



Jesse Tam Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Port of Seattle, Seat 5

What would you point to as your biggest accomplishments during the current term? If not an incumbent, where do you think the current Port commission has fallen short?

The Current Port Commission has failed Washington State residents with major financial mismanagement and cost overrun on SeaTac International arrival terminal expansion project. The original design build contract signed in 2014 in the amount of \$344 million, with schedule to open in 2018. It was delayed for 4 years and finally opened in 2022, with a final bill of approx. \$1 billion. Most recently, the news regarding the design flaws of only 16 out of the 20 airplane stalls are now usable, along with the current complicated lawsuits filed from both the port and the contractor, was all initiated from the contract and management of the issues that have happened during the past 8 years.

As a public entity, it has been an ongoing practice for over a decade with very little accountability and was lack of transparency to our local resident in Washington State. News finally came to the surface and the situations were disclosed by the press after many years of events. At this point, no one seems to be willing to step up to accept the responsibility. My opponent served on the commission the longest time and was there particularly in those years from 2015 to 2023 and he suggested the contractor was to be responsible to the issues.

The Port has ambitious goals to shift users at SeaTac away from using a personal vehicle to access the airport. What immediate projects do you support to accelerate that shift?

It is time for us to find a way to minimize the traffic jam issues in and surrounding our airport. With the increasing demand for our airport services, the current ground transportation system is outdated, and the local private vehicles will certainly surpass our roadway capacity in the extremely near future.

Public transportation of our current light rail is our immediate solution.



- 1) The port must provide immediate improvement of our light rail satellite stations in receiving air travelers with luggage in many locations throughout our entire King County region.
- 2) Proper check-in of passengers and luggage capacity must be available as it is inside the current airport terminal.
- 3) Long-term parking facilities are needed to support those satellite stations.
- 4) The current long walkway needs to be re-designed to accommodate the travelers with luggage and with difficulty walking from airport light rail stations to and from the air terminals or to their cars in the nearby parking facilities.
- 5) Other convenience and cost of transportation will be the main incentive for travelers to start shifting their traditional way to travel to the airport with their own vehicle. The objective is to shift all the users away from their personal vehicle to public transportation to and from the airport in the future.

Do you support adding congestion pricing to Airport roadways?

The airport is now getting more and more expensive to park and to drive to due to the congestion time. I don't believe it is fair to people to pay more of the congestion caused by the lack of effective design and traffic management of the port.

How do you reconcile the environmental impact of the cruise industry with the Port's role in accommodating it?

We do want our cruise ship for our tourists because of its positive economic impact in our region with billions of dollars of tourist revenue to our local economy. Seattle is the major cruise ship gateway to Alaska. However, we must also pay attention to the pollution caused by the cruise ships during the time at our Seattle downtown waterfront terminals and its negative impacts on our Green Corridor while traveling to and from Alaska. To balance these two major issues, we must work with our cruise ship partners to share the burden to make sure it is a win-win outcome in the near future.

We want to hear from our cruise ship partners regarding their plan to improve their fuel source by minimizing fossil fuels and to have it replaced by other fuels such as natural gas to cut emission problems.

We need to build our electricity capacity in our waterfront terminal to power the cruise ship while docking. Idling is no longer an option.



We need to look into our renewable green energy source, such as solar, wind, and tidal power sources to supply long term solutions.

Currently the Port plays a big role in supporting roadway capacity projects to improve freight capacity. How do you envision the role of the Port in shaping the region's transportation system evolving as population rates continue to increase and impact freight delay?

We must find solutions to maximize our roadway capacity for freight while it is directly conflicting with the increasing traffic from the other our local population. It is absolutely the port's responsibility to create better freight roadway capacity to move our cargo with higher efficiency and to minimize the excessive cost of traffic jam. With my decades of international travelling and visiting many major cities in this country, I found a common effective solution. Those big cities are working around the clock, 24/7 for freight within the port facility but move its outside roadway transportation to off hours. It is difficult and sometimes impossible to build more roadways for traffic, roadway capacity is limited without any geographical option. So as most normal traffic is concentrated during the daylight hours, many of those large cities set traffic rules for freight transportation to allow them for only certain hours into the late night or early morning hours, before and after the normal traffic hours. By doing so, they increase the roadway capacity without building up more roadway. It is something that we can apply to our region for better transportation efficiency.

What role do you see the Port of Seattle having in the immediate future to address the region's shortage of housing?

The Port of Seattle is a major job creating engine in the region, with more people moving into this area and working for the port and other industries, more housing will be needed to meet the new demand of housing. The Port can provide some of the housing support initiatives.

- 1) Port has property that could develop into affordable public housing in the proximity of the port's work areas for the workers.
- 2) Port can subsidize rental expenses to the workers' families as part of work benefits and/or labor unions' contracts.



- 3) Port can provide public transportation assistance to those who live further away from the port working areas for more direct and low cost transportation services.
- 4) 1 out of 3 jobs in our region is trade related. Trade must go on with minimal disruption to support all these jobs who will pay for the housing needs.
- 5) Port can provide training and apprenticeship to the young people who will help in the construction trade to build more housing to meet the demand.

Does the Port Commission have enough resources to conduct proper oversight of Port-wide projects and initiatives?

It is not about how many people on the Port Commission, it is about how to allocate its resources to develop the proper oversight practice. The historical practice of the Port Commission is to have one commissioner to serve as commission president and 4 supportive commissioners to carry out the agenda and policy.

I recommend the port commissioners to develop a "check and balance" policy that the decisions are made throughout the port operations to ensure all decisions are made with at least one other person to sign off to minimize one person's quick decision process. The whole entire port operation must have total accountability and transparency to raise the level of future performance.

What do you think the Port has done well to invest in the economic and environmental health of South Sound communities, and what should it do better or differently?

The Port has openly expressed interest in helping the South Sound communities. Various efforts and plans have been discussed and carried out to promote its environmental health but unfortunately, the levels of achievement have been far below the communities' expectation. In the result of that, a class active lawsuit was filed at King County Superior Court on April 19, 2023, representing multiple communities and cities against the Port and Airlines for inferior environmental health with increasing health risk due to toxic airport pollution.