



Interfaith Works, P.O. Box 1221, Olympia, WA 98507  
[office@interfaith-works.org](mailto:office@interfaith-works.org) – (360) 357-7224 – [www.interfaith-works.org](http://www.interfaith-works.org)

## **General Election 2017 City Council Candidate Questionnaire: A Voter Resource**

Interfaith Works sent out a questionnaire to candidates running in contested primary races for Council seats in the Cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. The questions reflect issues of current concern to Interfaith Works.

We believe that the candidate's responses are of great interest to our membership and our many community partners. Our objective is to provide a resource to voters to guide them in their election choices.

Candidate responses are published without editing. Interfaith Works does not endorse any candidate.

### **City of Tumwater Mayor**

#### **General Election Candidates: Pete Kmet / Chris Ward**

**1. Please state your plans to increase citizen access to government. For example, how will you include the voices of all of those in our communities – racial and ethnic minorities, the low-income, folks who live in shelters and on the street, youth, our elders and others – in planning for our community's future? What specific plans do you have to reach out to all people so that their concerns and hopes might be heard, and most importantly, be given equal weight when the city council on which you wish to serve makes decisions?**

Pete Kmet:

Since I have taken office as Mayor, Tumwater has greatly expanded our communication with the community as well as our volunteer programs. We've engaged in three community-wide discussions related to the future of Capitol Boulevard and the Brewery. We've established focus groups to solicit more detailed feedback on specific issues like public safety, parks, and design standards for new development. Citizens can sign up to receive announcements and electronic newsletters. We mail a printed newsletter to all residents and businesses within the City twice a year, and we use utility bill inserts to distribute information. We've created Tumwater University and the Police Citizens Academy for residents that want more in-depth information about the City. We've provided grants for neighborhood gatherings and projects. And we offer regular volunteer opportunities. We've used mailed surveys to obtain feedback from the community on how we are doing and to gather opinions about specific issues. As Mayor, I've made numerous presentations on various topics to a wide variety of groups throughout our community, including at our senior center and a large private senior care facility

here in Tumwater. Staff have also outreached neighborhood associations, businesses, churches, students, and many others. All of these efforts are intended to reach as many residents as feasible regardless of race, marital status, age or housing status, and I plan to continue these efforts if reelected.

Chris Ward:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**2. Have you ever been homeless? Known anyone who is homeless? How does that affect your decisions on services your communities could provide? Also regarding homelessness, please give us your thoughts on what a county-wide solution to homelessness would look like.**

Pete Kmet:

No, I've never been homeless; but I've met numerous residents and students who are or were homeless. Social services are not my area of expertise, so I've been trying to learn more about the causes of homelessness and potential solutions. We are in the process of doing a community survey to find out how our community perceives this problem and ascertain their willingness to support additional taxes to provide services for homeless individuals. It will take a collective effort amongst all jurisdictions, schools, nonprofits and others to reduce homelessness in our community.

Chris Ward:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**3. Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your age, race, gender, immigrant status or economic standing? Do you know anyone who has experienced these types of discrimination? If so, how does that affect your decisions on city ordinances and policies in these areas?**

Pete Kmet:

I grew up in a blue collar family in a small town and experienced first-hand the difference between families of workers vs. the "elite". So, I've always appreciated a working class perspective, even as I've progressed in my professional career.

Chris Ward:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**4. What specific ideas do you have about law enforcement accountability? Do you support a citizen review board for your city's police department? Why or why not? Do you support the use of body cameras by city police officers? Why or why not?**

Pete Kmet:

Our law enforcement officers have a very difficult job, often having to deal with problems and situations most people want to avoid. I am very appreciative of their work. Tumwater's police officers go through an extensive pre-hiring screening process to ensure we hire the best people we can. They are required to go through a lengthy field training program before they are allowed to patrol on their own, and are provided extensive training opportunities as they progress in their career. Complaints are typically handled internally initially, with an opportunity to appeal a decision to the Police Chief, City Administrator, and ultimately to the Mayor. Shooting incidents are subject to a more intense review, requiring to be investigated by an outside police department. I believe the current process is working. However, if a citizen review board were set up, I would prefer to see one board for the three cities, so board members have enough reviews to broaden their experience and build expertise.

For years, Tumwater has had video cameras installed in our patrol vehicles, and body cameras on our motorcycle patrol officers, and they have been very helpful in resolving the few complaints we receive. I'm in favor of expanding this to body cameras for all patrol officers, but this will generate a huge volume of video with private information on it that will be expensive to manage. I would prefer that the public disclosure aspects of managing this information first be resolved by the legislature before proceeding with an extensive body camera program.

Chris Ward:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**5. Affordable housing is a concern in our communities. The predicted population growth in Thurston County will only increase the cost of housing. Do you think it is the responsibility of cities to ensure that housing is available for people across a range of economic circumstances? If so, what should be included in your city's planning?**

Pete Kmet:

Under the State's Growth Management Act, City's must provide for a range of housing types. We have done that in Tumwater, with housing ranging from high end single family homes to highly subsidized rental units. A number of nonprofits own subsidized houses and apartment complexes in Tumwater, several of which have been assisted by grants made available through the City over the years. Several years ago Tumwater passed an ordinance protecting several manufactured home parks in Tumwater, and successfully defended this ordinance in the State Supreme Court and Federal 9th Circuit Appeals Court. All of these facilities provide hundreds of units of affordable housing within Tumwater.

I have advocated allocating the majority of our community development block grant funding for affordable housing (we currently receive \$800 K every third year as a result of an agreement with Thurston County and Lacey). I've also used my office to help promote organizations like Homes First! and Rebuilding Together. And we've supported Together! and their work with the Tumwater School District to provide services for homeless youth. Tumwater also runs a satellite food bank out of our HQ Fire Station. We provide funding to the Community Investment Partnership (a United Way/City partnership) and directly fund some additional support services outside of that process. We recently amended our code to authorize a multifamily housing property tax exemption, including an affordable housing unit bonus, for the brewery area and properties on Capitol Boulevard, with the intent to promote more affordable housing in these areas. We also provide low income seniors with a discount on their utility bills.

Chris Ward:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**6. In the past year, how many times have you taken public transportation, or traveled in some way other than a single-occupancy vehicle, to work, to city events, or to public meetings? What should cities do to help residents reduce their carbon footprint?**

Pete Kmet:

I haven't taken the bus in a while but I often walk and bike throughout our community. I have been a strong advocate for improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities not just in Tumwater but throughout the region.

The Thurston Regional Planning Council is currently working on an estimate of local carbon emissions. Preliminary information from that work indicates that vehicle travel, along with where we get our power (PSE), and how energy efficient our buildings are, are major contributors to our City's carbon footprint. So, to reduce our footprint, it's important for local government to plan our cities and provide for transportation choices so that people can get to

work and services without having to drive. We also need to continue to advocate that PSE switch to less carbon intensive sources of energy like solar and wind. And we need to support changes in the building code that provide for energy efficient design. These are just some of the ways cities can reduce our carbon footprint. We will learn more as the TRPC work evolves.

Chris Ward:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**7. How will your city be affected by climate change/sea level rise? Does your city have a plan to address these effects, and what more can or should your city do to respond?**

Pete Kmet:

While Tumwater won't be directly affected by modest levels of sea level rise, we will be impacted by climate change in many other ways. This includes more extreme weather events, seasonal temperature extremes, and higher variations in year to year precipitation affecting the availability of water. This will result in more variability in water use, more extreme flood events, increased forest fire risk, stressed plants and animals providing a foothold for weeds, invasive species and insects. TRPC is working on a hazard mitigation plan and climate adaptation plan that considers these impacts. In Tumwater, we are working on ways to reduce peak summer water use, to diversify our sources of water, to improve our stormwater management facilities, and update to our urban forestry plan, among other things.

Chris Ward:

**This candidate did not submit responses**