The Urbanist Port of Seattle Commissioner Questionnaire

* What are your goals for the Port of Seattle board for the next term?

Over the next four years I would like to ensure that the Port takes the lead in bringing aviation biofuels to Sea-Tac Airport. It is a critical project that would be first in the nation. Oslo, Norway already powers every flight leaving its airport with biofuel, and we can do it too. There have been many studies showing it is feasible, now we just need the leadership to make it happen.

I would also like to make sure that we have done everything possible to limit carbon emissions from ships, both container cargo ships and cruise ships. This requires a collaborative effort with all west coast ports and I am the leader who can bring those groups together because I have done it before.

Finally, I would like to improve the Port’s contracting and purchasing processes so that women and minority-owned businesses have a more equitable opportunity to compete. In this way we share the prosperity generated by the Port with more people and help “the high tide lift all boats.”

* What do you envision as the future of Terminal 5 in Seattle?

I see Terminal 5 as a model of 21st-century maritime facilities. Of course, the on-dock rail is especially attractive to tenants and terminal operators. It’s also more efficient and reduces emissions and congestion from truck traffic. The deepening of the berth, partly with federal dollars, means that larger ships can dock there and that is also more efficient. Planning for shore power to reduce emissions while at dock is also important. My one concern is for the people of West Seattle and their quality of life. I want to make sure that Terminal 5 is a good neighbor to them. But I hope that the future of Terminal 5 is as an environmentally friendly, efficient marine terminal that has high demand among shipping customers.

* Sound Transit 3 light rail routes will impact Port of Seattle holdings and interests. What role should the Port play in the process and should it be a funding partner?

The Port has a long history of working collaboratively with Sound Transit, and providing significant financial contributions toward some of its projects, or projects nearby by that help to improve freight mobility, reduce traffic congestion, and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. Since both the West Seattle Bridge and Elliott Avenue are key industrial corridors it makes sense for the Port to play a role in the planning and construction of ST3 light rail routes, and , potentially, provide funding, as long as there is a clear nexus with the Port’s mission. In addition, the Port must protect industrial lands along the route from uses that do not support economic development.

* Do you support tolling Airport Drive to reduce private vehicle use at the airport?

I would support tolling on the drive, if other measures do not prove successful. For example, parking garage rates could reflect “demand pricing” and lead to a reduction in private vehicle use. I would also want to consider how “private vehicles” like Uber and Lyft cars would be accommodated. Another consideration is the rapid transit service to the airport. If you live near a light rail station that works, but what about those who don’t? Is that a hardship for them? I would need more information to make a good decision, but I support the principle of reducing private vehicle use at the airport.

* What commitments as a commissioner will you make to fight climate change?

As a key issue in my campaign, I will do whatever it takes to bring aviation biofuels to Sea-Tac Airport. It can we done if there is leadership and strategic collaboration between public and private interests. Just as the solar and wind energy industries needed help getting started, so do aviation biofuels. Alaska Airlines is on board and so are several environmental non-profits. Now we just need the leadership at the Port to make it so. I will provide that leadership.

I also commit to working for shore power at every dock to reduce carbon emissions from ships, continued Port investment in the Duwamish River clean up, and stormwater quality projects to reduce runoff from Port property.

* The Port owns a great deal of land. Would you support using any of it to deal with the region’s affordable housing crisis, as other public entities have done?

If the affordable housing supports jobs for those who work in aviation, maritime, and manufacturing, then I see perfect complement to the mission of the Port. Otherwise, it would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Industrial lands are growing scarcer by the day, and, without them, we run the risk of losing many good family-wage jobs. Once they are used for other purposes, they rarely return to industrial uses. Those jobs are held by the very people who face homelessness without them. Again, I support the principle of providing affordable housing for everyone. And we want people who work in Port industries to have access to such housing near where they work. It’s a balancing act that needs to be undertaken with great thought for both the short-term and long-term implications.