

2009 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Robert		Walker

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

Port Commission #4

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes x No

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

10 years continuously, 27 years total

5. How long have you resided in King County?

10 years continuously, 27 years total.

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: **Taxpayers for Walker**

Address: **432 Bronson Way NE**

City/State/Zip: **Renton, WA 98056**

Campaign Phone: **(425) 802-5385**

Campaign Fax: **None**

Campaign E-mail: **Elect_robert@porkland.org**

Campaign Website: **http://www.porkland.org/robert**

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

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

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)
PCO	Elected	2002-2004	N/A

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

Office Title	Year of Run
State representative, 48th district, Position 1	2004
Port of Seattle Commissioner, Position 4	2005

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 think the Port of Seattle is teetering on the verge of disaster, and that's why I'm running for commissioner:

- Cargo volumes and Port market share continue to decline, with no clear plan to reverse this trend.
- Declining property values have resulted in looming budget deficits.
- The entire airline industry is, again, on the verge of bankruptcy.
- Notwithstanding the dire fundamentals, Port expenses are growing as a percentage of revenue.

Performance audits: I support these. Only a limited scope performance audit has been performed, which primarily focused on whether the Port was overpaying for projects, and whether small businesses had adequate opportunity for bidding on them.

I'd like to see further performance audits in the following areas:

- Efficiency and completeness of intermodal facilities.
- Relative cost of the Port of Seattle versus competing ports.
- Security and policing of Port facilities.
- Compensation and benefits relative to the industry.
- Alignment of real estate portfolio with business needs.
- Scandals: From e-mail scandals to bidding scandals to executive pay scandals, the Port of Seattle has been at the center of controversy for a number of years. There's no point in blustering about previous scandals; my biggest concern is preventing the next one. Scandals are, in my mind, symptoms of a larger overall problem: a working culture that is too cozy, has too much impunity, and—most importantly—doesn't have enough to do. Idle hands are the devil's work and in this economy, we can't afford them.

Growth: The Port of Seattle is very keen on starting new businesses (real estate development in Interbay, for example) but is not best-in-class in running its existing businesses, and these are in decline. Proponents of the Port's "green" initiatives may dispute this, but I think the biggest "green" initiative the Port should focus on is money. Jack Welch's example of "fix, sell or close" is a good one

to follow.

Terminal operations: Terminal 5 is managed by Eagle Marine Services, Terminal 18 and 30 by SSA Terminals, Terminal 46 by TTI, Terminal 91 is self-managed, terminal 115 by Northland, and the grain terminal by Louis Dreyfus. This can't be the most efficient way to manage terminals.

The Port is not an ATM: As a taxpayer, I'm tired of paying for the same horse twice. The Port of Seattle has been a key enabler of poorly managed agencies such as Sound Transit. Any highway construction even remotely happening in the vicinity of the airport has been paid for in recent years—in part—by the Port. Now, some groups are even asking the Port of Seattle to pay for reducing air pollution. The Port should focus strictly on its core business, and tax revenue should be used to make prudent and appropriate investments in this core business.

I'm an engineer, and I like to fix things. I won't make any glamorous campaign promises, but I will work hard to focus the Port on its core business: the efficient and cost-effective flow of people and goods. I'll work hard to reduce the Port's share of your property tax bill. And most importantly, I'll work hard to keep Seattle the "Portal to the Pacific" for many generations to come.

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

Precision questioning: Skilled at asking the right questions to uncover hidden problems, I will not be a rubber stamp on the Commission.

Project management: I have considerable experience managing large, costly, and complex IT projects. Accordingly, I can readily deal with multiple priorities and shifting deadlines, also common at the Port.

Procurement: As a required approver for most IT spend on an 8-figure annual budget at Microsoft, I am skilled in both process control and vendor management. I will view proposed improvements to both of these processes through the lens of my considerable experience in this area.

Not for Sale: Politicians like to say that they're not for sale, usually on their way to the bank. I'm actually not for sale. I refuse to accept any campaign contributions because they never come without strings attached. It's a sad commentary on the state of government affairs that it's a virtue to shun influence-peddling, but I can't ignore reality.

Differing Perspectives: At Evergreen, I learned that to really understand an issue, you need to consider it from multiple dimensions. Unfortunately, the usual tone of political debate isn't conducive to this way of thinking. Every issue boils down into extremes; 30-second opposing sound bites tailor-made for television. Issues, in reality, are complicated and deserve the thoughtful consideration I promise to give them--even if this complexity can't be neatly packaged for the evening news.

Technology Expertise: I have extraordinary breadth and depth of technology experience across a wide-ranging technology portfolio. I think that this experience will be highly valuable in analyzing both the efficacy of existing technology projects and the ROI of proposed technology projects.

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.

a) At one point during my college career, I learned that most people don't have a life's goal. Even fewer people who have one actually write it down. I was no different than most people. I had no life's goal. And being the unconventional sort of person, this really bothered me.

Over several weeks, I thought long and hard about this. A life's goal needs to be taken seriously. Ultimately, it ended up being fairly obvious, and something that has long been a passion of mine: experiencing the world's people and its cultures. I grabbed a pen and paper, and I wrote down my life's goal: **I will visit every continent in the world.**

It's really incredible how such a small sentence can shape your entire life, but for over a decade, my life's goal has shaped mine. I travel on a shoestring, staying as close to the local culture as possible. No expensive tours or five star hotels, and usually alone. I have explored the rainforests of South America, the verdant plains of the Transkei, and the back streets of Akihabara. I have stood exhausted on a crumbling section of the Great Wall, after riding a city bus for hours to the outskirts of Beijing and hiking for miles up a dung-covered donkey track. I have traveled to far-flung corners of the Aleutians and the North Slope where people literally bet their lives on cargo arriving from Seattle. And I have spent more time at Sea-Tac Airport than I ever expected I would.

I have a true sense of awe and wonder at how interconnected our world can be. Enjoying a Washington red delicious apple bought at a produce stall in Hong Kong could drive this home for anyone. Trade matters. Culture matters. Seattle, the Portal to the Pacific, matters; we are instrumental to the lives of millions of people who rely on our city. And the Port of Seattle is Seattle's front door. We're probably all keenly aware of this, but I'm especially aware given my

travels.

My life's goal? It's not complete. The harshest continent of seven, Antarctica, remains. I can't wait!

- b) Also while in college studying full-time, I wrote two technology books which were subsequently published by Macmillan (and simultaneously passed my classes with excellent evaluations). I'm particularly proud of the ability I developed to manage multiple projects with shifting priorities and tight deadlines. Both my writing skills and my project management skills have proven to be essential in most of my professional undertakings since that time, and I expect they will serve me particularly well on the Port Commission.
- c) More recently in my professional career, I have grown in responsibility from managing 12 servers in one facility to over 3,600 servers spread across 7 facilities. I have accomplished this through implementing a high degree of consistency and automation in the services delivered. These process improvements are not strictly applicable to the IT field; I look for opportunities to automate *everything* where it makes business sense. More importantly, I know both where automation makes business sense, and where technology can create more problems than it solves.

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.

- I am an active member of Stay Safe Seattle, a non-profit harm reduction organization that focuses on at-risk teens. I volunteer with this organization on outreach and fund-raising activities to support its work in the community.
- I have gained considerable experience in event production and management through my deep involvement in the Seattle underground electronic music scene. While this may seem to be an unusual example, it has given me a keen first-hand appreciation for logistical considerations. For example, solving the problem of parking hundreds of cars per hour at the airport (all of which must navigate a construction zone) is not unlike solving the same problem at an outdoor music festival.
- I am exceptionally well-connected with local young, struggling visual and performing artists who would love more exposure. If elected, I will advocate for the Port of Seattle to become more closely connected to the local arts community. I will also advocate for featuring the works of local artists

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

The Port Commission is the board of directors of the Port of Seattle, and represents its owners (taxpayers). I know who owns the Port: **taxpayers**. I understand its business, and have solid plans to improve it. And if elected, I will faithfully represent the interests of the voters.

I believe that the two most important duties of the Port Commission are fiduciary responsibility and oversight in furtherance of this responsibility. In my view, the first rule of a fire is to put it out, and this will be my key initial focus. Although the Port doesn't have the same crisis of confidence it did a year ago, many known issues remain unresolved while the business of the Port continues to decline. Key to improvement will be the implementation of performance audit recommendations already made, and recommending additional performance audits in the areas with the biggest probable P&L impact. I will also factor public safety into consideration when making performance audit recommendations.

The third most important duty of the Port Commission is to drive efficiency and build market share. These go hand-in-hand. I don't want to preside over an era of layoffs and decline; we should leave that to other Port Commissions from whom we attract business!