

## 2017 Candidate Questionnaire

### SECTION I

#### BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

**John Persak**

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
John	M	Persak

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

**Port of Seattle Commission #4**

3. Are you the incumbent?                      Yes      No X

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

28 years, two minor breaks

5. How long have you resided in King County?

28 years, two minor breaks

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan?      Partisan              Nonpartisan X

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

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#### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:                      Persak for Port

Address:                                      **POB 84355**

City/State/Zip:                      Seattle, WA 98124

Campaign Phone:                      (206)291-5411

Campaign E-mail:                      [john.m.persak@gmail.com](mailto:john.m.persak@gmail.com); [info@johnpersak.com](mailto:info@johnpersak.com)

Campaign Website:                      [PersakforPort.org](http://PersakforPort.org)

#### POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

<b>Public Office</b>	<b>Elective or Appointive?</b>	<b>Dates Held</b>	<b>Leadership Role (if any)</b>
City of Seattle's Freight Master Plan Advisory Board	Appointive	Dec 2014 to Jan 2017	Stakeholder for Georgetown Community
Port of Seattle's Energy and Sustainability Committee	Appointive	May 2016 to date	Stakeholder for ILWU Local 19 and at large community (Duwamish Valley)
City of Seattle, Industrial Lands Use Panel	Appointive	August 2016 to date	Stakeholder for ILWU and labor

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

<b>Office Title</b>	<b>Year of Run</b>
Seattle City Council Position #8	2015

## SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
  - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
  - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
  - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

I am running to become a Seattle Port Commissioner to ensure that the Port of Seattle remains the people's port, to bring transparency in governance, community-led solutions, and ensure that its substantial economic benefits are shared by the public across the region and regionally throughout Washington State. I will prioritize stewardship for our working waterfront, our fishing community, our airport communities, and respect for the well being of workers and their families in and around the Port of Seattle. In the wake of controversies that have plagued leadership at the Port of Seattle throughout the years, I am committed to accountability in decision-making with outcomes that prioritize living wages, the rebuilding of the middle class, the need for a livable planet and communities, and an open dialogue with the public.

I am committed to democratic values and an intersectional view of problem solving, and have I fought for the rights of workers and communities for many years. I am the only candidate with contemporary hands-on policy experience directly with Port of Seattle issues such as environmental sustainability, freight mobility, labor relations, and land use, all of which will be essential to be an effective voice on the Port of Seattle Commission. I have a unique understanding of the issues that need to be addressed and the key stakeholders and solutions that can be brought together to fix them. I believe the Port can be a leader in the green energy economy because of the decision making leverage of the Port over a carbon intensive transportation and supply chain network. I will do everything I can to leverage the Port's economic engine to advance reductions in its carbon footprint while making sure that all stakeholders, especially impacted communities, are brought along and enfranchised in the process.

The Port's decisions have to reflect our priorities as a community, in order for the public to support this vital public institution. This requires mindful decision-making, creative problem solving and consensus building, all while prioritizing community livability, environmental stewardship, accountability, and respect for workers.

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

Relationships are the most important thing when it comes to making long-term collaborative decisions within an institution. My experience in labor relations in a challenging working environment in the maritime industry and labor/community in general, along with my work on many second-tier stakeholder groups, is essential to solving the complex and long standing institutionalized challenges at the Port of Seattle.

I value the significant relationship building that I've engaged in the past two decades, particularly with those who come from a different background and experience and possess differing perspectives. Whether people are representing a large constituency or their own interests, I like to engage with them based on the principle that desired stakeholder outcomes are enriched and more lasting through achieving a desired outcome for as many as possible. For me, this means starting outside a concession/compromise model by identifying coinciding interests through disclosure, transparency, and getting as much available data on the table as possible, within the time available to make a decision. By understanding all the perspectives, and coming to some agreement on data and present conditions, I believe that multifaceted negotiation on difficult issues can be most successful.

My ability to assess risk profile, costs and benefits, externalities and impacts of concurrent processes, and the impact on decision flexibility down the road are key traits that will lead to good Port decisions in the public interest. All of this requires a discipline of understanding the social and cultural environments within which I am challenged, and possessing the patience to wait for more information and clarification when the outcomes and consequences of a decision are unclear.

My firm belief is that consensus building through identifying common goals among stakeholders is the foundation for necessary consensus building with other Port of Seattle Commissioners and Port staff, and problem solving around community disparities at and around the Port of Seattle. In my experience, working on commonalities among interests who disagree is the first step toward building trust in a troubled cultural environment, in order to come to consensus, compromise, or "third options" on items of disagreement. As a new Seattle Port Commissioner, I will utilize my substantial negotiating, consensus building and relationship building experience and skills to benefit the Port and all of King County.

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

Throughout the past several years, I have worked with multiple stakeholders across labor, community, business, Port of Seattle, City of Seattle, and State Legislators to ask leaders to reconsider the location of a multipurpose sports arena to Seattle Center, and away from our deep water marine terminal and rail yards in the industrial SoDo district of Seattle. As a representative of the most impacted workforce, workers on our Port terminals, I took the first public stance in opposition of the original location on this issue in early 2012, and over the past five years have applied my skills in media relations, grassroots organizing, and engagement with public officials to change public awareness of the implication of the proposal. In working with our legal team, and listening to the advice of experienced leaders in our community, we were able to avoid the impacts of a City Council

decision, at least for the time being, that didn't consider the full impact of the most affected communities and workers around our Port.

My recent contribution to the Port of Seattle's Energy and Sustainability Committee, in the interests of providing a voice for middle class jobs and labor union members in a just transition toward environmental sustainability, was a great fulfillment of a long desired opportunity to participate in the imperative conversation about climate change. One of the great challenges of this struggle is alleviating the fear that a livable planet means less jobs and less opportunities for workers. To the contrary, I believe that it requires empowering labor leaders and union members to take a seat in the conversation so that the impacts of long term policies can be relevant for those who otherwise would continue to suffer in silence the associated short term and long term health problems. This is a necessary conversation that needs to continue at the Port of Seattle Commission level, to take leadership in the development of a green energy and transportation economy in an otherwise carbon intensive transportation and logistics industry within the seaport and airport. Setting the Port of Seattle on the path toward a carbon neutral footprint by 2050, and being a part of that solution, means that my son and the next generation will benefit from the foresight of the current generation making decisions to reduce carbon and reverse the impacts of global warming. I've been very proud to be a part of this multi-stakeholder led effort by the Port, and hope to continue my leadership role as a new Port Commissioner.

Ten years ago, I led the effort for organizational change while serving on the board of Waterfront Federal Credit Union. In a fast changing regulatory environment after the 2007-8 financial crisis, credit unions were hit the hardest, because the economy of scale and limitations on investment options for credit unions were not considered in the new regulations that were supposed to address the deficiencies of large lending and investment institutions. In spite of these external challenges, I was able to lead reforms in the institutional culture that set the stage for better management relations with employees, more equitable lending services to the membership, and an increased CELS rating from the National Credit Union Administration. Addressing the governance issues between the CEO and the Board of Directors was key, and was only possible through a grassroots effort to recruit new board candidates to see these changes through. I believe I was an integral part of setting Waterfront Federal Credit Union on a solid and sustainable path, and that experience can directly benefit me as a new Port Commissioner.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

Stakeholder, Port of Seattle Energy and Sustainability Committee, May 2016 to date;

Stakeholder, City of Seattle Industrial land Use Advisory Panel (Office of Economic Development/Mayor's Office), August 2016 to date;

Delegate, Martin Luther King jr. County Labor Council, February 2016 to date;

Vice President, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 (executive board since 2011), January 2016 to date, full registrant member since 2004;

Stakeholder, Seattle Freight Master Plan Advisory Board, December 2014-August 2016;

Stakeholder, Duwamish River Opportunity Fund stakeholder (community/environment funding, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods), 2014;

Chair, Livable Workable Georgetown (neighborhood assessment project w/ City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods), December 2014-December 2015;

President, Puget Sound District Council, ILWU, January 2014 to date (Washington State, council member since January 2011);

Waterfront Federal Credit Union board (chair & labor relations chair, 2010-11), May 2008 to May 2011;

Chair, Waterfront Federal Credit Union Supervisory Committee, May 2008 to May 2011;

Central Co-op dba Madison Market, Trustee & Finance Committee, May 2001 to May 2003;

UFCW Local 1105 Shop Steward, Contract Bargaining Committee, May 2001 to May 2003.

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

The Port of Seattle Commission is the legally governing body of the special purpose municipal corporation known as the Port of Seattle. The duties include the setting of overall policy for the Port of Seattle, including the joint partnership under the Northwest Seaport Alliance, to hire and direct the CEO, and to invest public resources to advance trade and commerce, promote industrial growth, stimulate economic development, and create jobs. Other duties include the oversight and approval of budgets, certain leases, contracts, collective bargains agreements, ensure of audit activities and financial controls and compliance, supervise the Commission chief of staff, and operate in accordance with the most recent governance policy set forth by the Port of Seattle Commission. All of these things are done under the purview of the RCW of Washington State, the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act, and other laws, regulations and court decisions. While all of these duties are all important, the responsibility of setting policy for the Port of Seattle is paramount, because it means that the Commission holds ultimate responsibility for how decisions are made throughout the institution, and has an interest in ensuring that policy reflects that values and priorities of the people of King County.

My top priority is the creation of good paying jobs to rebuild the middle class in King County and Washington State. The Port plays a huge role in economic development, and I will leverage the role of the Port of Seattle to create opportunities for workers who cannot afford college debt or cannot survive on sub-livable wages, while emphasizing a just transition to a green energy economy that will enhance the health and safety of workers at the Port of Seattle and impacted communities near our airport and seaport. In doing so, I will focus attention on the recapitalizing of our fishing fleet to ensure that the jobs of retrofitting and replacing vessels remain in King County; advance career and technical education (CTE) as part of the Port of Seattle's legislative / partnership agenda, prioritize Community Workforce Agreements, Apprenticeship Utilization and Priority Hire in all Port related construction projects; preserve our manufacturing and maritime industrial lands , which includes engaging the City of Seattle on land use and planning; and building on the achievements of the NW Seaport Alliance, in order to secure a Tennant for Terminal 5 and effectively compete with the Ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert in British Columbia, and other gateways that benefit from a widened Panama Canal.

Equity and Environmental Sustainability are a necessary element in Economic Development, in order for communities to avoid the negative impacts of growth. Respecting the collective bargaining process, advancing race and social justice policies and frameworks, and expanding opportunities for women and minority businesses are areas in which I will emphasize for social and economic justice at the Port of Seattle. Solutions to mitigate operational impacts such as airport noise, ground traffic from the seaport and airport, and diesel emissions from equipment, aircraft, and ships must be community led and community centered, so that as a Commissioner I can advance policies and solutions that are most relevant to impacted communities, and support the outcome of carbon neutrality for the Port of Seattle by 2050.

My experience and background in community banking and board governance will inform my commitment to Transparency and Accountability in decisions as a Commissioner. Proper controls on operational performance, adherence to set policy, and financial controls rely upon an active outcome based monitoring of senior staff by the Commission. I will insist that more staff resources are devoted to full implementation of ethics policies and any new ones that are necessary, and comprehensively review the Commission's governance policies and staffing directives to achieve these outcomes. I am in full agreement of moving the CEO's role to an Executive Director position, which will require a change in the terms of the hiring agreements from what has been set for past CEOs, informed by stakeholder input.

All of this experience, along with my current engagement on many Port of Seattle issues, means that I will hit the ground running as a newly elected Port of Seattle Commissioner, in order to continue the Port's mission of creating good paying jobs, while prioritizing livable communities and environmental stewardship.