Off-Dock Container Support Facility Project

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- The Port is in the process of developing a new Off-Dock Container Support Facility ("Facility") on three Port-owned parcels (total of 24.5 acres, east of Thorne Road/north of Maxwell Way) in the Tideflats ("Site").
- Off-dock container facilities are a critical infrastructure need that help decrease supply chain congestion by improving container port operations and efficiencies that, in turn, ease impacts on the rest of the supply chain (i.e., ship, terminal, rail, road congestion). Off-dock facilities free up on-dock space by providing an area away from the dock for non-water dependent uses like the storage, staging, preparing, and processing of containers and chassis.
- The new Facility will not only help relieve supply chain congestion but also decrease air emissions (from ships, trucks, rail and yard equipment) and improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of goods in and out of the Port.

SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES

- Due to unprecedented high demand for retail imports since mid-2020, the entire supply chain has been stressed or disrupted and Puget Sound gateway ports have been operating above 80 percent capacity utilization.
- Supply chain disruptions and backlogs have caused ripple effects throughout the system 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. It also results in unprocessed empty containers and chassis remaining unavailable for regional agricultural export use.
- On-dock space at the Port's marine shipping terminals is at maximum capacity; on-dock expansion of existing international terminals is not possible. Terminal expansion is also confined by adjacent properties that are being used for Port logistics or by transportation networks (i.e., roads and rail).

SITE LOCATION

- Due to a shortage of available land in the Tideflats, and after consideration of all possible alternatives, it was determined that the proposed Site is the only viable location for the Facility.
- The criteria for site selection included: a parcel of at least 25 contiguous acres; a location within one mile of the Husky and Washington United Terminals entry gate; excluding property already in use, and mitigation sites.

AIR EMISSIONS BENEFITS and HABITAT MITIGATION:

- The Facility will have positive impacts on air quality and reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions from terminal operations by reducing the wait time for ships to come into the dock; burning less fuel in yard equipment by reducing the number of times a container is moved on the dock; reducing the number of and time trucks sit idling while waiting to get in/out of the terminals; and minimizing train backlogs.
- The Site is a combination of fully and partially graveled lots containing 4.42 acres of isolated Category III Wetlands that will be filled as part of this project. The Port will replace the wetland area with mitigation credits from its Lower Wapato Creek habitat site. The Port constructed the Lower Wapato Creek site as advance mitigation for development projects, like the off-dock container support facility. The Lower Wapato Creek site preserved over 110 native trees, including large cottonwoods, and will be planted with a diverse array of approximately 150,000 emergent/ground cover, shrubs and trees as well of a mix of over 40 native grasses.

NEXT STEPS

- The Port is currently going through all required regulatory and permitting processes; it is anticipated the Facility will be completed by the end of 1st quarter 2024.