

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY & EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. HISTORY OF WASHINGTON PORTS

Each of Washington's 76 ports has its own characteristics. Ports range in size, in the scope of their facilities and operations, and in their locations—some are on water, while others are far inland.

Historically, private owners—primarily railroads—exercised monopolistic control over shipping rates and made arbitrary decisions about which products were allowed to pass across the wharves. In order to promote and protect all commerce, the state legislature responded in 1911 by authorizing the public ownership and management of Washington's ports. The legislature passed an enabling act permitting the creation of public port districts. On a broad scale, ports engage in economic development activities. Ports are the only public agencies whose primary mission is to spur economic development. Ports do this by acquiring, developing, leasing or selling, operating, and maintaining facilities for all forms of transfer—air, land, and marine—in accordance with RCW 53.08.

B. FORMATION OF PORT OF CAMAS-WASHOUGAL

The Port of Camas-Washougal, a political subdivision of the State of Washington, was established in 1935 by a vote of the people to create a favorable climate for economic development in the Camas-Washougal area.

C. GOVERNANCE

A three-member commission governs the Port. All commissioners are elected by voters within the district and members serve 4-year terms. The Port District encompasses approximately 102 sq. miles within Clark County.

The Public Industrial Corporation (PIC) was established on January 11, 1982, in response to the 1981 Washington State Economic Development Act. The PIC has the authority to issue tax-exempt industrial revenue bonds, which provide below-market interest financing for private industries to construct manufacturing facilities. The PIC program is intended to expand existing manufacturing operations and encourage new industries to locate in the Camas-Washougal area.

The Commission sets policy and delegates authority for the day-to-day operations of the Port District to its Executive Director and staff. The Port Office is located adjacent to the Marina, at 24 South 'A' Street in Washougal.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Description of Port of Camas-Washougal Properties

The port's real estate holdings are all located within Clark County. Clark County encompasses 656.6 square miles, and ranks 35th out of the 39 Washington counties in terms of size.

During its 75-year existence, three operating areas have been developed:

- **Industrial Park:** In 1966, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed a flood retention levee, thereby enabling the development of land behind the levee for industrial uses. The levee eliminated flooding of the area by the Columbia River and businesses began to locate within the

310-acre Industrial Park in 1970, which currently averages a 90+ percent occupancy rate and provides the community with approximately 1000 jobs and an annual payroll of over \$30 million.

The levee created a separation between the Industrial Park and port-owned Cottonwood Beach on the shores of the Columbia River and in 2001 the Port, Clark County, and the cities of Washougal and Camas formed a partnership to create a regional park at Cottonwood Beach. Subsequently dedicated in 2005, and re-named “Capt. William Clark Park at Cottonwood Beach,” it encompasses 85 acres between the levee and the Columbia River.

In addition, the Port is master planning an additional 125+ acres of undeveloped property east of and adjacent to the Industrial Park. This undeveloped land is known as Steigerwald Commerce Center.



- Marina: The recreational boat Marina was constructed in 1968 expanded over the years and now provides moorage facilities for 350+ vessels. It also features a 4-lane launch ramp, an on-the-water restaurant, yacht club, self-service fuel dock, parking areas for boat trailers and vehicles, and self-contained RV's, and the Marina Park featuring summertime concerts, and Parker's Landing Historical Park which showcases the history of the area.



- General Aviation Airport. When first acquired by the port in 1962, less than 10 airplanes were based at Grove Field. The Airport is currently home to approximately 100 aircraft, and offers 79 hangars and 14 tie-downs, with limited aircraft services and a self-service fueling facility. In addition, the port leases approximately one acre of adjacent land to Immelman Hangar Development which offers privately-owned hangars.



Tourism Promotion

- Fly-in at Grove Field
- Participate in: July 4 Celebration at Captain William Clark Park
- Christmas Ships
- Two free summer concerts
- Hosted Boating Season Closing Ceremonies
- Public recreational marina
- Puffin Restaurant
- Parker's Landing National Historic Site
- Commercial and Guide Fishing Opportunities
- Fishing Tournaments



Local Economic Development Group

In 2010, the port initiated formation of a local economic development partnership with representatives from the Cities of Camas and Washougal, and the local Chamber of Commerce to collaborate on economic development opportunities within the port district.

