

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
Larry		Phillips

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?

I have resided in Seattle since my birth in 1951.

5. How long have you resided in King County?

I have resided in King County since my birth in 1951.

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

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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)
King County Council	Elective	1992-present	Council Chair 2004, 2005, 2006 Budget Chair 2001 (4 th Qtr), 2002, 2003; 2008 Growth Management Chair Regional Water Quality Chair
Sound Transit Board	Appointive	2004-present	Central Link Oversight Committee Chair Executive Committee Member
Washington State Legislature, State Representative	Elective	1989-1991	

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

Office Title	Year of Run
N/A	

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 the office of King County Executive to continue serving the people of King County, and to bring renewed energy and focus to protecting vital county services and building infrastructure projects. Right now, elected officials at all levels must lead to strengthen our economy. I am fighting to begin and complete significant infrastructure improvements that will not only build for the future, but also support family-wage jobs for working men and women and attract billions of dollars from federal and state sources to be spent in our county and region. I will also stabilize local and regional government services for public safety, public health, transit and our most vulnerable citizens – a critical priority in these times of economic uncertainty for King County’s citizens. I will also continue King County’s leadership role in managing growth on a regional basis, which can only be done with effective King County Executive leadership.

This leadership vision for King County can be seen in the issues on which I have led and built my career on – managing growth, reining in sprawl, promoting urban renewal and re-development, protecting open space, water quality, and natural resources for future generations, and supporting strategic investments in transit and transportation, like Sound Transit and its expansion, and the Viaduct Replacement project. As a King County Councilmember, I have worked very hard to provide policy direction, executive agency oversight, and budgetary decision-making in each of these areas and much more, but there is much more to do.

King County government is in transition as we move from a local service provider in urban areas to a true regional government serving the cross-jurisdictional needs of 1.8 million people. Building on our successful implementation of the Growth Management Act (1992-present) and the successful merger with METRO (1994-present), we must continue to build transportation and transit infrastructure, provide law, safety and justice services through our County’s Superior and District Courts, Prosecutor, Sheriff, and Detention programs, promote effective health and human services, preserve and protect clean air, water quality and critical habitat, and enhance parks, recreation, and trail opportunities for our families. And given our continuing general fund shortfall, we must do so through fiscally responsible methods and efficiencies.

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

My most important personal characteristics as an elected official include:

- **my ability to remain focused on, and produce effective solutions for substantive issues as they arise;**
- **to listen, ask good questions of staff and the public, and seek the advice of colleagues and constituents in crafting solutions to challenging issues; and**
- **to be innovative and remain flexible in fashioning solutions that work and will stand the test of time.**

I also have the ability to carve out areas of policy and programmatic expertise (King County's budget and fiscal management; natural resource and water quality protection; salmon recovery; arts, parks, trails and open space; growth management; regional transit and mobility), become knowledgeable on issues within each, and be the regional leader and county officeholder that my constituents and fellow elected officials can rely on to be candid, reliable, trustworthy, and productive. Hence my being recognized as "Public Official of the Year" by the Municipal League in 2001.

I also have demonstrated a willingness and ability to work with diverse people and perspectives, especially rural and urban residents, and elected officials from other jurisdictions and political parties. I take on responsibility, welcome leadership opportunities and challenges, and stand ready to accomplish regional and county objectives. My Executive campaign has attracted support from over 1,200 individuals representing all corners of King County, including several mayors of suburban and rural cities. As Budget Committee Chair, I have also fashioned four County Budgets that have passed unanimously and been signed (not vetoed) by the Executive—each with increasingly difficult choices to make amid a "budget crisis." I did so by forming a bi-partisan "leadership team," engaging the public and our independently elected county officials to set priorities, and worked well with the Executive in negotiations.

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.
- 1) **As a Sound Transit Boardmember, I joined Board Chair Greg Nickels in rallying support for expansion of Sound Transit’s light rail system after the 2007 defeat of the “Roads and Transit” ballot measure, being the first to vow to bring a transit-only package back to voters in 2008, which we did successfully. I worked with my fellow Boardmembers on a new package, and campaigned long and hard to educate voters about their opportunity to build a transit system comparable to other major metropolitan areas. I could not be more pleased that Sound Transit II passed resoundingly at the polls in 2008, allowing our region to continue digging its way out of a 40-year backlog for mass transit infrastructure. As Chair of Sound Transit’s Central Link Oversight Committee, I have successfully accomplished “on-time and under-budget” delivery of the first segment of light rail, which will be opening on July 18th from Downtown Seattle to Tukwila.**
 - 2) **As Chair of the Council’s Budget Committee for four budget cycles, I worked on a bi-partisan basis with my colleagues to address our budget crisis, cutting a cumulative total of over \$200 million in expenditures from our general fund (current expense) budget while prioritizing and preserving vital public services. In doing so, I insisted on developing an open and continuous dialogue with citizens, suburban cities, labor, and separately elected county officials, engaging them in understanding the problems and crafting the solutions, and challenging Executive agencies to dig deeper for efficiencies and new ways of doing business. While painful, it proved successful, as my budgets passed unanimously and were signed into law each time by the Executive.**
 - 3) **As a recognized leader on growth management, natural resource conservation, park, trail and open space preservation, and fish and wildlife habitat protection, I led the effort to preserve in perpetuity the Snoqualmie Forest and the effort to recover salmon in the Cedar/Sammamish/Lake Washington watershed. The Snoqualmie Forest Initiative led to the permanent preservation of nearly 100,000 acres of productive forestlands in Eastern King County—an area nearly twice the size of Seattle. The Salmon Recovery Plan for our watershed was the culmination of nearly 10 years of work to recover Chinook and other salmon species in the state’s most populous watershed, and answer the federal government’s Endangered Species Act listing. I was the Steering Committee Chair for the Plan’s development, which has been approved by the federal government and received unanimous ratification by the 27 cities in the watershed.**

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 have been involved in many community activities that relate to my duties as an elected official. An activity of great involvement and relevance has been that of coaching young athletes in a variety of sports, which I started when I was 19 years old. I coached football (3 years), basketball (11 years), baseball (2 years), soccer (1 year), and taught young people to swim and snow-ski over many seasons. Coaching has taught me the value of effective communication and leadership; patience in working with others whose involvement is ultimately critical to success of the venture; the “lessons of defeat” as a great teacher and motivator for “victory,” and competition as a great means by which to improve skills and build teamwork. Involvement in coaching over my adult life has not only brought me into closer contact with family members, my neighborhood, and greater community, but has also allowed me to hone skills vitally important for the role of King County Executive.

As a former high school and college athlete, and as a coach, I know the value of good coaching (teaching, managing, decision-making) for the athletes involved, their families, and the community at large. I also know that the lessons of skill development, teamwork, sportsmanship, effective communication, and competition are transferable to public life and my role as a King County elected official, and as King County Executive.

I know that no proposal or measure can pass without the Executive being a “team player” with other county and other jurisdictions’ elected officials, and that the Executive must enlist other important stakeholders, respecting their skills, roles and involvement. I know the Executive has to play by the rules to win their trust and respect and that my ideas need merit to be competitive among a sea of ideas and proposals. Being an athlete and a coach helped to teach me about the skills I need to be an effective leader and King County Executive, and the importance of involvement in the community to meet challenging objectives.

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

The King County Executive is responsible annually for developing and managing a balanced budget, leading and managing a large staff of approximately 13,000 employees encompassing seven departments and numerous divisions, developing policy initiatives for Council review, proposing the appropriation of funds to support departments, agencies and programs, proposing comprehensive land use and zoning plans, and the overarching leadership of King County government as a local and regional services provider.

Of these, the most important is leading, managing, and holding accountable the executive functions of county government, ensuring that county services are delivered on a timely and cost-effective basis, and that county agencies are open to innovation and creativity that can lead to higher productivity, greater efficiency and better service delivery. To do so, the Executive must hire the best available managers, hold them accountable for performance, yet yield to them sufficient freedom to get the job done.

The next most important duty is the development and adoption of the annual (and now bi-annual) budget, as it is the most important “policy” statement for county residents as to where and for what their taxpayer resources will be spent. Through exercise of the Executive’s authority to develop responsible budgets, the public can be assured that their Executive is deploying their tax dollars on a prioritized basis, how well services are being delivered, and how agencies and personnel are being challenged to improve performance and remain accountable. Through the annual Budget exercise, the Executive can help reshape policy and redirect programmatic efforts as circumstances change or needs arise. As a separate, but equal branch of county government, the Executive balances the Council’s work to scrutinize and make policy and the judiciaries’ power to enforce and interpret our laws.

Lastly, a significant duty/role of the King County Executive is to be a regional leader on emerging issues critical to the health, safety and prosperity of King County residents. Providing vision, leadership and wisdom on critical issues like Puget Sound Recovery, Global Warming and Climate Change, economic revitalization, criminal justice reform, and social and economic equity is a central role of the Executive to which citizens look for guidance and inspiration. Effectively leading and managing the executive functions of county government must be done with a keen eye and instinct for what it takes to ensure continued quality of life for county residents.