

# King County Democrats

## 2019 Candidate Questionnaire

### Municipal Level



<b>Candidate Name</b>	Mark Solomon	
<b>Position Sought</b>	Seattle City Council, District 2	
Home Legislative District	37 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>Are you a Democrat?</b>	Yes	
<b>Campaign Name</b>	Friends of Mark Solomon	
<b>Campaign Contact Information</b>	Mailing address: P.O. Box 9100 Seattle, WA 98109	Phone: 206-679-1162 Fax: N/A
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Campaign manager or point of contact	Self at this point	
Consultant(s)	Jason Bennett, Argo Strategies	

### Part I – Candidate Background

*Please limit each answer to **no more than 250 words.***

Please briefly summarize and highlight your qualifications, education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation, and other relevant experience.

I am a Seattle native, born and raised on Beacon Hill. I am a graduate of Seattle Prep and Seattle University. I enlisted in the US Air Force at 22, received my Commission as an Officer at 25 and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after 30 years of combined Active and Reserve service. I know how to manage people, projects, budgets and logistics in a large organization; I've done it as the Senior Officer in my military reserve unit at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and as Chief of Base Operations in a combat zone.

I have been a Crime Prevention Coordinator with the Seattle Police Department for 29 years, addressing public safety and quality of life concerns for the communities of District 2. I know how the City works and know where it falls short in responding to the concerns of District 2 residents and businesses. I know this District, the issues and challenges, and I've fostered relationships and have established partnerships to get things done for our community.

I am also a small business owner, co-founder Obsidian Security Group, a Seattle-based security consulting and staffing enterprise. As such, I understand the challenges small businesses face.

I am and have been involved in numerous community-based efforts, including serving on the Board of Directors for YouthCare, the Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates, Aradia Women's Health Center, and civic involvement with groups like the Breakfast Group, mentorship programs and various community councils.

I am a union member, ProTec 17 and have received their endorsement.

Describe your history of political involvement, if any, in the Democratic Party, particularly in Washington state politics. In what offices have you served or previously sought to be elected or appointed?

I first became a member of the 37th District Democrats in 1981 and have served as a PCO in various precincts. I volunteered with Senator Henry Jackson's 1982 re-election campaign and attended that year's state convention in Spokane. I was a facilitator of our LD Precinct Caucuses in 2016. For short periods, I lived in the 11<sup>th</sup> Legislative District as well as the 33rd, and regularly attended precinct meetings. Additionally, I previously sought elected office when I ran for Washington State Senate in 1994 to represent the 37<sup>th</sup> District as a Democrat.

What prompted you to run for this office? What priorities are you seeking to address with your campaign?

I see this as an opportunity to continue to serve my community, just at a different level. The city needs to do a better job of addressing the needs and concerns of the people of District 2. Residents of the district feel that their city government has not been responsive to them; I want to change that narrative. The City Council, as a whole, needs to hear the voices of District 2 communities just as loudly as they do the voices of Queen Anne and Magnolia. I pledge to be responsive, accessible and accountable to the people of District 2.

Some of my Priorities for District 2:

- Enhancing public safety through community policing, relational policing, supporting community-based crime prevention efforts.
- Homelessness response: We must be smarter about how we allocate our dollars so we work to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place. We must also work to effectively serve those who are homeless so they can participate in changing their circumstances.
- Affordable housing: We must create affordable housing that does not displace current, low income residents. We must make it easier for people to be able to stay in their neighborhoods
- Opportunities for youth: I will promote opportunities for youth in District 2 to take advantage of the tech employment and construction and trade (Union) jobs that the Seattle economy has available.
- Support for small businesses in District 2 so that they are not displaced by high rents or taxes.

From whom are you planning to ask for an endorsement? If you have received endorsements to date, please list them.

I am seeking endorsements of the following organizations: King County Democrats; 11<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats; 37<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats; MLK Labor Council; Firefighters Local 27; Seattle Police Officer's Guild; Sierra Club Seattle Group; Transportation for Washington; Transit Riders Union; Aerospace Machinists District Lodge 751; UA Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 32; and other labor and civic groups.

I have received the following individual Endorsements to date:

ProTec Local 17; Betty Patu, Seattle School Board President; Larry Gossett, King County Council Member; Retired State Representative Mary Lou Dickerson (D-36); State Representative Gael Tarleton (D-36); Camille Monzon-Richards, Executive Director Emerita, Seattle Indian Center; Juan Cotto, Director of Social Impact, Bloodworks Northwest; past Board President of El Centro de la Raza.

Please describe your campaign strategy - provide in writing your campaign goals and present progress towards them to your KCDCC endorsement interview.

My strategy is simple: Qualify for the Democracy Voucher Program so I can focus on knocking on doors and meeting voters. My overall goal is to meet with people in every community in District 2, from Rainier View to the International District. I intend to attend at least one meeting of every Community Council, demographic council and business association in the District; I have attended many of them to date and will be present and available to them going forward. I also had a series of small, intimate house meetings with neighbors, hearing directly from them in their homes about their concerns and expectations they have of

their city Councilmember. Neighbors from North Beacon Hill, Rainier Beach, Seward park and Georgetown have hosted these meetings and I'll continue to attend, as it's a great way to connect. My goal is to get in front of as many people as possible, hear from them, let them know what I will work to get done for them and ask for their support, vote and trust that I will work on their behalf.

In addition, I am participating in the Democracy Voucher Program. We have successfully submitted over 150 donors and signatures from Seattle residents; 75 in D2 to qualify and were notified as of last Friday that we have qualified. Financial goals are \$75,000 for the primary and \$75,000 for the general.

Have you ever been a member of any other political party? If so, what party? Have you ever given money to a candidate from another party in a partisan race? If so, to whom and when?

No

Please answer the following questions. Your answers will not disqualify you from consideration for endorsement by KCDCC.		Yes*	No
1	Have you ever failed to pay any taxes or failed to comply with court ordered judgments?		X
2	Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor?		X
3	Have you ever been a member of any other political party?		X
4	Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?		X

\* If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, please explain your answer:

## Part II – Local and State Issues

#	Question	Yes	No	Qualify your response
1	Do you support amending the U.S. Constitution to lessen the influence of money in politics, and declare that corporations do not have the rights of natural persons?	X		
2	Do you support the right of public workers, excluding military, to bargain and strike?	X		
3	Do you support increasing the minimum wage in your jurisdiction to \$15 per hour or higher?	X		
4	Do you support legislation at the local and state level to require equal pay for equal work for all genders and for people of color?	X		
5	Are you willing to have yourself, your staff and your peers undergo training to understand and combat institutional racism and implicit bias?	X		I have been through some of this training. Additionally, I myself have been a Cultural Diversity Trainer for Seattle Police Department.
6	Are you willing to have yourself, your staff and your peers undergo training to understand and combat sexual harassment?	X		I have been through this training as well.

7	Do you support raising revenue at the city level to expand transit service?	X		I would examine where we are currently allocating transit dollars (like the Street Car Connector), take a hard look at if that allocation is really meeting our transit needs and shift that spending to ensure better mobility for pedestrians, transit, cyclists and freight.
8	Do you support development impact fees to help pay for schools, roads, and parks, as allowed under the Growth Management Act?	X		
9	Do you support building a municipally owned and operated broadband system in your city?	X		
10	Do you agree that municipal government should use its borrowing capacity to fund additional units of affordable housing?	X		
11	Do you support infrastructure to make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to walk and bike on your city's streets?	X		
12	Do you support requiring police officers in your jurisdiction to wear body cameras?	X		This has been shown to be beneficial for officers as well as members of the community.
13	Do you support your municipality implementing a "Ban the Box" program as is already in place in Seattle and Spokane?	X		
14	Do you support "Gender Neutral" bathrooms throughout the city?	X		
15	Will your campaign be accepting contributions from corporate PACs such as, but not limited to, fossil fuel, pharmaceutical, or health insurance companies?		X	I am not seeking that support.

***The remaining questions in this section are for City of Seattle candidates only.***

15	Are you participating in the Democracy Voucher program?	X		
16	Would you support the placement of Community Health Engagement Locations in your district?		X	I've seen compelling arguments on both sides of this issue. I support immediate treatment to effective case management rather than enabling self-destruction. Coming to the position of opposing safe consumption sites is based partially on working with our first responders on a daily basis, knowing what they encounter and how they are already addressing these situations. It is also based on hearing from our community partners who work with people experiencing

			<p>addiction and knowing that their focus is engaging people to participate in their own recovery. Yet, I am supportive of the harm reduction benefits such sites could offer. I feel we need to engage in a fact-based, informed discussion with all our stakeholders, including those suffering from addiction, to chart the best course forward.</p>
17	Do you support the forced removal of unauthorized homeless encampments ("sweeps") in your district?	X	<p>Unauthorized encampments are a huge concern for my District, especially for the residents and businesses of Georgetown and SODO. The authorized encampments, such as the Tiny Home Villages in Georgetown and the Othello Neighborhood, are generally accepted by the community. They participate and are integrated in the community-- that is what makes them successful.</p> <p>I have been to unauthorized encampments and have seen the conditions in which our unsheltered neighbors live. These encampments are health and safety hazards that no one should be forced to endure; to leave them in that circumstance would be inhumane.</p> <p>The City can provide more temporary low-to-moderate barrier shelters, invest in more longer-term supportive housing, and fund effective case management and wrap-around services. Yet, the City can't do it alone; we need partners. We need other cities, the County, the State and the Feds to step up and partner with us. We need our faith-based communities, our non-profits and our corporate partners to participate. We need our sheltered neighbors to come to the table to work with our unsheltered neighbors. We need to look at this from a regional health care model where we examine everything and we work from both sides to reduce the number of unsheltered neighbors, address underlying needs and move them towards stable, safe and supportive housing.</p>

18	Would you have supported the 2018 employee hours tax to fund affordable housing as it was originally passed?		X	Two things come to mind. First, rather than targeting our largest employers and property tax, B & O Tax and L & I payers and blame them for the problem, I want to include them in the discussion about how we can work together to address the problem. Second, a proposal with no plan or accountability is a non-starter. The goal was to raise \$250M to address homelessness. However, there was no clear plan as to how the money was going to be spent, nor how the program would be assessed for effectiveness. The process of deliberating and enacting policy must be much more transparent to be accountable to the public.
19	Do you support allowing more housing types, such as triplexes, rowhomes, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units, in single-family zoned areas in your district?	X		
20	Would you support the construction of a 10-unit affordable housing building on your street?		X	I live on a residential, single family home, non-arterial street on North Beacon Hill with no transit stops within a five-block radius. A 10-unit building of any kind would be out of character for this street and these homeowners. Preserving neighborhood character to the extent we can is a priority for those in the neighborhood. They are not NIMBY; they want growth and development that compliments the neighborhood, rather than detracts from the character or displaces its people. A 10-unit structure would be better sited closer to the transit and commercial nodes along Beacon Avenue South or 14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue South, and would better serve those living in that building.
21	Would you support a "congestion price" on downtown drivers in order to relieve traffic congestion and fund public transit improvements?		X	We need to facilitate the flow of transit, including goods, services and Freight mobility, through the city rather than penalize and further tax people because they have no option but to drive to their destinations. We need to offer more transit options so people can move easily around and through our region without having to rely on single occupancy vehicles. We can do this by offering more transit

				options, transit only lanes, dedicated bike lanes, increased frequency of transit and hours of operation, all-door boarding, more transit routes, more connectors like a spoke and hub system that connects neighborhoods to more transit routes. With an annual budget of nearly \$6 Billion, I'm sure we can find efficiencies and better allocate those funds instead of putting a further tax burden on our residents or visitors.
22	Do you support completion of the Bicycle Master Plan, including the installation of protected bike lanes on arterial streets?	X		

### Part III – Free Response Questions

Please limit each response to **no more than 500 words**.

Please review the King County Democratic Platform at <https://www.kcdems.org/d/platform/platform.xml>. How have you worked, and if elected, how would you work to implement the goals in this platform?

I have been a Democrat for my entire life. I have worked to embody Democratic ideals in my career and community service. I will continue to advance these principles as a Seattle City Councilmember.

As a law enforcement professional, I work tirelessly to ensure that the civil rights of all Seattle residents are protected. All people deserve to feel respected and safe in our community. I believe that public safety is not just a matter of police officers, firefighters, and other first responders doing their jobs, but also about residents feeling safe and engaged as they are doing *their* jobs, living in *their* community. That's why I am committed to creating a consistent community policing program. A Police Commander should be assigned to District 2 for a minimum of four years. This will allow the community to establish a strong working relationship with the Precinct Command Staff. This will create a more collaborative process to establishing policing and relational norms throughout the District.

I also support the use of body cameras by police officers. This increases accountability for law enforcement, and increases the public trust in those agencies. A transparent police force is essential to our democracy.

I believe that everyone has the fundamental right to housing that is affordable, comfortable, and safe. We must ensure that our housing affordability policies are equitable, and crafted to minimize the displacement of our neighbors. As part of this process, residents must have ample opportunity to give feedback on major changes to their neighborhoods. As your City Councilmember, I will be accountable to the public. I will work for District 2 to create a community that we are all proud of.

I support neighborhoods that are vibrant economically, culturally, and creatively. That's why I will work with the Mayor's Office and the Office of Economic Development to increase the allocation of funding for the "Only in Seattle" program. These grants will bolster community enhancement projects throughout District 2. I also support the Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District and other programs that celebrate and enrich the art, culture, and history of our district.

Our region is growing quickly. How will you ensure that existing residents and newcomers alike have

equitable access to affordable housing, public transit, and neighborhood amenities such as parks and schools? How will you protect current residents, and especially our most vulnerable communities, from displacement caused by this growth?

I am fortunate enough to live in the house my family built on Beacon Hill. If this home had not stayed in my family, I wouldn't be able to afford to live here. The current housing market puts home ownership out of reach for many of our working families. Rental costs in some neighborhoods have become so high that some neighbors are forced to move out of the city. I support efforts such as the Mandatory Housing Affordability Plan, the Multifamily Tax Exemption, homeownership assistance through the City's Office of Housing and community-based efforts through organizations such as Southeast Effective Development (SEED) and HomeSight. Further, I support the tax reduction/exemption and tax deferral programs offered by King County for our seniors and disabled neighbors. I will work to ensure these efforts not only continue, but are enhanced, so families are not displaced due to rising housing costs. We must invest in mechanisms to keep people in their current homes and build enough affordable housing units to allow people to be able to live in this city without exceeding 35% of gross annual income.

How have you worked to combat climate change? How would you use your elected office to ensure your region drastically lowers net carbon emissions by 2030 and achieves carbon neutrality by 2050?

To ensure that Seattle drastically lowers net carbon emissions, we must reform our transportation system to reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles. We need to offer more transit options so people can move easily around and through our region, with a lighter environmental impact. We can do this by offering more transit options, transit only lanes, dedicated bike lanes, increased frequency of transit and hours of operation, and all-door boarding. More transit routes, especially more connectors in a spoke and hub system that connects neighborhoods to more transit routes, would increase the mobility of our city, reduce traffic congestion, and increase our city's transportation sustainability.

Describe your vision for tax reform and tax fairness. What changes to the state's tax system would you ask the Legislature to make?

Our tax system is one of the most regressive in the country. I support tax reform that does not disproportionately impact low-income residents of our community. I favor a statewide income tax that would allow us the financial flexibility to re-adjust other taxes in our current system. On the local level however, I believe we could be asking more of developers and folks who are benefiting most of the growth in our city to pay more of their fair share (like in the case of impact fees).

If you were in charge of putting together a budget proposal for King County, what would it look like? How would you raise revenue to avoid harmful cuts to public services?

This is out of my jurisdiction, but much like my response above, I would support a statewide income tax to offset harmful cuts to public services, and other reductions to regressive tax law.

What important state and local issues have you worked on (or taken an interest in) that you feel aren't getting enough attention from elected leaders and the media?



I am deeply interested in ensuring that our local economy is vibrant and continues to flourish throughout the future. Economic vitality means our business districts are thriving, neighborhood employment opportunities are increasing, and more people are engaging with their community. I believe in inclusive economic vitality and opportunity, in which our neighbors and family businesses are not displaced. When discussions in the City focus on helping small businesses, they invariably focus on Aurora, Lake City, and parts of downtown and Pioneer Square. Infrequently do we focus on the needs of the small businesses struggling in District 2. We must invest now in order to have a thriving local economy in the future.

As housing consumes much of the available office and manufacturing space in our city, business leases have become cost-prohibitive. We must support small businesses in our neighborhoods by providing commercial and manufacturing space that is affordable. We can introduce a pilot program to apply tax credits for the development or upgrading of commercial space. This will help small businesses compete and keep jobs in our District.

To fill these jobs, we must prepare Seattle's youth through educational and apprenticeship programs. We must invest in programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math fields, apprenticeships in building and construction trades, and financial literacy. I will advocate for partnerships with the technology giants in our city to help our youth compete. To build a vibrant economy, we must nourish the workforce of tomorrow. I want to fill the high-tech centered jobs with local talent. I want that talent to be grown right here, in District 2.

What specific social justice issues are most important to you? How have you addressed them? How would you use your elected office to address them?

As a Board member of YouthCare, I am committed to ending youth homelessness. Our youth are the future; we must invest in them and commit to helping them get back on their feet. In a region as prosperous as ours, no one should have to live unsheltered or out of their vehicle. People of color and LGBTQ youth are disproportionately represented among our homeless population. I have worked and will continue to work with community-based organizations who are not only trying to break the cycle of homelessness, but working to prevent our neighbors from becoming homeless is the first place.

As a city, we spend about \$80 million dollars a year addressing homelessness. In spite of this spending, results have been marginal in getting our unsheltered neighbors out of unsanitary and unsafe conditions and into housing that meets their needs. I'm encouraged by the regional approach that Seattle, King County and our neighboring cities have undertaken, but I want to see even more achievable results. This means smarter investments in rental assistance, building additional housing units, increasing our low-to-moderate barrier shelter capacity, investing in permanent supportive housing, and investing in treatment and services for mental health and addiction. I support the Human Services division in their work on homelessness. I aim to provide the support they need to cut through red tape and get it done.

I have devoted my career to public safety. Specifically, I work to reduce crime and violence and facilitate rehabilitation for victims of crime. In 1996, I was recognized by the Virginia Beach Police Department for assisting them in instituting a youth gun-violence prevention program. Today, I remain a fierce advocate for stronger gun control. We must enact tougher legislation that keeps guns out of the hands of our youth and those adults who should not possess them.

Do you believe elected officials have a responsibility to bring up the next generation of leadership? If so, how do you plan on doing so?

Absolutely. We must prepare the youth of today to be the leaders of tomorrow. Not only do we need to invest in educational and vocational opportunities to our youth, but we need to actively promote their growth as leaders. As Crime Prevention Coordinator for the Seattle Police Department, I work to empower young people to be leaders for public safety in their communities. I have taught countless courses on community policing, gun-violence prevention, and lockdown safety to youth, and I am constantly impressed by their ingenuity and engagement. I look forward to expanding my interaction with young people on the City Council so that I can similarly empower them to become the next generation of leadership. I will expand internship, shadowing, and apprenticeship opportunities so that leadership is more accessible and tangible for our youth.

What is your definition of diversity? What experience do you have promoting diversity?

Diversity is the variance and value in the life experiences of people with different socio-economic, religious, cultural, racial, sexual orientation, and gender identities. I have spent my career engaging with law enforcement to create community policing policy that is more equitable and reflective of the diversity in our community. I have led inclusivity training and bias training to disarm the unconscious stereotypes that impact public safety and police work. From 1991-1993, I was a Cultural Diversity Trainer with the Seattle Police Department. From 1995-1997, I was a Seattle Police Department Community Police Academy Class Facilitator. I received the City of Seattle Valuing and Managing Diversity in Excellence Award for my work incorporating diversity into policing. To this day, I work collaboratively with the community to develop public safety programs that reflect the diverse needs and populations of District 2.

**I affirm that all the information provided in response to this questionnaire is true, complete and correct, to the best of my ability, and that no relevant matter has been omitted.**

Signature

//SIGNED//

Printed Name

Mark Solomon

Date: 4/24/2019