

## COVER MEMO

**Briefing Date/Time:** June 16, 2025

**Staff Contact/Title:** Mike Reid, Community and Economic Development Director, [miker@portolympia.com](mailto:miker@portolympia.com)

**Subject:** Waterfront Center

**Purpose:** ☒ Information Only ☐ Decision Needed

### Overview:

Staff will be working with Commission to develop project guiding principles for the Waterfront Center effort. In synthesizing the May 19, 2025 Commission Work Session it appears there is emerging alignment on the following principles:

1. Marine-Related Focus
  - a. Broad consistency with 30-year historical concepts
  - b. Water-dependent or water-related uses
  - c. Alignment with Army Corps of Engineers permit requirements
  - d. Consistency with city zoning and shoreline master program
2. Marina Support
  - a. Incorporation of a permanent home for Swantown Marina offices
  - b. Enhancing marina amenities and services
  - c. Supporting boating-related and marine recreation businesses
3. Community and Tourism Development
  - a. Creating gathering spaces
  - b. Providing public access
  - c. Supporting tourism infrastructure
  - d. Potential for community programming
  - e. Integrating trail access and pedestrian connectivity
  - f. Variation in economic access
4. Strategic Port Involvement

- a. Generate more revenue than expenses
- b. Ensuring economic viability and developer capability are critical
- c. Alignment with Vision 2050 and Destination Waterfront
- d. Potential for incentivizing desired uses

These principles (or whatever the Commission may ultimately decide upon) would become the basis for developing and scoring responses to a subsequent Solicitation or Interest or Request for Proposals.

**Background:**

At the May 19, 2025, Commission Work Session the Commission discussed the development of Site D, also referred to as the Waterfront Center. Mike Reid, Community and Economic Development Director, presented a historical overview, noting the need for an anchor tenant to justify development. The Commission considered various roles for the Port, from ground leasing to full ownership. They debated the feasibility of a Solicitation Of Interest (SOI) model versus a more structured RFQ/RFP process. The consensus leaned towards the SOI, emphasizing project sustainability and ensuring public amenities. The Commission and staff committed to reconvene to refine the process and project guiding principles, aiming for a balanced development that aligns with the city's comprehensive plan.

**Summary & Financial Impact:**

Discussion Only