

Waterfront Revitalization

Frequently Asked Questions

(updated October 25, 2011)

Q. What is happening on the waterfront?

A. The Port of Camas-Washougal is evaluating the acquisition, cleanup and revitalization of the waterfront, including a portion of the former Hambleton Lumber Mill property. This property is located east of the port's marina and offices on the Columbia River between 'A' Street and 6th Street. At approximately 25-acres, the property is situated on the north bank of the Columbia River near the border of the Cities of Camas and Washougal.

Q. Who owns the property?

A. The Hambleton Brothers Lumber Company currently owns the property. The port owned the property from the 1940's to the 1970's when it sold the land to the Hambleton Company.

Q. Why is the port involved?

A. The property presents an opportunity to expand public access to the Columbia River. The port owns property to the east and west of the site. Connecting these properties, improving public access to the river, and bridging gaps in regional trail systems is a priority for the port.

In 2010, the port updated its Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements through a lengthy public planning process. The first stated goal of this strategic plan is to 'enhance economic development through partnerships to leverage strategic investments.' Specifically, "The port mission is to make strategic investments and develop effective partnerships that enhance the community's quality of life by bringing jobs, infrastructure, and recreational opportunities to East Clark County." This property presents exactly the type of opportunity that falls within the stated goals of the port's long-term plan.

The community lost more than 40 family-wage jobs when the Hambleton Mill closed. The property has great redevelopment potential. However, the redevelopment of a former industrial site like a lumber mill often requires public support to address and remedy issues such as historical environmental contamination. Remediation of these issues complicates the restoration of this area and the port's involvement is essential in order to put the property back to a productive economic use, clean up contamination and restore riparian habitat. The port's ability to receive funding through state and federal grants allows the clean up to happen more quickly than it would through a private business or individual.

Q. Has the port signed any commitments or agreements?

A. The port has retained the environmental consulting firm of Maul, Foster and Alongi, to evaluate the environmental condition of the site. The port has not made a commitment to acquire the property. The port has an interest in seeing the property developed while maintaining public access to the waterfront and may acquire a portion of the site for future development. The port is exploring financial and operational arrangements that include joint property development, coordination and analysis of environmental cleanup and planning for future acquisition and revitalization and grant funding to accomplish these purposes.

Q. What are the goals for this planning study and site analysis?

A. The port is particularly interested in developing the property while retaining public access to the waterfront. In addition, it has identified the following priorities for this waterfront revitalization project:

- Clean up the property and address existing environmental contamination issues
- Revitalize the property to create jobs and increase revenue
- Enhance habitat quality of the Columbia Riverbank
- Connect port land holdings to the east and west of the mill property

Q. How much money is the port spending for this planning study?

A. The study is being funded by a \$200,000 Integrated Planning Grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology, awarded to the port in July 2011. The port retained environmental consulting firm Maul, Foster and Alongi to administer the grant and conduct the site environmental analysis. The Integrated Planning Grant is funded from the Model Toxics Control Account that is funded by a fee applied to the first possession of hazardous materials, including petroleum, in the state. The Model Toxics Control Account was established as part of a voter approved initiative passed in 1988.

Q. How will the public provide input and stay informed about the process?

A. The port has planned a series of informal and formal public meetings to gather community input. In addition, the port website contains a project page that will be regularly updated with electronic copies of reports and plans as the process continues. It is found here: http://portcw.com/index.php/projects/waterfront_revitalization/.

Q. What is the timetable for community input and the planning process?

Fall 2011 - Conduct field investigations on the property to do the following:

- Study physical characteristics including soil structure and suitability for future buildings
- Assess potential for environmental contamination

- Investigate potential presence of cultural or historical resources

Fall 2011 – Interview key business stakeholders in the community to listen to their ideas and concerns about the future use of the property.

October 26, 2011 – Hold the first meeting, open to all the community and conducted in the form of an interactive planning workshop. Project leaders will share findings of field studies, discuss potential uses of the property and will identify key issues to address in planning and design. The public will share their priorities and fill out comment cards.

February/March 2012 – A community open house will solicit comment on conceptual plan alternatives for future site development.

Spring 2012 – Based on technical studies and community input, the port will make a decision about how to move forward.

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