

8 July 2025

Dear Councilmembers,

RE: District 5 Vacancy

I want to express my interest in being considered for the District 5 vacancy that is opening up because of the resignation/retirement of Councilmember Cathy Moore. I have been a resident of Seattle since 1985 when I moved here for graduate studies in architecture at the University of Washington. During my 40 years as a Seattleite I have lived in 9 different houses, apartments and condominiums in Fremont, Maple Leaf, Ravenna, Capitol Hill, Lesser Queen Anne, Ravenna again, View Ridge, then Maple Leaf again where I have lived with my wife, grown step-children, dog and cat since 2010. During my time here I have walked my dogs roughly 36,000 miles, run at least another 25,000 miles, and commuted on foot and bicycle another 40,000+ miles, commuted by bus another 10,000+ miles on at least 5 different routes, and yes, driven cars many tens of thousands of miles more, all on the city streets and sidewalks (not too much driving on sidewalks though). When I travel the first thing I do is to walk or run in the neighborhoods around where I stay. I think that the pedestrian experience gives one the truest measure of a place. You can see, hear, smell and touch the city and see how both other pedestrians and drivers interact with people on foot, and get a sense of the care that residents and government take of the place. With a total of 25 years living in District 5 (the last 12 also working here), I think that I have a good measure of the place.

My main critique of the city as of 2025 is that for as long as I have lived here city leaders have labeled us as "The Greenest City in the US" ® (or words to that effect) while we continue to increase greenhouse gas emissions and defer to an automobile and single-family house centric vision for the city at every opportunity, year after year after year. Given that the global warming emergency is the greatest existential threat that people have ever faced it is grossly irresponsible not to vet all political decisions for their environmental impacts and reject ones that add to the environmental disaster we live in every day.

In the 5th District one of the most persistent issues is the lack of sidewalks and the crumbling condition of the few that we have (I have personally stumbled over many of them and have a wrecked knee to show for it). When our neighborhoods were annexed 60-70 years ago the city promised sidewalks to the new residents and at the rate we're going, we will be lucky to have a decent pedestrian environment by the year 2250. The other problem is the clumsy way in which the city has reluctantly allowed more density in new housing with little regard to the history of architecture and urban design which gives us wonderful models for livable, green, dense communities (that the city zoning stoically ignores). Given the current low density of housing and the prohibitive cost of building SDOT compliant sidewalks, we need a more creative approach to making NE Seattle a beautiful, pedestrian friendly, denser, environmentally responsive and responsible community for the next century or two.

I cannot pretend to be politically aligned with the 'moderate Democratic' majority on the council. I am not a Democrat and do not even think that capitalism is the best way to build a healthy, caring society, but I am a realist and work to bring about the most positive change possible at any given moment every day. I would plead with the council members to look beyond bringing in yet one more of their own for the comfort of it and instead think about the Lincolnian model of a team of rivals to make the council more effective and responsive to the whole community, not just those who see the world the same way you do.

Thank you for your consideration,

Citizen Nic Rossouw



Education:

B.A. (Architecture) University of New Mexico, Albuquerque 1984
M.Arch University of Washington, 1992

Licensing:

Professional Engineer (State of Washington) #38567

Master's Thesis:

Design of a housing project for an elderly community in NE Seattle based on field research of projects in Sweden.

Employment:

Architectural Intern	(1980-1986):	Various firms in Johannesburg (South Africa), Albuquerque NM and Silverdale WA.
Structural Drafter	(1986-1988):	Swenson Engineers, Seattle WA
Project Engineer	(1988-1990):	Swenson Engineers, Seattle WA
Project Manager	(1990-1995):	Ratti Swenson Perbix, Seattle WA
Principal	(1995-2007):	Swenson Say Fagét, Seattle WA
Sole Proprietor & Head Philosopher	(2007 – present):	giraf design, Seattle WA

Community service:

Seattle Design Commission (Vice-chair)	2002-2006
Monorail Review Panel (Chair)	2003-2005
Transitional Resources - Board Member	1997-2002

Statement of Professional Experience:

I have worked in the architectural and engineering field since shortly after starting my architectural education at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1979. While studying at the University of Washington in 1986 I took the world's longest summer job with the master structural engineer, Gary Swenson which refocused my career. Working with Swenson I found the perfect place to explore the art and science of making buildings stand up while reflecting, exploring, and expanding the concepts of the architect. Over 21 years I established long term collaborative relationships with a large group of architects, contractors and other engineers and found my place as an expert in the design of wood buildings and custom residential structures. During my 12 years as an owner/principal at Swenson Say Fagét I learned the pragmatics of running a business, including many years as the personnel director. In early 2007 I left to work as a one-person operator where I am free to select the clients and projects that I work on without the financial pressure of needing to pay the salaries of employees or please the profit expectations of business partners. My work includes architecturally and structurally challenging single-family residences and small commercial and institutional structures, as well as providing structural engineering to artists.

Statement of Political Experience and Beliefs:

I grew up in Apartheid era South Africa with anti-Apartheid activist mother and the family legacy of my great-grandfather JS Marwick who organized and led a march of over 7,000 Zulu miners from Johannesburg over 400km to Natal to get them to safety ahead of the Second Boer War and then became a liberal independent salty opposition member of parliament many years before Helen Suzman became famous for the same role. Living in a militaristic anti-Marxist police state I developed a lifelong distrust of the military, police, capitalism, propaganda, political parties and a great admiration of political participation, protest, political satire, socialism and pacifism. Ironically, I moved to the most militaristic nation in history, the United States, in 1985 as a conscientious objector to the then South African military.

I had two stints of elected office as a student in South Africa and then in Seattle, and then as a Democratic Precinct Committee Officer in Maple Leaf. Other than brief stints as a Democrat in the early 90s, then more recently as a Green, I have never affiliated with any organized or disorganized political parties. I have been a presidential primary delegate for Tom Harkin, Barack Obama, and Bernie Sanders. If pressed I would identify as an independent-socialist-green-creative-pacifist-anarchist.



City of Seattle

FINANCIAL INTEREST STATEMENT AND ADDRESS VERIFICATION CANDIDATES FOR COUNCIL DISTRICT 5

All City of Seattle officials and employees are subject to the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code (SMC), Chapter 4.16, (the "Ethics Code"). The purpose of the Ethics Code is to ensure that no public office is used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. An individual with certain financial interests may be prohibited from participating in City business, as specified in the Ethics Code. Please click [HERE](#) to see SMC 4.16.070, a list of prohibited conduct.

The City Council is interested in knowing whether you have any financial interests that could be an issue with your service on the Council. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Answering "Yes" does not necessarily disqualify you from consideration:

1. Do you, or any member of your family, **receive compensation** from any person or entity that engaged in any transactions or activities with Seattle City government in the past five years? ☐ No ☒ Yes, please complete item 1 on page 2.
2. Do you, or any member of your family, have a **direct financial interest** in any person or entity that engaged in any transactions or activities with Seattle City government in the past five years? ☐ No ☒ Yes, please complete item 2 on page 2.
3. Have you, or any member of your family, served in the past five years as an officer, director, trustee, or employee of an entity that engaged in any transactions or activities with Seattle City government? ☐ No ☒ Yes, please complete item 3 on page 2.
4. After referencing SMC 4.16.070, do you have any other relationships, employment history or financial interests that you feel could be an issue with your service on the Council under the Ethics Code? ☐ No ☒ Yes, please complete item 4 on page 3.

In order to be eligible for appointment to Council Position 5, you must be a resident of District 5 for at least 120 days (City Charter Article IV, Sec. 2; Article XIX). Please confirm your eligibility by clearly printing your current residential address and affirming the length of your residency at that address:

Street Address: REDACTED
Zip Code: REDACTED
Resident at this address since: 2010

Name of Candidate (as registered with King County Elections): NICHOLAS JOHN ROSSFOW

I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the information provided on this page and on page 2 and on all attached sheets is true and correct and that I have made reasonable inquiry to determine the truth, accuracy, and completeness of my responses.

Signature: 

Signed at SEATTLE, Washington

(City or other location must be filled in.)

Date: 7/8/25

Note: If you are appointed to the City Council, you will be required to complete a "Personal Financial Affairs Statement" on a form provided by the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC). You can see SEEC Form F1 by clicking [HERE](#).

EXPLANATIONS FOR RESPONSES ON PAGE 1: (Use additional sheets if necessary. For assistance, please call the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission at 206-684-8500.)

1. Please provide the name and address of each person or entity for which you answered Yes on page 1

Name:

Address:

GIRAF DESIGN

REDACTED

2. Please provide the name and address of each entity for which you answered Yes on page 1.

Name:

Address:

3. Please indicate (i) the name of the person holding the position (you or an immediate family member); (ii) the title of the office, directorship, trusteeship or employment held; and (iii) the name and address of the entity.

Person holding the position:

Position held with entity:

Entity name:

Entity address:

NICHOLAS ROSSOUW

SOLE PROPRIETOR

GIRAF DESIGN

REDACTED

4. Please describe the relationships, employment history or financial interests for which you answered YES on page 1.

I AM AN ENGINEER AND CONTRACTED WITH MURASE ASSOCIATES TO PROVIDE STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING FOR THE NEW LITTLE SAIGON PARK FOR SEATTLE PARKS DEPARTMENT (WORK SPANNED FROM 2018 THROUGH EARLY 2025).

I HAVE PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED IN ENGINEERING FOR THE PARKS DEPARTMENT ON A NUMBER OF PROJECTS, BUT NO OTHERS IN THE LAST 5 YEARS.