



# **Port of Whitman County**

## **Comprehensive Plan 2016-2020**

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# PORT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



2016-2020

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Dedicated to the memory of  
Gerald J. Druffel  
1922-2014



Port Commissioner, District 2  
1981-1999

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## MISSION

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The Port of Whitman County is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all citizens of Whitman County through industrial real estate development, preservation of multi-modal transportation, facilitation of economic development and provision of on-water recreational opportunities.



Above: Manning-Rye Bridge near Colfax

Left: Washington State University Campus

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# WASHINGTON STATE PORTS

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## HISTORY

In 1911, the state legislature enacted laws that allowed the people to establish port districts and elect commissioners to administer the districts and oversee their development and operation. The Port District Act of 1911 provided legal resolution to the long struggle to achieve public control over areas that impacted the public through commerce.

While those laws have been changed from time to time since 1911, the most important provisions still remain. Because they are public, but must operate in a proprietary way much like other type of business, public ports are independent of other types of governmental authority except for state and federal laws. They are “creatures of legislature” and a special form of local government. Formed by a vote of the people they serve, ports are financed in part by property taxes paid by the people of the district.

A port district is a geographical area that may be as large as an entire county or as small as a city or town; its boundaries are defined when the district is formed. Voted into being by an election of the people who live in the district, law creates Port districts as “municipal corporations” of the state. Often referred to as “special purpose districts,” ports are different from counties, cities and towns.

Almost all powers of the port district are vested in a board of commissioners or “commission”. Elected from the district to serve six-year terms, the governing body of commissioners assures local control and accountability. The port commission, like a city council or county commission, is the legislative body responsible for making the policies and decisions of the district in both internal and external matters. Such policies or decisions might involve adoption of plans, establishing positions, setting employment policies, purchasing or disposing of real estate and other property, setting rates, adopting budgets, levying taxes and many others. The commission appoints an executive director who administers the policies and decisions made by the commission.

## GENERAL POWERS

Law allows port districts to develop many types of facilities to provide a variety of services. Most easily identified are the various transportation related amenities, such as marine terminals, storage sites, airports and other direct transportation. Ports also deal directly with economic development and on-water recreation.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Marine Terminals.** Terminals, a major part of many ports' operation, provide for the movement of ships, boats and barges in hauling goods and people in domestic and foreign commerce. These include piers, wharves, jetties, boat landings and equipment such as cranes for loading and unloading vessels and barges.

**Storage Sites.** Ports with marine terminals generally provide extensive storage and processing facilities related to the transfer of goods on water and land. These include warehouses, transfer places such as container freight stations, and places for processing, freezing, storage and subsequent movement of agricultural commodities and other perishable foodstuff. Some ports have large domed structures for the storage of bulk metal ore, extensive land areas to store logs and lumber awaiting shipment, and many ports have grain storage elevators.

**Airports.** Many ports in Washington operate airports, both large and small. Some deal only with general aviation, such as smaller, privately owned aircrafts. Others are major complexes with air passenger service and terminal facilities.

**Other Direct Transportation.** Subject to the limitations by law, ports may operate certain railway facilities. They may provide toll bridges, tunnels, highway approaches, canals, locks, utility lines, telecommunications infrastructure, tramways, ferry service and passenger watercraft.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Law empowers Washington's ports with broad economic development authority to bring business and jobs to their communities. Almost every Washington port pursues an aggressive program of industrial and economic development to promote employment and otherwise enhance the economy of the state and district. Some ports deal with all aspects of the subject, others with only one or two. Ports may:

- Develop lands for industrial and commercial needs
- Provide general economic development programs
- Buy, lease and sell property
- Provide air and water pollution control works
- Operate trade centers and export trading companies
- Establish and operate foreign trade zones
- Promote tourism
- Build telecommunications infrastructure and provide wholesale telecommunications services

## PORT OF WHITMAN COUNTY

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As early as the 1880's, long before the organization of the Whitman County Port District, steamboats carried orchard and grain products on the Snake and Columbia rivers to coastal markets in the west.

On November 4, 1958, an election held in conjunction with the general election approved a port district in Whitman County to be known as the Port of Whitman County. There were 6,653 votes cast in favor of the district and 2,503 votes against. On November 20, 1958, the County Commissioners established a Port District in Whitman County.

The people of Whitman County formed the Port to do three specific things:

- Provide access to slack water navigation on the Columbia/Snake River system
- Promote industrial development
- Provide recreation opportunities on the Snake River

The first meeting of the Port was held on January 15, 1959, in the County Commissioners' room in the Courthouse at approximately 2:30 p.m. At that time the Port Commission (having been duly elected to the position the previous year) elected D. I. Hopkins as President, Walter N. Nelson as Vice President, and Lawrence Hickman as Secretary. There have been only thirteen commissioners since 1959, providing the Port with continuity and strength of leadership.

Actual development and improvement of the on-water sites began in 1969, at the Port of Almota. Since then, the Port of Central Ferry, the Port of Wilma, Boyer Park & Marina, the Pullman Industrial Park, Pullman Industrial Park West (PIP West) and the Port of Whitman Business Air Center have been constructed. The Port is now primarily an industrial real estate developer, measuring part of its success in terms of new jobs created and new tax base developed rather than maximum return on investment. Although integral to the Port, the recreation provider aspect of the Port's mission has become secondary to the industrial and economic development aspects.

## VALUES

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The Port values its relatively small size, which enables it to work with people face to face, both inside and outside the organization. It also values its creativity and willingness to work with people on many different kinds and sizes of projects; its combination of public and private perspectives; its ability to move quickly, decisively, and effectively; its financial responsibility and integrity.

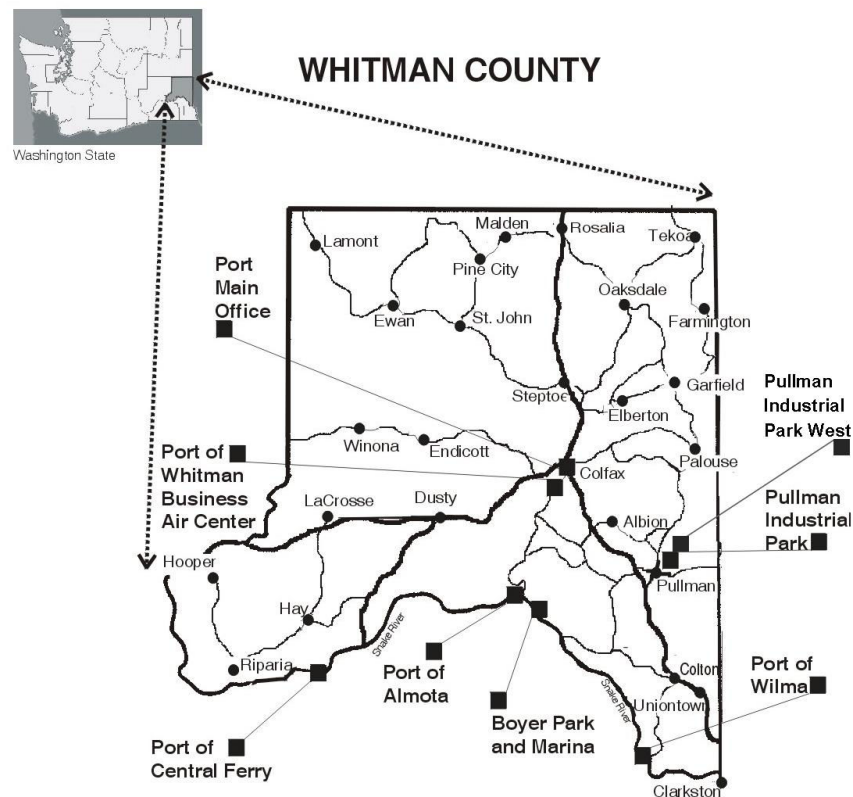


The Port also endeavors to balance economic development and growth with good environmental stewardship. With the increasing challenges facing waterfront development as a result of the ESA listings of salmon and steelhead and tighter stormwater regulations, the Port must be forward thinking in its future development plans and incorporate proactive methods for industrial development in balance with watershed improvements and preservation.

## LOCATION

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Situated in the southeastern corner of Washington, the Port District of Whitman County encompasses the entire county (see map). The Snake River forms the south boundary of the district where the Port's three on-water port/industrial sites (Almota, Central Ferry & Wilma) are located. The Port also has off-water sites located in Pullman and Colfax. The versatility of these properties offers a wide range of exciting opportunities for economic development within the Port's district.



## HISTORY OF PORT PLANNING

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The Port's earliest planning documents stated that timely, efficient development of public ports on the Snake River was a necessity. The 1961 economic summary and comprehensive plan included statistical and descriptive information documenting the need. In 1969, an update of the comprehensive plan identified seven specific sites for Port acquisition and development on the Snake River.

Throughout early planning documents, there were general statements or goals concerning the purpose of Port development actions. The 1969 development plan for the Port of Wilma-North Clarkston focused on the industrial development trends of the Lewiston-Clarkston area and the need to develop Wilma as a major industrial facility.

From 1969-1975, the Port concerned itself with the implementation of the 1969 plan. In 1975, a summary housekeeping amendment to the plan was made to reflect the trends and changes that occurred during implementation.

The off-water industrial site survey, prepared in October of 1978, revealed significant local interest in establishing industrial parks that would aid in the economic development of county communities.

Sometime in late 1978 or early 1979, the Whitman County Regional Planning Council was informally "hired" to facilitate and implement the updating of the Port's comprehensive plan. On March 22, 1979, the Port Commission established a Port of Whitman County Advisory Committee (Resolution 159) to assist, advise and make recommendations to the Port Commission on all matters pertaining to the review and updating of its comprehensive development plan.

On July 17, 1980, the Port Commission held a public hearing on the revised plan, which was tabled until the next meeting, and tabled thereafter several times until November 6, 1980, when it was finally adopted by the Board.

On May 4, 1982, the Port Commission adopted Resolution 190 as a statement of policy for off-water industrial development. The thrust of this resolution is that the Port will develop industrial sites in various areas and/or communities of Whitman County as long as there is strong community involvement and support.

On February 4, 1988, the Port Commission amended its comprehensive plan with Resolution 88-4, which allowed the sale of sites within the Port of Whitman County Industrial Park in Pullman.

At the beginning of 1989, the Port Commission designated the updating of the comprehensive plan as a priority for that year. On September 21, 1989, the Port Commission set about to accomplish this priority. The Commission chose sixteen citizens of Whitman County to serve on an ad hoc Citizens' Advisory Committee.

Finally, on December 9, 1989, the Commission, Committee and others met to discuss the goals, objectives and policies of the Port District. The information gathered from this meeting provided the basis of the plan update.

In 1995, the Port Commission amended the 1990 comprehensive plan consolidating several goals and objectives. The amendment also added elements to the plan that included off-water rural county industrial development, a stronger commitment to the support of a multi-modal transportation system, and the beginning of a plan to encourage the advent of telecommunications services in rural Whitman County.

In 1999, the Port Commission designated the updating of the 1990 comprehensive plan as well as the 1990-1995 amendments into one comprehensive document. A specific telecommunications goal was added and several other plan elements were refined. A public hearing for the 2000-2005 Port Comprehensive Plan was held on October 23, 2000, at 7:00p.m. at the Port office in Colfax, WA.

In 2004, a series of meetings were held to obtain public opinion and input on the 2005-2010 comprehensive plan. In addition, the Port made web-based requests for comments on the plan.

In 2006, the Commissioners amended the comprehensive plan updating the goals and objectives. Findings on these goals included many successes; specifically, the Port succeeded in the planning and construction of rural county telecommunications. The Port also found a lack of support and private sector interest for rural area industrial development.

In 2010, the Port Commission amended the comprehensive plan with updates for the next five years.

In 2016, the Port Commission held a public hearing on February 4, 2016, to obtain public opinion on the 2016-2020 comprehensive plan. The plan was also guided by periodic economic analysis reports conduct by University of Idaho economist, Steve Peterson.

# GOALS, POLICIES, & OBJECTIVES FOR PORT DEVELOPMENT

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The Port of Whitman County Commission recognizes the importance of clearly defining the major goals, objectives and policies of the Port and utilizing them to guide future port activity. Since port districts are publicly owned, it is important to receive public input on port development to ensure ports are targeting the needs and concerns of the district. Public opinion and input is important, nevertheless, the Port Commission remains the final authority as to the content of this comprehensive plan.

To obtain public opinion and input, public advertisement was placed in the Whitman County Gazette and the Moscow-Pullman Daily News requesting comments, as well as the Port's website and Facebook page, and a public meeting was held to discuss the 2016-2020 Port Comprehensive Plan. The date and location of the meeting is listed below:

- February 4, 2016 during the regular port commission meeting

Goals, policies, and objectives add flexibility to a comprehensive plan by giving general directions for decision making, but not specific projects for achievement. At the same time, goals and objectives provide a measure for evaluating and monitoring progress toward a desired end.

The goals, policies, and objectives section contains three distinct elements:

- (1) **GOAL STATEMENT** - A broad encompassing statement about a desirable future attribute, trait, or condition to strive for.
- (2) **POLICY/OBJECTIVES STATEMENT** - Specific target actions to be taken toward achieving the goal and a general course of action to be pursued.
- (3) **FINDINGS** - Information that explains the rationale behind each goal.

## GOAL 1

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*In addition to its on-going emphasis on agricultural-related industries, the Port will actively encourage diversification of the District's economic base.*

### Policies/Objectives:

- Identify and assist in the development of alternative products, markets, and industries relying on the human, organizational, agricultural and natural resources of the region.
- Investigate the need for additional facilities for storage, handling, and processing of value-added agricultural commodities.
- Undertake active recruitment of new economic activities and accelerate the Port's involvement in economic development activities in Whitman County's small, rural communities.
- Promote tourism as a viable industry by advertising, publicizing or distributing information designed to attract visitors as outlined by RCW 53.08.255.
- Initiate dialog with other public agencies and the private sector to obtain and support industrial feasibility studies of potential regional significance.
- Partner with local, regional and state economic development organizations in order to recruit, retain, enhance and foster business and industry.
- Utilize powers granted by SSB 6675 (RCWs 53.08.005, 53.08.370 and 53.08.380) and partner with local service providers, if invited and where feasible, to provide wholesale high speed, broad bandwidth telecommunications infrastructure throughout Whitman County.

### Findings for Goal 1:

Whitman County's major economic base is agriculture, an industry that fluctuates widely in response to interest rates, world markets, weather conditions, government policy, and inflation/recession cycles. We are also living in the age of robotics, computers, and high technology, and it takes fewer and fewer people to perform the work tasks, including farming. In order to offset these agricultural economic fluctuations and the displacement of farm workers, other types of industries should be developed in the county.

The official population of Whitman County is directly related to enrollment at Washington State University. Without WSU, the county's population would be spiraling downward like that of the small towns in the area. To state it simply, we need more jobs in Whitman County to decrease out-migration of population. It is the Port's opinion that economic base diversification, state of the art telecommunications and economic development outreach in the rural communities are some suitable paths to this goal. Since 2005, the Port continues to partner with multiple different telecommunications companies offering services throughout all of



Whitman County. In addition, the Port successfully recruited four new businesses to the Pullman Industrial Park.

In 2014, the Port sought and received grant funding from the State to study the feasibility of the construction of a Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certified building with space for lease to companies stemming from Washington State University. Study components included analysis of the regional impacts and partnering strategies, potential growth of research efforts at Washington State University in the next ten, a market funding strategy containing action elements linked to timelines (identify potential public sector leasing partners and grant/loan funding sources), identification of targeted industries as well as an analysis of how the project will assist local economic diversification efforts. The region has no lease space available for startup companies and the Port is currently fully leased at its buildings also. This study is still underway.

## GOAL 2

*Encourage a balanced and economical multi-modal transportation system serving agriculture, commerce and industry.*

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### Policies/Objectives:

- Recognize that all modes of transportation are important with emphasis being shifted from time to time depending on needs of the District.
- Formally participate in the State Transportation and Rail Plans on a regular basis and partner with local railroads to preserve and enhance rail service in Whitman County.
- Seek establishment and recognition in the State Transportation Plan of the major north south and east-west traffic (rail, barge & truck) corridors in the District and seek prioritization of the truck routes within the county road plan.
- Strive to maintain existing rail access at all port sites operated by the District.
- In conjunction with affected industries, review and participate in the acquisition and operation of short line rail facilities.
- Be the lead agency to pursue completion of the proposed Wawawai to Lower Granite Dam road in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers and other pertinent parties.
- Continue to participate in the operation and maintenance of Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport and related public facilities.
- Maintain and improve the Port of Whitman Business Air Center.
- Explore further partnerships to enhance and promote other rural Whitman County airports as needed.
- Support continued economical and ecologically friendly navigation of the Columbia/Snake River system.
- Support State and Federal policies that recognize the increasing transportation demands created by the local agriculture sector.
- Participate in the PCC Rail Authority through board membership.

### Findings for Goal 2:

Provision of water-transport access by the Port has enhanced the competitive advantage of agricultural producers and industries in the region by reducing reliance on overburdened rail car inventories and truck transport. However, the cumulative impacts of major rail line abandonments could result in an over-reliance on barge and truck transport. With the continuing debate over salmon recovery and possible dam removal, these issues become even more important to the continuing prosperity of our region.

In 2003, the Port announced its partnership in the Grain Train project to provide local shippers access to more rail cars for shipping local commodities. This WSDOT sponsored program rehabilitates and provides rail cars for farmers at times when such cars are in short supply.

In 2004, the state purchased the Palouse River & Coulee City (PCC) railroad. Negotiations began in 2005 to reach an operating agreement to keep this rail in service. Acknowledging the importance of this short-line system to our state's economy, in 2007, the State of Washington purchased PCC rail lines. Due to the maintenance neglect of the short-line system, the Washington State Legislature, under Chapter 518, Section 713, made \$8.6 million available for grant to any intergovernmental entity or local rail district provided the funds were used only to refurbish the system. In response to this legislation, Grant County, Lincoln County, Spokane County and the Port of Whitman County signed an interlocal agreement in March of 2008 to form the PCC Rail Authority. Funds for refurbishment of the rail line have been appropriated by the state of Washington with no promise of additional funding for the remaining repairs and ongoing maintenance of the system. The PCC Rail Authority continues to seek grant funding and legislative support to provide upgrades to the PCC Railroad system that have been identified and prioritized by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and deemed critical to the system's long term functionality.

In addition, the success of water-transport itself has placed considerable stress on the capacity of state and county roads in the District due to the volume of both locally originating and interstate truck traffic to Whitman port sites. This impacts the condition of roads for all users, as well as increasing the public costs of roadway maintenance. Therefore, the Port District ultimately benefits from the maintenance of adequate rail and road transportation in the District and can play a major role in identifying local needs and supporting adequate overall transportation planning in the region at local, state and federal levels.

In the spring of 2010, the Port staff and Commission provided input during regional stakeholder meetings for the Regional Transportation Policy Organization 20 year plan. The Port requested the addition of short-line rail preservation and enhancement to the plan as well as repairs on the Almota grade. The final plan has been published and can be accessed through the SEWEDA website at <http://www.palouse.org/Reports.html>.

### GOAL 3

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*Assist District communities by supporting economic development facilities, services and by coordinating communication and partnerships with entities engaging in economic development activities.*

#### Policies/Objectives:

- Undertake active recruitment of new economic activities both from inside and outside the District.

- Acquire feasible sites in Whitman County for cooperative development with interested communities and firms. Initiate dialog and work in partnership with other public agencies and the private sector for economic development purposes.
- With community support, acquire and lease feasible single or multiple-use facilities in Whitman County communities.
- Seek partnership with entities such as the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), Washington State University (WSU) and the state legislature to fund economic development facilities and services.
- Provide input on District and County needs to the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) and the Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA).
- Monitor changes in water rights policies and laws as they may potentially impact business and agricultural interests within the county.
- Contact State legislators, as needed, to provide input on policy work.
- Assist or refer private business needs with agencies providing assistance.
- Distribute promotional materials for the District and County in general and develop promotional materials for Port facilities in particular.

#### Findings for Goal 3:

The Port holds the following capabilities as a general-purpose economic development agency and an off-water industrial property developer. The Port acts as a liaison between private businesses and local, state, and federal business assistance programs. It is a conduit to state and federal lobbyists. Therefore, the Port needs to communicate with, and educate, the public about these capabilities. The Port must continue to increase the coordinated, cooperative promotion of the area to prospective industrial investors and firms. Recent success in this area has been seen through the development of Public Development Authorities (PDA's) in local communities.

Most of the smaller communities in the District have experienced population decline and the actual disappearance of essential goods and services. Much of this problem is due to a lack of local jobs. However, some of the problem is due to a need for greater organizational strength. Now, as the Port's on-water sites have become successful, the Port is able to turn more of its attention to further off-water development.

However, both because of the Port's limited resources and because it increases a project's chances of success, it is essential that the affected communities become involved as partners with the Port in developing off-water projects as per Port Resolution # 190. Communities need to organize investment/development groups that are dedicated to the economic well being of their communities and can work with the Port towards the same goal.

The key to the successful development of the Port's Industrial Park in Pullman was the involvement of the City of Pullman, the Pullman Chamber of Commerce, the

Greater Pullman Economic Development Corporation, and Washington State University.

In 2003, communities began to form local public development districts (PDA's). These districts are made up of local people investing in retail/medical services in their communities. This type of local support will benefit the Port's mission if opportunities to partner become available.

## GOAL 4

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*Maintain Boyer Park & Marina physically and operationally in recognition of the importance of the park to the quality of life in the Port District.*

### Policies/Objectives:

- Investigate opportunities to increase income and reduce costs while continuing maintenance of the park, marina and other facilities. Institute cost centered management practices to reduce yearly deficit.
- Continue to maintain the free day use areas of Boyer Park & Marina as a public service to the citizens of Whitman County.
- Seek grant funding, when appropriate, to upgrade and replace marina infrastructure.
- Acquire additional land for on-water recreational purposes where feasible.

### Findings for Goal 4:

The closing of the public park at Central Ferry limits the available on water recreation sites for Whitman County residents. For years Boyer Park & Marina has been known as an oasis on the Snake River. The Port funds, operates and maintains the park and marina as a public service to the citizens of Whitman County, as it is the only port facility that is appropriate for use by everyone in the county. The Commissioners acknowledge the facility historically operated at a deficit and will need the support of the Port to decrease this gap. Significant investment has been made since 2014 to upgrade and replace park infrastructure as well as expand the camping opportunities through the addition of RV sites and cabins. In the meantime, Boyer Park & Marina truly enhances the quality of life for those in the area who utilize the park.



## GOAL 5

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*Continue acquisition, development and management of Port property and facilities.*

### Policies/Objectives:

- Maintain a flexible leasing policy responsive to the needs of the District.
- Provide public port facilities as warranted by market demand.
- Continue to provide support for the Port of Wilma Volunteer Fire Department.
- Work toward acquisition of additional acreage wherever needed or invited for future Port expansion.
- Pursue acquisition of additional land at all port sites when occupancy reaches 75 percent.
- Encourage maximum taxable tenant improvements at all Port sites.
- Incorporate proactive environmental planning with industrial development.

### Findings for Goal 5:

In order for the Port to continue its success, it must continue acquisition, development and management of all Port properties and facilities. Therefore, the Port must continue to nurture its existing on-water and off-water sites and diversify its interests by exploring alternative locations and approaches, such as micro-enterprise development in rural communities.

With the increasing challenges facing waterfront development as a result of the ESA listings of salmon and steelhead and updated stormwater regulations, the Port must be forward thinking in its future development plans and incorporate proactive methods for industrial development in balance with watershed improvements and preservation.

## GOAL 6

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*Maintain the District's fiscal ability to provide needed resources and services to all clients while seeking to minimize the reliance on local tax revenue. Seeking to minimize reliance on tax revenue should not take precedence over any other goals.*

### Policies/Objectives:

- Periodically review long-term lease rates to consider the impacts of inflation, the needs of the District, and the competitiveness of leases.
- Periodically review the best use of excess or inactive properties and consider their sale to fund capital projects.
- Strive to increase the District's eligibility to procure funds under state and federal guidelines and utilize that eligibility for desirable economic development projects.

#### Findings for Goal 6:

Historically, Port policy has been to conserve the District's money and not require more taxes beyond what was originally authorized. Tax revenues support the Port activities including the continued operation and maintenance of Boyer Park & Marina as a free day use park on the river for the citizens of Whitman County. Tax revenues aid in the continued support of the Pullman/Moscow Airport through payment on a long-term bond and the on-going economic development activities, which entail support of legislative lobbying efforts, business recruitment efforts and business retention efforts for the District and Palouse region at large. While the Port strives to become self-supporting, this goal should not take precedence over the Port's goals and objectives until economic development efforts are no longer necessary in Whitman County.

## GOAL 7

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*Develop a telecommunications plan and infrastructure to facilitate enhanced telecommunications services countywide.*

#### Policies/Objectives:

- Work within the guidelines of SSB 6675 (RCWs 53.08.005, 53.08.370 and 53.08.380), a Senate bill passed in May of 2000, allowing Ports and Public Utilities Districts (PUDs) to build telecommunication infrastructure and offer it wholesale to service providers.
- Work with Whitman County's independent telephone companies, when invited and where feasible, to create infrastructure that will help our local providers enhance telecommunications services offered to rural communities.
- Work with the PUDs, NoaNet, Bonneville Power Administration, and other agencies building Telecommunications infrastructure to provide and link networks that will reach in and out of Whitman County.
- Build transmission and "bricks and mortar" type facilities for lease in Whitman County that will encourage telecommunications companies to provide enhanced services in rural Whitman County.
- Build partnerships with regional and state-wide Port districts to facilitate the growth of a dark fiber telecommunications network.
- Pursue opportunities for last mile build out of fiber to the home (FTTH) networks in communities.

#### Findings for Goal 7:

Since May of 2000, the Port has partnered with multiple telecommunications carriers that are providing at least two broadband choices to citizens countywide. The Port

communicated its willingness to partner with and provide infrastructure for all local telecommunications providers. The Port has run fiber at the Port of Wilma and the Pullman Industrial Park, facilitating competitive pricing and services to tenants. In 2015, the Port signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Port of Lewiston and the Port of Clarkston to provide administrative support to their telecommunications efforts.

Continue to look for creative ways to develop infrastructure, form partnerships and link networks in order to provide affordable, state-of-the-art telecommunications opportunities through the Whitman County telephone providers and their respective small service bases.

## SUMMARY

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In establishing these policies, goals and objectives, the Port of Whitman County hopes to set a realistic and achievable course for the next five to ten years. The Port has written these goals broadly in order to maintain flexibility while identifying priorities, targeting actions and providing information behind the rationale for each individual goal.

## ON-WATER INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

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The on-water port industrial sites of the Port of Whitman County are located between river miles 83 and 138 on the Snake River with the Central Ferry site being about 408 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The original Port of Whitman County Comprehensive Plan called for land acquisition at seven sites along the Snake River. Since then, three of these have been developed and four have been abandoned for varying reasons, mainly siltation problems and poor road access.

The Wilma site is located near the terminus of the Columbia-Snake River inland waterway. Only the Ports of Clarkston (Washington) and Lewiston (Idaho) are further upriver. The Wilma site also has the distinction of being the most diverse in function of the three active Whitman County port sites.

In 2001, the Port contracted with the Asotin PUD to perform the water system maintenance and routine testing. In the spring of 2010, the Port began performing these duties independent of the PUD.

In 2013, a new rail spur was constructed by the port to serve the new McGregor Company plant at Wilma. 2013 also saw a rail spur and crossing repair near Bennett Lumber Products on the east end of the port.

In 2014, the Port of Wilma water system was transferred to the Asotin PUD. The PUD also took over utility locate responsibilities for water and sewer infrastructure at Wilma. Also, a new railroad spur was installed at the east end of the port to serve Hinrichs Trading Company.

In 2015, a new drain field and septic tanks were installed at the Port of Wilma. After completion of said projects in concert with lift station improvements, the sewer system was transferred to the Asotin PUD.

In 2015/2016, the port received a \$1M FRAP (Freight Rail Assistance Program) grant/loan combination to rehabilitate the main Wilma rail spur and install new concrete crossings port wide, as well as replace ties, and conduct track cleanup through the Port site.

About thirty miles downriver, the Port's Almota site serves as a major Whitman County trans-shipment point for local white wheat.

In 2009-10, the Port, in partnership with the Northwest Grain Cooperative (formerly known as Whitman County Growers), made sheet pile dock improvements at Almota. The road was also rocked and graded.

Approximately twenty miles downriver from Almota is the Central Ferry site. It is also a major trans-shipment point for local white wheat and is developing into a major site for the manufacturing and wholesaling of fertilizer.

In 2009, the Port initiated the engineering and permitting through the Department of Ecology and the County for a well project at Central Ferry. The project includes well drilling and second phase for vault placement, electrical and piping. The project was designed to serve an agricultural chemical company, but will also be able to serve potential new tenants at the Port.

In 2010, Port Commissioners voted to postpone the redetermination of rental rates (port-wide) for two years due to the economic recession.

In 2011, the new well came on line at Central Ferry.

In 2013, the Port received a CERB (Community Economic Revitalization Board) grant to construct a new spur to service Central Ferry Dry Fertilizer and create more car storage and spur functionality for all tenants.

In 2013, the Port completed a rail spur extension at Central Ferry, adding 850 feet of track on Lots H & I.



# WILMA SITE

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## PORT CHARACTERISTICS

**Description:** All land lying south of the Camas Prairie Railroad and north of the Snake River in Sections 13 & 24 in Township 11 North of Range 45 East of the Willamette Meridian and Section 19 in Township 11 North or Range 46 East of the Willamette Meridian; as per Correction Plat of Port of Wilma-North Clarkston as filed in the Whitman County Auditor's office.



**Size:** There are 279.90 acres of developed industrial property and 76 acres of undeveloped property. 229.90 acres of the developed acreage are divided into 24 lots and one public port site with 14.70 acres. The Port built two buildings in the mid 1990s on the public Port site at Wilma. One building is under lease, and the second building is for sale.

**Water:** 2,000 gallon/minute system; 500,000-gallon reservoir with two deep wells. As part of the new water plan developed in 2000, the Port constructed the Wilma waterline to bring water into the site from the Asotin PUD.

**Sewer:** The sand filter chlorinator dual lagoon system was decommissioned in 2006. The infrastructure still exists. In 2006, a 5,000 gallon septic tank was connected to the two three-hundred feet drain fields constructed in 1989. In 2015, a new drain field was built to meet Washington State standards and the system was transferred to the Asotin PUD.

**Grain Storage:** 4.6-million bushels storage for grain and dry peas.

**Present Tenants:** Two agri-chemical companies, a lumber milling and manufacturing company, a wood chip processor and shipper, a concrete block manufacturer, two propane distribution and storage companies, a wood recycling company, a tree service company, a self-contained waste processing facility, a helicopter business, a boat manufacturing company, a break bulk shipper, and a grain shipment and storage company.

**Acreage Available:** As of 2015, all available land is under lease. The remaining 76 acres, located across State Highway 193 to the north is zoned agricultural and remains undeveloped.

**Other:** Rail access via Camas Prairie Railroad, a Port owned spur line, a county road, and Public Port area with dock and dolphins. The Port contracts with the City of

Clarkston for fire protection and the Port of Wilma Volunteer Fire Department now exists as an administrative board only. Telecommunications infrastructure exists on all of the developed property.

## PORT OPERATION

**Service Area:** An estimated 200-mile radius when considering all the products that are transported to Wilma such as wood chips, hog fuel, timber, soft white and hard red wheat, dry peas and lentils, and other grains, as well as the greater northeastern Washington region and parts of Idaho and Montana.

**Peak Traffic Time:** Spring, summer and fall months.

**Frequency:** The average yearly frequency is about 125 trucks per day; peaking at 400 or more trucks per day, seasonally.

### **Problems and Constraints:**

1. The undeveloped land to the north of Highway 193 is currently zoned agricultural and this acreage would need to go through a re-zone to industrial. A cost/benefit analysis would need to be done before development.
2. Increasing difficulties in developing riverfront property as a direct result of the ESA listings of salmon and steelhead in the main stem of the Snake River and tighter stormwater regulations. The Port must look to more environmentally friendly approaches to developing riverfront and other land in order to find a balance between industrial development and watershed improvement and preservation.
3. Considerations for future development include how the cost of developing the land compares with its lease ability and whether the land should be zoned for heavy industry or high-technology.

# ALMOTA SITE

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## PORT CHARACTERISTICS

**Description:** A parcel of land located south of the Camas Prairie Railroad and north of the Snake River in Section 13 in Township 14 North of Range 42 East of the Willamette Meridian.

**Size:** Smallest of the three ports with approximately 10.5 acres.

**Water:** One individual well (about 37 gpm at 90-100 feet).

**Grain Storage:** Current approximate storage capacity 3,687,000 bushels

**Present Tenants:** Two grain storage and shipping companies.

**Acreage Available:** None.

**Other:** Public Port with sheet pile dock and dolphins. Maintained access road.



## PORT OPERATION

**Service Area:** A 50-mile radius encompassing the farming communities of Whitman and Garfield Counties in Washington and Latah County in Idaho.

**Peak Traffic Time:** Harvest time and after traffic tie-ups due to weather, road closures, or unavailability of barges.

**Frequency:** Average yearly frequency is about 25 trucks per day. There may be up to 100 trucks per day during peak periods.

### Problems and Constraints:

1. The first six miles of SR 194, also known as Almota Road, which all traffic must use, is characterized by a 7% grade dropping 1,250 feet. The steepness of the grade causes several truck accidents each year. The road is also used by recreational traffic traveling to Boyer Park, Lower Granite Dam or the dunes recreation area, which adds to the danger of the road. Each year during the spring thaw, the road is closed to truck traffic which causes a slow down of the county economy. The grade road maintenance concerns were added to the PRTPO transportation improvement plan in 2010 and are still of major concern as of 2015.

PRTPO is currently working on a long-term update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2016-2035. Additionally, this need was added to the PNWA priority list for Federal funding.

2. Nearly all the land at Almota is leased. Expansion of this particular site is impossible due to topographical limitations.
3. Port function could be greatly enhanced with the completion of the proposed Wawawai to Lower Granite Dam road project. Completion of this road would greatly increase the service area for grain intake.

# CENTRAL FERRY SITE

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## PORT CHARACTERISTICS

**Description:** Part or all of the land located south of the relocated Camas Prairie Railroad, north of the Snake River, and east of Washington State Highway #127 in Sections 3, 4, 8, & 9 of Township 13 North of Range 40 East of the Willamette Meridian; as per the Port Central Ferry plat as filed in the Whitman County Auditor's office.

**Size:** A 131.88 acre site with 15 lots and a 12.17 acre public port area.



**Water:** Individual wells from 50 feet to 175 feet in depth with reported yields of 200 gpm. In 1988 the Port drilled a well on Site J to a depth of 100 feet, which is yielding 750 gpm but was tested to 1,200 gpm. In 2011, a new well was constructed on Lots H & A-2 to a depth of 105 feet, which is yielding 400 gpm.

**Sewer:** Individual septic tanks.

**Grain Storage:** 7,232,000 bushels.

**Present Tenants:** Five grain storage/shipping companies, three fertilizer companies, and Fire District # 8.

**Acreage Available:** 2 sites remaining that are encumbered by Rights of Refusal by existing tenants. These noncontiguous lots are 7 acres and 11 acres respectively.

**Other:** Located adjacent to State Highway 127, 56 miles north of Walla Walla. Rail access via Camas Prairie Railroad spur line; rail spur upgraded in 2012. County road access to the site. Public Port site, and fire district building..

## PORT OPERATION

**Service Area:** This site services a very wide area including Whitman, Spokane, Garfield and Columbia Counties, as well as the greater northeastern Washington region and parts of Idaho and Montana.

**Peak Traffic Time:** Harvest time and after traffic tie-ups due to lock closures or barge unavailability or limited rail car availability, as well as excessive rail car costs.

**Frequency:** The estimated average yearly frequency is about 60 trucks per day with high frequencies of about 185 trucks per day.

**Other:** Several existing tenants hold options on existing lots for possible future expansion.

**Problems and Constraints:**

1. Lack of work force due to site isolation is a problem. The nearest towns from which to draw laborers are LaCrosse, Colfax and Pomeroy, which are about 45 minutes from the site.
2. Increasing difficulties in developing riverfront property as a direct result of the ESA listings of salmon and steelhead in the main stem of the Snake River and tighter stormwater regulations. The Port must look to more environmentally friendly approaches to developing riverfront and other land in order to find a balance between industrial development and watershed improvement and preservation.

## SUMMARY

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From the foregoing site profiles, current key commodities for which the Port District presently provides local and regional transportation include:

- Grain
- Wood products
- Liquid bulk commodities
- Ag-inputs
- Other general commodities

Grain trans-shipment continues to be a major facet of Port activities. The existence of comparatively inexpensive water-mode transportation gives Whitman County agricultural producers a distinct competitive advantage in the world market.

Presently, the main weak points in the general trans-shipment of products from the port sites are the sub-optimal road connections to these sites. If railroad abandonments continue, these road connections could further deteriorate. The abandonment of each railroad section results in additional truck movement on the county and state arterials so that the commodities from that area can be transferred to a different shipping point. Also, continued siltation, deferred lock and dam maintenance and resulting river system closures, cuts in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers budgets, and pressure from environmental groups to breach the dams, all threaten to impact regional water transportation.

In past years, the majority of Port District's energy focused on on-water development. The advent of expanded markets, advanced technology, and an awakening need for maintaining economic viability has begun to open new horizons for Port involvement and growth. The Wilma site, now a major industrial and shipping port on the Columbia/Snake river system, is the stalwart foundation upon which the Port District has grown.

The Port continues to diversify its economic development efforts and involvement in regional economic issues that concern all of Whitman County, not concentrating its efforts on any one facet of the total port operation.



## OFF-WATER INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

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The 1980 off-water industrial development goal was to support the economic stability of District communities through providing industrial park facilities. In 1982, the Port Commission adopted Resolution 190 stating that the Port will insist upon communities taking an active and vigorous approach to industrial development and procurement of possible tenants before the Port will consider development in the community.

Throughout the early and mid-1980s various off-water development proposals were investigated at Oakesdale, Rosalia, Colfax and Pullman. Several of these sites were revisited in the 1990s, as well as a site in Garfield.

In response to the heavy involvement of the City of Pullman, WSU, the Pullman Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Pullman Economic Development Corporation, as well as a positive feasibility study, the 1986-87 development of the Port Industrial Park in Pullman (PIP) became a reality. In 1988 the Port acquired its first “tenant” at the park, selling Lot 2 to Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories (SEL).

In 1986-87 the Colfax Chamber of Commerce approached the Port concerning the possible construction of an industrial park at the Colfax Airport. The Port commissioned a feasibility study on the proposed project. The study concluded that investment in a full-fledged industrial park, complete with roads, utilities, and buildings, was not recommended. The study did recommend alternate steps for the City of Colfax to take concerning the development of the airport and economic development in general. The Port reflected on the need for industrial development in rural Whitman County and decided to proceed with the project.

In 1988-89 the Port assisted the Palouse Chamber of Commerce in a business recruitment effort involving a property subject to a Department of Ecology clean up order.

In 1990-95 the Port purchased the land and started planning for the Colfax Industrial Park. The Port also completed a series of business incubator and purpose-built port owned buildings at Pullman Industrial Park to be leased by start-up companies.

In 1995-2000 the Port completed Colfax Industrial Park Phase I. The Port, in response to expansion by SEL and other Port tenants, went on to develop PIP Phase II, which was completed in 1996. In 1998, SEL expanded once again, purchasing all but two of the buildable lots left in Phase I and II. The Port, spurred by the SEL land sale of 1998, purchased an additional 30.46 acres east of Pullman Industrial Park and developed PIP Phase III which was completed in the summer of 2000.

The Port also purchased the Community Education and Training Center in downtown Colfax in the summer of 2000 in order to help insure a continued community college presence in Colfax and to help create down town micro-enterprise opportunities. There were several failed attempts to establish micro-enterprise businesses within



the building, and since the direct support of education unrelated to economic development is not within the authority of a port district, this building was transferred to Whitman County in 2005.

In 2002, the Whitman County Commissioners communicated to the Port Commissioners that they intended to close the Whitman County Memorial airport. The Port Commission elected to take it over for three reasons: preservation of rural airport infrastructure in Whitman County; it adjoined the Port's Colfax Industrial Park; and it housed three existing businesses. The Port combined the acquisition of this land with the Colfax Industrial Park to form the Port of Whitman Business Air Center. In 2004, the Port began developing the airport layout plan (ALP). The design phase of the taxiway realignment project began in 2006 and construction was completed in 2007.

The Port has developed and grown Pullman Industrial Park, which has been very successful to date. In 2004, the Port broke ground on the construction of a 13,829 sq. ft. building in the Pullman Industrial Park for Isothermal Systems Research. In 2006, the Port broke ground on the expansion of the ISR building (an additional 27,500 sq. ft.) to accommodate the growing needs of the company. Both of these phases were funded in part by the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB).

In 2005, the Port also received funding from CERB to explore the feasibility of constructing a small-business incubator within the Pullman Industrial Park. The study showed that construction of this type of building would not be the best way to meet the needs of the Pullman community. The Port will need to explore other avenues for creating a business incubation program that successfully incorporates technology transfer from WSU and has sufficient funding to grow and retain viable businesses within Whitman County.

In 2005, the Port leased their old administrative building and purchased a new office on 302 North Mill Street in Colfax. The legal description is Lot 6 and the south 18 ft. of Lot 5, block 13, town of Colfax, according to the plat thereof, recorded in Book A of Plats, page 16, records of Whitman County of Washington. This move accomplished several goals for the Port including the acquisition of expanded space for existing staff and room for the potential growth of future staff. It also allowed the Port to house all of its records under one roof.

In 2006, with CERB funding, the Port conducted a feasibility study for the future Green Grid Center of Excellence. The findings from the study supported the use of an existing building rather than new construction.

In 2007, the Port of Whitman Business Air Center taxiway realignment and resurfacing was completed. The Port Commissioners also decided to resign the Port's position on the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport board. The Port continues to sustain the airport by providing financial support for the airport's operations and continued payment of

its share of the bonds issued to fund improvements at the airport's passenger terminal.

In 2008, the Port was awarded \$1 million as part of its designation of an Innovation Partnership Zone (IPZ) within the Pullman Industrial Park. The grant funds were spent on acquiring land to expand the park, administration, and the research and technology projects outlined in the Port's application to the State.

In 2008, the Port sold its rental building on Merman Drive and completed its purchase of 56 acres of land at the corner of SR 27 and the Albion Road to ensure room for future growth of the Pullman Industrial Park as it reaches its capacity.

In 2010, the Port was awarded a \$1M loan by the CERB board to fund extension of City of Pullman Utilities to the PIP West site as well as help fund development of streets and utilities within the park.

In 2010, Port Commissioners voted to postpone the redetermination of rental rates (port-wide) for two years due to the economic recession.

In 2011, the Port completed the annexation of the Pullman Industrial Park West into the City of Pullman. 2011 also saw the sale of the Port building located at 1230 NE Hickman Court to the Art of Medicine.

In 2011, the port constructed a 60 x 80 public hangar at the Port of Whitman Business Air Center which was subsequently leased to Inland Crop Care. The dry fertilizer area was also expanded to accommodate the three based agricultural spray companies as well as transient spray pilots.

In 2012, Lot 3 Pullman Industrial Park Subdivision II was sold to the Washington State Crop Improvement Association.

In 2012, the Port completed a FAA Funded project at the Port of Whitman Business Air Center that paved several aprons and created additional aircraft tie-downs.

In 2013, Lots 1, 2 & 18 in the Pullman Industrial Park Subdivision II were sold to Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories. Lots 20 and 21 in Pullman Industrial Subdivision I were sold to Decagon Devices.

In 2013, the Port completed an extension of City of Pullman water and sewer to the Pullman Industrial Park West. This project was funded by a CERB (Community Economic Revitalization Board) grant through the Washington State Department of Commerce.

In 2014, the Port of Whitman Business Air Center ALP (Airport Layout Plan) was partially updated through a grant from the FAA. Updates included potential future hangar layouts and improved vehicle access.

In 2015, the port leveled Lot 13 in Pullman Subdivision II to increase buildable space and make the Lot more attractive to potential tenants.

In 2015, the Port of Whitman Business Air Center was rezoned from agricultural and heavy industrial to Airport Commercial District. Later that same year saw the construction of a new \$1.9M runway at POWBAC, including new lighting, new signage and new drainage primarily funded by the FAA and WSDOT Aviation.

# PULLMAN INDUSTRIAL PARK - EAST

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## FACILITY CHARACTERISTICS

**Description:** A parcel of land situated within the south ½ of Section 29 in Township 15 North of Range 45 East of the Willamette Meridian; as per the Port of Whitman County Industrial Park Subdivision plat as filed in the Whitman County Auditor's office.

**Location:** On Terre View Drive off the Palouse Highway (State Highway 27) in the north end of Pullman. Shares a common border with the WSU Research and Technology Park to the south.

**Size:** 100.5 acres of fully developed sites with streets and utilities.



**Present Tenants/Occupants:** Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Amplicon Express, Munir Daud and Associates, Decagon Devices, Metriguard, River Masters Engineering, Galexis Technologies, Diligent, Merry Cellars, the Palouse Conservation District, The Palouse Science Center, Washington State Crop Improvement Association, Art of Medicine, and the City of Pullman.

**Acreage Available:** Approximately 15.5 developed acres in Phase III of the Park are available for lease or purchase.

**Features:** City water, sewer and roads. Avista Utilities electrical and gas service. Verizon telephone service. Wetland mini-park located in Phase III. Telecommunications infrastructure.

## FACILITY OPERATION

The Port leases and sells land for others to develop, and builds improvements for lease to industrial or commercial tenants. The Port controls weeds on the unleased property. The Port owns and maintains the telecommunications infrastructure throughout the Park.

**Problems and Constraints:**

1. Hilly topography increases site development costs.
2. Lack of significant industrial base in Whitman County necessitates aggressive, intensive marketing efforts.
3. There is no more land available at the PIP site once Phase III is filled.
4. Port may retain some usage of land for start-up businesses.

# PULLMAN INDUSTRIAL PARK - WEST

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## FACILITY CHARACTERISTICS

**Description:** Lots 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 of Locust Grove Industrial Park South Plat, according to plat thereof, recorded under Auditor's File No. 659426, in the Whitman County Auditor's office. The industrial park and surrounding privately held acreage was annexed into the City of Pullman in 2011.

**Location:** Northwest of the Pullman Industrial Park-East, near the intersection of SR 27 and Albion Road.

**Size:** 56 acres.

**Present Tenants/Occupants:**

**Acreage Available:** 56 acres of undeveloped lots.

**Features:** City of Pullman water and sewer were extended to the site in 2014. The Port also installed a fiber optic line as part of the BTOP project in the right-of-way on the Pullman-Albion Road.

## FACILITY OPERATION

The Port leases and sells land for others to develop, and builds improvements for lease to industrial or commercial tenants. The Port controls weeds on the unleased property.

### Problems and Constraints:

1. Hilly topography increases site development costs.
2. Lack of significant industrial base in Whitman County necessitates aggressive, intensive marketing efforts.
3. The Port is in the planning process of developing the acreage, including: rezoning, annexation into the City of Pullman, extension of City utilities, street and utility development within the Park.
4. Cost and ability to obtain land for possible future expansion.

# PORT OF WHITMAN BUSINESS AIR CENTER

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## FACILITY CHARACTERISTICS

**Description:** A 38.64 acre parcel of land situated in the South East ¼ of Section 20, the South West ¼ of Section 21, the North West ¼ of Section 28, and the North East ¼ of Section 29, Township 16 North, Range 43 East of the Willamette Meridian, Whitman County, State of Washington as filed in the Whitman County Auditor's Office.



**Location:** Located on Airport Road approximately 1 mile from State Route 26, directly adjacent to the Colfax Airport.

**Size:** 19.84 acres in Phase I divided into 13 lots. 12.73 acres in Phase II, which are currently being farmed. Phase I was completed in 1998 and Phase II will be completed as needed

**Present Tenants/Occupants:** Pac West owns Lots 1 and 10 of Phase I. Other tenants and land owners include Paulson Mini Storage, Hennigar Trucking, Joseph's Grainery, Fender Air, Inland Crop Car, TLC Flying and multiple public and private hangar tenants. Private citizens lease Lots 12 and 13 as well as small private hangar foot prints and three large hangars. Also onsite are two 6-bay t-hangars, four private hangars and four Port owned pole buildings.

**Acreage Available:** Lot 8 is still available for lease and the 12 acre un-platted parcel is still available on the industrial park side. There are multiple sites of varying size available on the airport side for lease only.

**Features:** Water system, drain field and roads. Avista Utilities electrical. QWEST telephone service. Natural gas available.

## FACILITY OPERATION

The Port of Whitman Business Air Center is a federally obligated airport. The Port has ongoing improvement projects under its Airport Layout Plan and capital improvement plan. The Port controls weeds on the unleased property in partnership with the airport.

### Problems and Constraints:

1. Lack of permanent water rights for possible industrial water needs.
2. Slow development has increased risk of water/sewer infrastructure failure due to lack of use.

## SUMMARY

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Presently, Port off-water sites are limited to Pullman and Colfax. Pullman offers a fairly large population base from which to draw a work force (see appendix A). The Port of Whitman Business Air Center, when fully developed, will attract its workforce from Pullman as well as the rural communities in north central Whitman County. Studies and practical experience indicate that the population base of a community is of prime concern to companies that are considering relocation.

Both the 1980 Port Comprehensive Plan and Resolution #190 imply that off-water sites should be industrial parks serving more than one tenant. However, during the 1980s, the Port Commission and staff became aware that this policy might not be feasible to implement outside of Pullman because a multi-tenant industrial park, in other than a population center, is likely to be unsuccessful. The slow growth of the Port of Whitman Business Air Center has illustrated this theory to a small degree as though Colfax is not as populous as Pullman, it is the County seat and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population center in Whitman County.

Following this population reasoning, the small towns and rural areas of Whitman County would be better served by a policy authorizing the acquisition and development of single-tenant properties, incubator-type properties or micro-enterprise partnerships, more appropriate in scale to smaller towns.

The feasibility study done for the Colfax Airport Project indicated that the small towns and communities of Whitman County could put themselves in a more favorable situation by implementing the following:

- Establish an interested, influential group within the community dedicated to the promotion of economic growth.
- Have all zoning and planning of potential industrial sites in place and basically ready for occupation.
- Evaluate water, sewer and other support infrastructure and scale business types sought accordingly or plan for upgrades.
- Know the type and extent of growth its citizens prefer, evaluate the community's strengths and weaknesses in attracting businesses, determine what incentives it can offer, and then decide whether an active or a passive approach to business recruitment will be taken.

The Port of Whitman County continues to increase its involvement in economic development activities throughout the county and in statewide rural development issues.



# TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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RCWs 53.08.005, 53.08.370 and 53.08.380 allow Ports and PUDs to build telecommunication infrastructure and offer it wholesale to service providers. Under these provisions, the Port has worked to develop a telecommunications plan and infrastructure to facilitate enhanced telecommunications services countywide. The Port works with Whitman County's independent telephone companies and ISPs, when invited and where feasible, to create infrastructure that helps local providers enhance telecommunications services offered to rural communities.



Since May of 2000, the Port has partnered with multiple telecommunications carriers that are providing at least two broadband choices to citizens countywide. The Port communicated its willingness to partner with and provide infrastructure for all local telecommunications providers. The Port has run fiber at the Port of Wilma and the Pullman Industrial Park, facilitating competitive pricing and services to tenants.

In 2008, the State's Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) awarded the Port twenty-five thousand dollars to study the feasibility of constructing a high speed telecommunications line between Pullman and Spokane, along the former Palouse River Coulee City rail line on the east side of the county.

In 2010, the Port of Whitman, a sub-applicant on a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant was informed by the lead applicant, Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet) that an \$84M award was approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The Port's portion of this BTOP award, approximately \$9.8M was to expand middle-mile fiber optic infrastructure to the unserved and underserved rural citizens in the areas of Whitman County. Through this program, the Port constructed over 135 miles of middle mile network connecting from a major telecom handoff site for carriers in Spokane, WA to Clarkston, WA. The Port's BTOP funding provided critical broadband investments for the underserved rural communities of Whitman County, enhancing library, medical and government services as well as providing an invaluable business recruitment, expansion and retention tool for future economic development growth.

Since the completion of this middle mile network infrastructure, in 2013, fourteen different telecomm providers lease the Port's dark fiber. The network serves over fifteen different cell towers in Spokane and Whitman counties, four industrial parks, two state universities, E911 call centers, hospitals, and many local government and private businesses.

The Port's network has produced significant returns from the original investments. However, the middle-mile network funded through BTOP funding did not resolve a significant last-mile access issue for the residents of our rural communities (populations <5,000). In 2014, the Port completed an in-depth analysis of the investment necessary to improve the local access networks in four of the most unserved communities located along the middle mile fiber route of the BTOP Round 1 project in Whitman County.

The Port believes that if funding were made available to build the physical infrastructure, strategic partnerships with one or more broadband providers would deliver all end user retail services. The Port proposes to leverage its existing middle-mile fiber network funded through BTOP and build extensions throughout each community to connect to individual premises, developing a last-mile network. The Port will partner with one or more broadband providers to deliver all retail services over the physical network. Doing so will eliminate broadband providers' requirement for investment in the last-mile infrastructure and incentivize them through a low incremental cost business model whereby they have immediate access to a pool of customers once connected to the Port's network.

The Port will continue to look for creative ways to develop infrastructure, form partnerships and link networks in order to provide affordable, state-of-the-art telecommunications opportunities through the Whitman County telephone providers and their respective small service bases.

## RECREATION

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The Port District is authorized by State statute to develop and maintain water-related public parks and recreational facilities. The Port is not allowed to be involved in off-water recreational endeavors.

In the 1970s the Port Commission leased 40 acres from the Corps of Engineers and, along with the Corps, developed Boyer Park & Marina located on the Snake River in the Almota area. An additional 20 acres was leased from the Corps in 1997 for the Snake River Trail and possible location for a new park sewage treatment site. This site is now known as Boyer Park & Marina. The site includes parts of Government Lots Nos. 7, 8, & 9 lying south of Whitman County Highway #8350 and north of the Snake River in Section 19 in Township 14 North of Range 43 East of the Willamette Meridian.



Above: Boyer Park & Marina

The Boyer Park Marina consists of eight docks. Five of the docks are piers that have no fingers to make traditional slips. Three of the docks have fingers with two boat ties per slip. These docks accommodate smaller boats up to twenty-two foot. To arrive at the quantity of boats the marina can moor an average of the lengths of boats was taken into consideration. The quantity of boats could go up or down depending on the length of boats that moor in the future on the piers. With current moorage data the average amount of boats the marina could moor is 125 boats. There is a swimming area with sandy beach, 41 overnight campsites with full and partial hookups, 21 overflow campsites with full hookups, 4 cabins, a convenience store/grill, tent sites, a 4-room motel, cruise boat dock, picnic areas, picnic gazeboes, a campfire circle, a 3.5 mile pedestrian/bike trail, restrooms with dressing areas and showers, laundry facilities and lots of parking.

A concessionaire, selected by the Port, operates the restaurant and manages the marina and camping area. The concessionaire maintains the park in partnership with the Port.

In 1995, two grants were written and awarded to the Port for the enhancement of Boyer Park and Marina. The first, an IAC (Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation) grant, provided for the main boat launch parking expansion, extensions

for the boat launch, path paving within the park and on the jetty, a large picnic shelter at the restaurant building, 4 motel rooms, 2 new indoor restrooms, a new finger dock in the marina and a new cruise boat dock off the jetty. This work was started in 1996 and completed in 1998. The second grant, an ALEA (Aquatic Land Enhancement Account) grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation was also written in 1995. This grant funded the construction of the Snake River Trail, a 3.5-mile pedestrian/bike trail featuring interpretive signs, benches and picnic shelters, completed in 1998.

In 2001, new aluminum dock ramps were installed. In 2003, the restaurant and store underwent remodeling and the picnic shelter was enclosed. In 2004, the overflow camping area was completed adding 21 full hookup campsites.

In 2007, repairs were made to update the gasoline pump system. Renovations were completed to the hotel, including the expansion and construction of a deck for a family suite.

In 2009, the planning, preliminary engineering and a SEPA environmental checklist were initiated to extend the existing RV Park (Phase II) at Boyer Park to the west to accommodate 13 more RV spaces to meet the current and future demands for recreational facilities. In addition, water & sewer pipes (including an expansion of an existing septic drain field) will be extended to each RV space, with electrical cable.

In 2013, a cultural resources study was completed for the main campground and RV expansion areas. This study will streamline future construction projects in the park.

In 2014, a new concessionaire took over Boyer Park. During the transition period, the Port undertook a complete renovation of the apartment space, as well as updating the carpeting in all of the motel rooms and updates to the heating and cooling systems in the building. New equipment was purchased for the restaurant and flooring throughout the kitchen, restaurant, and store space.

In 2015, the public restrooms in the park were updated with sensor sinks and toilets. Electrical repairs were made to the docks, as well as the installation of new curbing and bumpers. The Port also went out to bid on an RV expansion project which will result in 13 new full hook-up RV sites, 4 cabins, a new drain field, sprinkler system, and a new playground structure in 2016.

The Port has also started the planning process for the long-term vision of its marina.

Under RCW 53.08.260, the Port has the power to develop and maintain public parks and recreational facilities as to more fully utilize boat landings harbors, wharves and other facilities in the district. The Port Commission feels that Boyer Park & Marina is a facility that all taxpayers in Whitman County can utilize and enjoy. Unlike many of the Port's other industrial based facilities, Boyer Park & Marina is readily available to

everyone in Whitman County. Hundreds of people utilize the park each day during the peak summer season and there is activity at the park year round. Boyer Park & Marina would be enhanced by the completion of the proposed Wawawai to Lower Granite Dam road project. The proposed road would more easily serve Whitman County citizenry and provide a loop system for ingress and egress to the park during peak times.

## AUTHORIZED DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

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In 2003, the Port Commission took over the contract for the Authorized Development Organization (ADO) from the County. By 2005, the County Commissioners received pressure from local communities to direct the ADO position toward avenues that were not compatible with the Port's economic vision. The County chose to pursue those interests and the Port resigned its ADO contract with the County.

In 2007, the County Commissioners voted unanimously for the Port to again administer the County's economic development efforts for the subsequent two years. As the ADO, the Port partnered with Washington State University to host the first annual Open Business Plan Competition. In the first year, thirty thousand dollars in cash prizes were awarded to competing area entrepreneurs with the aim of generating interest and synergy to create new businesses in the region.

In 2009, the County Commissioners renewed the contract for the ADO position with the Port for another two-year term but turned the contract over to SEWEDA (South Eastern Washington Economic Development Association) in 2010. The Port partners with and supports SEWEDA on broad regional economic development efforts.

## PALOUSE RIVER COULEE CITY RAIL AUTHORITY

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Acknowledging the importance of the rail line to our state's economy, in 2007, the State of Washington purchased three short-line railroad tracks, known as the Palouse River Coulee City Railroad (PCC). The Palouse River and Coulee City Rail System (PCC) consists of the CW, P&L, and PV Hooper rail lines, a short-line system encompassing approximately 300 miles of track operating within Grant County, Lincoln County, Spokane County, and Whitman County, Washington. The PV Hooper branch runs from Thornton to Winona and from Hooper through Winona to Colfax, Washington. The CW branch runs from Coulee City to Cheney, Washington. The P&L branch runs from Marshall through Pullman, Washington, to the Idaho border near Moscow, Idaho, and from Palouse, Washington directly east to Princeton, Idaho, where it meets a line owned by Watco Companies Incorporated.

The PCC rail line is the state's longest short-line freight rail system. The state recognized that closure of the lines would mean that traffic would be diverted to surface streets, and shippers would have no way to move grain during periods when roadway load restrictions and closures are in effect. In addition, without the short-line rail system, there would be increased congestion and maintenance costs on roadways. Due to the maintenance neglect of the short-line system, the Washington State Legislature, under Chapter 518, Section 713, made \$8.6 million available for grant to any intergovernmental entity or local rail district provided the funds were used only to refurbish the recently purchased Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC) rail line system.

In response to this legislation, Grant County, Lincoln County, Spokane County and the Port of Whitman County signed an interlocal agreement in March of 2008 to form the PCC Rail Authority. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) identified and prioritized refurbishment for the PCC rail line and the \$8.6 million of state allocated money.



In 2009, the PCC Rail Authority submitted a federal application for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant for funds to rehabilitate the deteriorating infrastructure of the short-line to ensure long-term viability. In addition, the Port applied through Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers for a 2010 appropriation of \$1 million to extend the Oakesdale track for a Co-Ag unit train loader facility.

In 2015, the Washington State legislature approved a transportation package that award for 8 bienniums, \$36 million for rail improvements on the PCC system. The State rail office and the PCC Rail Authority board will collaborate to prioritize maintenance. The PCC Rail Authority continues to seek grant funding and legislative

support to provide upgrades to the PCC Railroad system that have been identified and prioritized by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and deemed critical to the system's long term functionality.



# IMPLEMENTATION - PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS OF THE PORT OF WHITMAN COUNTY

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## WILMA SITE

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1. Partner with the County to construct a turnout at the main entrance of Wilma drive.
2. Possible re-zone of upland land trade acreage.
3. Develop quarry site of upland land trade acreage.
4. Obtain more land from the Corps west of Wilma on the river.
5. Develop proactive plan for watershed improvement and preservation in conjunction with industrial development.
6. Maintain all existing port facilities and improvements in good order and repair, including replacements.
7. Improve and repair the public port site dock and booms.
8. Continue to aggressively market to and potentially develop or improve vacant land for potential tenants.

## ALMOTA SITE

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1. Maintain all existing port facilities and improvements in good order and repair, including replacements.
2. Develop proactive plan for watershed improvement and preservation in conjunction with industrial development.
3. Pave gravel roads.

## CENTRAL FERRY SITE

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1. Acquire additional land near or adjoining present site as the need arises.
2. Continue to level, prepare, and improve undeveloped sites as needed.
3. Develop proactive plan for watershed improvement and preservation in conjunction with industrial development
4. Maintain all existing port facilities and improvements in good order and repair, including replacements.
5. Enhance and maintain the existing wells.

## PULLMAN INDUSTRIAL PARK - EAST

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1. Construct rental buildings and associated infrastructure when feasible and needed.
2. Within reason, do whatever engineering is necessary to encourage the occupation of the sites.
3. Continue to work with local developers that have an interest in constructing rental buildings in the Park.
4. Maintain all existing Port facilities and improvements in good order and repair, including replacements.

## PULLMAN INDUSTRIAL PARK - WEST

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1. Develop the streets and utilities within the park.
2. Develop and install signage.
3. Construct rental buildings and associated infrastructure when feasible and needed.
4. Within reason, do whatever engineering is necessary to encourage the occupation of the sites.
5. Continue to work with local developers that have an interest in constructing rental buildings in the Park.
6. Maintain all existing Port facilities and improvements in good order and repair, including replacements.

## OTHER OFF-WATER INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

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1. Undertake selection, acquisition and development of a feasible site or sites within Whitman County for industrial development by the Port and/or for cooperative development with adjacent communities and/or firms interested in the area.
2. If necessary, construct railroad spurs to provide rail access to Port property.
3. Continue with financial support in the operation and maintenance of the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport.
4. Participate with Whitman County in potential joint partnerships to form rural utility districts in underserved portions of the county.
5. Partner with and support the South East Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA) on broad regional economic development efforts and in its role as ADO.
6. Financially participate in the acquisition, development and operation of regional railroads, which preserve a core rail system as deemed appropriate by the Port Commission.
7. Facilitate advanced telecommunication infrastructure and services across the District.

8. Support the funding of the Northwest Economic Alliance (NWEA) and participate on the board and in business recruiting strategies developed by the staff.
9. Maintain all Port improvements in good order and repair, including any replacements thereof.
10. Research and acquire new land in and around Pullman.
11. Evaluate sites for other industrial parks near Pullman.
12. Pursue the acquisition of water rights in association with site specific port development.

## BOYER PARK & MARINA

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1. Maintain all existing park improvements and Port park equipment in good order and repair including replacements.
2. Add income producing infrastructure when feasible.
3. Seek opportunities to improve the marina facilities.
4. Acquire additional land near or adjoining present site as the need arises.

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME

The capital development component of the Port's Comprehensive Plan is known in Washington State Port Law as a "comprehensive scheme of harbor improvement." This element of the plan describes in general terms what major improvements to Port properties are planned and what new acquisitions are planned. A port may not make a major improvement or acquisition unless it is addressed in the "comprehensive scheme." (RCW 53.20.010)

Site	Improvement	Estimated Costs	Estimated Completion
Wilma	Develop subdivision II rail spur	\$600K	2017
	Purchase CHS subdivision 2 rail spur	\$700K	As needed
	Maintain existing rail lead	\$310-\$325K	As needed
Boyer	RV area expansion	\$700K	2016
	Re-build sprinklers in main RV park	\$300K	2018
	Install cabins	\$100K	2016
	Shower improvements	\$250K	As needed
	Replace marina docks	\$2 mil	As needed
	Upgrade electrical in main RV park to 100 amp service	\$200K	2018
	Repave main RV park	\$200K	2018
	Turbine water system pump	\$50K	As needed
Almota	Provide rail facilities	\$100-\$200K	As needed
	Maintain river bank	\$25-\$50K	As needed
	Improve roadways	\$25-\$50K	As needed
Central Ferry	Extend and maintain rail spurs	\$100-\$200K	As needed
	Construct new dolphins	\$150-\$500K	As needed
	Utilize and protect water rights	Unknown	As needed
Port of Whitman	Lease property and recruit new businesses		Ongoing
Business Air Center	General airport infrastructure improvements	\$100-\$300K	As needed
	Connect to Colfax City water infrastructure	Unknown	As needed
	Build/lease rental building	\$200-\$400K	As needed
	Continue to monitor water right application	Unknown	As needed
Pullman Industrial Park - East	Sell lots/buildings		As needed
	Acquire additional land near Pullman	\$.5-2 mil	As needed

Pullman Industrial Park - West	Develop streets and utilities, and coordinate the creation of utility encashment zone with City of Pullman	\$2.2 mil	As needed
Telecomm Infrastructure	Build last mile FTTH system in communities	\$8 mil	As needed
	Construct other fiber optic runs	\$2 mil	As needed
Colfax Office	Wall repairs	\$10K	As needed
	Paint and seal building	\$10K	As needed
	Upgrade computer and IT systems	\$15K	As needed
Rural Communities	Acquire or lease new/existing properties and facilities throughout the district for economic development purposes or micro-enterprise	\$200-\$800K each	As needed
Railroads	Acquire right of ways	Unknown	As needed

## APPENDICES

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- A) Port District Powers
- B) List of Acronyms and Abbreviations
- C) Other Resources
- D) Resolution

## APPENDIX A – PUBLIC PORT DISTRICT POWERS

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### PUBLIC PORT DISTRICT POWERS

1. Provide facilities for all forms of transfer (air, land and marina) such as terminal facilities, airports, multi-use buildings, warehouses, elevators, canals, locks, tidal basins, rail and motor vehicle freight and passenger handling facilities and improvements needed for industrial and manufacturing activities with the district. (RCW 53.08.20 and others)
2. Construct, purchase or maintain facilities and equipment needed for the freezing or processing of goods and agricultural products, etc. (RCW 53.08.20)
3. Improve district lands by dredging, filling, bulk heading, providing waterways, or developing such lands for sale or lease for industrial or commercial development purposes. (RCW 53.08.060)
4. Install industrial waste disposal, sewer, water and other utilities when not adequately provided by other governmental entities. (RCW 53.08.040)
5. Improve any waterway, create new waterways, widen, deepen, or otherwise improve watercourses, bays, lakes or streams. (RCW 53.08.060)
6. Install pollution abatement facilities for new or existing business firms and industries under certain conditions. (RCW 53.08.041)
7. Develop and maintain public parks and recreational facilities as to more fully utilize boat landings, harbors, wharves and other facilities of the district. (RCW 53.08.260)
8. Establish, operate, and maintain foreign trade zones with permission of the federal government construct and maintain warehouses and other facilities with the zone. (RCW 53.08.030)
9. Fix, without right of appeal, the rates of wharfage, dockage, warehousing, and port and terminal charges upon all improvements owned and operated by the district. (RCW 53.08.070)
10. Levy property taxes, subject to constitutional limitation and, buy, sell, or build properties to finance district operation. (RCW 53.36.020)

11. Undertake and adopt comprehensive development plans for the district, including studies and surveys to assure the proper utilization of transfer facilities, land or other properties or utilities. (RCW 53.08.160)
12. Exercise the right of eminent domain. (RCW 53.25.190)
13. Make cooperative agreements with other ports, local, or state governmental bodies, thereby providing better services at lower costs. (RCW 29.34.010)
14. Expend general funds for promotional hosting to attract industry or trade to use district facilities. (RCW 53.36.130)
15. Establish local improvement districts within the district. (RCW 53.08.050)
16. Tourism promotion authorized. (RCW 53.08.255)
17. Acquire, construct, lease and operate rail services, equipment and facilities inside or outside the district. (RCW 53.08.290)
18. Establish trade centers. (RCW 53.29.020)
19. Create industrial development districts within a port district. (RCW 53.25.040)
20. Build telecommunications infrastructure and provide wholesale telecommunications services. (RCWs 53.08.005, 53.08.370 and 53.08.380)



## APPENDIX B - LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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ADO	Authorized Development Organization
ALEA	Aquatic Land Enhancement Account
BTOP	Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
CERB	Community Economic Revitalization Board
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FBO	Fixed-Based Operator
FRAP	Freight Rail Assistance Program
FTTH	Fiber to the Home
IAC	Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation
LEED	Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design
PCC	Palouse River Coulee City Rail Line
PIP	Pullman Industrial Park
PNWA	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
POWBAC	Port of Whitman Business Air Center
PRTPO	Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization
PUD	Public Utilities District
R & D	Research and Development
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SEL	Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories
SEWEDA	South East Washington Economic Development Association

WPPA Washington Public Ports Association

WSU Washington State University

## APPENDIX C - OTHER RESOURCES

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For additional information on port districts, Washington Ports and the Port of Whitman County, consult the internet sites listed below.

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association	<a href="http://www.pnwa.net">http://www.pnwa.net</a>
Palouse River Coulee City Rail Authority	<a href="http://www.pccrail.org">http://www.pccrail.org</a>
Port of Whitman County	<a href="http://www.portwhitman.com">http://www.portwhitman.com</a>
South East Washington Economic Development Association	<a href="http://www.seweda.org">http://www.seweda.org</a>
Washington Public Ports Association	<a href="http://www.washingtonports.org">http://www.washingtonports.org</a>
Washington State Department of Commerce	<a href="http://www.commerce.wa.gov">http://www.commerce.wa.gov</a>

## APPENDIX D - RESOLUTION

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### RESOLUTION NO. 16-03

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PORT OF WHITMAN COUNTY ADOPTING A NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE PORT THAT WILL BE UTILIZED AS A GUIDE FOR FUTURE PORT DIRECTION FOR THE NEXT 10-20 YEARS.**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with RCW 53.20, the Port of Whitman County adopted its original Comprehensive Plan for port improvements in 1961 which was subsequently updated in 1969, 1980, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and now in 2015 with amendments being approved thereto between said dates from time to time; and

**WHEREAS**, the Port Commission has deemed it necessary to update and revise the Comprehensive Plan because it has been five years since the last major revision; and

**WHEREAS**, at the request of the Commission a new Comprehensive Plan has been prepared by Port staff; and

**WHEREAS**, said revised Comprehensive Plan has been presented to and discussed with the Port Commission and suggested changes, revisions have been made; and

**WHEREAS**, at 11:00 AM on February 4, 2016, a public hearing was duly conducted by the Port Commission concerning the revised plan with all desired alterations and corrections; and there being no objections and it appearing that as now presented it is in the best interest of all concerned that it be adopted as the full and complete Comprehensive Plan of the Port of Whitman County superseding all other plans and amendments.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that said plan as attached hereto is hereby adopted as the Comprehensive Plan of the Port of Whitman County, Washington, pursuant to RCW 53.20, and it shall supersede all prior plans and amendments whatsoever.

DATED this 18<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016.

**PORT OF WHITMAN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan Boone, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John E. Love, Vice President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Kammerzell, Secretary