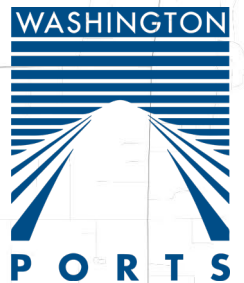




Public Ports in Washington

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Island County - Council of Governments

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Overview

Port Districts – Introduction and History

Port Powers – Overview

Port Funding Sources

What ports do:

- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Industrial Development and Environmental Remediation

Case Studies!



An aerial photograph of a large port yard, densely packed with thousands of intermodal containers in various colors including blue, red, green, and white. The containers are organized into neat rows and columns, separated by narrow aisles. In the background, some port infrastructure like cranes and buildings are visible.

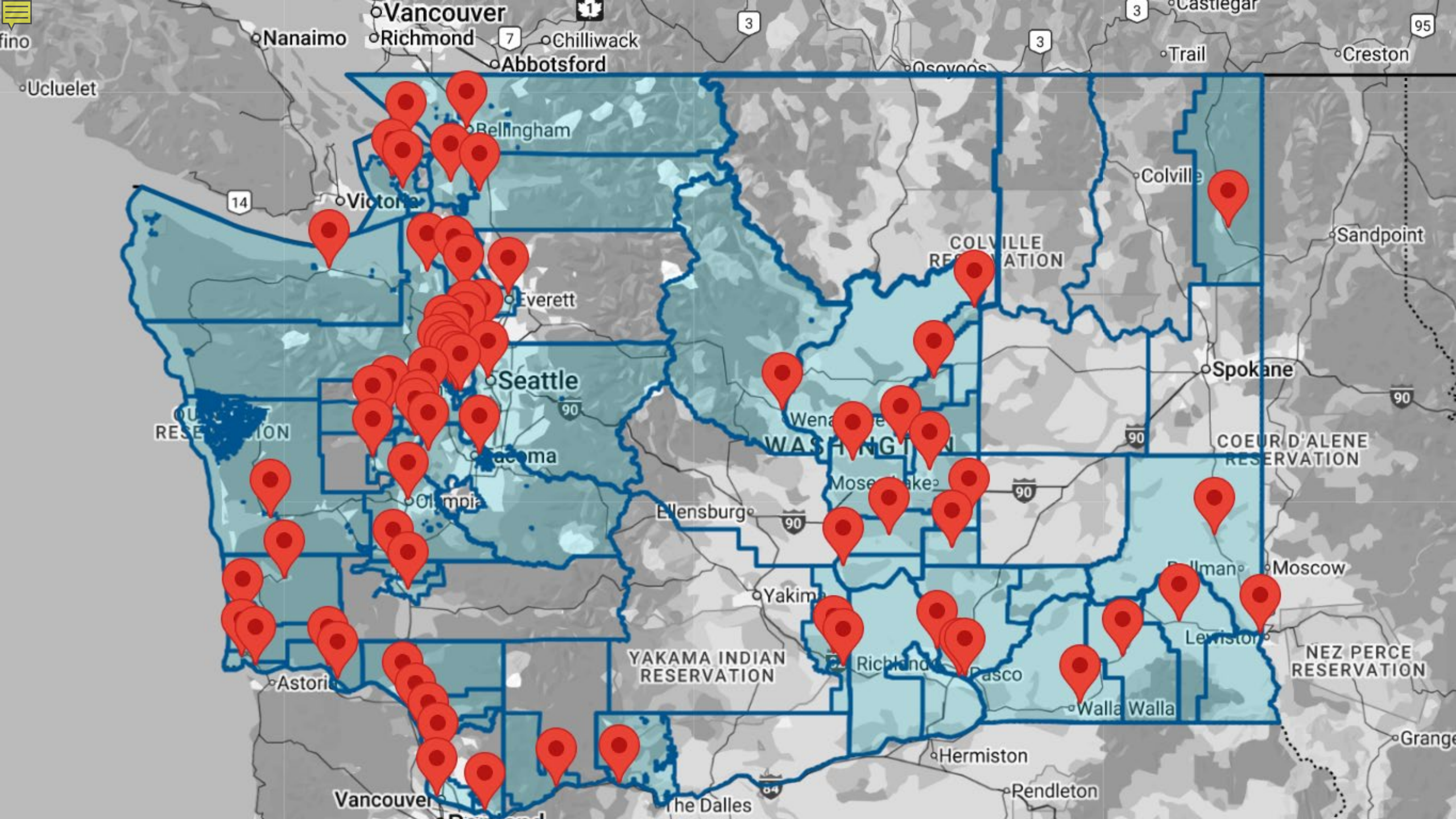
Port Districts in Washington State

There are 75 port districts in Washington State

Ports are special purpose districts and municipal corporations

Ports were created to retain public ownership of waterfront and critical infrastructure

Ports facilitate trade, but the main purpose is to promote economic development



1911 Seattle & Grays Harbor

1912 Vancouver

1913 Bremerton

1915 Kennewick

1917 Brownsville

1918 Tacoma & Everett

1919 Kingston

1935 Camas-Washougal

1940 Pasco & Ridgefield

1941 Klickitat

1948 Shelton

1949 Edmonds

1960 Grand Coulee & Coulee City

1961 Woodland, South Whidbey
& Kahlotus

1964 Sunnyside, Skamania
& Skagit County

1965 Moses Lake & Ephrata

1966 Othello, Wahkiakum County #2 & Warden

1967 Coupeville

1959 Orcas

1958 Benton,
Clarkston, Columbia,
Garfield, Wahkiakum #1,
Chelan County, Douglas, Mattawa,
Royal Slope, Quincy & Whitman

1954 Chinook

1952 Walla Walla

1951 Poulsbo & Hoodspport

1950 Friday Harbor

1978 Pend Oreille

1990 Grapeview

1988 Grandview

1986 Centralia,
Chehalis & Lopez

1921 Allyn, Bellingham & Longview

1920 Kalama & Silverdale

1923 Port Angeles, Manchester & Waterman

1922 Olympia & Illahee

1924 Port Townsend

1925 Keyport, Tahuya

1926 Anacortes & Mabana

1927 Dewatto

1928 Ilwaco, Peninsula
& Willapa Harbor

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1920 Kalama & Silverdale



The **Port of Bellingham** first entered the ferry business in 1923 when it built a landing for the Canadian Pacific Railway's ferry, *Motor Princess*. The auto-ferry traveled between Sidney, B.C. and Bellingham in roughly three hours, each way. Today the port's Fairhaven Terminal accomodates passengers using the Alaska Ferry System and a privately-operated ferry operating between Bellingham and Victoria, B.C.

Washington Public Port District Formation

1911 - 1990



Published by the Washington
Public Ports Association, 1997.

The **Port of Grays Harbor**, founded in 1911, is known for its log and lumber shipments. Here, the "billionth foot" is loaded aboard a Japanese ship in the 1920s.



Intro to WA Ports and WPPA

1911 – Port District Act enacted by WA Legislature

- Animating spirit: Public benefit from public resources
- Initial port district power: Development of transportation facilities
- Economic development *officially* added in 1985



WPPA Mission :

“Strengthen the Washington Port industry through Collaboration, Advocacy, Research, and Education.”

Engagement with our partners

Legislative: What can we advocate for together?

Educational: What can we learn from each other?

And more: What more can we do to strengthen the WA trade economy?



More Port History

1911- Washington State Legislature passes the Port District Act, authorizing the creation of port districts

INITIAL POWERS:

- “Port districts for the acquirement, construction, maintenance, operation, development, and regulation of a system of harbor improvements and rail and water transfer facilities...”
- Acquisition of property; construct/condemn/maintain “sea walls, jetties, piers, wharves...other harbor improvements.”
- Improvements for “industrial and commercial purposes”
- Authorized to collect taxes, issue bonds

1911-1912 - Ports of Seattle, Grays Harbor, and Vancouver

1913-1941 – More big ports (Tacoma and Everett) and the Mosquito Fleet Ports emerge (i.e. Bremerton, Brownsville, Kingston); Kalama 1920; Longview 1921; Tri-Cities Ports (Kennewick, 1915; Pasco, 1940)



Port funding sources

Revenues!

- Lease revenue is a major driver of port revenues around the state
- Buying and selling real estate is another revenue input

Bonds!

- General obligation bonds (backed by tax levy);
- Revenue bonds (backed by revenue from a specific source)

Taxes

- Founding statute: established a general port levy, funded by property taxes, now at 45 cents/\$1,000 assessed valuation
- Industrial development district (IDD) tax levy (45 cents/\$1,000 assessed valuation - two, 6-year periods of taxation, spent over 20 years)
- Other: dredging levy, local improvement districts

Grants and loans

- Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)
- Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
- Local and community projects, state capital budget



Formation 101

Last port formed: Port of Grandview, 1988

Recent attempts:

- Yakima County, defeated in 2002 (2:1 margin) and 1988
- Kittitas County and Spokane County have looked into it
- My most recent conversation?: Okanagan County!

General process:

- Must have an assessed valuation of at least \$150 million.
- Petition from at least 10 percent of proposed district voters
- Petition describes boundaries, selects either three or five commissioners, describes districts if they are chosen, and chooses a name.
- County holds a hearing after notice; County submits the ballot proposition to the voters at the next election.
- The initial port commissioners may be selected at the same election, or at the next election after the port is formed.



Port Powers-A Continuous Evolution

Additional powers have been granted by Legislature to fill various needs

1955 - Industrial Development Districts-transforming underutilized sites for maximum public benefit

1955 - Leasing and Selling Property-encourage private development by leveraging public resources

1959 - Toll Bridges and Toll Tunnels-Construct, operate, purchase, lease, improve contract for operation

1965 - Park and Recreation Facilities- to improve utilization of port facilities

1975- Pollution Control Facilities- Provide services to businesses

1985 - Economic Development Programs- broad authority to encourage growth and build infrastructure- very important!!!





WA Ports as Economic Engines

Ports drive local economic development strategy through execution of their comprehensive plans

Port Economic Development strategies are tied directly with the Department of Commerce and other local and regional leaders. Partnerships are critical to attracting new business and growing existing priorities, including manufacturing.

Ports respond to local needs with expanded authority

- ✓ Tourism Promotion added in 2009
- ✓ Wholesale Broadband Authority added in 2018
- ✓ Workforce Development added in 2019



Examples of Partnerships at Work

Seven ports serve as their communities “Associate Development Organizations”

-ADO's are a frontline resource helping provide resources to small businesses within their communities

The Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) is a critical resource for ports by providing funding for planning grants and new project development and construction costs.



WA Ports and Transportation

Transportation infrastructure is critical to ports achieving our economic development mission.

The system must be a competitive advantage for ports: it must be safe, efficient and well-maintained.

Ports fund important projects connecting agriculture and manufacturing to global consumers

Terminal 5 - Port of Seattle/Northwest Seaport Alliance, \$500m investment in trade

Inland seaports - Ports of Benton and Walla Walla looking at developing transload hubs

Columbia River Ports - Maintaining river depths to maximize exports

Expanding Rail Access to Marine Terminals - Ports of Everett, Longview and Bellingham



Robust Freight Investment is a State Competitiveness Priority

The Puget Sound Gateway and the Interstate Bridge Replacement have statewide impact, benefitting multiple ports

Insufficient investment in maintenance and preservation will result in decreased safety

Fund the system. Ports are as likely to be located on a city street or county road as a state highway



WA Ports and Aviation

Ports operate 37 airports statewide, including 7 of the state's 12 commercial service airports.

All airports, including General Aviation airports, provide important services to their communities, including: flight and safety training, emergency air medical services, tactical wildland firefighting support and other commercial support.

The good news: larger airport receive up to 90% of infrastructure costs through federal airport improvement program funding (Smaller airports often receive *no* federal funding - rely on help from state programs administered by WSDOT)





WA Ports and Environmental Cleanup

Ports are uniquely situated to take on complex, long-term cleanup projects.

They can take underused or areas of limited public access back to productive use or public access in local communities or on waterfronts.

EX: The Portal at Port of Bellingham

Ports are able to partner with local communities and state or federal agencies to secure funding and navigate the cleanup process.



WAHKIAKUM PORT DISTRICT #1

Formed in 1958 (one of 12 formed that year) – Wahkiakum Port #2 was formed in 1966

Elochoman Slough Marina

- Process began in 1966, area identified for future basin with commercial moorage
- 1972, marina open for business
- Now?: Moorage for up to 300 boats

More infrastructure:

- 1987: Built storage units
- 1999: Built BBQ area and restrooms
- 2004: Built RV Park
- 2006: Began building cabins to accompany campsites
- 2023: New dock facilities and upgraded fuel tank

More exciting things in Cathlamet:

- River Mile 38 Brewing, opened in 2024
- Elochoman Marina Street Market



CHELAN DOUGLAS REGIONAL PORT AUTHORITY

Comprised of two ports! – Functional consolidation in 2019

- Six commissioners, two countywide port districts: Port of Chelan and Port of Douglas County

- Shared staff, collaborative operations

Operate across *many* port business lines:

- Aviation (Pangborn Memorial Airport)
- Industrial development
- Innovative business recruitment – data centers developing in Chelan and Douglas Counties

Focus on improving the community – Pybus Market, Trades District, Craft District, Regional Sports Complex





PORT OF COLUMBIA

Formed in 1958, along with nine other Central and Eastern WA ports
– spurred by prospect of development along Snake River

Lyons Ferry Marina – established following Little Goose Dam completion, at a site leased from US Army Corps

Industrial park facilities, tenants include:

- Red Band Cellars, winemaker
- USDA regional office
- Local trucking and logistics company

Blue Mountain Station Food Park – co-op market and commercial kitchen facility for local vendors and food producers

Columbia Walla Walla rail line – owner since 1996, freight connection between Dayton, WA and Weston, OR





Questions?

Thank you for having me!

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