

# **Cascade Bicycle Club**

## Electoral Endorsement Policies and Procedures



Adopted May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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## 1 – Introduction

### About Cascade Bicycle Club

Cascade Bicycle Club (Cascade), a non-profit organization based in Seattle, Washington, serves more than 14,000 members and the Puget Sound bicycling community. Our mission is to *Create a Better Community through Bicycling*. Cascade is operated by a 12-member volunteer Board of Directors, 29 professional staff, four AmeriCorps members, and thousands of volunteers.

Cascade Bicycle Club envisions a community that bicycles – inclusive, diverse and accepting, where people of all ages and backgrounds bicycle to work, to get around, and for fun and for health. We work to make bicycling convenient and safe, to create world-class bicycling infrastructure and to ensure that bicycling is recognized and appreciated as an important contributor to a healthy and fun life that brings people and neighborhoods together in a prosperous and livable community.

To those ends, we focus on the following goals:

- Get more people of all communities, backgrounds and ages to bicycle regularly and safely for transportation, fitness, recreation, and daily activities.
- Cultivate a community of bicyclists and non-bicyclists alike who respect each other on the road and trail and a broad-based coalition that supports bicycling as part of a larger vision of healthy, sustainable, and connected living.
- Significantly expand and improve infrastructure that facilitates safe and convenient cycling.

### Purpose

The purpose of our endorsement process is to ensure that our elected officials understand and support our mission and vision and also to provide our 14,000 members with information regarding candidates for elected office and ballot measures (including initiatives, propositions and referenda). We endorse candidates who we believe will most effectively use their influence as elected officials to create a better community through bicycling and help us realize our vision. For ballot measures, we endorse those that will help create a better community through bicycling. We make our endorsements without consideration of political party affiliation or sponsorship.

### Policies and Procedures

Using these policies and procedures, Cascade endeavors to conduct an endorsement process that is transparent, fair, and effective. We strive to be consistent in our endorsements and to be adaptable to current and changing political circumstances. Cascade believes that discussion and review of a broad spectrum of information will lead to the endorsement of the

most responsible and viable candidate and propositions/referenda whose positions are congruent with the interests promoted by the Club.

Cascade recognizes that its endorsement process is an educational opportunity for members of Cascade and for candidates; it is an opportunity to educate candidates about transportation, environmental, health, economic and other bicycling-related issues, and provides the organization the opportunity 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 Cascade's website, available for review and comment by members of Cascade, by the public, by incumbents, and by candidates. We believe that the wide dissemination of these Endorsement Policies and Procedures allows members of Cascade, candidates, incumbents, and other organizations to better understand how our endorsement decisions are made.

### **1.1 – Participation in Electoral Races – Ballot Measures**

Cascade's Board of Directors has sole discretion to determine whether it will endorse a candidate or ballot measure based on multiple factors, including but not limited to:

- Impact on policy affecting bicycling interests, including transportation, environment, land use policies, education, health, and recreation issues
- Anticipated impact on the results of the electoral race or ballot measure
- How endorsing or not helps build organizational capacity
- Available resources
- Ramifications and consequences of making an endorsement/not making an endorsement
- Strategic considerations affecting the long-term accomplishment of Cascade's mission

### **1.2 – Endorsement Authority**

Ultimate authority for issuing endorsements is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of Cascade Bicycle Club. The Legislative and Endorsements Committee (LEC), comprised of select Board members, staff from Cascade's Department of Policy, Planning and Government Affairs, and at-large members, is responsible for coordinating the endorsement process and forwarding recommendations to the full Board for consideration. Cascade's Policy and Government Affairs Manager initiates candidate and ballot measure contacts, compiles information for the LEC, and generally guides the deliberations of the LEC through the endorsement recommendation process.

#### **1.3.1 – Endorsement Process - For Candidates**

To receive an endorsement from Cascade, candidates must demonstrate a commitment to working to create a better community through bicycling. Successful endorsement typically involves completion of a candidate questionnaire; review by the LEC of internal and external

research, assessing the viability of a candidate and his or her positions on bicycle-related issues, and in select races, a formal interview. We consider the following criteria when making endorsements:

- *Clearly stated positions.* Does the candidate answer the questions asked and make his or her positions clear and unequivocal in the questionnaire?
- *Public record.* Does the candidate have a record of public support or opposition on our issues?
- *Approachability and willingness to learn.* Does the candidate demonstrate an openness and willingness to learn about bicycle issues and is he or she approachable and accessible?
- *Viability/electability.* Can the candidate win?
- *Personal and political experience.* Does the candidate have the requisite experience to succeed in public office?

Cascade does not consider the following factors when making endorsements:

- Party affiliation
- Votes and/or positions on issues unrelated to bicycling interests
- The views of individual Board Members regarding the candidates
- Personal or professional relationship or friendships with the candidate

### **1.3.2 – Endorsement Process - For Ballot Measures**

Regarding ballot measures, Cascade relies on internal research conducted by Staff and, in addition, in situations where a ballot measure is not clearly favorable or in opposition to bicycling interests, Cascade may invite members of the public and/or public interest groups to make presentations to Staff and/or to members of the Board of Directors regarding their position on a ballot measure. When presentations are invited, Cascade typically seeks to receive presentations to be made by both representatives favoring and representatives opposing a ballot measure.

### **1.4 – Early Endorsements**

Cascade will issue early endorsements to a select group of candidates who have demonstrated leadership in creating a better community through bicycling. An early endorsement may be given to elected officials who: (1) have demonstrated a strong and consistent commitment to creating a better community through bicycling; and (2) have made substantial accomplishments on bicycling-related issues; or (3) are dramatically superior on bicycling-related issues than their opponent. An early endorsement invokes an expedited endorsement process and gives due recognition to an extraordinarily strong and capable

elected official. Early endorsement involves direct and substantive contact with the candidate, is never automatic, and does not preclude dual endorsement of another candidate in the same race at some later date.

Decisions regarding early endorsements will be based on the following factors:

- Previous endorsement by Cascade (in extraordinary cases Cascade will make an early endorsement of a non-previously endorsed candidates)
- Voting record, including substantive accomplishments
- Position on bicycling-related policies and interests
- Strong campaign viability
- Potential impact on the race
- Demonstrated leadership and knowledge of bicycling issues
- Strong pro-bicycling values, particularly if presented in a challenging political setting
- Recruitment by Cascade
- Potential of other strong pro-bicycling candidates entering the race at a later date

### **1.5 – Automatic Endorsements of Previously Endorsed Incumbents**

Cascade will evaluate the record of select previously endorsed incumbents and determine whether their actions merit an automatic re-endorsement, or if additional information is necessary before making an endorsement. If additional information is deemed necessary, Cascade will contact the candidate to inform them of the type of information required, which may include an informal conversation, a questionnaire, or a formal interview.

### **1.6 – Multiple Endorsements**

Cascade endeavors to provide clear direction to its constituency through our endorsements. In addition, Cascade often seeks to influence the outcome of a race in the early stages. Therefore, Cascade 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-bicycling values
- Whether the candidates have equally strong voting records on bicycling-related issues

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- Whether the candidates have equally strong reputation for leadership and knowledge of bicycling issues
- Whether the candidates have been previously endorsed by Cascade
- Whether there will be political implications to Cascade from providing multiple endorsements
- Whether the candidates have previous involvement with Cascade
- Whether there could be political implications by not providing multiple endorsements

### **1.7 – Voting Guidelines**

Endorsements will be approved by the Cascade Bicycle Club Board of Directors.