

Grant Cogswell has one leg in queer community

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Heretofore little known fact about Grant Cogswell, who is bidding to replace Richard McIver for Position 8 on the Seattle City Council: he's bisexual.

Cogswell has been so focused on expanding the Monorail - and on McIver's support for Light Rail - that social policy issues have not come up much in his campaign. Cogswell said he favors infrastructure politics over social politics.

But he's also been an out bisexual since he was 22, which he says gives him a unique perspective. With his "one leg in the queer community and one leg out," as he put it, both queer and straight people can relate to him.

"I haven't spent a lot of time talking about it on the campaign trail," he said. "I don't think it's relevant to my most significant issues, which are transit, the environment and housing."

Then, as though suddenly realizing it, he said housing issues have a particular impact on the queer community.

"There is a huge immigrant base of young poor people who are moving into gay communities all over the country," he said. "How many 19-year-old gay kids from Idaho can land here and live in Capitol Hill?"

However, sexual minority politics do not make up a large percentage of Cogswell's platform, although he said he



Photo Courtesy of Grant Cogswell

Grant Cogswell

disclosed his bisexuality to both the Seattle Metropolitan Elections Committee and the Stonewall Democrats of Washington.

SEAMEC interviewers asked him about straight privilege, and he acknowledged how it can be easier to blend in as a bisexual. "I guess I can see the plain fact that I walk down the street holding my girlfriend's hand, and I've been with her for nine months," he said. "I never walked down the street holding my boyfriend's hand. You're just too jumpy. You can't do it in Texas, where my last boyfriend lives."

He also said people can't tell he's bisexual unless he specifically says so. "The sort of ease of assimilated straight life is all over me except for when I say otherwise."

Still, his sexuality plays little role in

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where his passions lie as a City Council candidate. Cogswell co-authored the first Monorail initiative, and his push to build what the voters have approved twice over is getting him the most attention.

It's also why he feels he's a better person for Position 8 than Richard McIver - the only racial minority currently on the council.

"He's been the Transportation Chair

for the last 5 years, and he has really not awakened to the fact that we've got to build a regional transit system or the quality of life in this region is going to be destroyed," Cogswell said.

"We have a choice of whether to build more freeways across the lake, and I don't think that's where our money should go," he added. "He's fought the Monorail and he's supported Light Rail,

which is going to be a huge waste of money."

Like most candidates, Cogswell said the LGBT community should care about issues like transportation and the environment because these are issues that affect everyone. "They're general across the board issues that LGBT folks have just as much as anyone else and in some cases a little bit more," he said.

Cogswell, who does not own a car of his own, said Monorail companies don't invest in politicians, which is the biggest difference between his campaign and that of Richard McIver.

"We're different here, we've always been different, and if we're going to preserve that difference we're going to have to build public transit," he said. **SGS**