

PORT OF VANCOUVER

STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY PANELS

SUMMARY NOTES

On April 18, 2018, the Port of Vancouver hosted a series of meetings with Advisory Panels to inform the update of its Strategic Plan. The Advisory Panels were established based on four topics that relate to the areas where the Port Commission has stated that it wants to establish goals and strategies:

- Marine and Rail Cargo Shipping
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Community and Neighborhoods

The Port invited approximately 25 people and organizations to participate in each of the Advisory Panels. The participants represented organizations that have experience and expertise in the respective topic and are active in Clark County.

The following notes summarize the Advisory Panel discussions. Each Advisory Panel meeting began with a brief presentation by Port staff and their planning consultants, Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc. The presentation provided an overview of the Strategic Plan update process and background information on the Port's current activities related to the topic area. The Advisory Panels were then asked a series of questions, including:

- What are the major challenges or priorities for this topic in the region?
- What do you see as the most effective role for the Port to play relative to this topic and to those priorities?

Marine/Rail Advisory Panel

Freight Mobility Challenges in Region

- I-5 Bridge – There is a need for a solution for replacement of the I-5 bridge, but the region has been unable to build and maintain consensus. The current situation causes worsening traffic congestion and is unsustainable. The Port could play a role as a convener.
- Regional Rail Capacity
 - While there has been increased demand and use of the regional rail system, a recent study by the Washington Public Ports Association indicates that there are no immediate bottlenecks in the system. Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific (UP) rail companies are both adding capacity in key locations in Eastern Washington and Idaho to support future growth.
- Rail Capacity at the Port
 - The West Vancouver Freight Access (WVFA) project has created substantial rail capacity.
 - There may be some need for the Port to upgrade its on-dock rail capacity to increase competitiveness for some cargos.
 - There are concerns about the safety of the rail crossing where trench enters Port
 - There are concerns about BNSF being the sole provider of switching services at the Port. There is a perception that this leads to logistical and cost issues.
- Heavy Haul Corridor – There is a need for designation of regional corridors for transportation of oversized project cargo to the northern plains and into central Canada.
- Truck Access to the Port – Locally, it is important for the Port and City to collaborate on the arterial roads and truck routes to the Port. The Port needs to be actively involved in plans for improvements to Mill Plain Boulevard in particular. The arterial streets will need to balance the needs of industry, downtown, and adjacent neighborhoods.

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Columbia River Navigation

- Channel Maintenance Dredging – It is critical for cargo trade to maintain the Columbia River navigation channel at the proscribed 43’ depth. It is challenging to obtain adequate funding for the regular maintenance dredging.
- Maintaining Anchorages – In addition to the channel, it is critical to survey and maintain the depths of the anchorages and turning basins. Currently, this is not conducted on a regular basis like the channel maintenance.
- Upriver Locks – Navigation and trade throughout the Columbia River system depends on maintaining the upriver locks also.
- Berths at the Port of Vancouver
 - To be accessible for larger vessels, the Port needs to dredge and maintain all of its berths to the same 43 feet depth as the navigation channel. Currently, some berths do not have that depth.
 - Berth 10 – improvements to the design are needed to make that berth easier to access.

Policy Issues Related to Marine Cargo

- There is currently uncertainty regarding international trade policy, especially tariffs. The Port has exposure to tariffs on both import (steel) and exports (agricultural commodities).
- Harbor Maintenance Tax – There is on-going debate at the federal level about reforms to the Harbor Maintenance Tax. The debate includes discussion of reforms to more equitably distribute funds generated by the tax. There is also concern that shippers are taking cargo to Canada or Mexico to avoid the added cost of the tax.
- Changes in environmental regulations and application of those regulations is a risk that the Port needs to track.

Areas for the Port to Improve

- Utilize new, expanded physical capacity at the Port
- Increase employment – there is tremendous jobs gap with too Clark County residents needing to commute out of the county to find work. Creating more jobs at the Port can reduce the need to commute
- Based on historic records, there is capacity on the Columbia River to double current shipping. With larger vessels, cargo volumes have been increasing, while the number of vessel landings have actually decreased.
- Continue to educate community on what the Port does. Communicate the benefits of WVFA and the I-5 bridge to the community.
- Port should utilize own maintenance staff more, fewer contractors.
 - Plan is for port to maintain after WVFA complete.
 - Tenants currently maintain their own rail connections.
- Short-Line Rail in North County – Port should be part of the discussion on how to best utilize this asset in the future.
- Play a bold role on I-5 Bridge – port is positioned well to take a lead role.
- Shore Power – continue to explore opportunities to provide shore power for ships at the Port. Ports to the north and south are doing this, it may soon become required by regulations, so the Port should stay ahead of that.

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Economic Development/Tenants Advisory Panel

Regional Economic Development Opportunities

Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) has recently updated its economic development strategy. It identified the following sectors where the region is well positioned to grow.

- Biotech & Life Sciences
- IT & Software
- Electronics
- Clean Tech
- Metals & Machinery

The Port should play a supporting role in serving those growth sectors in the following key ways:

- Providing real estate to meet target areas
- Collaboration with economic development partners
- Promoting development that aligns with the culture of the region

From the perspective of tenants, the Port should provide the following types of support

- Tell the story of business at the port
- More communications with community
 - Need intentional recurring communications

Regional Needs to Support Economic Development

- Workforce Development – There is need for greater coordination between employers and colleges to identify needs and provide tailored training.
- Outreach Partnerships – Strong, but always need to be improved.
- Protection of the existing industrial land base
 - Ex: Industrial land in East Vancouver
- I-5 bridge replacement – This is a key need for regional mobility and economic development. The Port could take a leadership role on this issue.

Relationship between port, CREDC, City of Vancouver and Clark County is strong – very functional relationship in terms of leading economic development

Other Economic Development Opportunities/Programs

- Entrepreneurship, incubators
- What is the future for areas outside of the port district? How do we preserve the industrial base – need to look beyond the port district.
- The Terminal 1 Waterfront development is a positive development and opportunity for the Port to support community revitalization and creating an icon for Vancouver.

Areas for the Port to Improve

- Regularly partner with other local government leaders
- Visit with businesses
 - Build relationships
 - Identify needs
 - Identify one point of contact with port for tenants
- Need to describe what the port does for the rest of the community
- Too much focus on local brokers – many companies are national corporations and have different needs

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Environmental Advisory Panel

What is the Port's Environmental Role?

- Climate Action Plan for the Port
- Port responsible to avoid environmental impacts related to their projects
 - Set up policies/procedures that would have flagged a project like Vancouver Energy
- Make sure the strategic plan's values connect to the goals
- The group asked for more clarity on understanding the Port's geographic boundaries, where it can use its resources.

Engagement with Environmental Community

- Vancouver is in the "Rain Shadow Effect" in terms of media coverage. Our local issues tend to get overshadowed and it's difficult to capture people's attention
 - Portland Shadow
 - Puget Sound Shadow
- Community Grassroots Events – Port participation in these types of events present a good opportunity to connect with people.
- Partner & support organizations
- General education
 - Meeting/presentations to organizations and boards of directors
- Need to rebuild trust with the public after the controversy over the Vancouver Energy proposal.

Opportunities

- Arts & Culture Interpretive Center at Waterfront
 - Ecology, history, culture
 - Include info about the port
- Vocational/Career - the Port needs to increase people's knowledge about opportunities for industrial jobs.
 - Connection with schools to ensure that guidance counselors and students know about opportunities for careers related to the Port
- Communication & Education – the Port needs to more effectively communicate and educate the public about the Port's role in the region and about trade and the economy.
- Consider threshold/goal for recruiting and retaining a percentage of green and clean companies to the Port
 - Example – renewable energy companies
- Prioritize brownfield development over greenfield development
- Vancouver Lake – There has been an over 10 year process of analysis of degradation of Vancouver Lake. A lot of information has been learned. No silver bullet solution to water quality problems have been identified.
 - The Port should play a lead role in environmental management of the lake
- Public trails and access – increase opportunities for public access to the waterfront and natural areas owned by the Port.
- Electric Ferries – The Port should consider playing a role in promoting electric ferries as a transportation alternative to improve connections along the Columbia River. Design and construction of electric ferries could also be a potential new manufacturing industry at the Port.
- Leadership in habitat mitigation
 - Regional needs, siting and function
- Build Tribal relationships

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Community and Neighborhoods Advisory Panel

Port's Role in Community

- "Triple bottom line" approach to decision making– economic, consider environmental impact, consider impact on community
- Foster job growth
- Community vitality
- Equitable communities – the group discussed what this concept means
 - Attainable by everyone
 - Health for everyone
 - Opportunities for everyone
- Environmental health
- Port has history of respecting and supporting Fruit Valley Neighborhood – the trust with the port was damaged due to Vancouver Energy proposal
- Need to communicate more effectively and regularly with the community
- Partnerships
 - Support economic development, important to have industrial base
 - Terminal 1 is an opportunity to reach community
 - Give people something they can love – marketplace

Opportunities

- Ferry Taxi – between Vancouver and Portland
- Create measurable community dividend
 - History Museum at Terminal 1
 - Public accessibility
 - Use as opportunity to engage public and educate
- Terminal 1
 - Skeptical of port involvement in urban development
 - Focus on infrastructure – Example: dark fiber
- Post – Vancouver Energy
 - Has port staff recognized there was a mistake and done soul searching?
 - Need to rebuild trust

Considerations

- Communication to district
 - Use of taxes – why are we paying when port is making money?
 - Education on what port does
- Traffic through neighborhood – Mill Plain
- Terminal 1
 - Traffic and parking
 - Bus stop – currently the bust stop at Terminal 1 is closed, need to think about accessibility by mass transit to the development.
 - Opportunity for family focused recreation
 - Example: Olympia Children's Hands on Museum
 - Need more coordinated outreach efforts with City and Gramor – no one knows you are all working together
- Consider organized volunteer service for port staff
- Port involvement in Vancouver Lake
 - Re-visit goal of restoring Vancouver Lake and take a leadership in restoration