



Interfaith Works, P.O. Box 1221, Olympia, WA 98507  
[office@interfaith-works.org](mailto:office@interfaith-works.org) – (360) 357-7224 – [www.interfaith-works.org](http://www.interfaith-works.org)

## **General Election 2017 Port Of Olympia Candidate Questionnaire: A Voter Resource**

Interfaith Works sent out a questionnaire to candidates running in contested primary races for Council seats in the Cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. The questions reflect issues of current concern to Interfaith Works.

We believe that the candidate's responses are of great interest to our membership and our many community partners. Our objective is to provide a resource to voters to guide them in their election choices.

Candidate responses are published without editing. Interfaith Works does not endorse any candidate.

### **Port of Olympia Port Commissioner, District No. 2 Nonpartisan Office – Four Year Term Candidates: Bill Fishburn / Bill McGregor**

**1. The Port of Seattle recently agreed to allow a space for houseless people to be located on its property. Up to 80 residents would live there in tents and small structures. What is the Port of Olympia's role in a countywide solution to homelessness? If you are elected Port Commissioner, would you vote to allow a tent city on Port property? Why or why not?**

Bill Fishburn:

The Port of Olympia exists to benefit the citizens of Thurston County. So with their support, it makes sense for the Port to partner with non-profits to address the housing crisis, and to look to Quixote Village as a source of inspiration. As a steward of public property, two obvious opportunities for the Port are 1) to use its property to provide a site or sites for emergency and transitional shelter; and 2) to write into its development contracts measures which help to fund such efforts, bringing for-profit companies into solution partnerships. I believe this is one of the high priority issues our county faces. It requires county-wide and even regional approaches to achieve progress, and the Port should definitely be a part of that.

Bill McGregor:

The Port of Seattle leased a small area to the city of Seattle. This approximately 15,000 sq ft area is located under the Magnolia Street Bridge in an industrial area. The City of Seattle by the

terms of the lease agreement are responsible for any and all utility needs of that area for that purpose. The term is for one year with an option for one more year. Per the city of Seattle ordinances, these locations must move every 2 years. I do not see a piece of property in the Ports portfolio that would necessarily fit that same nature of what the City of Seattle is proposing on that Port of Seattle Land. Our current properties in downtown Olympia are not in a location where they would be invisible from residence views, the HOCM, etc. as they will be in the new Magnolia Bridge area. While Ports are not in the same business as Cities to provide health and safety to its residents, I would be open to discussion. The needs of the homeless in our community is for a warming center and working through their needs – mental health, addiction, etc. I won't vote yes or no until I see what the issues are and how they are going to be handled. (Ports aren't in the business of developing a Farmers Market, but we worked with the City to get one established!)

**2. One of the Port's stated goals is to increase international trade. What should the Port do to ensure that any increased rail traffic that results from this will not harm the environment should, for example, a derailment occur? Related to that, what should the Port be doing to reduce carbon emissions related to its work and that of its tenants and other users?**

Bill Fishburn:

The Port should adopt policies and policy language that make it clear that Port business will avoid causing some types of rail traffic to travel through our Thurston County communities. The Port should respect resolutions by other governments and sovereign nations that oppose such traffic through their areas. The Port already has a resolution against coal and oil trains, and it could include nuclear free zones such as Olympia once had. The Port should recognize that the materials it handles, such as fracking proppants, are a part of its total carbon profile.

The Port cannot claim to be reducing its carbon footprint as long as it promotes the fossil fuel industry. The Port should support clean technology, and it can also promote environmental policies that support carbon sequestration. At the smaller scale, the Port should continue to work on reducing its own carbon emissions, promoting tenant use of renewable energy sources, replacing its vehicle fleet and equipment with hybrid and electric equipment where possible, doing metering studies, building out on its developed lands to protect trees and prairie where possible, and taking a hard look at the most energy- and resource-efficient ways to address sea level rise.

Bill McGregor:

The Port has a resolution that we will only handle "safe and legal cargo". If that is the case, then I don't know of a cargo that we are currently working to attract that would not fit that statement and therefore, any derailment of a rail car should not pose a problem.

Reducing carbon emissions: The port just completed its Green House Gas Emissions study and determined that we are far below reaching any plateau in this regard. As we look to purchase newer equipment as needed, the emissions of those equipment will be one of the criteria as to its purchase. The installation of solar panels on the Marine Terminal Warehouse and replacement of the high pressure sodium lights inside that warehouse has resulted in the solar panels feeding back in to the grid to PSE, produced a safer work environment to those working inside the warehouse and enough electricity generated to carbon neutral. We also provided solar panels to operate the parking lot lights at the New Market CleanWater development in Tumwater. Those lights are operating ONLY on solar and are not connected to the power grid. As new projects come on line for development, the Port Commission will ask staff evaluate the potential of additional solar or other sustainable energy options.

**3. Another of the Port's stated goals is to increase economic opportunities. What specifically should the Port do to reach out to local entrepreneurs to encourage and support small businesses?**

Bill Fishburn:

The Port also needs to be looking at steady growth, family wage sectors for economic development. That means jobs that are not subject to the ups and downs of the global economy. These help cushion all local business from market extremes. For too long, the Port of Olympia has done its own thing. It has not looked at the real drivers of the local economy to make policies that support County trends. Consider transportation. Thurston County is growing, and we must build mass transit. Mass transit jobs are clean energy jobs, which like other parts of the Clean Technology sector, provide an especially good opportunity for people without college educations to find steady work. Transit hubs support local retail growth. The transportation sector is a natural fit for the Port, yet it has not taken it seriously enough in the past. Infrastructure for the agricultural processing industry would support jobs in that growth sector.

The Port can support entrepreneurs and businesses focused on jobs in clean technology, renewable energy and sustainable local agriculture, not only through its incubations spaces or rent policies, but through programs supporting training and employment. Other Ports in the state are already doing this. Let's support local economic growth through projects such as public internet, electrical storage, or data centers. Thurston County has the benefit of a great quality of life with proximity to major metropolitan areas. I want the Port to get smart about this and explore how to make the most of it.

Bill McGregor:

The Port is working with the City of Lacey to modify the recent Port purchase of three commercial warehouses in the Hawks Prairie area of the city. Two of those buildings are occupied by several small businesses. The Third is unoccupied. The Port and the City of Lacey are working to put an Interlocal Agreement in place so that we can collaborate on this third building to provide "incubator" space for small businesses. "Incubator" space are small areas that new businesses can rent/lease while they start up their business. The rates are usually favorable so that the small business can get on its feet.

The Port Commission has also appointed me to participate in the Lacey Maker Space Project. A Maker Space is space where entrepreneurs, hobbyists, inventors, students, etc. can utilize the equipment necessary to develop their idea or concept into a product. Equipment can be 3D printers, computers, machinery tools, etc. To date, the Lacey Maker Space has applied for several grants that support these types of spaces and they have secured a building at Saint Martin's University through an agreement between the City of Lacey, the Lacey Maker Space and the University. Others that are participating besides the Port, are Thurston Regional Library, Evergreen University, South Puget Sound Community College, City of Lacey, Economic Development Council, North Thurston Public Schools, etc. There is already a smaller OLYMEGASPACE group doing this on a smaller scale.

**4. Please state your top priorities for the Port of Olympia in 2018 and why they are priorities. Sea Level Rise (SLR) and its impacts on all of the Downtown areas. The City, Port and LOTT who all have big investments in the downtown area have all contributed to the current study and plan that will be coming forward in a report to all three entities in November of this year.**

Bill Fishburn:

**Transparency:** The public should know what the Port is doing, and why. Public involvement saves both time and money. Public inclusivity, especially of diverse perspectives, is important to make sure Port Commissioners make the right decisions. My top priority as Port Commissioner will be to bring Port policies in alignment with these principles.

Fiscal responsibility: People want to know taxes are being used wisely. The Port should present its budget to Commissioners and to the public with clear, honest accounting of costs and benefits. We should see how each of the Port's business lines performs. Upon his departure in 2017, the Port decided to contract out the financial director's work to an out-of-county firm. The Port should hire a qualified financial director responsible for providing the Commissioners and the public with a clear picture.

**Climate Change:** We have many urgent decisions to make. The Port should better understand sea level rise. We need more than cost estimates for building walls to protect LOTT and other infrastructure. It is urgent to look at impacts on Port properties with legacy pollution. The Port can play a role in helping the entire community cope with climate change. It must start research and public discussion now.

**Environment:** The Port will have a role in coming decisions about the Deschutes estuary. It faces questions of its own about dredging. The Airport properties play a role in the ongoing discussions over natural prairie habitat in the County. Commissioners need to put environment on the agenda.

Bill McGregor:

Environmental Cleanup. We are all aware of the Legacy pollution that has happened over the years. Pollution caused by wood manufacturing mills, burning of kilns, and the resulting use of hazardous chemicals, petroleum spills, etc. Clean up of these brownfields is necessary and must be done in conjunction with Department of Ecology guidelines and standards. The East Bay properties adjacent to the Hands on Children's Museum will be completed this year and development of market rate affordable Housing, as well as Retail space on the street level is planned for 2018.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan. 2018 will be the first year of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Port Commission has provided the genesis of a Resilient Port through Environmental Stewardship, Community Assets and Economic Opportunities. There are 5 focus areas: Accountable, Sustainable, Innovative, Engaged and Balanced.



There are 5 goals:

1. Strengthen our commitment to serve all of Thurston County
2. Be a leader in Environmental Stewardship
3. Promote and prioritize Economic Development throughout Thurston County
4. Optimize and sustain the resources (finances, personnel, time, and infrastructure/equipment) necessary for the Port to thrive and innovate
5. Grow our value as a Public Port

**5. On several occasions in the last few years there have been loud and passionate protests, bordering on violence, when the Port chose to accept military shipments. What is your position on whether the Port should stop handling military cargo?**

Bill Fishburn:

I will start by saying that I support the right to peaceful protest and the right to freedom of speech; to express concerns when you feel something is wrong. I want to see the Port engage in cargoes that are sustainable and do not depend on us sending our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and friends and neighbors off to fight in wars. I want to be sure that the cargoes our longshore handle are safe and do not require excessive personal protective equipment to be moved. I want to make sure that cargoes coming through our communities do not pose safety threats to homes, property, or people. However, military cargoes at the Port have been boom and bust, and some have been unsafe. My grandfather, dad, and four uncles have all proudly served in the US Military. I support our family members and friends who serve our country. Our community support for men and women in uniform should take many forms; from celebrating their service through offering civilian transition services, veteran apprenticeships and training opportunities, and providing all needed medical support after completing their years of service.

Bill McGregor:

My position on the handling of military cargo has not changed. The Port is in the business of moving cargo from truck and rail to vessel loading. The Port is in the business of moving cargo from vessel discharge to truck, rail and potential other water forms of transportation. With JBLM in between the Port of Tacoma and the Port of Olympia, we are the secondary load/discharge port for that activity. I support continued use of the Ports facilities to assist with the movement of military cargo in conjunction with the cargo resolution "safe and legal" language.