

2017 AAPA Communications Award Program  
Entry Classification: Miscellaneous  
Title: Waterfront Master Plan

## Summary – Waterfront Master Plan

The Port of Vancouver USA is redeveloping 10 acres of waterfront property along the Columbia River in downtown Vancouver. The property, which is the site of the port's original marine terminal, includes a non-operating hotel, an executive office building and several empty lots. The goal is to redevelop the property over the long term into a vibrant, urban, mixed-use development with a significant number of public amenities, including a walking trail that connects to roughly 10 miles of trail owned by the City of Vancouver, and access to the Columbia River for public events and public enjoyment. The port also plans to develop a public marketplace as part of the overall mixed-use development.

### 1. Communication Challenges or Opportunities

The development of the waterfront master plan had several communication challenges and opportunities. The main challenge was to get adequate public input into the development of the master plan to meet the needs and wishes of the community for a vibrant public space that could be enjoyed by the broader Vancouver community while redeveloping formerly industrial property into a job-creation engine. To this end, the port implemented the following specific measures:



- Held four public meetings to get input from the community and different points in the development of the master plan
- Held five commission workshops that were open to the public to discuss progress on the master plan. These workshops were also aired, live-streamed and archived by Clark-Vancouver Television (CVTV).
- Held two public open houses to inform and engage our community and solicit public feedback.
- Provided Web-based and paper comment cards to the public to get input and obtain feedback on development of the plan.

Some of the internal factors that needed to be addressed included keeping our three commissioners and port staff up to date on the plan and its progress, so we not only held commission workshops, but we regularly updated staff through staff meeting presentations. Externally we needed to not only communicate with the public on our progress, but also with critical stakeholders such as the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Farmers Market, and downtown Vancouver businesses interested in the development. We addressed those stakeholders through a series of specific stakeholder meetings.

## 2. Complement to Overall Mission

The mission of the Port of Vancouver USA is to provide economic benefit to our community through leadership, stewardship and partnership in marine, industrial and commercial waterfront development. This mixed-use waterfront development provides those benefits through the creation of mixed-use commercial space that will create living wage jobs in the community, and by providing a vibrant community space on the front porch of Washington state, and our communication around this master plan reflected that mission.

## 3. Planning and Programming Components

The **goal** of developing the master plan was to provide a vision for the port's property and Terminal 1 that the commission, key stakeholders and the public could support, and that could be turned into a master plan the port could use to get the entire site permitted for development.



**Objectives** for the master plan were to develop a vibrant and unique mixed-use development that the port commission, port staff, key stakeholders and public could support and get energized and motivated about. Key milestones in the delivery of the master plan included:

- Development of a plan for each of the five individual lots on the site (specific uses)
- Development of a public space plan for the property which includes a large dock space
- Completion of a fully developed master plan
- Successful completion of the City of Vancouver master plan permitting process

Each of these goals was successfully met and the project will receive its final permit this summer.

The primary audience related to the development of the plan was the community. Secondary audiences for the plan included key stakeholders such as the City and downtown business community, port commissioners and port staff.

#### 4. Actions Taken and Communication Outputs

The main strategy used to develop the waterfront master plan was to obtain a broad base of public support for the waterfront project.

Tactics used in implementing the strategy included public meetings with the community to obtain input and feedback during the development of the plan, development of several small group gatherings with key stakeholders to obtain input and buy-in, and multiple workshops with the port commissioners to obtain their support and buy-in.



Implementation of the plan from beginning to end took nearly 30 months. Staffing for the plan included staff from multiple port departments, including economic development, external affairs, sales, engineering and environmental. The port also partnered with Seattle-based architecture firm NBBJ to help develop the master plan.

*Consultant NBBJ speaks to the commission at a public meeting*

#### 5. Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

Communication outcomes for the master plan have been fantastic. The project incorporated the use of comment cards at each of our public meetings; even when comments didn't include great ideas for the development of the master plan, they included strong support for the port planning process. In addition, a recent survey done for the port found the waterfront project to be top of mind for the public when asked about the port and what it does.

#### Project Links

- [Waterfront Project web page](#)
- [Concept Development Plan](#)

## Public Outreach and Communications

- Feb. 23, 2017: [City of Vancouver 30-day public comment period for CDP applications](#)
- Dec. 5, 2016: [Port hosts Waterfront open house, Christmas Ships viewing at Terminal 1](#)
- Sept. 20, 2016: [Project for Public Spaces conducts two workshops on feasibility of marketplace at Terminal 1](#)
- Dec. 8, 2015: [Port hosts waterfront open house at Terminal 1](#)
- Sept. 28, 2015: [Port receives waterfront development plan, requests additional public feedback](#)
- Aug. 11, 2015: [NBBJ presents waterfront plan at public workshop](#)
- July 14-15, 2015: [Port hosts commission workshop, public open house](#)
- June 18, 2015: [NBBJ leads public workshop on waterfront design concepts](#)
- May 26, 2015: [Port, NBBJ conduct public workshop on master-planning process](#)

## Social media outcomes

Terminal 1 has generated a considerable amount of attention and excitement in the community. Across all platforms, we received 4,562 total impressions. We went out with a lot of big news at the same time, so we were happy to have this many impressions on our social platforms. Over the 4,562 impressions, 436 people engaged with the content, giving us an engagement rate of 9.6 percent across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and MailChimp. Of those platforms, MailChimp performed the best with 1,025 total impressions and 385 engagements for an outstanding 37.5 percent engagement rate.

## Supporting documents

- Master plan (Concept Development Plan) application to City of Vancouver: [www.portvanusa.com/assets/Final-CDP-Application.pdf](http://www.portvanusa.com/assets/Final-CDP-Application.pdf)
- Public comment archive: [www.portvanusa.com/assets/Waterfront-Project-Community-Member-Comments-07-22-16.pdf](http://www.portvanusa.com/assets/Waterfront-Project-Community-Member-Comments-07-22-16.pdf)
- Waterfront flyer: [www.portvanusa.com/assets/POV-Waterfront\\_flyer-100116-Lores.pdf](http://www.portvanusa.com/assets/POV-Waterfront_flyer-100116-Lores.pdf)
- Waterfront pull up banner (see attached)