

# Cascade Bicycle Club

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## Electoral Endorsement Policies and Procedures



Adopted July 15, 2009 by the Board of Directors of the Cascade Bicycle Club

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## **Cascade Bicycle Club Endorsement Policies and Procedures**

### **1. Introduction**

Cascade Bicycle Club (“CBC” or the “Club”) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) organization creating more livable communities by promoting health and recreation through bicycle activities, advocacy, and education. Our mission is to *Create a Better Community through Bicycling*. CBC is operated by a full-time staff of more than 20 employees under the leadership of an Executive Director, a volunteer Board of Directors, and a large group of dedicated volunteers who live and cycle in the communities of the Puget Sound. Among CBC’s advocacy work to promote the creation of more livable communities, CBC endorses candidates seeking election to public office. CBC also issues endorsements on selected important questions presented to the electorate in ballot measures, including initiatives, propositions, and referenda.

Through these Endorsement Policies and Procedures, CBC endeavors to conduct an endorsement process that is fair, effective, and efficient. While we cannot hope to achieve consensus in every situation, CBC strives to provide consistency in our endorsements and to be adaptable to current and changing political circumstances. CBC believes that discussion and review of a broad spectrum of information will lead to the endorsement of the most responsible and viable candidates and ballot measures whose positions are congruent with the interests promoted by the Club.

CBC recognizes that its endorsement process is an educational opportunity for members of CBC and for candidates. It is an opportunity to educate candidates about transportation, environmental, health, and other cycling-related issues, as well as an opportunity for CBC to learn more about local candidates and the communities that they serve or hope to serve.

These Endorsement Policies and Procedures are to be posted on CBC’s website, and are open for review and comment by members of CBC, by the public, by incumbents, and by candidates. CBC believes that the open dissemination of these Endorsement Policies and Procedures allows members of CBC, candidates, incumbents, and other organizations to better understand how our endorsement decisions are made.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CBC’s policies and procedures are patterned closely on the Endorsement Policies and Procedures of the Washington Conservation Voters (2007). WCV is a nonpartisan group promoting environmental policies. WCV has graciously permitted CBC to utilize WCV materials.

## **2. Participation in Electoral Races**

CBC has discretionary authority to determine whether it will participate in an electoral race based on multiple factors, including but not limited to:

- Impact on policy affecting cycling interests, including transportation, environment, land use policies, education, and recreation issues
- Development of political power
- Impact on the result of the race
- Strengthening the grassroots organization

## **3. Ballot Measures**

CBC may endorse, oppose, or take no action on a ballot issue. Ballot measures may involve questions presented to the electorate in such measures as initiatives, referenda, and other petitions to the people or the Legislature. To consider a ballot measure for endorsement or opposition, CBC must determine that there is an important reason for participation based on the following factors:

- Impact on cycling-related interests
- Usefulness as an organizing tool
- Available resources
- Political ramifications of CBC participation
- Issues affecting the operations, finances, and functions of nonprofit organizations

## **4. Endorsement Process**

The CBC Board of Directors issues electoral endorsements of candidates and on ballot measures. The Program Committee of the Board and the Executive Director (or his or her designee(s)) are tasked with the responsibility of coordinating the endorsement process.

CBC's endorsement process involves the use of a questionnaire, oral interview with a base level of consistent written questions, and internal research to assess the viability of a candidate for office and his or her position on cycling-related issues in our community. Regarding ballot measures, CBC relies on internal research conducted by Staff and, in addition, in situations where a ballot measure is not clearly favorable or in opposition to cycling interests, CBC may invite members of the public and/or public interest groups to make presentations to Staff and/or to the CBC Board regarding their positions on the ballot measure. When presentations are invited, CBC typically seeks to receive

presentations by both representatives favoring and representatives opposing the ballot measure.

CBC participants in the initial phase of the endorsement process comprise (a) members of CBC Staff under the direction of the Club's Advocacy Director and (b) representatives of the CBC Board of Directors. The Staff/Director group develops endorsement recommendations that are submitted for review by the Program Committee of the CBC Board of Directors, which then reports to the entire CBC Board of Directors. The entire CBC Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the issuance of CBC's electoral endorsements. The approval process is further addressed in Section 1.7.

A questionnaire and/or interview may be waived when a candidate is clearly not viable or when an incumbent is eligible for an Early Endorsement (see Section 1.5). CBC will offer the same endorsement process to each viable candidate in a particular race.

## **5. Endorsement Factors**

The following factors are considered by CBC in evaluating candidates and making endorsement decisions:

- o Candidate Background
  - o Recruitment by or involvement with CBC
  - o Voting record, including substantive accomplishments
  - o Position on cycling-related policies and interests
  - o Demonstrated leadership and integrity on cycling issues
  - o Potential for productive relationship building
  - o Knowledge of statewide and local issues
  - o Contributions the candidate has accepted
- o Political Climate
  - o Viability
  - o Political implications for CBC from participation
  - o Ability to impact the balance of the jurisdiction regarding cycling issues
  - o Political office to which the candidate is seeking election
  - o Viability of the opponent
  - o Resources CBC can provide to the candidate
- o Other

- o Usefulness as an organizing tool
- o Available resources

The following factors may not be considered in the endorsement process:

- o Votes and/or positions on issues entirely unrelated to cycling interests
- o Whether Board members will vote for the endorsed candidate
- o Party affiliation
- o Personal or professional relationships or friendships with the candidate

Responses to a questionnaire and an oral interview are used to assess approved factors for consideration, as is other information provided by the candidate (such as past reports, a current brochure or résumé, and Public Disclosure Commission filings) or obtained by CBC. The questionnaire and/or interview may be waived when a candidate is clearly not viable or when an incumbent is eligible for Early Endorsement (see Section 1.5).

In exceptional circumstances, a written questionnaire may be used instead of an oral interview, such as in a race with de minimis political value or a race with an extraordinarily large number of candidates.

## **6. Early Endorsements**

An Early Endorsement may be given only to elected officials who (1) have been previously endorsed by CBC, (2) have demonstrated a strong and consistent pro-cycling ethic, and (3) have substantial accomplishments on cycling-related issues. An Early Endorsement expedites the endorsement process and gives due recognition to an extraordinarily strong and capable elected official.

A decision to provide a candidate with an Early Endorsement will be based on the following factors:

- o Previous endorsement by CBC
- o Voting record, including substantive accomplishments
- o Position on cycling-related policies and interests
- o Strong campaign viability
- o Potential impact on the race
- o Demonstrated leadership and knowledge of cycling issues

- Strong pro-cycling values, particularly if presented in a challenging political setting
- Recruitment by CBC
- Potential of other strong pro-cycling candidates entering the race at a later date

An Early Endorsement must be accompanied by direct and substantive communication with the candidate. While encouraged, an oral interview is not required for an Early Endorsement.

An Early Endorsement is never automatic and does not preclude a dual endorsement at a later date. Any viable candidate, as determined by CBC, who enters a race where an Early Endorsement has already been conferred, may be offered an interview to determine if multiple endorsements are warranted (see Section 1.6).

## **7. Multiple Endorsements**

CBC endeavors to provide clear direction to the voting public through its endorsements, as well as the distribution of its political resources. In addition, CBC often seeks to influence the outcome of a race in the early stages. Therefore, CBC strongly discourages multiple endorsements in the same race.

However, there are certain, limited circumstances in which multiple endorsements in the same race may be warranted. A multiple endorsement decision will be based on consideration of the following factors:

- Whether the candidates have equally viable campaigns
- Whether the candidates have equally strong pro-cycling values
- Whether the candidates have equally strong voting records on cycling-related issues
- Whether the candidates have equally strong reputations for leadership and knowledge of cycling issues
- Whether the candidates have been previously endorsed by CBC
- Whether there will be political implications to CBC from providing multiple endorsements
- Whether the candidates have previous involvement with CBC
- Whether there could be political implications by not providing multiple endorsements

## 8. Voting Guidelines

### o Quorum

Voting on endorsements may take place during an actual or telephonic meeting of the Board of Directors or, when timing warrants, by way of email. Additionally, a vote may be taken in phases (e.g., a vote may be taken of persons attending a meeting, with a request to poll absent directors via email or telephone). For purposes of calling for a vote on an endorsement of a candidate or on a ballot measure, a quorum is defined as one over 50% of the members of the Board of Directors. Proxies are to be counted in determining whether a quorum exists.

### o Proxy

Proxy votes are allowed. A member of the Board of Directors possessing the proxy of one or more other Board members must present the proxy(ies) to the CBC Secretary in person or electronically by not later than the time when the votes are being cast.

### o Voting Requirements

o A majority vote of those members of the Board of Directors present at a meeting or by email is required to confer an electoral endorsement or a position on a ballot measure.