

From: [Jenna Kay](#)
To: [Cnty 2025 Comp Plan](#); [Jeffrey Delapena](#)
Subject: FW: The "Future Social Use" of the Camas Mill: a "String of Pearls" leading to an unrestricted cleanup.
Date: Friday, July 31, 2026 9:08:58 AM
Attachments: [HWY 14 Corridor.pdf](#)
[HWY 14 Corridor.pdf](#)
[Clark County Council SB 6123.pages](#)

For comp plan record

From: Randal Friedman <randal@camasearthdaysociety.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2026 2:55 PM
To: council@cityofcamas.us
Cc: Alan Peters <APeters@cityofcamas.us>; Molly Williams <molly@camasearthdaysociety.com>; Glen DeWillie <glen@camasearthdaysociety.com>; Caroline Mercury <camaswamillinfo@downtowncamas.com>; Emily Hess <ehess@maulfoster.com>; David Stuebe <David.Stuebe@cityofwashougal.us>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Don Steinke <crvancouverusa@gmail.com>; Richard Kolber <richardkolber@hotmail.com>; markleed02@gmail.com; Heidi Cody <heidi@waconservationaction.org>; Trang Lam <Trang@portcw.com>; Nan Henriksen <nannow@lycanon.org>; Ellen Burton <ellenburton1@yahoo.com>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Jenna Kay <Jenna.Kay@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: The "Future Social Use" of the Camas Mill: a "String of Pearls" leading to an unrestricted cleanup.

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Council --

I spoke at the Council and Planning Commission last week. I spent three days at Camas Days and Picnic in Color, meeting many new young families with kids. They enjoyed the restored Rotary Flume. I listened to their conversations as families and friends as they explored their new lives in Camas.

These voices looking at the future of Camas for their grandkids are not new, though perhaps to you. They have been kept from you. Most others have heard them. Two past mayors voiced them in the Post-Record.

Here's a look at a completed "string of pearls" showing a new path forward:

- **1988:** Washington voters overwhelmingly pass Initiative 97, creating a public version of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). Voters reject the legislature's and industry-favored proposal. This policy sets clear expectations for public access to a livable environment.
- **The 1990s** saw rapid growth in Washington. Over a million people (21.7%) moved there, employment increased by 27%, and Camas' population doubled to over 12,000.
- **Early 1990s:** The MTCA's lack of clarity posed a risk to industrial land cleanup. Landowners kept brownfields closed or with limited use, preventing public or private funding. The loss of greenfields accelerated.
- **1994:** The legislature unanimously passed SB 6132, creating and limiting new powers for the Department of Ecology (DOE).

The committee analysis states that industrial land zoned industrial would be cleaned only to industrial standards

A.

with that use enforced by a covenant with the state. Public access land use is excluded. The Agreed Order process is created.

B. SB 6123 includes a second cleanup pathway, declaring “making clean land available for **future social use**” as a broad goal. However, future social use is not defined or mentioned again. [emphasis added]

- **2009:** DOE’s Annual Report identifies future social use as one of the four basics of the MTCA.
 - **2020:** PFAS chemicals are found in Camas’s drinking water, raising concerns about groundwater contamination from the mill and its possible impact on future social use.
 - **2025:** A connection between SB 6123 and a second cleanup option is discovered, allowing for the creation of clean land for future social use where industrial cleanup would otherwise be required. The final piece of the puzzle is the word “expectations” as a trigger for industrial cleanup. DOE is empowered to make the call to reject statute-imposed expectations based on an assessment of future social use.
1. The Sierra Club, concerned about potential manipulation of the 1994 process, had opposed the bill as too restrictive on DOE’s discretionary powers. The future social use concept mitigates these longstanding concerns.
 2. This second pathway allows cities, counties, schools, and special districts to discuss the benefits of preserving the future social use, which is the return of the Camas Mill to a historic driver of growth and jobs in SW Washington. With new planning models a vibrant place for people to live, work, shop, recreate, can be created where they can enjoy some restored waterfront.
 3. These new stakeholders can now consider how the Camas Mill created 4% of the country’s jobs in 1980, which is equivalent to 10,000 jobs today when adjusted for population. This development fills a gaping hole in the developing HWY 14 urban corridor.
 4. If the non-operational mill property cannot transform from an unused, neglected brownfield, it could create the negative effects of greater sprawl. This continued brownfield prevents stakeholder vision to preserve the property’s future social use purposes.
 5. A door for full public involvement is opened.

This concept of future social use is based on existing laws and should be a transparent process like the legislative process that created it. It is a string of pearls started by our legislature in 1994 anticipating the situation we have today. DOE has an established path to complete the string for our collective future.

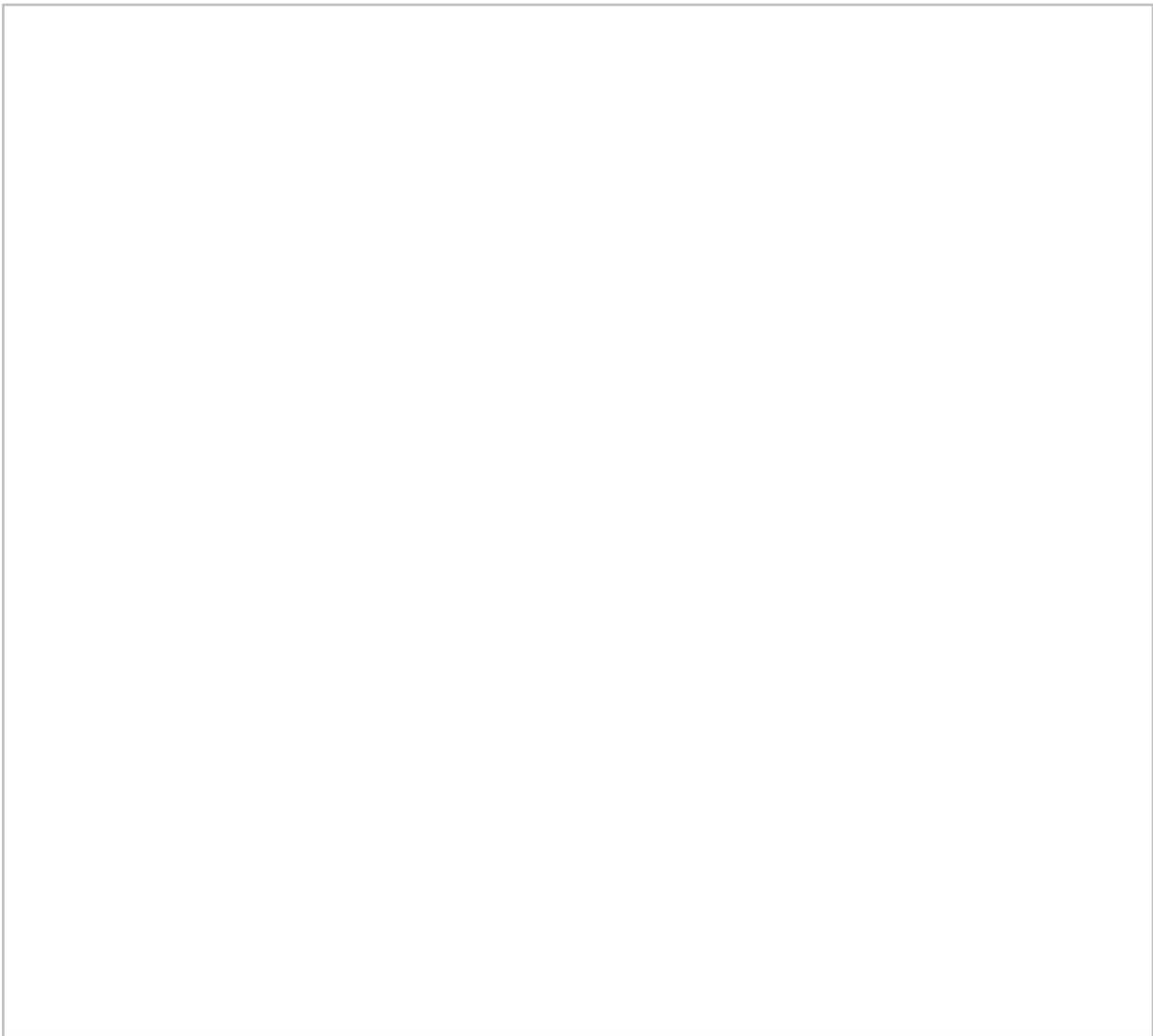
I saw Camas come together for three days. Let’s work together to create this path for our community and region’s future. Check out the flume’s new art that shows the Columbia Gorge corridor including the Camas Mill.

The Mill District Plan is moving along. When will the hearing/meeting schedule for *Our Camas 2045*’s adoption be released?

Randal Friedman







On Jul 21, 2026, at 8:42 AM, Randal Friedman
<randal@camasearthdaysociety.com> wrote:

Council — This is the email I provided to the Chair of the Clark County Council. As mentioned in my public comment last night, the concept of “future social use” is presented as the opening of a new pathway to determine the cleanup level of brownfields like the non-operational portions of the Camas Mill.

This pathway was created in 1994 by the Washington legislature’s passage of SB 6123.

The Camas Earth Day Society would appreciate an opportunity to present this to council. It represents two years of work with a number of groups and individuals

both within and beyond the City of Camas.

I noticed that the question of industrial zoning and the mill is on the Planning Commission's agenda tonight. I would appreciate this email forwarded to the Commission as I intend to present a public comment tonight,

Thank you and thanks to the many people who have participated in the development of the Mill District Plan.

Randal Friedman`
Land Use Policy
Camas Earth Day Society
<http://www.camasearthdaysociety.com>
(360) 606-0219

Begin forwarded message:

From: Randal Friedman <randal@camasearthdaysociety.com>
Subject: REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF A NEW
CONCEPT FOR BROWNFIELD CLEANUP OF THE CAMAS
MILL
Date: July 21, 2026 at 8:35:49 AM PDT
To: Sue Marshall <sue.marshall@clark.wa.gov>
Cc: Don Steinke <crvancouverusa@gmail.com>, Richard Kolber
<richardkolber@hotmail.com>, Heidi Cody
<heidi@waconservationaction.org>, Ann Foster
<annfoster5093@gmail.com>, Molly Williams
<molly@camasearthdaysociety.com>, Glen DeWillie
<glen@camasearthdaysociety.com>, Denis Hayes
<denis@denishayes.com>, Natalie Swan <swan@yakamafish-nsn.gov>

Summary — The Camas Mill brownfield, currently zoned for heavy industrial use, should be considered for a higher standard of cleanup based on the concept of “future social use.” This concept, rooted in SB 6123 of 1994, allows for a broader consideration of land use beyond current zoning, potentially benefiting the entire county. The Clark County Council is encouraged to support this concept and consider a resolution in favor of its application in the remediation process.

Clark County Council Chair Marshall — Consider our state from 1990-2000. Our state grew 21.1% adding more than a million new Washingtonians. The economy was more remarkable adding 27% new jobs. This is the historical context in 1994.

In 1994, state lawmakers attempted to create rules for cleaning up contaminated industrial sites, known as brownfields. At the time, many property owners refused to clean these sites up due to unclear regulations and the risk of being hit with massive, unpredictable cleanup costs.

Here is a simplified breakdown of the issues back then:

- **No Clear Process:** There were no established steps for cleaning up the land.
- **Financial Fear:** Owners worried local governments might demand an expensive, perfect cleanup, leaving them with giant bills.
- **Financing Hurdles:** Existing environmental laws did not give banks or future buyers the confidence that the property wouldn't hold hidden liabilities.
- **The Result:** Because cleaning old industrial sites was too risky and expensive, owners abandoned them. Instead, developers chose to build on untouched natural land (known as "greenfields")

In 1994 committee staff of the Senate Ecology and Parks Committee noted: "Uncertainty over future liability can be a deterrent to purchase and redevelopment of industrial lands." The committee, in response, sponsored SB 6123. SB 6123 placed in statute clear and unambiguous criteria to encourage the cleanup of industrial sites. The catch was defining industrial for cleanup where future use would remain industrial. The criteria? Land designated and zoned industrial through a plan prepared under the Growth Management Act. That remains current state law.

To address the policy issues from 1994, brownfield owners can now be provided additional certainty as current law requires this industrial cleanup to contain a covenant with the state prohibiting any land use making the land accessible to the public. Think

revenue, jobs and bringing more commerce taking that pressure off existing property and business owners, e.g. a destination hotel.

This is where the current status of the state-mandated cleanup of non-operational portions of the Camas Mill stands. As *Our Camas 2045* is cued for adoption, mill property, even non-operational and shown not needed for any future operations, remains designated/zoned for Heavy Industry. While we question the action this Council took on the Nevin property UGA expansion, the premise of the Council's adoption was based on the City of Camas' incorrect reading of the law. According to the City of Camas' representation, continued heavy industrial designation would not preclude a higher cleanup. Notwithstanding the industrial zoning, according to Camas, Ecology could require the mill be subject to an unrestricted cleanup. It isn't so.

Under the city's current interpretation of the law, the Nevin expansion would not open a door to sprawl. Future mill property was available to serve the growing needs of the HWY 14 corridor, though the city's incorrect representation of current law was not considered. In the city's mind the Nevin property would not create indirect impacts from the next tier of expansion into rural foothill lands. The indirect impact analysis under this theory is not an issue for study under SEPA.

We take a different view: the continued designation of industrial uses threatens the availability of these lands for future social use. The continued designation for industrial use under the GMA precludes future planning and land user that could benefit all of Clark County. Our state has mandated basic changes necessary for creating the resiliency needed for living with climate change. *Our Camas 2045* puts that in writing: the mill will instigate future planning at the time of their convenience. Is that why the State of Washington gave local government sweeping powers to control land use subject to legal standards? Standards like those created by SB 6123 in 1994?

There is an alternative. Growth, mandated by our state legislature, is coming to Clark County. This growth can be accommodated consistent with emerging principles of city planning. In 1980 the Camas Mill provided 4% of the total jobs in Clark County. Today that

would be the equivalent of 10,000 jobs. Camas Mill's "future social use" can take pressure off meeting numerical quotas beyond Camas' city limits.

It's a world where we collectively reduce VMT through better use of our existing and emerging urban cores. It is using those urban cores to provide realistic mobility solutions to these coming challenges. We're not building new freeways, thankfully, but we are getting the traffic growth. We can't expect people to give up their cars when we convert more and more rural land, putting in place more decades of personal driving.

We talk about the emerging HWY 14 corridor shown in the attachment. Centering growth in this corridor creates non-private auto mobility options. Otherwise, Clark County is overrun with more Greenfield conversions and growing VMT.

It is a new approach to planning in a world of climate change. It is what we propose in the Mill District Plan.

We talked about the plan before the County Council in opposing Option 3. The county's proposed action did not consider the future social use of Camas' large brownfield. This brownfield is under order to remediate and should be considered an alternative under SEPA and the GMA. It was not.

Future Social Use. We have found a second pathway for how brownfield remediation can occur in our state. It is independent of whatever the local government has enacted. It provides a voice for neighboring governments and NGO's to propose more regional based solutions.

The pathway allows the Department of Ecology to independently assess the "future social use" of the brownfield. With that assessment, and that assessment alone, Ecology can require that the land be cleaned to accommodate a higher use. The concept of future social use was created by SB 6123 in 1994. Future social use is a concept to assure all voices are heard, including this Council with its responsibility to shape growth policy for the good of the entire county. It recognizes that better planning would keep more

jobs and housing in Clark County versus development scattered through SW Washington.

It assures a broader future, with greater regional input, can be considered under law. It provides a voice for Clark County, and others, where one presently does not exist.

This second pathway has never been done. There is no state established definition of future social use. It is for Ecology to decide based public input and existing statute. This is an opportunity to create that standard.

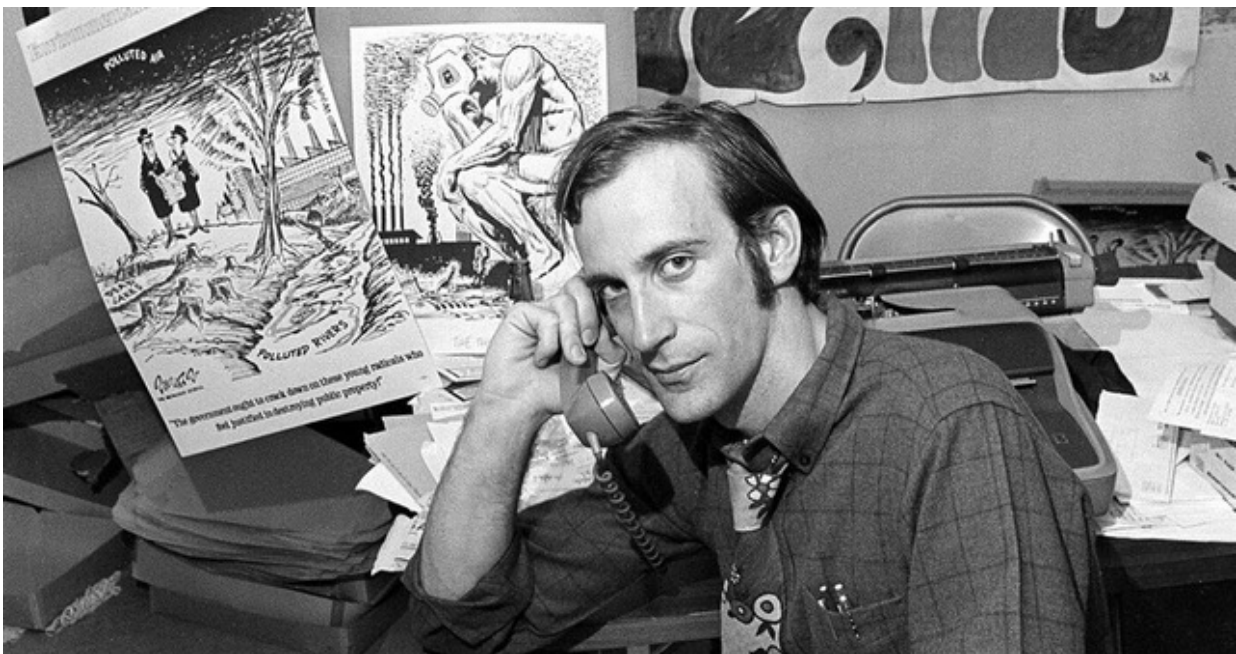
32 years ago the Sierra Club opposed SB 6123. The Sierra Club recognized the purpose of the bill was to expedite the cleanup of brownfields. It was designed to limit Ecology's ability to require a brownfield remediation beyond an industrial level.

The Sierra Club's position was omniscient. Committee staff summarized the Sierra Club's position,

"Industrial cleanup standards may not be adequate to protect human health and the environment; industrial properties are defined too broadly"

The Sierra Club's fear is exactly where we find ourselves in Camas.

Earth Day. The Camas Mill was central to the creation of the original Earth Day. Denis Hayes, the National Director, summed up this relationship on the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. As reported by the Harvard Gazette:



When I grew up, in a [Washington state] paper-mill community, there was no form of pollution control on the smokestacks. The stench from sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide was pervasive. The dominant image everybody had of my town for 25 miles in every direction was “That’s the place that stinks.” The mill poured uncontrolled water pollution into the Columbia

Three words placed in SB 6123 can right this wrong: **future social use.**

The concept of future social use is not new. It is fundamental to native American peoples and their relationship with the planet. The Yakama Nation has said regarding the Camas Mill cleanup level: “The restoration of natural resources impacted by the [mill’s] past, current, and future releases of hazardous waste in order to make the public whole and further tribal Treaty rights.” That sounds like future social use.

I suggest future social value is a concept the Clark County Council consider and support.

The Camas Mill and its legacy of pollution can start this second pathway. The mill's cleanup can lead the way in how we look at brownfields as key to our county and state's future. Smart growth as an alternative to the continuing march of bulldozers onto our disappearing greenfields.

Consideration of future social use, and the future of the mill property, is central to evaluate the Nevin property from Option 3. This 160 acre urban expansion ignores the future social use of hundreds of acres of non-operational mill property as an alternative. This is the antithesis of the future social use concept. We describe it in our input to the county. <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/143111208/>

Our Ask: This Council participates in this broad policy effort over the next several years. Ecology starts assessing results from sampling that starts this Fall. Ecology should understand that the principle of cleanup is not limited to meeting the current zoning of a city government. This is not the mill of yesterday. It is owned by Koch Industries who really wanted only the Longview mill. So I've been told by people who would know. GP's "revitalization" campaign does nothing but distract from the sad reality now facing SW Washington's future. I can see the smile from Wichita.

We suggest this Council consider the higher and independent standard of preserving future social use. It is a concept presented and discussed in our upcoming final Mill District Plan.

Future social use is a concept similar Earth Day itself. Isn't the basic root of Earth Day recognizing the future social value of our planet? With that recognition comes the need for observing the limitations of its air, land and water. Earth Day was and continues to be recognizing our planet as the singular "blue marble" once again seen with awe from space.

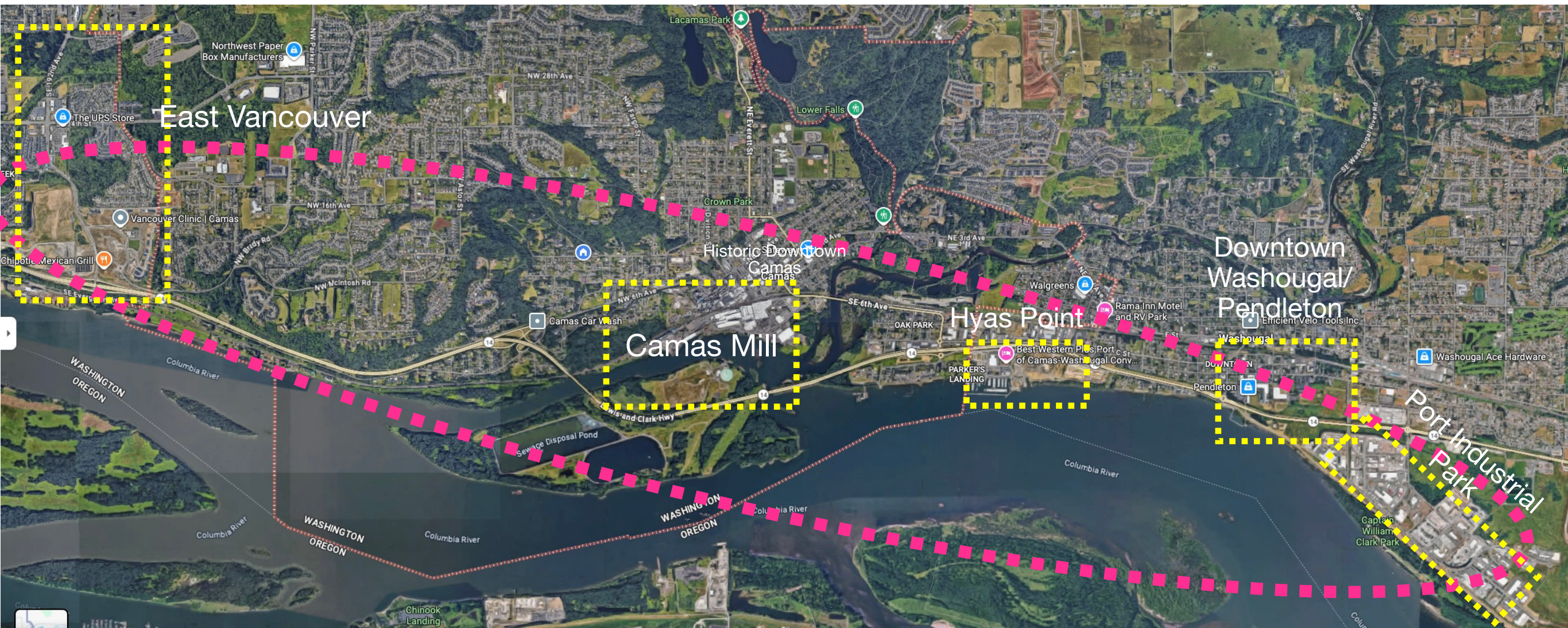
Future social use as a concept is part of what we are bringing forward in the Mill District Plan. We would appreciate your consideration. Perhaps this Council can consider a resolution supporting the concept of future social use and its application in the

Model Toxics Control Act. This Council can support the consideration of future social use in the upcoming remediation process. With completion of the upland work plan, and twelve months of sampling, consideration of the cleanup level is not far down our road. It is within the term of your District's new councilor as you return to civilian life.

The attachment provides some additional background on future social use. More discussion is being added to the final Mill District Plan from the public review draft dated February 2026. <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/189989153/>

Thank you.

Randal Friedman`
Land Use Policy
Camas Earth Day Society
<http://www.camasearthdaysociety.com>
(360) 606-0219



The emerging HWY 14 urban corridor. Already approved is a development agreement with Pendleton, development of the former quarry at 192nd, the old HP campus in East Vancouver, Hyas Point and continued development of downtown Washougal and the Port Industrial Park, The hub of this corridor is the Camas Mill. In 1980 it represented 4% of total jobs in Clark County. With today's population that's equivalent to 10,000 jobs. Alternatively, non-operational mill property can remain a brownfield. The industrial "cleaned" property would be subject to a covenant with the state, prohibiting land uses requiring public access. The restricted property will force development further into rural Clark County including the Nevin property.