



# Container Port Element

## Table of Contents

|   |                      |      |
|---|----------------------|------|
| A | Land Use             | 12.3 |
| B | Transportation       | 12.4 |
| C | Economic Development | 12.4 |
| D | Environment          | 12.5 |

container port element







# Container Port Element

## discussion

The Port of Seattle is one of the largest cargo centers in the United States, serving as the entry and exit point for marine cargo to and from the Pacific Rim and Alaska. The Port of Seattle container operations are unique among West Coast ports because they are adjacent to the urban core, abutting the busy downtown, a tourist-friendly waterfront and two sports stadiums that attract millions of visitors each year.

The Port of Seattle’s marine cargo terminal plays a vital role in the Seattle economy. The Port of Seattle includes approximately 1,400 acres of waterfront land and nearby properties. Nearly 800 acres of that land are dedicated to container terminal operations and cargo handling. Most of the freight shipped through the Port travels in intermodal containers that are transferred to or from railcars or trucks on the dock. Some of the containers are shuttled by truck between BNSF and UP railroad yards. Marine cargo accounts for thousands of jobs, millions of dollars of state and local taxes and billions of dollars in business and personal income for Seattle and the region.

As vital as the marine cargo economic sector is, it is also vulnerable to changes in nearby land uses, traffic infrastructure and congestion, and larger economic conditions. In 2007, the City strengthened protection for industrial uses in industrial zones by limiting the maximum size of office and retail uses. This Element advances the same policy intention while responding to the state mandate.

The state legislation that requires the inclusion of this Container Port Element in this Plan also identifies approaches that the City may consider using in the future. These include creating a “port overlay” district to specifically protect container port uses; industrial land banking; applying land use buffers or transition zones between incompatible land uses; limiting the location, size, or both, of non-industrial uses in the core area and surrounding areas; policies to encourage the retention of valuable warehouse and storage facilities; and joint transportation funding agreements. The core area is defined as coterminus with the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial

Center. The state law also adds key freight transportation corridors that serve marine port facilities to the state’s list of transportation facilities of statewide significance.

## A Land Use

### policies

- CP1** Help preserve cargo container activities by retaining industrial designations on land that supports marine and rail- related industries including industrial land adjacent to rail or water-dependent transportation facilities.
- CP2** Continue to monitor the land area needs, including for expansion, of cargo container-related activities and take action to prevent the loss of needed land that can serve these activities.
- CP3** Discourage non-industrial land uses, such as retail and residential, in industrially-zoned areas to minimize conflicts between uses and to prevent conversion of industrial land in the vicinity of cargo container terminals or their support facilities.
- CP4** Consider how zoning designations may affect the definition of highest and best use, with the goal of maintaining the jobs and revenue that cargo container activities generate and to protect scarce industrial land supply for cargo container industries, such as marine and rail-related industries.
- CP5** Consider the value of transition areas at the edges of general industrial zones which allow a wider range of uses while not creating conflicts with preferred cargo container activities and uses. In this context, zoning provisions such as locational criteria and development standards are among the tools for defining such edge areas.

container port element

A

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**B** Transportation

## policies

**CP6** Monitor, maintain and improve key freight corridors, networks and intermodal connections that provide access to cargo container facilities and the industrial areas around them to address bottlenecks and other access constraints. Provide safe, reliable, efficient and direct access between Port marine facilities and the state highway or interstate system, and between Port terminals and railroad intermodal facilities, recognizing that Port operations must address other transportation needs, such as pedestrian safety.

**CP7** Make operational, design, access and capital investments to accommodate trucks and maintain successful railroad operations and preserve mobility of goods and services. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, improvement of pavement conditions, commute trip reduction strategies, including through transportation management associations, roadway re-channelization to minimize modal conflicts, use of intelligent transportation systems, construction of critical facility links, and grade separation of modes, especially at heavily used railroad crossings.

**CP8** Maintain the City's classification of "Major Truck Streets." Because freight is important to the basic economy of the City and has unique right-of-way needs to support that role, freight will be the major priority on streets classified as Major Truck Streets. Street improvements that are consistent with freight mobility but also support other modes may be considered in these streets.

**CP9** Identify emerging cargo container freight transportation issues and work with affected stakeholder groups, including the

Seattle Freight Advisory Board. Provide regular opportunities for communication between the City, the freight community, other affected communities, and other agencies and stakeholders.

**CP10** Continue joint City and Port efforts to implement relevant Port recommendations such as recommendations contained in the Container Terminal Access Study.

**CP11** Given the importance of cargo container terminal operations to the state and regional economies, develop partnerships within the City, the Port, the region and the State to advocate for project prioritization and timely funding to improve and maintain freight infrastructure, and explore funding partnerships.

**CP12** Maintain consistency between local, regional and State freight-related policies.

**C** Economic Development

**CP13** Encourage the siting of new businesses that support the goals for cargo container activities in designated Manufacturing / Industrial Centers.

**CP14** Work cooperatively with other agencies to address the effects of major land use and transportation projects to avoid or mitigate construction and operational effects on the cargo container industry sector.

**CP15** Facilitate the creation of coalitions of industrial businesses, vocational training and other educational institutions and public agencies to help develop training programs to move trained workers into cargo container related jobs.



**D** Environment

policies

- CP16** Identify opportunities to achieve economic, community, and environmental benefits from the development and operations of cargo container related activities.
- CP17** Form partnerships with non-profit, community-based, private and public stakeholders to establish environmental improvement goals, including carbon emission reductions, storm water management, redevelopment and clean-up of existing marine industrial properties, sustainable design, and fish and wildlife habitat improvements. Develop strategies to achieve these goals that include developing funding mechanisms and legislative support.
- CP18** Work with non-profit, community-based, private and public stakeholders to formulate plans for public open space, shoreline access, and fish and wildlife habitat improvements that incorporate community needs and area-wide habitat priorities with the need to maintain sufficient existing marine industrial lands for present and anticipated cargo container needs.

container port element