

## Staff SEPA Determination Findings Report

**Project Name:** Update to the Port of Tacoma's Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (CSHI) by Resolution 2024-07-PT to update language to match the Port of Tacoma Strategic Plan and the list of properties owned by the Port of Tacoma.

**Date:** October 23, 2024

**Environmental Project Manager:** Ryan Medlen

**Master ID #:** None

**Proponent:** Port of Tacoma

**Location:** The document, 2024 Port of Tacoma Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements, applies to the boundaries of Pierce County, WA, the identified planning area of the Port of Tacoma. However, the properties referenced in the document are those owned by the Port of Tacoma, which are concentrated in the Port of Tacoma Manufacturing and Industrial Center.

### Proposal:

The Port proposes the following update to its CSHI:

- Removed some superfluous language.
- Revised to reflect the current strategic plan including the mission, goals, and core values.
- Added language to clarify the scope of authorization in the CSHI and the connection to SEPA.
- No changes to the Port of Tacoma's planning area, planned uses, or property ownership are considered in the update.
- A new "Exhibit A" is incorporated to more transparently identify properties owned by the Port of Tacoma and their intended use.

Approval of the amended Port of Tacoma Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements will update this document to reflect the 2021-2026 strategic plan, project, and property acquisitions previously authorized by the Commission.

The Port of Tacoma's CSHI requires public notice and a hearing prior to a vote of the Port Commission to amend the comprehensive scheme of harbor improvements. This change would be implemented through a Port Resolution.

### Government Approvals/Permits:

The Port of Tacoma Commission is required to approve the updates to the CSHI by Resolution 2024-07-PT prior to taking effect. A public hearing is scheduled for November 19, 2024.

This environmental checklist has been prepared for the update to the CSHI; individual project proposals are not anticipated from this action.

### SEPA FINDINGS:

The update to the CSHI in this resolution is an administrative update to reflect previous actions by the Port of Tacoma. As noted in the document, future property acquisitions or development proposals will be required to be subject to review when environmental impacts can be reasonably assessed. These actions will rely on the Port of Tacoma Strategic Plan, CIP, and other Commission approved documents.

The effect of the approval of the CSHI is the authorization to expend funds "for the carrying on of any harbor improvements" under Chapter 53.20 RCW beyond those funds that are required to prepare the CSHI.

WAC 197-11-055 dictates that project threshold determinations are required when environmental impacts can be reasonably identified. The DNS is not intended to support future development actions. Phasing from a non project document to a future narrower scope based on site specific analysis is consistent with WAC 197-11-060.

The Port of Tacoma's Strategic Plan (2021-2026) includes six organizational success (OS) strategies. This update to the CSHI to reflect the current property ownership and previous land use decisions by the Port of Tacoma supports strategy OS-2 which is to "Protect the public's investment by maintaining existing assets and positioning them for future growth."

**Air:**

1. The Port of Tacoma's Strategic Plan (2021-2026) includes four environmental leadership (EL) strategies. Of these, strategy EL-2 is to "Reduce the air and climate pollution generated by Port and tenant activities while protecting their operations from the impacts of climate change."

**Water:**

2. The Port of Tacoma's Strategic Plan (2021-2026) includes four environmental leadership strategies. Of these goals, strategy EL-3 is to "Invest in project that improve the quality of stormwater runoff from Port properties, embody best practices and empower our tenants to comply with complex permits."

**Plants & Animals:**

3. The Port of Tacoma's Strategic Plan (2021-2026) includes four environmental leadership strategies. Of these goals, strategy EL-4 is to "Create wetland opportunities and improve fish habitat independent of regulatory obligation."

**Energy and Natural Resources**

4. N/A

**Environmental Health:**

5. The Port of Tacoma's Strategic Plan (2021-2026) includes four environmental leadership strategies. Of these goals, Strategy EL-1 is to "Remediate contaminated Port properties in a manner that ensures protection of human health and the environment while enabling economic development."

**Noise:**

6. Individual projects evaluated separately from this action will be subject to the City of Tacoma Municipal Code, Chapter 8.122 Noise Enforcement for control measures of noise impacts, or to applicable Pierce County requirements.

**Land (and Shoreline) Use:**

7. The Port does not have authority over zoning and any use planning relies on the local jurisdictions to adopt zoning controls as necessary. Where the Port has chosen to restrict a use that is otherwise allowed given the area's zoning, these are not proposed to change in this update.

**Transportation**

8. N/A

**Historical and Cultural Preservation:**

9. N/A

**Resolution Findings:**

10. WHEREAS, the creation of public ports was authorized by an act of the Washington State legislature in 1911; and
11. WHEREAS, the Citizens of Pierce County by majority vote, established the Port of Tacoma on November 5, 1918; and
12. WHEREAS, the Revised Code of Washington 53.20.010 specifically requires the adoption of a Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements; and
13. WHEREAS, the Port of Tacoma Commission, on April 29, 1919, adopted a Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (CSHI); and
14. WHEREAS, the Port of Tacoma Commission has amended its Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements from time to time since then; and
15. WHEREAS public notice of the Commission's Public Hearing on the amendment of the Port's Plan was provided at least ten days in advance of today's hearing as required by RCW 53.20.020; and
16. WHEREAS the Commission held its Public Hearing on November 19, 2024 on the proposed Amendment and has considered all public comments offered; and
17. WHEREAS, the Commission embraces its duty to protect Port-owned property located in the City of Tacoma and dedicated for industrial use providing the community, region, and state with jobs, goods and tax revenue in support of our state and region's economic vitality; and
18. WHEREAS, while today the transportation industry is highly reliant on fossil fuels, we look forward to a future where renewable energy will take a larger role in supporting the movement of commerce; and
19. WHEREAS, the Port recognizes that renewable forms of energy - while not commercially available for all applications at this time - are becoming more prevalent and affordable and federal, state, and private institutions continue to drive down costs through further research and development; and
20. WHEREAS, this amendment to the Port's Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvement addresses Port-owned property and is not intended to address or preclude the transport, storage, or export of fossil fuel from marine cargo terminals as required by the Federal Commerce Clause and other requirements imposed upon the Port

**Conclusion:** Based on the above-described Findings, staff recommends that the Port of Tacoma's responsible official adopt the attached determination of nonsignificance (DNS) for this project as permitted under the substantive authority of SEPA in accordance with the Port of Tacoma SEPA Resolution 2023-01-PT, as revised.

*Ryan Medlen*  
Ryan Medlen (Oct 23, 2024 15:55 PDT)  
Senior Environmental Project Manager

Oct 23, 2024  
Date