Container Port Element in Washington’s Growth Management Act

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Governor’s Container Ports Initiative

- Created in 2006
- Intended to improve rail and container port freight mobility
- Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma combined are the third largest load center for containers in North America with about $70 billion in goods flowing between these two ports
Governor’s Container Port Initiative

• Ports of Seattle and Tacoma have a complex system of marine terminals, truck and train corridors and industrial and warehouse support services
• State and local land use laws did not require the protection of industrial lands and freight corridors
• As a result, the integrity of these areas were threatened by gentrification of neighboring areas
Governor’s Container Port Work Group

• Comprised of representatives from ports, cities, state transportation agencies, and governor’s office

• Achieved consensus on the need to address industrial land gentrification issues through the planning process instead of the permitting process
Pressures to Convert Industrial Lands

- 2007 – City of Seattle received permit applications for nearly 800,000 sq. feet of retail and office projects in the two most intense industrial zones
- Significant pressure to locate incompatible uses in the Duwamish area, e.g. “Liveable SODO” planning process
Tax Impacts and Land Use

• Commercial uses generally yield more retail tax dollars per acre than industrial lands, however, port activities reap significant excise tax levies
• Family wage jobs offered by industrial uses
• Washington is the most trade-dependent state
Freight Corridors

• No cohesive protection for freight corridors
• Incremental encroachment by commercial uses on freight corridors
• Conflicts between cars and trucks
Conclusions of Work Group

- Protect operations of existing marine terminals
- Preserve key truck and train transportation corridors
- Maintain nearby industrial support services such as warehouses and cargo logistics centers
Designate, Improve, and Protect Key Freight Corridors

- Amend the definition of “facilities of state-wide significance” to include key local freight corridors
- Identify key freight corridors in the city comprehensive plan
- Develop a long term investment strategy for designated freight corridors in TIP and port district comprehensive scheme
State Land Use Law Changes
RCW 36.70A.085
Growth Management Act

• Creation of a “container port element” for the city’s comprehensive plan
• Cities with marine container port with excess of 60 million in annual operating revenue must include a container port element
• Cities with a port district with operating revenues of 20 million or more may include a marine industrial port element
• Collaboration between the Port and the City
• Establish policies and programs that define and protect core areas of the port and freight corridors
Port Element Requirements

• Define and protect core areas of port and port-related industrial uses
• Provide “reasonably efficient access to core industrial area through freight corridors.”
• Identify and resolve key land use conflicts along the edge of the core area and minimize and mitigate incompatible uses
Port Elements Must Be:

• Completed by the city according to the schedule for other GMA comprehensive plan elements
• Consistent with the economic development, transportation, and land use elements of the city’s comprehensive plan and consistent with the capital facilities plan
Approaches to Developing Port Elements

• Creation of a port overlay district
• Use of industrial land banks
• Use of buffers and transition zones between incompatible uses
• Use of joint transportation funding agreements
• Use of policies to encourage the retention of valuable warehouse and storage facilities
Approaches, cont.

- Use of limitations on the location, size or both of nonindustrial uses in the core area and surrounding areas
- Use of other approaches by agreement between the city and the port
Links

- Appendices to the Report - http://www.ofm.wa.gov/reports/ContainerPorts_Appendices.pdf