



WA APA Conference October 8, 2025

Working Waterfronts and the GMA

Why Every Planner Should Know Their Port Districts

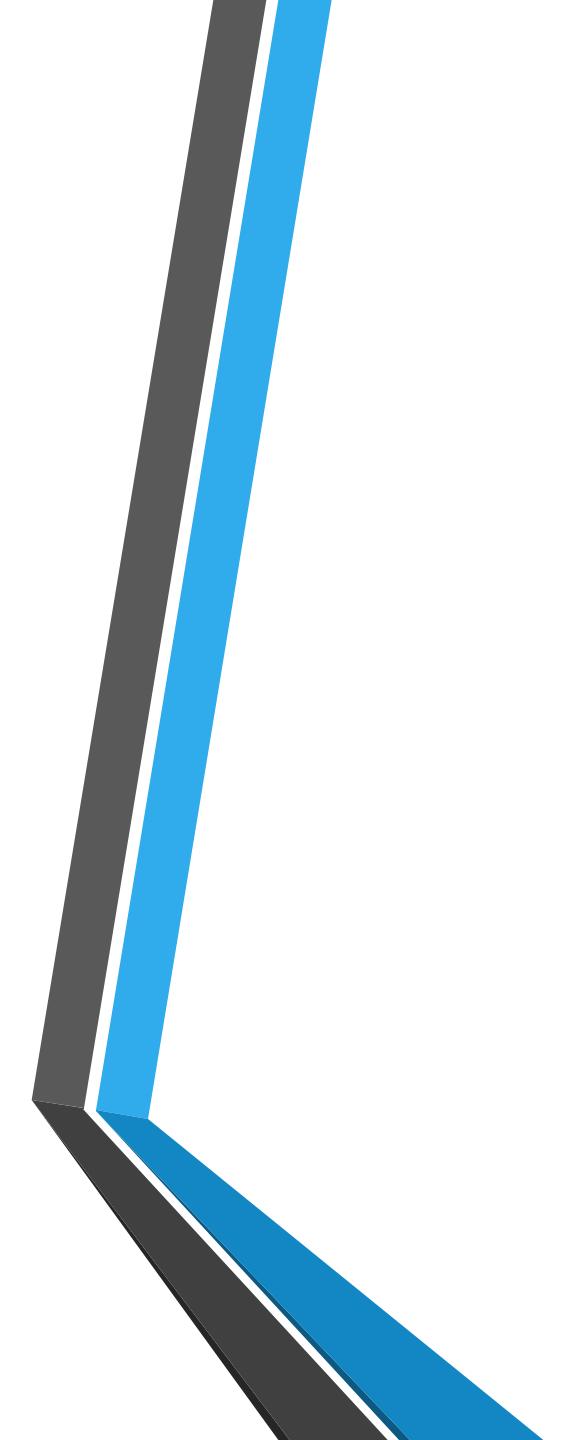
Presenters:

James Weaver, Port of Poulsbo

Deirdre Wilson, Port of Tacoma

Ryan Medlen, Northwest Seaport Alliance

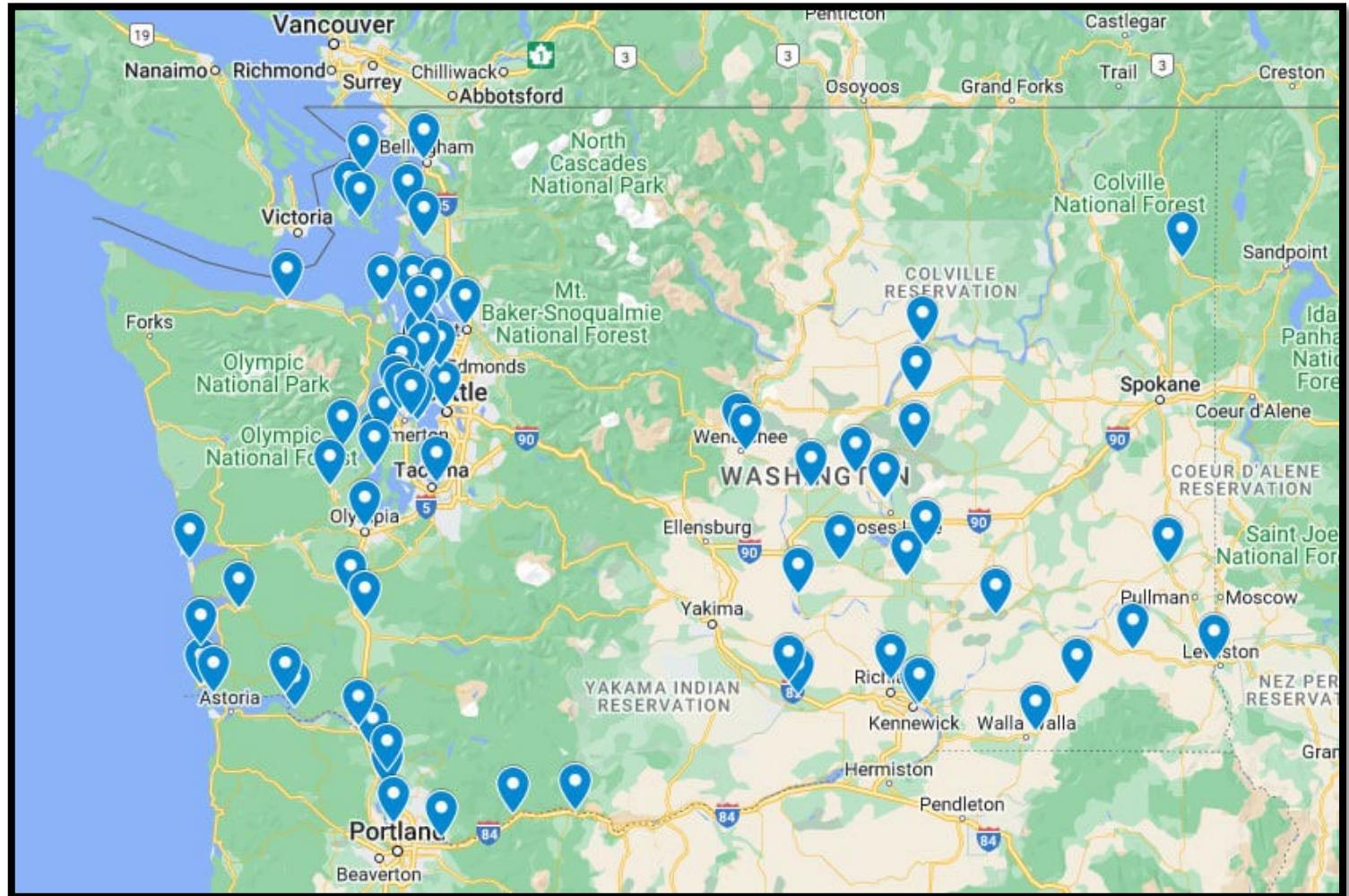
Geraldine Poor, Port of Seattle



Agenda:

- History of Washington Ports
- Ports as Economic Development Engines
- Environmental Role of Ports
- Local Port Subarea Planning
- Maritime Freight in the Puget Sound
- Why Freight Matters
- Local Road Projects for Freight
- The Unique Port Role
- Q & A

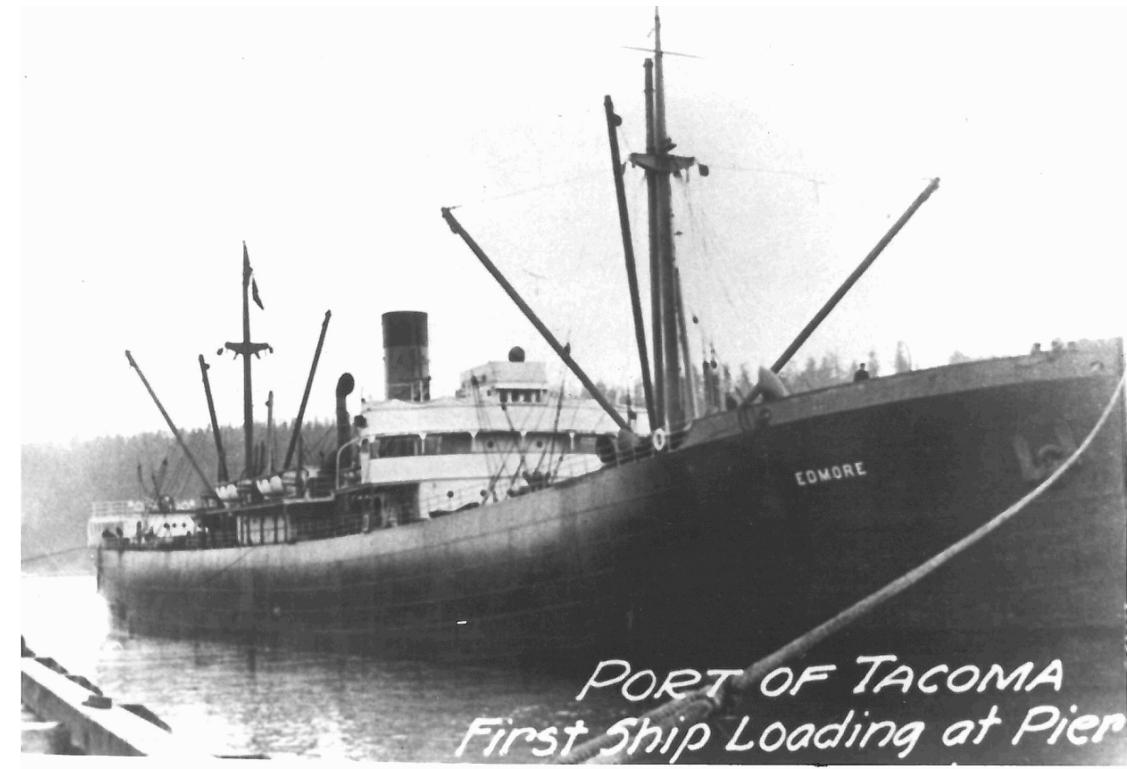
**75
PORTS
LOCATED IN
33 OF 39
COUNTIES**

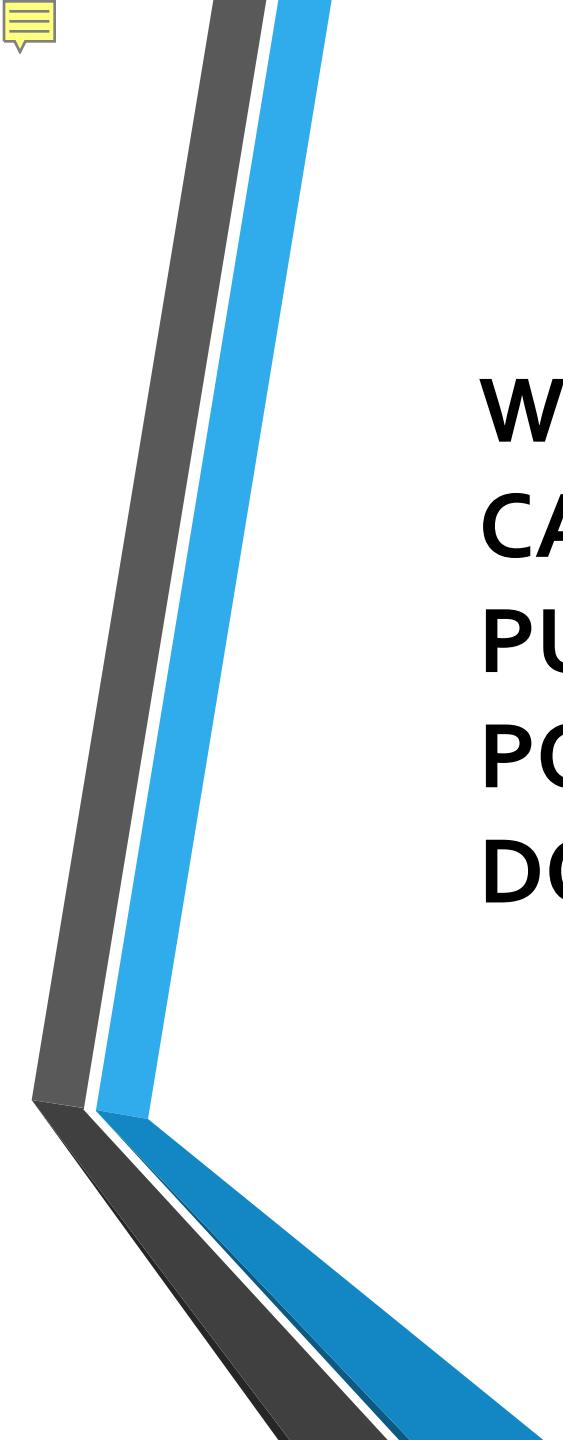




THE HISTORIC VIEW 1911: PORTS FOR THE PEOPLE

- Public Ownership of The Commercial Shoreline
- Break Rail / Shipping Monopolies
- Public Access And Local Economic Control
- First Ports: Seattle, Grays Harbor, Vancouver





WHAT CAN A PUBLIC PORT DO?

- Airports
- Marine Terminals, Rail, Marinas, Piers, Boat Ramps
- Industrial Parks, Factories, Job Centers, Business Incubators
- Broadband, Utilities
- Economic Impact: Workforce, Tourism, city/small business partnering



- Serve as multimodal transportation hubs
- Provide job growth centers
- Develop parks & recreation
- Use municipal powers of taxing, eminent domain, and annexation.
- Act as their own SEPA Authority.



ENVIRONMENTAL ROLE OF PUBLIC PORTS

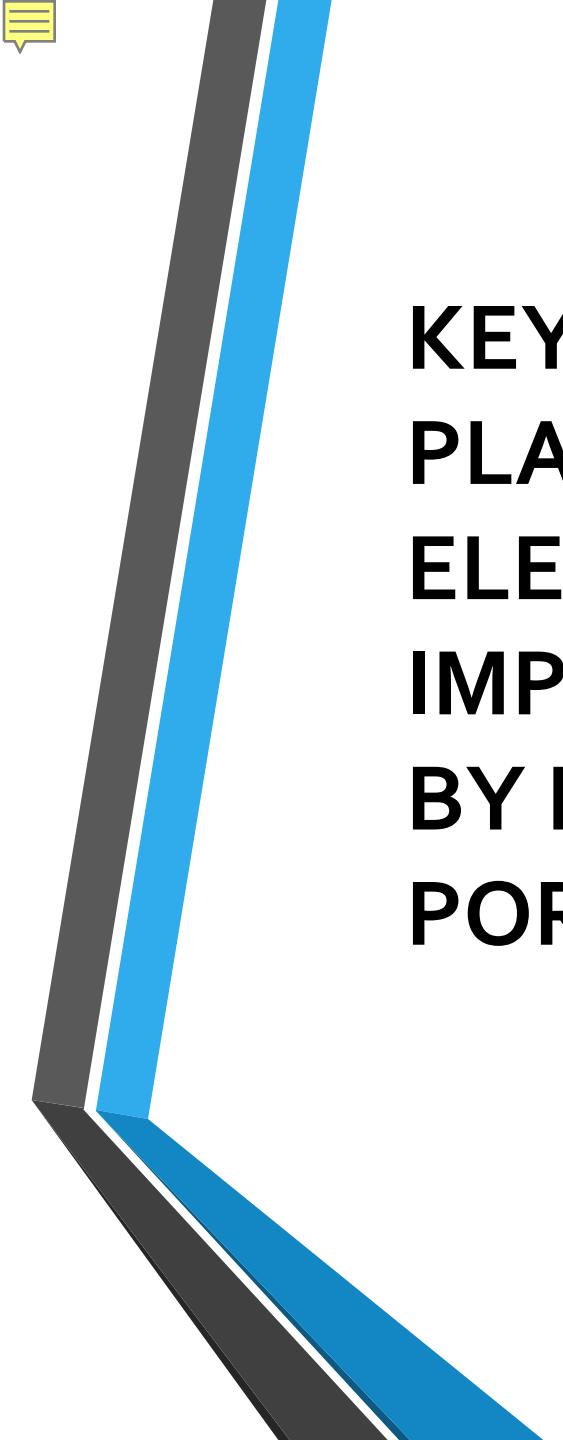
- Shoreline Master Programs
- Critical Areas Implementation
- Climate Resiliency
- Sustainable Waterfronts
- Ports Have Evolved: now stewards of environment and climate resiliency



Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy



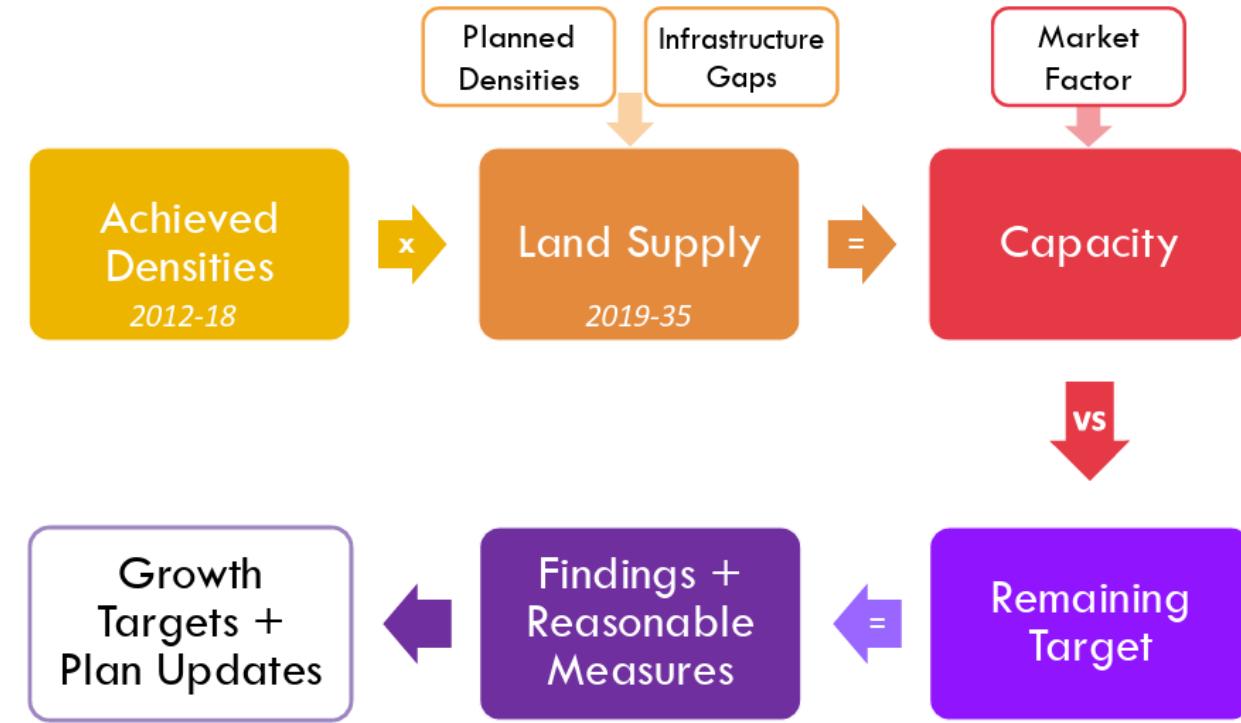
- Voluntary collaboration among four port authorities: The Northwest Seaport Alliance, Port of Seattle, Port of Tacoma, and Vancouver Fraser Port Authority
- Vision to Phase out seaport-related air pollutants and GHG emissions by 2050 supporting clean air for local communities
- Elements include ocean going vessel-in-transit and -at-berth, trucks, trains, and cargo handling equipment
- Strategy catalyzes collaboration across the ports, industry, government, and community for collective vision based on extensive engagement
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting related to adopted implementation plans



KEY COMP PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED BY PUBLIC PORTS

- Land Use
- Capital Facilities
- Utilities
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Climate Change/Resiliency
- Rural Development (some)
- And Port (mandatory element for container port cities)

PORTS IN BUILDABLE LANDS PROGRAM





ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PORTS

Ports play a crucial role in the state's economy, providing jobs, generating revenue, and contributing to the overall growth and development of Washington State.

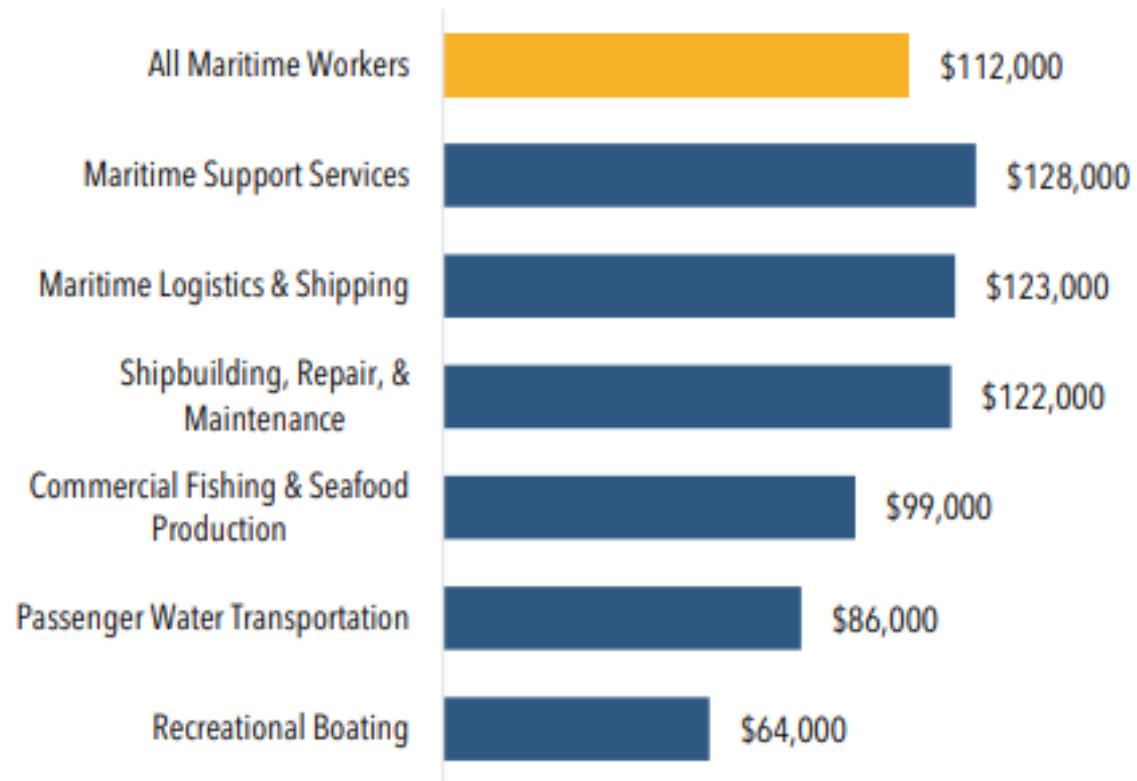
In 2023, Port of Seattle, Port of Tacoma, and the Northwest Seaport Alliance supported:

- 265,000 jobs
- \$17.7 billion in wages and benefits
- \$55 billion in business output

Each direct job in the maritime sector was associated with a total of 2.8 jobs across the state economy.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PORTS

Figure 13. Average Earnings Among Washington Maritime Workers, Total and by Subsector, 2022 (including benefits)



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023.



EMERGING CONCEPTS FOR PLANNING WITH PORTS

- Land use capacity studies for Port-related growth
- Market responsive zoning for maritime, industrial, & innovation districts
- Shared use infrastructure, EV networks, fiber, stormwater
- Joint grant applications for infrastructure and roads
- Subarea planning, transportation planning in Manufacturing Industrial Centers

Tideflats Subarea Planning

Process and Timeline



Subarea Plan Outline and Framework

1. Introduction
2. Context
3. Environment and Health
4. Tribal Assets
5. Transportation and Infrastructure
6. Land Use and Economic Development
7. Implementation

Policy Development

1. Integrate policies from the GMA Container Port Element
2. Develop draft policies based on MPO/RTPO's Vision 2050
3. Visioning Process/Advisory group
4. EIS Inputs

PLAN LEADERSHIP PARTNERS



Tideflats Subarea Planning Promo Video



16



Tideflats Subarea Unique Approval Process

1. Forward Steering Committee recommendation to Tacoma City Council and Planning Commission
2. Planning Commission Review
 - Public Hearing – 45-day comment period if material changes proposed
3. City Council Review
 - 45-day comment period if material changes proposed (per Work Plan)
4. Steering Committee governments may submit comments jointly, by agreement, or separately

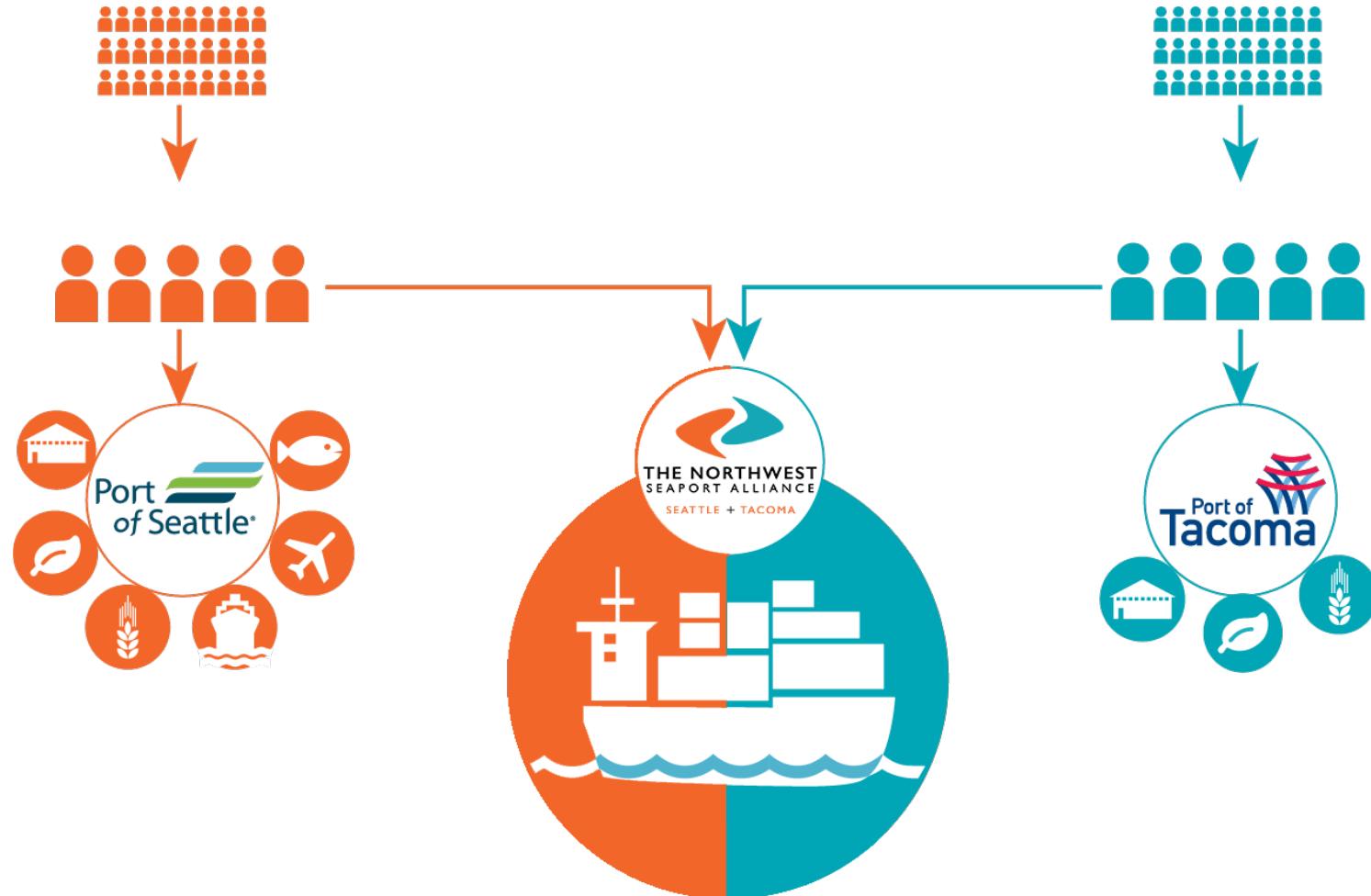


Lessons Learned

1. Implementing Comprehensive Plan Port Elements via the Subarea Plan process is a lot of work, but it allows time to:
 - Address competing interests upfront as opposed to a project-by-project basis.
 - Collaborate with stakeholder governments for collective decision-making.
 - It satisfies the MPO requirement for the Manufacturing Industrial Center.
2. Benefits include a long-term coordinated approach to planning, development, and capital improvement programming.
3. The Tideflats Subarea Plan provides predictability and supports ongoing maritime cargo operations that are coordinated by the Northwest Seaport Alliance - a Top 10 container cargo gateway in North America.

Washington's First Public Port Development Authority

NWSA: Moving Marine Cargo Together Since 2015





THE NORTHWEST
SEAPORT ALLIANCE
SEATTLE + TACOMA

One NWSA, Two Harbors

Seattle Harbor – Duwamish MIC

5 maritime cargo terminals

Additional sites for transload facilities



Tacoma Harbor – Port of Tacoma MIC

7 maritime cargo terminals

Additional sites for laydown (storage) area



Coordinated Investment
Coordinated Marketing

NWSA: What Comes Through the Gateway?

	<u>International Import</u>	<u>International Export</u>
Top 5 2024 Commodities By Number of Full TEUs	Furniture	Hay & Forage
	Machinery	Frozen Potato Products
	Motor Vehicle Parts	Paper & Paperboard
	Toys & Games	Scrap Paper
	Apparel	Dried Distillers Grain
Top 5 2024 Commodities By Value	Motor Vehicle Parts	Soybeans
	Machinery	Corn
	Apparel	Machinery
	Furniture	Frozen Potato Products
	Footwear	Dairy Products

Why Care About Freight Efficient Land Use and Transportation?

The NWSA provides one example of planning for freight, but all jurisdictions should plan for freight, especially within commercial or industrial lands.

Support Economic Activity

- Freight activity will change along with growth targets (via retail activity) and employment targets.

Reduce Freight Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

- Matching the right logistics capacity and facilities to the right land use and destinations to reduce the distance that trucks must drive for deliveries.

Move Goods Sustainably

- Protecting industrial lands means protecting a resource that provides for employment centers and commercial activity. Port Districts are your public sector partner in this part of the transportation sector.

Further Reading: *NCHRP Report 998 - Planning Freight-Efficient Land Uses*

Mapping the Freight Routes

NWSA Key Landside Connections



GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN

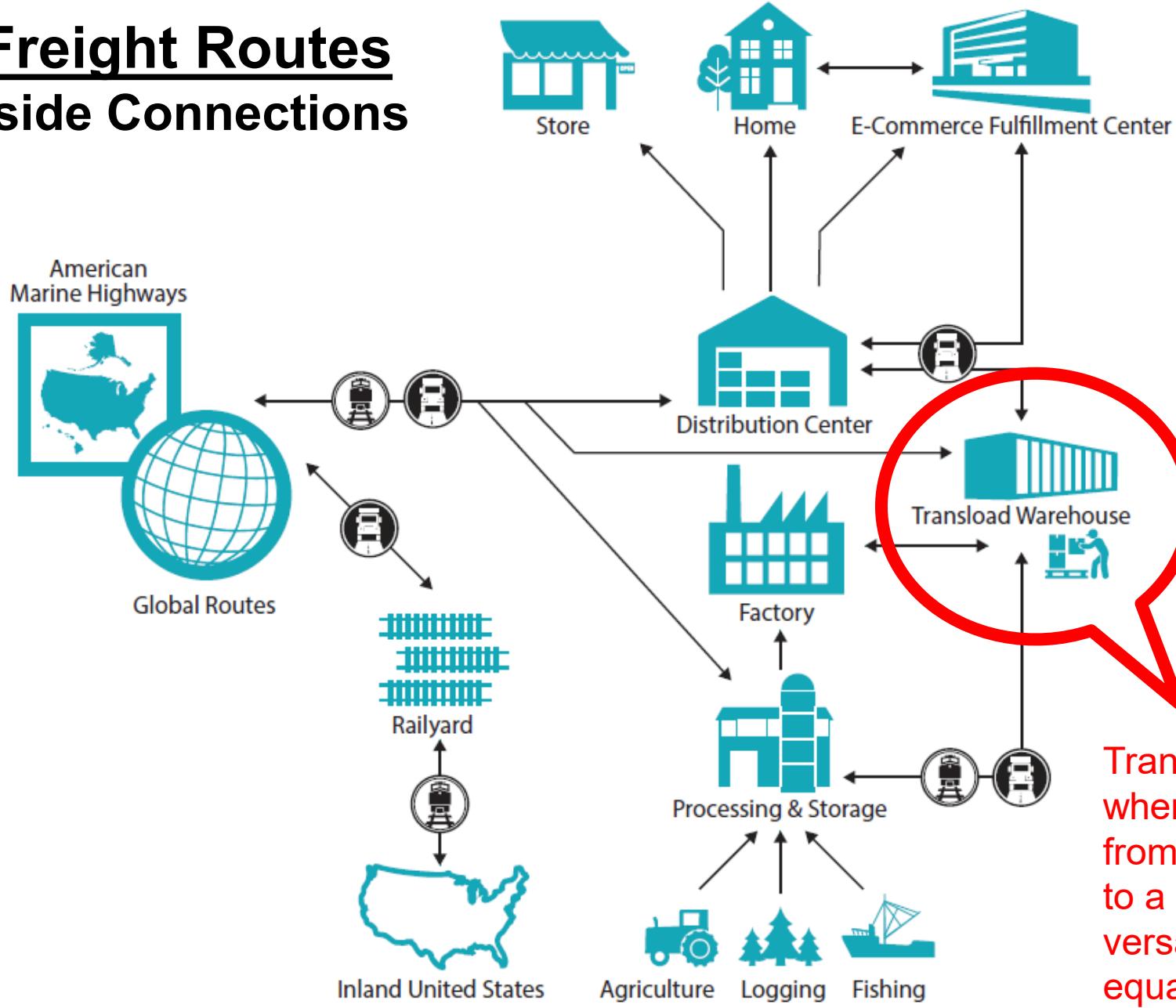
LEGEND



Rail Transport



Truck Transport



Transload facilities are where cargo is moved from a shipping container to a 53' trailer or vice versa. ~Five TEUs equals two 53' trailers.

Define the Level of Freight Activity

Example - NWSA International Maritime Freight Activity



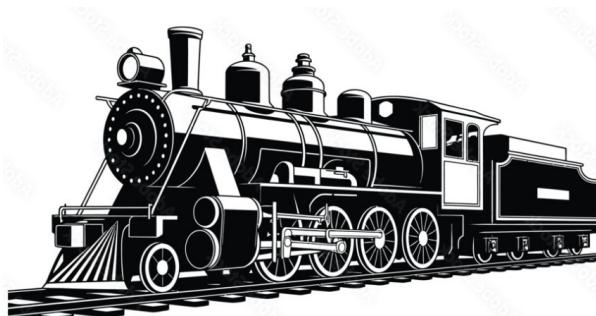
6/1/2024 – 5/31/2025 Vessel Lifts

Weekly Average	28,835
Actual Range	14,833 to 39,393

From 6/1/2024 – 5/31/2025 Truck Visits*

Weekly Average	18,250
Actual Range	12,334 to 22,846

*For trip generation purposes, a visit is 2 – one trip arriving, one trip departing



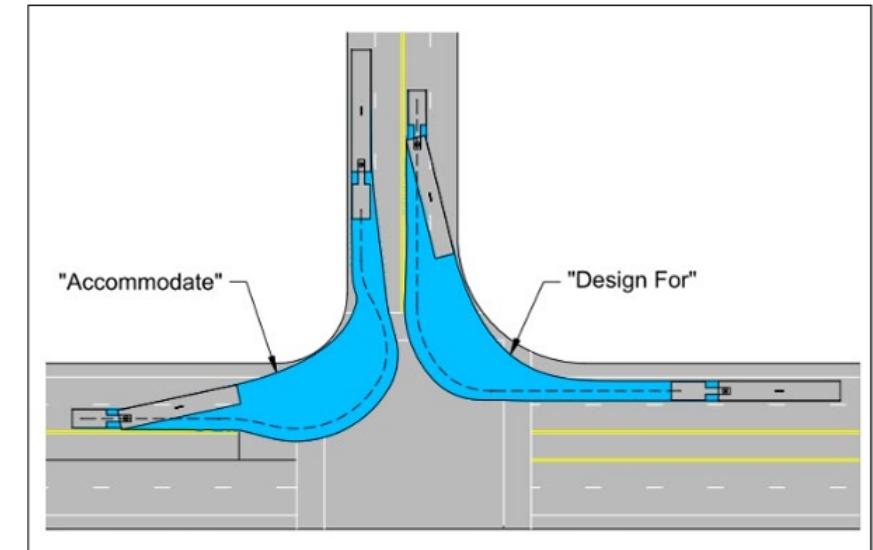
6/1/2024 – 5/31/2025 Rail Lifts

Weekly Average	10,296
Range	6,562 to 14,039



Freight Planning: Port/NWSA Perspective

1. **The supply chain is local, regional, national, and global.** Cities and counties should recognize and support WSDOT in making sure the region has a viable supply chain.
2. **GMA says to identify freight routes, but it is up to the jurisdiction to make sure these freight routes align with zoning.** Consider what land uses the freight routes to support and what supporting “freight” means in that context.
3. **Plan for success - think about the potential level of freight volume you’re planning for in zoning.**
Where there is some freight activity, accommodate the trucks. When there’s a lot of freight activity, design for the trucks for better transportation system performance.



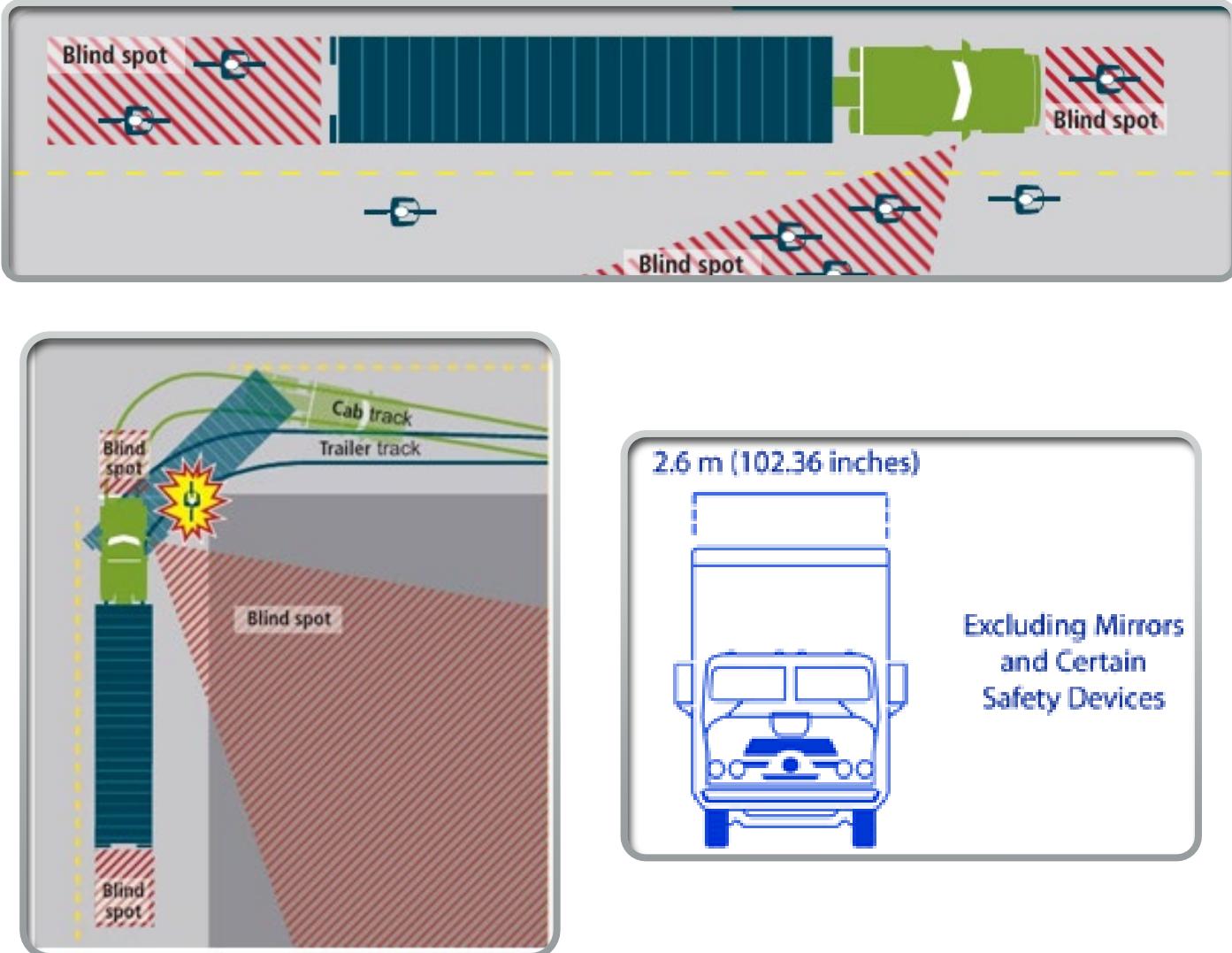
Source: SDOT Streets Illustrated, Figure BV. Accessed June 2024.

Balancing Freight & Safety

Heavy freight vehicle have unique safety needs to protect their drivers and other roadways users.

When planning freight routes, think about:

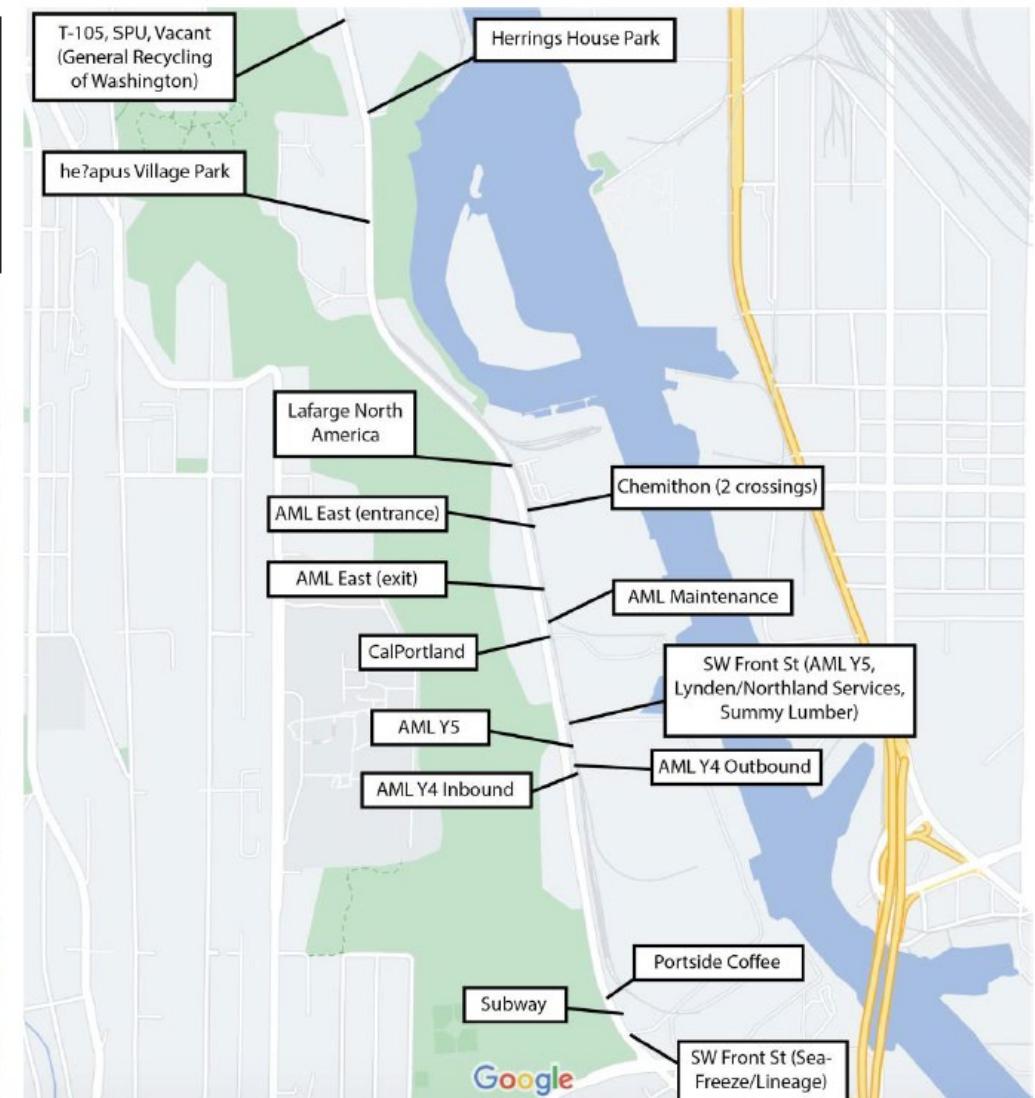
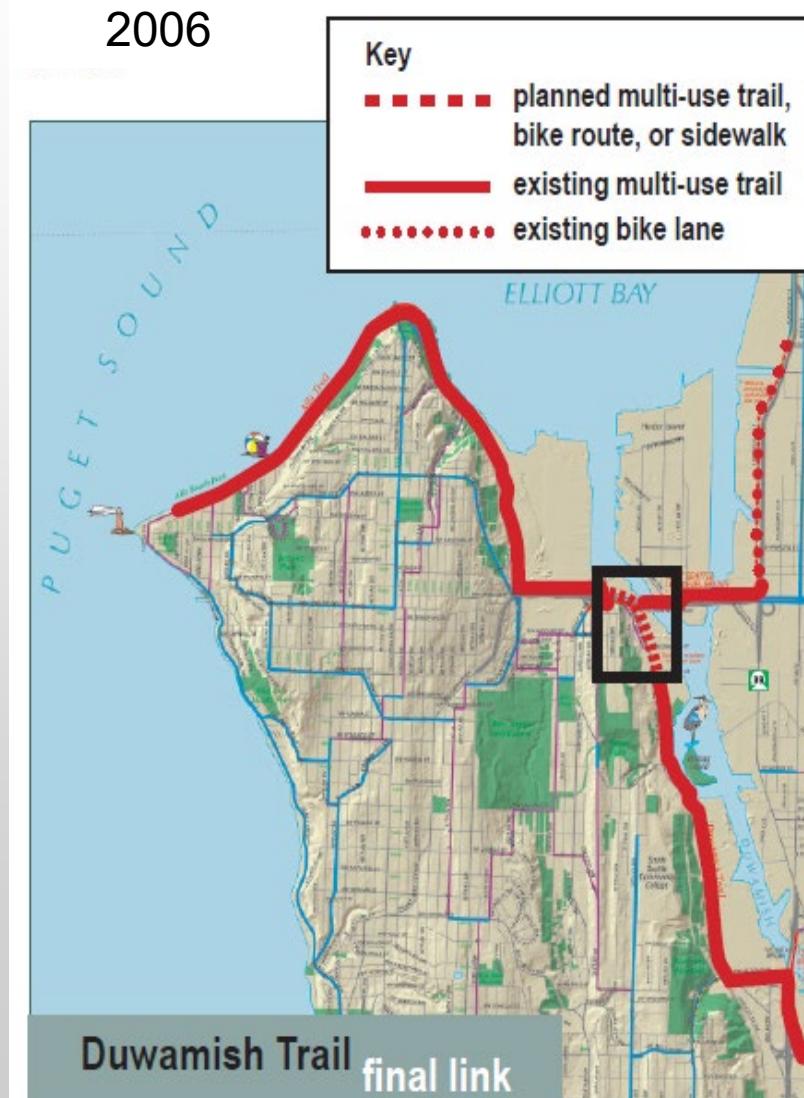
- Sight lines
- Lane width
- Turn radii
- Ways to use alternate rights-of-way or physically separate key pedestrian and bike routes



Duwamish MIC Bike Trails

West Marginal Way

2006



Duwamish Trail alternatives summary



A - West side shared sidewalk	B - West side Protected Bike Lane (PBL) [preferred]	C - East side Protected Bike Lane (PBL)	D - East side Off-street trail	E - West side Off-street trail
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Would require removal of all trees, utility rel.Narrow buffer, driveway conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Can fit with desired widthsImproved driveway sightlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">North end point has no space to crossCurrent curb lane queueing during peak periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires railroad acquisitionProhibitively expensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Substantial geotechnical workProperty acquisitionProhibitively expensive



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

E Marginal Way design context

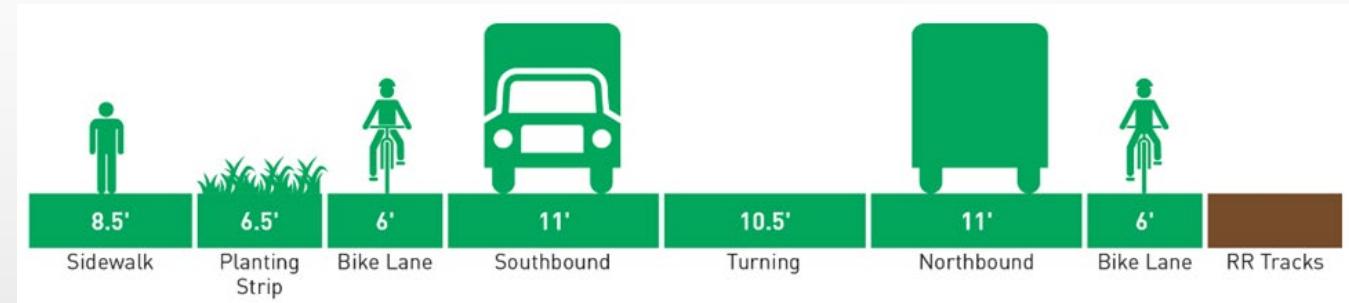


E Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project

East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project - Transportation | seattle.gov

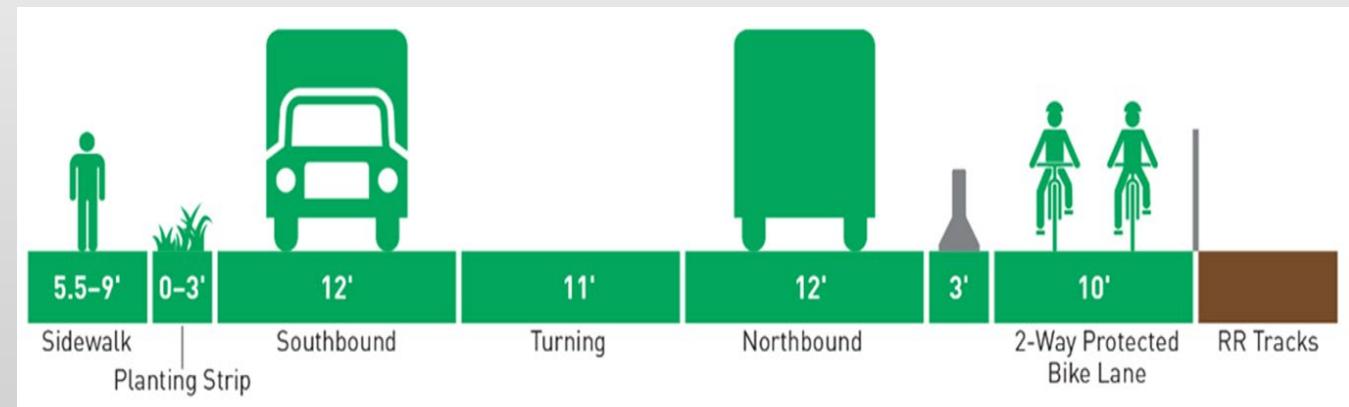
Current:

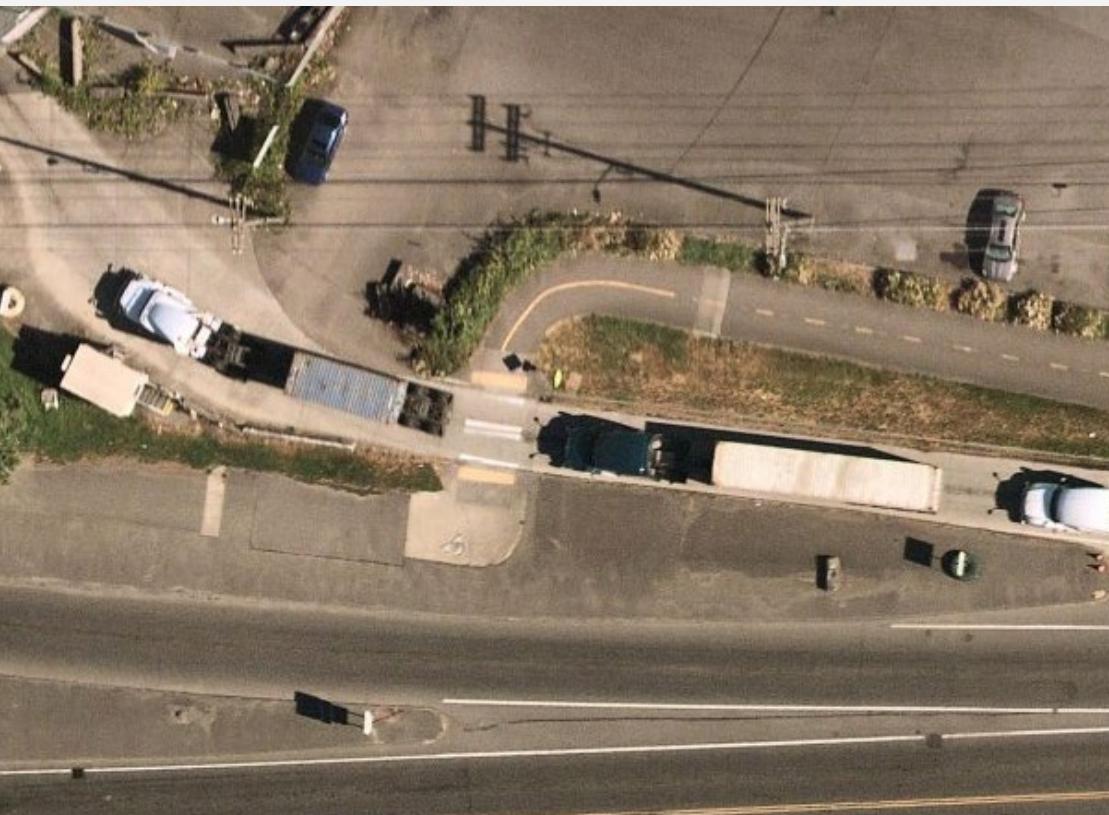
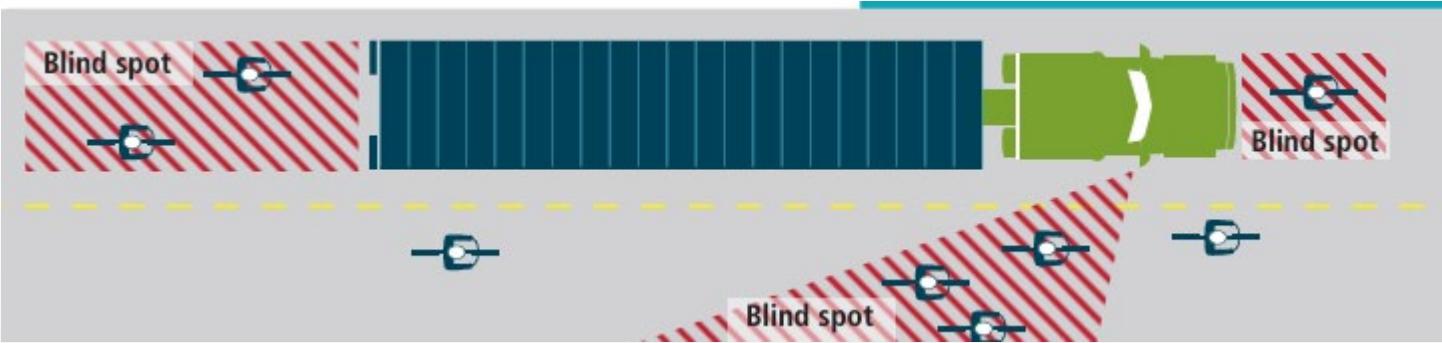
- No separation between road & bikes
- Road pavement in poor condition
- Safety concerns at intersections & along road



Future:

- Rebuilt intersection, ITS, traffic signal, and RR xing relocation
- S Spokane St truck apron
- Heavy Haul pavement standards
- Adds fully separated bicycle facilities
 - Keeps bicyclists away from driveways
 - Minimizes conflict points





Perpendicular crossings of truck lanes can help the truck driver and the bicyclist see each other.

Major Project Partnerships (sampling)

SR99 Tunnel (AWVRP)	WSDOT	\$281M
Airport Station Light Rail	POS for Sound Transit	\$110M
E Marginal Way Overpass	POS for FAST Corridor	\$22M
Harbor Island T18 Truck Bridge	Seattle	\$19M
SR519 Grade Separation	WSDOT	\$13M
SR518 Lane Expansion	WSDOT	\$8M

Benefits

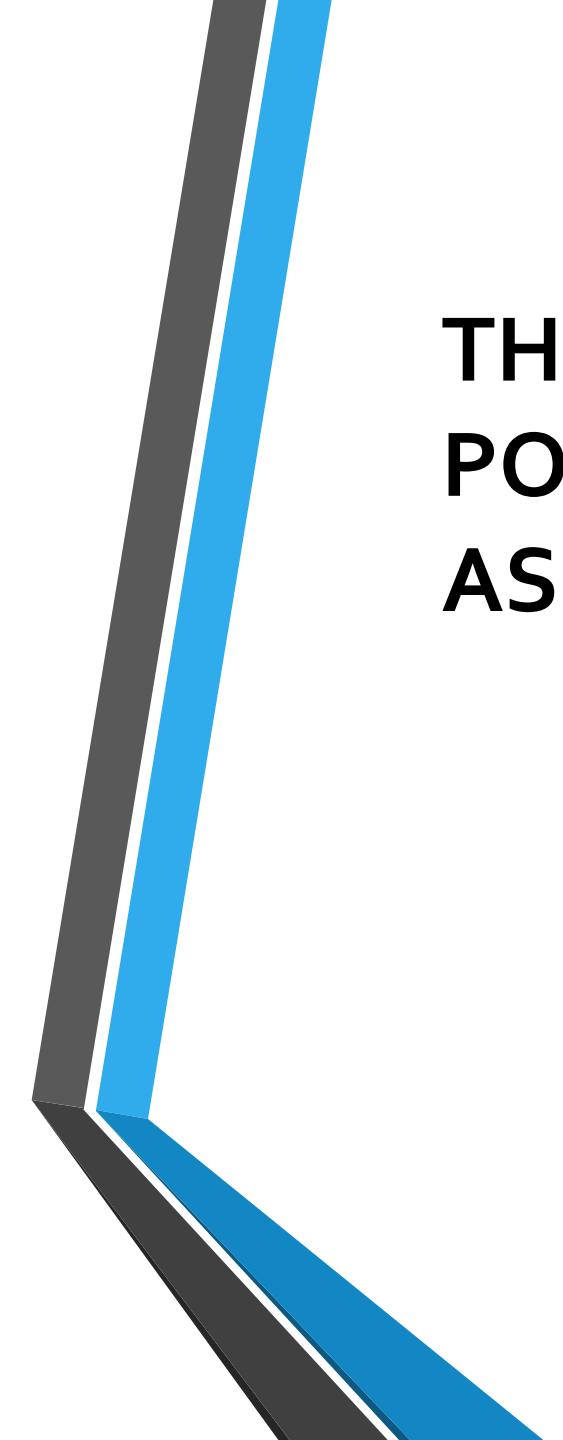
- Improve access, safety, mobility
- Separate freight movements
- Provide transit choices
- Reduce congestion
- Enhance sustainability

Over \$510 Million in Transportation Investments by the Port of Seattle



Why Every Planner Should Know Their Port Districts

<u>Port</u>	<u>City / County</u>
Affirm unique jurisdictional roles	Affirm general purpose jurisdictional role
Emphasize shared goals and benefits	Recognize shared goals and benefits
Communicate contributions: economy, transportation and land use	Value industry sector in economy, transportation and land use
Mitigate our impacts	Work together to create solutions
Invest to accelerate improvements	Work together to create partnerships



THE PORT ASKS

- Examine regulatory, environmental, and fee policies to **foster a positive business climate** that attracts industrial enterprises.
- Strengthen land use **protections for industrial areas** and prohibit urban sprawl and incompatible land uses.
- Support improvements to promote maritime uses and move freight efficiently.

