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Seattle Information Technology (IT) Department
Confirmation Questions
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1) What are your major goals for the Seattle Information Technology (IT) Department over the next four years?

I am driven to pursue organizational excellence.

My ambition is to strive for Seattle IT to be ***a best-in-class digital service delivery team***. There are 9 specific goals that would bring such a vision to life:

1. Focus – perfect clarity on dynamic business deliverables

2. Outcome-Driven – align every big and small effort to business outcomes

3. Nimble – a living IT organization that moves at the pace of business

4. *Employee Focus* – create an environment for employees that builds on trust and provide professional development to best serve this City

5. *Client-Centric* – think client first when making big and small IT decisions

6. *Transparency* – proactively share usage of IT human and financial resources with all stakeholders

7. *Collaborative* – co-create solutions with end users and strategic private sector partnerships

8. *Digital Equity* – aim to provide a range of digital solutions respecting variety of stakeholder needs

9. *Privacy* – create awareness and adhere to all privacy associated policies and guidelines

2) What do you see as the primary challenges facing the Seattle Information Technology (IT) Department in the next four years?

It has been my experience that any organization facing a turnaround opportunity and specifically an IT focused department must assess nine areas for improvement. Over the last few weeks, I have had a chance to observe the IT organization closely including an opportunity to meet with over 150 both IT colleagues and client stakeholders. It is my assessment that Seattle IT is facing urgent opportunities on all nine fronts.

1. Alignment. There is a mismatch of stakeholder expectations amongst client departments on what they expect from a central IT. An even greater divergence of views exists within the IT organization around its own consistent understanding of mandate and vision.

2. Process. An over engineered process environment has slowed down the IT department. This reality exists both how IT staff work amongst themselves, as well as between IT and client interactions. The overall governance structures around IT can also be streamlined and strengthened.

3. Structure. The construction and arrangement of IT is another main area worthy of simplification. Instead of the current orthodox IT functions, the structure should represent an agile formation that can form small delivery focused, cross-functional and diverse teams. Such a review should also include span of control and aim to minimize hierarchies.

4. Skills. An IT team that cannot keep up in talent (technical and business) development is guaranteed to fail. An all hands-on deck approach must be pursued at Seattle IT to ensure that we tackle real people liability issues, where employees may have years left in their career, but skills are already obsolete. This would require a sharp focus on skills development on an urgent basis.

5. Resources. Budgeting for operational and technology modernization work must be overhauled to unlock capacity from IT's existing budget and human resources. We must invest in our employees as they a critical resource to delivering IT services. Every attempt to look at resource spent from a City of Seattle perspective versus an isolated departmental perspective will be key to maximize value from IT investments.

6. Technology. A disciplined and thoughtful approach is required around all legacy technology footprint. This approach amongst other things would include how systems can bring the City of Seattle together, as well as allow us to use new technological innovations that a modern municipality like the City of Seattle is expected to embrace for operational excellence.

7. Security. Keeping up with a daily changing security landscape is essential. Use of the latest tools, applying best practices in our processes, raising cyber awareness of the City of Seattle and partnerships with the private sector will all be key pillars of a modern security program.

8. Compliance. In a public sector setting, it goes without saying that compliance to legislation and policies is essential. Seattle IT must review and strengthen all compliance related work on a continuous basis.

9. Communication. How we inform and what we share with our stakeholders will ensure that the City of Seattle understand the business value generated by IT, as well as appreciates the challenges it faces. Further, using a variety of tactics, it would be critical to allow for communication to flow back into IT, so that clients have an opportunity to inform us of their needs.

3) How do you plan to approach employee morale?

There is no question that the general employee morale at Seattle IT can be improved. Many individuals who are attracted to the work at IT are often wanting to explore future learning. I want to create a work place culture that promotes continuous learning and does rewards creativity to improve the employee morale.

Talent development, so that each Seattle IT employee has an opportunity to grow their technical and soft skills will be an essential ingredient of a turnaround.

Acquiring new learning is just step one, as we must also allow the application of skills. This will require putting our own IT staff in front of technology modernization efforts.

Creating a formal mentorship and job shadowing program will be another tactic for IT staff to explore new career options within the diverse IT team.

Ensuring an individualized career progression plan exists for every IT employee will be an expectation of each IT manager.

Simplification of processes so that IT staff can focus on the value creation work will be another way to boost work satisfaction.

An open communication model providing IT colleagues to raise their ideas for workplace improvement will also be essential to rebuild trust amongst the team.

Deliberate recognition and celebration of both small and big achievements of IT staff will demonstrate positive momentum.

Knowledge exchanges and short-term internship opportunities with the local private sector to provide hands-on learning opportunities for IT staff will be another tactic to show investment in our workforce.

An in-house managed and staff designed annual tech conference will provide IT staff the opportunity to learn from each other, participate in workshops, as well as host external industry experts to share perspectives.

The above should be taken as a starting point. On an ongoing basis, opportunities to invest in our workforce will come forward with a direct impact on employee morale.

4) What are examples of "lessons learned" from your prior jobs? What specific expertise and experience from prior jobs do you anticipate you will apply in your position at Seattle IT?

A brief summary of lessons learnt that would directly apply to Seattle IT:

- Strong commitment towards talent development resulted in both financial savings and a higher employee engagement.
- Always client-centric mindset encouraged behavior that significantly minimized friction between IT-client departments.
- Moving away from several transaction relationships to strategic partnerships with private sector partners was key in moving forward an aggressive technology modernization program.
- Empowering staff to make many decisions allowed projects to move at a much faster pace.
- Simple IT structure with minimal management hierarchy both sped up decision making and provided clear line of sight around roles and responsibilities.
- Zero-based resourcing where every vacancy, uncommitted dollar, every staff retirement was an opportunity to open a discussion to make a case for either status quo or something new.
- Simplified project in-take process that quickly determined the right level of due diligence appropriate for every project request presented to IT.
- Use of a simple work planning framework that allowed the alignment of work across the IT organization and full transparency to stakeholders. The planning framework we introduced is called OKRs invented by Intel and used by leading global brands.
- Avoiding 5-10 year long and $100M+ transformation plans and instead thinking of 18-month IT planning sprints. The flux caused by tech disruptions, fluid budgets, revolving political leaderships make it an impractical situation to stick to long-term strategies in the public sector.
- Separate simple and small executive governance structures that covered areas such as cyber security, new project in-take.
- Platform rationalization policy that challenged the organization to think as one and where practical move to common foundational technology platforms with business specific applications built on top.
- Managed security services that allowed the cyber security team to provide more value-add service by actioning on intelligence provided by a third-party partner, as well as participating on new technology modernization projects.

- A proof of concept (POC) program that encouraged experimentation with new tools with several POCs happening in parallel in the IT organization at a fraction of investment.
- An annual financial commitment towards an IT infrastructure reserve providing a higher level of certainty around modernization planning and execution.
- Applying project-based costing to only true new piece of work, while a vast majority of IT budget at the disposal of IT to redirect as per business needs and guided by an executive level IT-client governance.
- An excellent partnership with City's corporate legal, procurement and finance functions to look at every opportunity to fast track IT work while always respecting the relevant legislations.

5) How do you plan to ensure that Councilmembers and Council staff receives the information needed from your department to make policy and financial decisions?

It is my intent to be responsive to Council requests and to provide timely information to Council to assist your policy and budgeting working. I look forward to building relationships with Council to fully inform their analysis and development of policy priorities.

Additionally, being mindful of the large portfolio that City Council must oversee, I recommend the following schedule of updates to further assist Council's work:

Item	Audience	Frequency
Annual work plan	City Council	Q1
Major Projects Update	Governance, Equity, and Technology Committee	Quarterly

6) What opportunities do you see for improving collaboration between your department and other City departments? How do you anticipate working collaboratively with other City departments and being responsive to individual department's needs?

All client interactions to-date have confirmed that often the collaboration spirit exists, but several opportunities continue to get missed. A few sample tactics to aggressively improve IT-Client collaborations:

- CTO participation at every departmental leadership team at least twice a year.
- Each IT division head participation at various client department meetings to both listen to their needs and update on IT news.
- Empowering IT client service directors to be able to drive the client department asks through the IT organization.

- Engagement with City departments in Q4 of every year to develop next year's strategic work plan and avoid a project-by-project tactical planning conversation.
- Visibility of IT resources dedicated to City department specifically within Applications, Project Management, Business Analysis, Site Support & Architecture.
- A deliberate attempt to situate IT resources with client departments, where practical
- An expectation of all IT staff to job shadow various aspects of client departments applicable to their job functions
- An annual IT tradeshow to showcase products and services providing a fun and informal interaction opportunity between and IT and the broader client base in various departments.
- Client facing dashboards to provide visibility around utilization of resources and outcome of work
- Client participation on interview panels for every future IT management position.
- A greatly simplified project in-take process to allow for right sizing the due diligence per work request
- Client departments consultations to shape how IT plans the use of IT general funds.

The above are general client relationship building practices. At the same time, there may be client department specific tactics Seattle IT would identify and engage.

7) How do you intend to foster partnerships with other governments (e.g., local, state, federal) to develop good public policy? How will you work to ensure that Seattle's goals and priorities are reflected in regional projects?

A government relations strategy would be driven by IT's annual work plan that would identify opportunities to collaborate. In addition to the obvious government partners such as King County and Washington State, we would build relationships with the following organizations:

- Various technology functions within the federal General Service Administration including the Mobile Government, Emerging Citizen Technology, Emergency Response, Cyber Security and other areas.
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- Federal US Digital Service to acquire best practices around digital engagement
- Washington State Autonomous Vehicle Work Group
- Washington State Broadband Office
- Washington State Office of Privacy and Data Protection

Seattle IT would leverage the expertise and connections of the City's Office of Intergovernmental Relations.

Amongst the various tactic to shine a positive spotlight on the City of Seattle would be to partner with a private sector partner to attract an annual small gathering of local government IT leaders. This would serve at least two purposes: Firstly, showcase Seattle IT's best practices and learn from our peers and secondly, a great way to engage with the local technology players to put a spotlight on Seattle's technology successes specifically in the government space.

8) **After many years, the city went through an IT Consolidation process forming the Seattle IT department in April 2016. The final phase 4 of the consolidation process occurred in 2018. As a result, Seattle IT is now responsible for managing all IT projects in the city and the most recent biennial budget reflects a new project-centric structure. How will you approach making decisions about maintaining the City's infrastructure? With a citywide portfolio of almost $450 M, how will you ensure that capital projects are completed on time and on budget?**

As mentioned under item # 4, a project-centric approach for every small and large work effort that includes not just true new capital IT work, but also various operational initiatives will be challenging.

Instead, I would pursue an approach with stakeholders to achieve the following outcomes:

- IT infrastructure reserve fund with built in flexibility to take advantage of changing business needs
- Merging of isolated department project asks under single platform asks, where practical
- An analysis that sets criteria of converting project-funding to general funding for all IT operational work.

My approach around improved management of capital projects will cover four broad areas:

- Clear objectives and a well-defined business case before a budgetary decision is made. This would ensure an alignment of outcomes amongst stakeholders.
- Transparency to stakeholders with a disciplined approach around timelines and financial estimates
- Robust vendor relationships specifically on larger platform deployments
- Investment in internal project management expertise with a focus on an agile project management life cycle

9) **How do you intend to approach customer service? What measurable goals for customer service do you use? What improvements do you anticipate working on in the area of customer service, such as a universal single-sign-on system or 311 customer service type system, unifying City's Customer/Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system, and providing access to city services on multiple platforms and in multiple languages?**

One outcome of a best-in-class digital service delivery IT team would be best-in-class digital engagement between residents and the City of Seattle.

Common platforms such as CRM will allow us to pursue a seamless experience for the user. If executed right, we would create a personalized and in-context digital experience for the end user boosting customer service. Such an approach would also provide the operational staff at the City of Seattle to have an end-to-end, real-time transaction visibility.

Adopting consistency in deploying technology solutions with a mobile-first approach will also help meet the needs of a tech savvy resident of this world-class city.

Unifying the call center technology footprint will also allow the deployment of common services such as chat bots that can provide responses in multiple languages to the most common queries creating further capacity for call centers.

Leveraging chat bots with a universal single sign-on capabilities will allow residents to complete many routine tasks in a shorter period with a consistent user experience. Several examples exist in the market place example in the banking industry where such innovations are helping boost client service.

A concept I plan to introduce to the City of Seattle is the concept of using client journeys to map out all possible touch points between various types of client interactions and the organization. This allows to plan for the right combination of technology solutions versus inserting an isolated technology product in one specific area of a client journey.

The above is just a handful of examples around using digital technologies to raise client service. The City of Seattle has a home advantage that only a handful of cities anywhere in the world can claim to have i.e. we are home to the world's most tech savvy brands for whom a superior client service is second nature and an essential ingredient for survival. I would make every attempt to learn and partner with the local private sector for the betterment of the City of Seattle residents.

10) How will you conduct outreach to neighborhoods and improve the way City government interacts with its constituents? How can the City take advantage of video conferencing, social media apps, electronic polling, and crowdsourcing platforms to broaden public engagement?

All electronic channels especially around crowdsourcing platforms are a great addition to the traditional stakeholder engagement practices.

I would aim for every client facing technology to have the capabilities of capturing of client sentiment at the point of every transaction.

Further, participation on Community Technology Advisory Board (CTAB), Mayor's Innovation Advisory Council, as well as the creation of topic focused consultations (e.g. user experience and chat bots) would allow Seattle IT to capture the full flavor of community input.

One fine print: Every time a government entity opens its doors to outreach with its constituents, it sets expectations. I believe in proactive and multi-channel stakeholder consultations. I also believe in delivering to the stakeholder expectations. It would be critical that the nine areas identified under item # 2 have begun to be addressed before new expectations are set.

11) How will you address issues of the evolving workforce of the future, such as filling positions vacated by aging City workers, and welcoming more people of color, women, and people with disabilities to the City workforce where they may not have been traditionally represented in large numbers?

Workforce planning would consider two business realities at Seattle IT. Aging demographics that demands deliberate succession planning and instances of technology corporate memory that may reside with one or two individuals.

Seattle IT management would plan for the above so that there is a clear path for every critical position.

Within the IT available budget envelope and in line with any HR guidelines, IT management will pursue the following tactics to diversify Seattle IT work force:

- partner with local post-secondary institutions to have a constant flow of qualified interns
- create a department specific plan to recruit more interns from Seattle College programs, especially Seattle Promise students.
- partner with local community organizations to provide internship opportunities for new comers who may lack superior English language skills but have relevant technical skills to offer
- determine opportunities with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to provide internship opportunities for their client demographics.
- provide volunteer opportunities at Seattle IT to high-school students from under represented demographics and expose them to the technology sector.

12) How will you approach contracting decisions so as to give ample opportunity for women-owned, minority-owned, and disadvantaged businesses to participate? What does Race and Social Justice mean to you?

I am thrilled to be joining an organization that openly discusses the sometime difficult realities around Race and Social Justice. As a visible minority, whose first language is not English, I can directly appreciate the disadvantage people can face especially when entering the workforce.

My approach will include building on a successful year in meeting our IT annual WMBE aspirational goals for consulting and purchasing procurements and continue to make this a key consideration at the outset of every new IT initiative.

Seeking ongoing feedback from existing WMBE contractors will be important to make sure we continue to remove any barriers for such organizations to engage in business opportunities with IT.

Setting aggressive consulting and purchasing goals for the department in the annual WMBE Outreach plan for IT moving forward and empower and support staff and WMBE Leads to drive these initiatives.

It will also be important to provide advance openness and transparency by ensuring IT has a strong presence in the City and community outreach events to engage with vendors interested in doing business with the City where available.

Further, I will be promoting IT as a preferred business partner / buyer by creating a culture that is open to, and values, vendors interested in learning more about doing business with Seattle IT.

Throughout my career, I have made practical attempts to positively contribute to this conversation. Sometimes this has taken the form of participating on boards like Oxfam Canada (global NGO) and Immigrant Services of Calgary. Other times through my work to support social economic development in Ottawa, as well as volunteering time with organizations like Ottawa Community Loan Fund and Ottawa Community Foundation. At times it has been a simple idea to celebrate diversity by organizing international pot lucks at work to recruiting international students from local post-secondary institutions for internships.

13) What do you see as the City's role in facilitating affordable high-speed Internet to all residents and businesses?

It goes without saying that high-speed Internet is an essential service. Lack of this service directly impacts the ability of a resident to fully participate in this community. Especially in Seattle, home to global technology brands, we should set even higher standards for high-speed Internet access to all our residents and businesses.

Another technology worth exploring is the use of TV White Space to provide high-speed Wi-Fi. Successful trials have taken place around the world with some Seattle brands also involved.

A fully deployed and managed municipal broadband infrastructure is not a solution I would promote for a variety of reasons including a very capital intensive, operationally demanding initiative. Instead partnerships such as the ones described above would be both an affordable and a faster mechanism to make an impact in this space.

Additionally, we would continue our current focus on digital equity work including leveraging our relationships with cable franchise providers and telecom carriers for low-income plans and programming.

14) How do you plan on holding cable and broadband companies like Comcast, CenturyLink, and Wave accountable to the Cable Customer Bill of Rights and ensuring quality customer service for all residents and businesses?

I intend to build active working relationships with locally operating cable and broadband companies to make sure that we understand their plans that may have an impact on the adherence to Cable Customer Bill of Rights. Regular reporting on compliance and consulting with the cable customers would be important to ensure that Seattle IT is ensuring the application of the Bill of Rights in both letter and spirit.

15) The City of Seattle is in the process of appealing the FCC's 5G ruling, potentially limiting local control of public rights-of-way as technology companies deploy 5G wireless telecommunication network infrastructure. What do you see as the city's role in facilitating the expedient rollout of 5G infrastructure in Seattle?

A complete overhaul of telecom infrastructure like 5G is a rare occurrence given the highly capital-intensive exercise. The City of Seattle IT and other municipalities have a high stake in this space given telecom backbones have become economic, social, public safety lifelines for our daily operations.

I would work with all relevant City of Seattle stakeholders and provide leadership as required to ensure that the City of Seattle is an early adopter of 5G technologies. Like every technology deployment and with 5G given the physical installation of telecom assets, a centralized managed streamlined process for telecom operators will be essential. Seattle IT will ensure the relevant expertise is made available to the organization as and when required.