

WTIA 2019 Seattle City Council General Election Endorsements



The Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA) is a trade association that combines the power of member companies to solve problems they cannot easily solve alone. Our purpose is to build a strong technology sector in a thriving community.

Our strategic priorities are to...

- Cultivate new talent by operating the premier, nationally registered tech apprenticeship program;
- Use group buying power to deliver high value, affordable services to member companies;
- Create forums for industry, education, and government to collaborate effectively;
- Cultivate public policies that are well informed and build a thriving community.

In support of those priorities, WTIA has engaged with candidates running for Seattle City Council. Seattle faces many challenges. What we need now are city council members who will genuinely engage in a productive dialogue with the technology sector, the most powerful job creation engine in a century to build a thriving and inclusive city. Together, we can and will build a strong city that ensures the next generation of residents continue to generate opportunity for all who call Seattle home.

We interviewed eighteen candidates in-person with a panel of tech industry representatives. The following election endorsements are based on those interviews, review of their responses to a questionnaire, and discussions with other organizations and stakeholders tracking the primary election process. We looked for candidates who: demonstrated a willingness to learn about issues that matter to the tech industry and our employees and their families, expressed an interest in working with all constituents to solve the City's problems and capitalize on its opportunities, will be accountable to their districts, and have a path to succeeding in the primary election.

We hope this report will help you make a more informed voting decision. Please exercise your right and civic duty to vote. Ballots must be postmarked by November 5.

We are all counting on you!



District 1: Phil Tavel

District 1 incorporates West Seattle and is currently represented by incumbent Councilmember Lisa Herbold. We are fully supporting the candidacy of challenger, Philip Tavel.

Phil is a long-time District 1 resident with an impressive CV and deep ties to his community as a public school parent and volunteer. Phil served for over a decade as a public defender and as a Judge Pro Tem in King County District Court. He has tech experience as well, most notably co-founding a video game company.

Phil is passionate about the positive role small and large business play in our community. If elected, he is eager to engage and bring business to the table to help craft policy solutions to address some of Seattle's major challenges around issues like homelessness, public safety, and transportation.

Tavel's energy and optimism for what Seattle can be are palpable. He speaks with passion when talking about his district. Crucially, Phil also has experience brokering complex negotiations and bringing people together to solve problems. Given his passion for his district and improving the city, as well as his experience engaging with the business community, **WTIA endorses Phil Tavel to represent District 1.**



District 2: Mark Solomon

WTIA is happy to endorse Mark Solomon to fill the open seat in District 2, which includes Georgetown, Mt. Baker, and Rainier Beach neighborhoods. Mark grew up in the Beacon Hill neighborhood and is an increasingly rare lifelong Seattle resident. His commitment to public service is longstanding—he was an officer in the U.S. Airforce, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. Today, Mark works as a crime prevention coordinator at the Seattle Police Department.

We were impressed by Mark’s laser-like focus on public service and history of working to better his community. He is especially passionate about public safety and exploring opportunities to broaden access to technology careers. WTIA has worked across the country improving access to technology careers for women, people of color and veterans. We would be thrilled to find a partner on city council to work with us on this effort in Seattle.

Mark also earned high marks for working successfully with groups holding diverse perspectives. His ability to reach agreement on gun safety measures among organizations with disparate views on gun control demonstrated his ability to broker complex negotiations.

Mark does not pretend to be a deep policy expert on technology, but he is clearly eager to engage and believes our businesses contribute positively to the community and need to be constructively engaged. This mindset is sorely needed on city council. **WTIA endorses Mark Solomon to represent District 2.**



District 3: Egan Orion

District 3, which includes Capitol Hill, the Central District, and Madison Park, is currently represented by Councilmember Khasama Sawant. Many believe it is time for a change in that district given the councilmember's hostility towards the business community, and the tech industry, specifically. We believe District 3 needs a Councilmember who has deep ties to the community, is able to engage with a broad range of stakeholder groups, and has grit. No other

candidate encapsulates that more than Egan Orion.

Egan has been a fixture in his community for over a decade and is perhaps most well known for saving *Pridefest*—an event that Egan continues to manage and is a banner event for Seattle. We were impressed with Egan's strong family and personal ties to his district, tech knowledge, and his strong desire to engage small business. We believe Egan will focus on getting things done for his city and his district, and, unlike the incumbent, focus less on self-branding for higher office. **WTIA endorses Egan Orion for District 3.**



District 4: Alex Pedersen

District 4 encompasses the University of Washington, Ravenna, and Wedgewood neighborhoods.

Alex has robust private and public sector experience. On the public sector side, Alex has one of the strongest resumes of anyone running this election cycle in the city. Alex previously worked at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and did stints in Maryland, Philadelphia, and Oakland. He worked for Councilmember Tim Burgess, a powerfully

pragmatic voice on City Council for many years, deeply respected by all political walks of life. During the interview, it was clear Alex learned much from Tim.

Alex's background and experience make him more than ready to hit the ground running on day one. In addition, his calm demeanor, proven willingness to engage all stakeholder groups, and focus on results-oriented policy were impressive. **WTIA endorses Alex Pedersen to represent District 4.**



District 5: Councilmember Debora Juarez

Councilmember Juarez is running for a second term to represent the people of District 5, making up the neighborhoods of Maple Leaf, Northgate, and Lake City. She is a consummate working political leader who is more interested in results than flashy slogans or TV interviews. Her engaging and plain-spoken style is very refreshing.

Councilmember Juarez plans to continue the projects that she's started, ranging from bringing an NHL team to Seattle to facilitate the build-out of our region's light rail infrastructure. Councilmember Juarez has a reputation for looking to her district first and the city second, but this is a misnomer—it's clear she's passionate about both.

At a time when the business community feels left out of the political process, Councilmember Juarez is adamant that business is at the table. She wants to open and elevate the civic dialogue in our city, focusing less on blaming and name-calling and more on getting results.

Seattle needs Councilmember Juarez. Her experience, energy, sense of humor, and work ethic make her an easy pick for another 4-year term. She also loves hockey, so she's got to be great, right? **WTIA endorses Councilmember Juarez for a second term as the representative in District 5.**



District 6: Heidi Wills

Heidi Wills is running to represent the communities of Fremont, Ballard, and Crownhill that make up District 6.

We were impressed with Heidi at all stages of the evaluation process. She served as a Seattle City Councilmember from 1999 to 2003. Prior to her time on the Council, Heidi also spent nearly a decade working for King County.

Heidi has a strong point of view on how the Council must function as a lens to focus limited resources on solving problems and providing essential services. Her prior government experience and her business experience made her one of the most policy and process literate of all the candidates interviewed. It is clear she is ready to hit the ground running on her first

day in office.

Heidi is a successful small business owner and an active leader in her community. She intends to combine her public policy and business acumen to bring a highly competent, pragmatic voice to the Council. **WTIA endorses Heidi Wills to a return trip to City Hall as representative for District 6.**



District 7: Jim Pugel

District 7 encompasses Queen Anne Hill, Magnolia, and downtown Seattle and is currently represented by retiring councilmember, Sally Bagshaw.

WTIA believes Jim Pugel is the best choice to represent the district. Jim has a long career in public service, starting in the Seattle Police Department in 1982 where he eventually became captain of the West Precinct, a precinct similar to the district that he would represent. Jim also served as Interim SPD Chief of Police and later Deputy Chief at King County Sheriff's Office.

In his over 30 years serving the Seattle community, Jim has built a reputation as a respected problem solver with strong relationships among local business leaders, elected officials, and government agencies. He has much needed hands-on experience addressing the challenges we face in Seattle today around homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse.

We believe Jim would be a collaborative but independent voice, ready to get to work on his first day in office. His commitment to bring all stakeholders to the table when drafting public policy is a much needed breath of fresh air. We can see this in his wide range of endorsements, earning support from the Alliance for Gun Responsibility, CASE, and International Brotherhood of Teamsters among others.

Andrew Lewis, who is also running for office, was impressive in our interview. Unlike Jim, Andrew's endorsements are more one-sided, relying predominantly on labor organizations and led by Unite Here Local 8, which made the single largest investment in his race. Andrew is a bright, young prosecutor in the City Attorney's Office. We fully expect him to develop into a strong, future leader in Seattle.

WTIA is proud to endorse Jim Pugel for District 7.