



Seattle Works

Candidate Guide

King County Executive 2009



Seattle Works
informs, connects
and inspires people
in their 20s and 30s
to take action in our
community.

**Volunteer. Lead. Influence. Invest.
Do Something.**

www.seattleworks.org

A special thank you to the volunteer team who made this guide possible by generating fearless, on-the-money questions and reaching out to the candidates.

Patrick Bell
Jamie Emerson
Michael Pearce
Brian Reiffe
Chris Rule
Jay See
Michael Taylor-Judd
Krystal Wood
Kendee Yamaguchi
Intern, Sean McCotter

King County Executive

Candidates: Dow Constantine, Susan Hutchinson

Salary: \$169,000-\$173,000

Term: 4 years

What the law says: The county executive shall supervise all administrative offices and executive departments established by this charter or created by the county council; shall be the chief peace officer of the county and shall execute and enforce all ordinances and state statutes within the county; shall serve on all boards and commissions on which a county commissioner was required to serve prior to the adoption of this charter, but if more than one county commissioner was required to serve, the county council shall appoint a councilman or councilmen to serve on the board or commission with him; shall present to the county council an annual statement of the financial and governmental affairs of the county and any other report which he may deem necessary; shall prepare and present to the county council budgets and a budget message setting forth the programs which he proposes for the county during the next fiscal year; shall prepare and present to the county council comprehensive plans including capital improvement plans for the present and future development of the county; shall have the power to veto any ordinance adopted by the county council; shall have the power to assign duties to administrative offices and executive departments which are not specifically assigned by this charter or by ordinance; and shall sign, or cause to be signed, on behalf of the county all deeds, contracts and other instruments.

Translation: The King County Executive is the head of the county executive branch and the highest elected official representing King County. In other words, the executive essentially oversees all departments within the county government. The King County Executive submits legislation to the County Council. The position also entails proposing a budget to the County Council that covers county operations for the coming year, and the County Executive has the power to veto any ordinances passed by the King County Council.

1. What are the top three issues facing this office and what solutions are you offering?

King County is the 14th largest county in the United States, with a diverse population of nearly 2 million residents spread across urban, suburban and rural areas. Because of the size and importance of the jurisdiction, the King County Executive is widely considered to be the second most powerful elected official in the state (after the governor), overseeing a government that covers nearly a third of the total population of Washington State. Specifically, the Executive heads a \$5 billion regional government whose more than 13,000 employees provide crucial services for the County's residents: everything from courts and jails, to protecting public health and making sure our food and water are safe and clean, to sewage treatment and flood control, land use permitting, protecting and managing open space and parks, and running Metro Transit, one of the largest public transit agencies in the country. And while King County remains a great place to live and raise a family, the challenges we face today are very serious: Our economy is in trouble, and our people are hurting. Yet at a time when people need a helping hand the most, King County government is faced with steeply declining revenues, unmet human service needs, spiraling criminal justice costs, rapidly expanding transit demand with diminishing resources, and a critical need to protect the farms, forests, and clean air, water and food we rely on to support our quality of life. To meet these challenges, King County must make the difficult decisions necessary to solve the vexing budget problems that have simmered for years. That will require strong, new leadership, a true regional focus, and an emphasis on lasting solutions—not on gimmicks and quick fixes that saddle taxpayers and future generations with even greater problems...

2. How would you use this office to promote volunteerism and community service?

...When elected King County Executive I will work to address four critical challenges facing our county:

I will make the county a partner in economic development— putting the focus on strengthening our neighborhoods and suburban communities and on assisting small business.

I will continue to deliver on difficult environmental issues, including protecting sensitive shoreline habitat from destruction, fixing land use regulations to protect people, wildlife and natural systems, and expanding the public investment in forests, farmlands and open space.

I will ensure that King County makes the investments in transportation necessary to keeping our regional economy—and the people who live here—moving forward, just as I have as a Sound Transit Board Member and Transportation Committee Chair.

I will push for the reform our government requires to make its operations efficient and sustainable, to protect workers' security, and to ensure that those who need a helping hand are able to get it.

Dow Constantine

Candidate chose not to respond to questionnaire.

Susan Hutchinson

Raised in West Seattle, I spent childhood summers at my grandparents' home on Snohomish County's Port Susan Bay. When the threat of the construction of a major oil port facility on the bay galvanized the community to successful action, I was introduced to the power of grassroots politics and the law. Since then I went on to graduate from West Seattle High School and the University of Washington where I remain an active volunteer committed to ensuring that today's youth have the same opportunity for an exceptional public education that I had. An attorney for 19 years, I practiced law and worked on a number of community projects in the early 1990s including helping activist Charlie Chong with efforts to preserve open space. In the legislature, on the county council, and in my personal volunteering I have continued to commit myself to the issues that are a priority for me to improve the quality of life for all of King County's residents. I understand the positive change that takes place when residents engage in their community and contribute time and energy to make it a better place. Improving King County for all our residents will require dedication and hard work. I am committed to that as Executive and I will encourage residents of King County to pitch in as much as possible to improve our quality of life.

Dow Constantine

3. What mode of transportation do you use to get to work? Why?

4. What is the most important thing you would do to make a noticeable impact on the traffic problems in the county? Do you support the agreement between the State, City and County to replace the viaduct?

As often as I can, I take the Water Taxi from West Seattle to downtown. Otherwise, I often drive my Toyota Prius.

In the wake of the defeat of the Roads & Transit measure in the fall of 2007, while other candidates in this race were busy trying to figure out which way the wind was blowing, or simply opposed to moving forward with light rail altogether, I called for an immediate public vote on Sound Transit 2 (Seattle Times op-ed, March 13, 2008) – the first regional leader to do so. I spent the next several months on the Sound Transit board working to craft a ballot proposal. My continuing work as chair of ST's Transit Operations Task Force will help assure that the agency can make the transition from primarily a systems builder to becoming an efficient operator of sustainable bus and rail service. As executive I'll build on this track record of action and assure that Phase 2 is constructed. No other candidate in this race can match my record of consistent commitment and action on transit and transportation. I was also the only consistent supporter of a tunnel solution for replacement of the Alaska Way viaduct, speaking out against an elevated replacement even when one of my opponents was trying to spend \$300,000 in county resources for a "redo" on the Governor's recommendation, and others in the legislature were silent on the issue. In fact, I was the only candidate who was in the room with the Governor, Mayor, Executive, and legislative transportation leaders, in meetings over the course of a year, as we struggled to give life to the tunnel proposal.

Dow Constantine

5. Define what a "livable community" means to you.

A livable community offers all its residents affordable housing, family wage jobs, public safety, efficient transportation, clean air and water, quality health and education, and a vibrant culture. That is my vision for King County and I will work hard to deliver a livable community to all King County residents as Executive.

Dow Constantine

6. What fictional HBO or Showtime series character would you most like to meet and why?

I don't have HBO, or Showtime, or time to watch either. But I'd like to meet Murray, the "band manager" from Flight of the Conchords. Reminds me of any number of people I've met over the years in the world of political campaigns.

Dow Constantine

7. How would you use social media to engage and inform your constituents?

8. Do you personally update your Facebook and Twitter pages? If you don't, who does?

I am so proud our campaigns' efforts to reach voters across the county including the largest eCanvass of any campaign in Washington State history. As Executive, I will continue to communicate with constituents through traditional media including television, phone and mail, as well as through an interactive website, facebook and twitter updates, and viral emails to reach residents far and wide.

I do. Although my campaign staff adds events and news clips, I enjoy posting and tweeting about meetings, events I have attended, voters I spoke with, etc.

Dow Constantine

9. If a friend came to visit you from out of town, where would you go to show your friend around King County?

Depends on the friend, naturally, and where he/she is from. And it depends on the season.

Winter: My childhood stamping grounds at Alpentel.

Spring: The Japanese garden at the Arboretum. Summer: A twelve foot aluminum boat with a 20-horse outboard from Des Moines Marina to Maury Island.

Fall: A walk down Rainier Vista on the UW campus to Husky Stadium on a football Saturday.

Dow Constantine

10. Why are you motivated to run for office?

I want to set the foundation for a new prosperity, improving the quality of life in King County for working families. We need real transit and transportation choices, sensible and humane criminal justice, responsible preservation of our environment, and genuine regional leadership. Ultimately, our job as Democrats is to make government work for people, to hold fast to our progressive principles, and not to get hung up on defending parts of the status quo that are no longer working. At this historic moment, with a new, innovative President in the White House, our county also needs renewal -- to clear away the debris of that which is no longer working, perfect that which is, and build an efficient, effective, 21st-century government. Building on my record as a reformer unafraid to lead on tough issues, I will work across old geographic boundaries to zero in on effective solutions to the problems we face as a region.

Dow Constantine

Seattle Works

Volunteer. Lead. Influence.
Invest. **Do Something.**

www.seattleworks.org

www.twitter.com/seattleworks

[Facebook— be a fan](#)