

# ACTION ITEM MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 6B  
Meeting Date: 11/19/24

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**DATE:** November 12, 2024  
**TO:** Port of Tacoma Commission  
**FROM:** Eric Johnson, Executive Director  
Sponsor: Jason Jordan, Sr. Director Environmental & Planning Services  
Project Manager: Ryan Medlen, Senior Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution 2024-07-PT - 2024 Update to the Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements

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**A. ACTION REQUESTED**

Staff requests Port of Tacoma Commission approval of Resolution 2024-07-PT to amend the current Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (CSHI) required by Chapter 53.20 RCW. The resolution would adopt updated language to match the Port of Tacoma Strategic Plan and the list of properties currently owned by the Port of Tacoma.

**Strategic Plan Initiative:** OS-2.

**B. BACKGROUND**

In 1911, voters in Washington State 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, Pierce County 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.

Under current State Law<sup>1</sup>, the Port of Tacoma must maintain a comprehensive scheme of harbor improvements to provide the public with awareness about the Port's intention surrounding development.

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 53.20.010

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 December 2017 to clarify that the Port of Tacoma chooses not to develop new facilities for the export of bulk fossil fuels. This provision remains unchanged in these updates.

Expenditures around harbor improvements and property acquisitions must be consistent with the Comprehensive Scheme of Improvements. For this reason, the latest updates propose incorporating a list of properties and their present or planned uses in addition to referencing other forms of Commission approval of expenditures. Other updates are administrative changes to update language to match the Port of Tacoma strategic plan and clarify the scope of approval with regards to environmental impacts subject to Chapter 43.21c RCW.

**C. SCOPE OF WORK**

The update to the Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements under this resolution is the full scope of work. Additional actions that may be necessary to maintain, operate, or implement the uses identified in the CSHI are managed as separate projects by the Port of Tacoma.

**D. FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

There is no direct cost to the Port of Tacoma for adopting this update. Direct costs associated with future property or improvement actions will be authorized through separate, project-specific resolutions.

**E. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS / REVIEW**

A Determination of Nonsignificance was issued October 25, 2024 (Attachment 4 and Attachment 5). Public notice was provided on October 29, 2024 and the 14-day comment period ended on November 12, 2024.

**F. NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval of Resolution 2024-07-PT, by the Commissioners, the Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (CSHI) will be modified.