactively engaged the tech sector. For example, Seattle could partner with a software company to create better signalization to improve traffic circulation and reduce emissions. The City could incentivize the production of biodigesters, heat recapture, and CO2 recapture systems that are scalable -- and affordable -- to the growing craft beer sector. These two examples illustrate the potential for fruitful partnerships but Seattle leaders must engage the tech sector to capture the benefit of similar opportunities for improving our city. If elected, I will make that a priority. In the meantime, I am supportive and intrigued by Project Ion in which WTIA partners directly with community-based organizations to generate creative solutions to making Seattle a better place as we grow.

5. What is the number one challenge facing the tech industry - and what do you see as the City's primary role in helping solve that dilemma? (500 word limit)

The number one challenge facing the tech industry in Washington is finding and retaining talent. This is due to two main factors:

1. Education: Washington's failure to fund both k-12 and higher education (particularly STEM) is restricting the pipeline of talent required to fill Seattle tech industries' hiring capacity. As a result, local firms hire staff from out of state and out of country to fill everything from entry to senior positions. If Washington's public education system were better, the sons and daughters of local families would find meaningful employment opportunities in our tech landscape which would reduce the HR costs of tech companies (moving, training, churn) and better support Seattle's intergenerational workforce. To solve this dilemma, Seattle could wield all its lobbying heft toward bringing everyone to the table in Olympia together for a funding solution to McCleary before time runs out in this legislative session and prioritize funding for computer science at our public colleges and universities.

2. **Business climate:** There is a growing perception that the City does not value the tech industry and sees its growth as a problem instead of a benefit. City Hall, at the behest of special interests, enacts ordinances – or tries to – that punish businesses instead of helping them thrive. The recent effort to create a head tax to fund the Office of Labor Standards would have essentially punished job creation and is reflective of Council’s dismissal of the importance of the contributions of the private sector to Seattle’s Common Good. In addition, Seattle’s lack of focus on basic services – roads, public safety, parks, schools (over which the City has little influence), libraries, utilities – diminishes the vigor of our business climate by making life more difficult and expensive for everyone. Only a functioning city can attract the business talent and investments needed to support Seattle’s tech community. The solution is to interrupt the status quo and partner with the business community, get back to basics, and spend existing tax dollars responsibly before seeking additional revenue sources such as the Seattle income tax which is not only of questionable constitutionality but also could depress Seattle tech companies from recruiting future employees. Labor regulations are also a factor at the state level, as is attracting a diverse workforce a tax code based too heavily on sales, property, and the B&O on gross receipts, which is disadvantageous to startups. Finally, I understand that a Research and Development tax credit bill did not go forward in Olympia but if elected, I would advocate for including any effort to assist R&D and startup support in our state legislative agenda.

6. What is the appropriate role of a city in helping to solve the challenge of portable benefits in a gig economy? (500 word limit)

This is an evolving issue that I need to research more to determine the appropriate role the City should play. But from what I understand so far, portable benefits are a smart and innovative idea to help us deal with the fundamental challenges in how people work in the emerging gig economy. We need to update how we address the needs of workers and the very significant changes in the way we live in the 21st century (multiple jobs, employers, etc.). Forward-looking gig companies are expressing openness to the idea as are other WTIA members I have spoken with such as Amazon who have a growing portion of employees who elude traditional labor classification. I’d like to see smart, thoughtful federal legislation on portable benefits that: a) acknowledges the valuable benefits that technology and gig companies provide to our economy and community, b) does not stifle innovation, and c) allows 21st Century workers to continue to have their needs met. Again, I need to learn more about the specific role the City can play in helping solve the challenge of portable benefits but my bottom line is to support both the flexibility afforded to employees choosing to participate in the gig economy and make sure that we do not stifle the innovation of the tech platforms at the foundation of the gig economy.