



NOTICE OF NEPA EA SCOPING AND PUBLIC MEETING for PORT OF TACOMA OFF-DOCK CONTAINER SUPPORT FACILITY

Project: Actions are proposed by two public agencies – **Port of Tacoma (Port)** and the **US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD)** – relative to use and development of property in Tacoma. The Thorne Road Properties project site that is the subject of this action is located at 1451 Thorne Road (Port Parcel 85), 1721 Thorne Road (Port Parcel 87), and 1702 Port of Tacoma Road (Port Parcel 72). Specifically:

- The Purpose of the *Off-Dock Container Support Facility* project (Project) is to relieve congestion and improve marine container terminal capacity and efficiency at the Port of Tacoma in order to meet the public's need and demand for increased cargo movement. The proposed Project would construct an off-dock container support facility of approximately 25 acres as close as practicably possible to the Husky and WUT entry gate, with a maximum distance of 1 mile, to help fulfill the Project Purpose and Need. The proposed Project would develop the project site into a fully functioning off-dock container yard to use for empty container and chassis storage, a single-high reefer pre-trip wash facility, and a wheeled reefer valet drop-off location, with the ability to also process fully laden containers. Other site features would include a truck entry and exit gate on Maxwell Way with a guard shelter, two emergency access gates on Thorne Road, an office trailer, perimeter security fencing, site lighting and power, security cameras, a railroad crossing, a roadability-testing area, and stormwater improvements. Proposed work includes clearing and grubbing, earthen fill, isolated excavation, site-wide grading, subgrade preparation, base course and pavement systems, stormwater infrastructure, and other utilities.

This Project is needed because existing Puget Sound Gateway Ports are operating above 80 percent capacity utilization¹. This is causing inefficient operations and inefficient container handling, which is resulting in a ripple of supply chain impacts that include excessive truck queuing and idling, cargo ships waiting at anchor or offshore for available terminal berths, train backlogs, delayed cargo deliveries, and slowed or halted manufacturing.

- Wetland Mitigation Summary: The proposed Project would permanently impact (clear, grub, and fill) 4.42 ac of Category III (palustrine forested [PFO], depressionnal) wetland. The Project proposes to mitigate the impacts using mitigation credits from the Port's Lower Wapato Creek Advance Mitigation Site which was constructed in 2021. The mitigation site increases ecological functions, values, and areal extent of Cowardin Classes of Wetland and Deepwater Habitats including; Riverine tidal streambed cobble-gravel/mud (Wapato Creek), estuarine intertidal unconsolidated mud (intertidal mudflats), estuarine intertidal emergent persistent wetlands (estuarine emergent wetlands) and Palustrine forested evergreen/deciduous wetlands (forested wetlands) in the lower Wapato Creek watershed. The mitigation site includes two primary habitat elements: (1) fish passage improvement through replacement of two Wapato Creek culverts at the 12th Street East crossing; and (2) re-establishment of wetland and fish habitat through relocation of Wapato Creek and constructing a diverse complex of associated floodplain and wetland habitats historically present in the Commencement Bay intertidal mudflats. See www.portoftacoma.com/wapato for additional details regarding the mitigation site.

Previous Environmental Analysis: As an element of the overall General Central Peninsula (GCP) Improvement Program, the Port of Tacoma (Port) is planning to redevelop the approximately 25-acre Thorne Road Properties project site to provide additional off-dock storage to support Port cargo uses. A SEPA Environmental Checklist was prepared, and a determination of non-significance was issued on 6/15/18 for the GCP Improvement Program, which includes the three Thorne Road parcels that are the focus of the *Off-Dock Container Support Facility* proposal.

MARAD awarded funds to the Port under the Port Infrastructure Development Program to be used for improvements to Port properties. The use of these funds requires NEPA compliance, which will be provided

¹ Above 80 percent capacity utilization, there is an inverse relationship between the number of containers on the terminal and the efficiency of the terminal. i.e., as capacity utilization goes up, efficiency goes down.

through the Environmental Assessment (EA) process. MARAD will serve as the lead federal agency for this NEPA EA.

Scoping: Agencies, affected Tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the NEPA EA. All comments are due no later than **July 30, 2022**. Methods for presenting your comments are described below.

- **EA Public Scoping Meeting:** MARAD and the Port are holding a virtual scoping meeting for the public on July 13, 2022, from 5:30p.m. to 7 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to solicit comments regarding the scope of issues to be addressed in the EA. The public scoping comment period will run from July 1 to 30, 2022. The meeting will be recorded.

MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING

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[+1 253-617-4257](tel:+12536174257), [201553394#](tel:+1201553394) United States, Tacoma

Phone Conference ID: 201 553 394#

Submit written comments via U.S. mail to:

Kris Gilson
Director, Office of Environmental Compliance
US Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

and/or

Port of Tacoma, Environmental Programs
C/O Heather Curbow
One Sitcum Plaza
Tacoma, WA 98421

- **Submit Written Comments via E-mail to:** environment@portoftacoma.com
- **Submit Comments on the Port’s Website:** <http://www.portoftacoma.com/sepa>