



March 21, 2024

Chair Johnson and Members of the Planning Commission:

I am here to provide testimony regarding the Employment Allocation and Vacant Buildable Lands Model capacity topic. For the Port of Camas-Washougal, this is a critical issue for the commission and the Port community. The amount of vacant buildable land is debatable, as you have heard and will continue to hear. More important than the amount of land that is assumed to develop, **it is the quality** of the land that will make the difference between a future based on imperfect assumptions and one based on practicality and reason.

In the case of the Camas UGA, the staff report concludes that there is capacity for 11,360 jobs while the Vacant Buildable Lands Model shows capacity for 11,363 jobs. The effect of those numbers means Camas has enough vacant buildable lands to accommodate all the employment growth for the next 20 years.

As someone who has searched for property in Camas for the Port to possibly acquire, I can tell you firsthand that **the quality** of the vacant buildable land, particularly in the western portion of Camas, is lackluster. Between habitat conservation areas, slopes, and wetlands, much of the property in west Camas is not suitable for industrial development. As assumed in the Model, industrial properties with critical areas will develop at 50% of the acreage. With many properties heavily encumbered by critical areas, it is not realistic to think that those properties will develop as the model assumes. What this means, effectively, is that Camas will not have the capacity for the 11,360 jobs allocated to the City. Without changes to the land inventory, Camas will likely fall short of the 20-year allocation.

Because economic development is central to the Port, we submitted a Site-Specific Request to add twelve parcels to the Camas UGA. Located near Grove Field, the twelve properties total just under 85 acres, with 32 acres used for runway, taxiway, and hangar space. We understand that the Planning Commission will not rule on the Site-Specific Requests, however, the allocation of employment projections and the VBLM capacity is under consideration.

We understand the difficulty of considering the assumptions for the VBLM. Rather than rely on some future work, another way to address the employment allocation and capacity issue is to look more carefully at the deduction of jobs related to construction and work from home. The 'deduction' of 10,024 jobs attributed to these employment segments negatively influences the capacity of the land inventory. It is not realistic to think that construction jobs need no land, and it is unrealistic to think that work from home jobs will be 100% work from home. There is more evidence to suggest that a hybrid work from home model, where there is a split of time between home and workplace, is becoming the norm. Those workplaces need land for their employees.

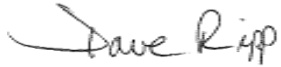
If the County assumes 30% of 10,024 jobs need 'no land' to accommodate those jobs, the County will still need land to accommodate 7,017 jobs in addition to the 65,071 jobs allocated to the UGA's. With the VBLM capacity for 65,091, the County would be short on land inventory for nearly 7,000 jobs. The exact calculations by City and UGA would need to be refigured; however, it is fair to suggest that Camas will be short of land by significantly more than 3 jobs and would need additional land inventory to accommodate its share of the employment allocation.

As I mentioned before, the Port submitted a Site-Specific Request to add nearly 85 acres to the Camas UGA and we believe that changes to the Employment Allocation are reasonable and justifiable. If staff is directed to revise the Employment Allocation numbers as suggested, the Port's 85 acres would be an option for the City of Camas to add to its UGA in terms of accommodating its 20-year employment projection.

In closing, it is imperative for the County to look more closely at two things related to land capacity and the employment allocation: 1) the assumptions for the Vacant Buildable Lands Model to address properties with critical areas need to be revisited and 2) the deduction of jobs related to construction and work from home needs to be reconsidered in terms of needing land inventory.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Ripp".

David Ripp
Chief Executive Officer