

Port of Vancouver begins buying land for new rail line

In its first regular meeting of the year, the Port of Vancouver yesterday amended its Comprehensive Scheme for Harbor Improvements and Industrial Development, opening the way for new rail access to serve current port industrial properties and the Columbia Gateway development.

"To remain competitive in the global marketplace and to provide for economic growth, the port must enhance its rail system," said port executive director **Larry Paulson**. More than 70 percent of cargo passing through the port is transported by rail, and that figure is expected to increase to 85 percent with the development of Columbia Gateway. Over the next ten years the number of rail cars serving the port is expected to increase from 44,000 to 120,000 annually. The new rail line will also relieve a major West Coast rail chokepoint, Paulson added.

The new rail line will also open up industrial sites north and east of the BNSF rail yard. In addition, Paulson said, the re-alignment of existing downtown rail crossings will reduce whistle blowing and train idling times.

Over the next two years the port will buy nearly 35 acres for rail access.

The rail line will run along 7th and 8th Streets and under the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway's north-south line to the east boundary of the port, then through the port's 600 acres of operating terminals, and continue west to serve Columbia Gateway.

Study seeks high-capacity transit answers

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, partnering with local jurisdictions, will study the county's high capacity transit options, including bus rapid transit, streetcars, light-rail transit, monorail and commuter rail.

The High Capacity Transit System Study will take a fresh look at the county's future needs and possibilities, says **Dean Lookingbill**, SWRTC transportation director.

The study will involve securing input from residents, elected officials, community groups and other transportation agencies. It is a first step toward a larger transit planning and project development process, according to Lookingbill.

City to fill three Planning Commission vacancies

The City of Vancouver is seeking applications to fill three vacancies on the seven-member Vancouver Planning Commission. Two of the vacancies are for full four-year terms. The third is for a term that ends in December 2009.

The vacancies were created by term expirations of **Michael Heywood** and **Anne McEnery-Ogle**, and the resignation of **Trevor Howard**, who has moved to Argentina.

Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8. Further information is available by going to www.cityofvancouver.us/boards, or by calling **Myk Heidt, 696-8181**.

City-county mediation volunteers sought; informational meeting is Thursday evening

Community Mediation Services, offered jointly by Vancouver and Clark County, is seeking 12 new volunteers to take training in conflict resolution.

Volunteers get professional training to provide mediation services for neighborhood disputes and small claims court cases. Advanced volunteers may also provide mediation services for some workplace conflicts.

Through Wednesday, Feb. 7, CMS is accepting applicants for the training program, which includes a 40-hour basic mediation training course and an intensive year-long mentored training program.

The program is not without cost. There is a \$100 materials fee for all volunteers. The \$800 cost of the 40-hour training program is waived after trainees volunteer their time.

An informational meeting is at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, in city council chambers in City Hall. For further information, call **Debbie Nelson, 619-1149**.

People

Arch Miller has been elected president of the Port of Vancouver board of commissioners, succeeding **Nancy Baker**. The three-member board reorganized yesterday, electing **Brian Wolfe** vice president and Baker secretary. The board of commissioners then re-appointed **Maggie Smith** as port auditor. The law firm of

Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt was re-appointed legal counsel.

Calendar

Port of Ridgefield commissioners meet in regular session at 6 p.m. this evening in port offices at 111 W Division Street.

Wednesday Headlines

[State troopers poised to go after an estimated 30,000 Clark County vehicle license cheaters--Columbian, **John Branton**](#)
[Ellis Dunn's Pioneer Street Cafe gets high marks for good food, conviviality--Columbian, **Don Hamilton**](#)
[Historical museum celebrates \\$500,000 access makeover Friday--Columbian, **Dean Baker**](#)
[Kelly Puntenev made county better place--Columbian, **Tom Koeningner**](#)
[Apple waves its wand, again--New York Times, **David Pogue**](#)
[Bush to acknowledge that U.S. policy in Iraq has failed and that he will send 21,500 new troops to beleaguered country--USA TODAY, **David Jackson**](#)
[With Iraq speech this evening, Bush will pull away from his generals--Washington Post, **Michael Abramowitz, Robin Wright and Thomas E. Ricks**](#)
[U.S. airstrikes back troops in Baghdad clash--Washington Post, **Sudarsan Raghaven and Joshua Partlow**](#)
[Democrat Christopher Dodd to enter presidential race--New York Times, AP](#)

Wednesday on the air

Reil and Mettler Ad Hoc review boards (live)—4 p.m. CVTV
Clark County Land Use Hearings (1/4)—5 p.m. CVTV
Portland Blazers at Dallas (live)—5:30 p.m. KGW-TV, KXL
President George W. Bush (live)—6 p.m. most networks
Is Tolling In Our Future? (12/12)—8 p.m. CVTV
Telecommunications Commission (12/6)—11 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the Weather

Colin Dunn adding to trail lore. ☞ **Dawn Prochovnic** making readers smile. ☞ **Tom Hunt** nears natal day saying all the right things. ☞ **Brent Erickson** promoting Camas school measure. ☞ **Chandra Chase** getting message out. ☞ **Lisa Lowe** rockin' and sockin'. ☞ **Wednesday**, cold, non-stick snow showers, 36. **Thursday**, cold, partly cloudy, sunbreaks, 32. **Friday**, mostly sunny, 34.