

COMMISSION AGENDA

Item No: 4B

Meeting: 12/21/17

DATE: December 6, 2017

TO: Port of Tacoma Commission

FROM: John Wolfe, Chief Executive Officer
Sponsor: Jason Jordan, Director, Environmental and Planning Services

SUBJECT: Resolution 2017-11-PT to amend the current Port of Tacoma’s Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements, Resolution 2012-04, regarding fossil fuel export facilities on Port-owned land.

A. ACTION

At a Commission Briefing on November 14, 2017, the Commission directed staff to bring forward Resolution 2017-11-PT to modify the current Port Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements, Resolution 2012-04. Resolution 2017-11-PT authorizes the following change to its Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvement to state:

“The Port of Tacoma chooses not to develop new facilities for the international export of bulk fossil fuels on Port-owned property.”

B. BACKGROUND

In 1911 local citizens were granted the ability to create and manage public port districts for the movement of goods and cargo. Subsequent legislation granted authority to port districts to pursue industrial development, operate marinas, docks, airports, railroads, recreational facilities, and promote tourism. This allowed for port districts to take a long view and invest in economic activities that would unlikely be developed or improved if left entirely to the private sector. Ports also can develop the infrastructure necessary to attract job-creating businesses. This infrastructure includes waterways, roads, rail, utilities and other such facilities. Port-owned properties and facilities are often leased by the port to private-sector businesses that generate jobs in the community.

In 1918 the City of Tacoma voted to create a port district. In April of 1919 the Port of Tacoma Commission adopted the first Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (CSHI). Port Commission’s vote and adoption of a CSHI sets forth in general terms the Port’s planned improvements.

The CSHI is amended as needed to expand the description of both the Port’s planned improvement projects, and the geographic limits of development needed to support improvement projects. While there have been periodic amendments to the geographic limits and development area, the current CSHI text was last amended in April 2012.

This amendment also adds a reference to the Container Port Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan and makes other minor changes to update the document.

Development within the port district is guided by the CSHI, as such, any future land development opportunity would be subject to this proposed new language.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Review is complete. A Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued on November 16, 2017. The public was notified of the Determination in *The News Tribune* on November 27, 2017. A 14-day comment period ended on December 11, 2017, and a reconsideration period ended December 18, 2017.

We received 3 comments: one from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department stating they have no objections, and 2 from public citizens in opposition. Staff responded to each of the citizens to explain the nature of the amendment.

D. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Today the transportation industry is highly reliant on fossil fuels. We look forward to a future where renewable energy will take a larger role in supporting the movement of commerce.

Renewable forms of energy, while not universally available for all applications at this time, are becoming more available, and more affordable. Where renewable energy technologies currently do not exist, or are not commercially viable at this time, the Port supports the use of cleaner fossil fuels that produce the lowest emissions.

The Port embraces its duty to protect Port-owned property located in the City of Tacoma and dedicated for industrial use, providing our community, region, and state with jobs, goods and tax revenue in support of our state and region's economic vitality.

This amendment to the Port's Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvement addresses Port-owned property and is not intended to address or preclude the transport, storage, or export of fossil fuel from marine cargo terminals as required by the Federal Commerce Clause and other requirements imposed upon the Port.