

# Port of Olympia Economic Impact Study

Phase II Scope of Work | May 13, 2026

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This scope of work presents BERK's revised approach to an economic impact study for the Port of Olympia. The analysis will include:

- Educational information about the role and functioning of the port.
- A clear explanation of direct job creation, economic multipliers, and other factors, as well as a transparent process with opportunities for members of the public and stakeholders to review our results and ask questions.
- A comprehensive assessment of the benefits and costs associated with Port activities. This analysis will include:
  - **Economic and fiscal benefits (Task 2 and Task 3):** the gross change in economic activity (via direct, indirect, and induced impact expressed as jobs, business revenue, and labor income) and taxes generated.
  - **Costs (Task 4):** ongoing and anticipated costs associated with operating and maintaining port assets, including future capital investments.
  - **Community value assessment (Task 5):** qualitative evaluation of the public good provided by the Port to Thurston County taxpayers, including emergency response and preparedness, access to waterfront and other quality of life enhancements.

## Task 1: Project Kick-off and Ongoing Project Management

Throughout the project, we will coordinate with Port of Olympia staff to ensure that we meet project expectations and adhere to the budget and schedule as planned.

Our team will facilitate a **kick-off meeting** with the Port of Olympia project team to build a common understanding of the ultimate goals of this work and how we will advance the work plan. As part of this effort, we will discuss overall project goals, scope, and timeline; proposed methodology and any refinements; data sources and requests for data and information; stakeholders to interview; project deliverables, including expectations for review; and communications protocols for the remainder of the project.

We will also set up a **regular meeting schedule** for coordination with the Port of Olympia project manager and other designated staff to communicate progress, review interim analysis, and address any project challenges as they arise.

**Deliverables:** Project kick-off agenda and meeting materials; final project schedule.

## Task 2: Direct Impacts Analysis

Building upon the frameworks used in the 2016 and 2021 studies, our team proposes the following methodology for estimating direct impacts for each of the Port’s four business lines, including any visitor industry impacts (such as off-site spending by recreational boaters). This approach will be finalized following conversations with the Port regarding available data and any changes to Port footprints and activities since 2021.

### *Economic Impact of Marine Terminal*

The Port of Olympia’s 66-acre Marine Terminal—featuring break bulk/container yards, log export, on-dock rail, and deep-water berths—drives economic impact by requiring labor for cargo handling and logistics, directly generating jobs, income, and revenue in transportation, warehousing, and marine services. The BERK team will estimate these impacts alongside Port operational effects, as detailed below.

Source of Impact	Method/Data Source
Port revenues from operations related to the marine terminal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request the number of jobs, revenue, labor income for the Port of Olympia that are related to marine terminal operations.</li> </ul>
Activities associated with the flow of cargo through the Port in sectors such as surface transportation, marine transportation, vessel operations, cargo handling etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assemble a list of businesses in related sectors with associated unique business identifier codes using data from the Port of Olympia, private sources such as ESRI Business Analyst, industry association member lists, and other supplemental sources.</li> <li>Submit the list to the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) for custom employment totals by sector.</li> <li>Calculate average gross business income per worker and average wage per worker by industry using data from the Washington State Department of Revenue (DOR) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and multiply by the number of direct jobs from ESD.</li> </ul>

As part of this subtask, the BERK team will also conduct an analysis of marine cargo activity over time at the Port of Olympia to describe recent trends in types of cargo and commodities handled, cargo volumes, cargo value, vessel traffic, and other metrics of interest. This will also include an assessment of the impact of the tariffs on cargo activity at the Port of Olympia.

Another component of this analysis is the **cargo volume user impacts**. The Port of Olympia facilitates the movement of hundreds of thousands of tons of domestic and international cargo each year, including bulk commodity exports (e.g., logs) to East Asia. Commodity-producing regions throughout Washington benefit from access to the port for the export of these goods, which in turn support capital inflows and employment. We will assess the cargo volumes over time and estimate the number of Washington-based jobs supported directly by these (primarily export) volumes, leveraging data from the U.S. Census Bureau (USA Trade Online), output-per-worker estimates by industry, and commodity production data series published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as other state and federal sources.

## Economic Impact of Marina and Boatworks

Swantown Marina and Boatworks, a full-service public harbor with over 700 slips and haul out and boatyard facilities, generates direct economic impact through several distinct activities, which the BERK team will estimate as summarized below.

Source of Impact	Method/Data Source
Port revenues from moorage fees, leasing of slips, fuel sales, parking, dry and mini storage space rental, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request the number of jobs, revenue, labor income for the Port of Olympia that are related to marina and Boatworks operations.</li> </ul>
On-site activity of tenants and various mobile contractors located at Boatworks who directly create employment and business revenue in marine repair, maintenance, and specialized retail trade sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assemble a list of businesses in related sectors with associated unique business identifier codes.</li> <li>Submit the list to the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) for custom employment totals by sector.</li> <li>Calculate average gross business income per worker and average wage per worker by industry using data from the DOR and BLS and multiply by the number of direct jobs from ESD.</li> </ul>
Off-site spending by permanent and transient boaters on items like food, lodging, retail goods, and entertainment in relation to being a moorage tenant or visiting the marina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Derive spending profiles per permanent and transient boaters using data and information from published studies on the impact of recreational boating (e.g. Economic Impact of Washington's Maritime Industry, Economic Impact of Port of Skagit marinas) and data on visitor spending by county from State of Washington Tourism.</li> <li>Apply the average spending per boater by industry to the total number of permanent and transient boaters received from the Port of Olympia to estimate total expenditures by industry.</li> </ul>

## Economic Impact of Olympia Regional Airport

The Olympia Regional Airport offers a range of services, including aircraft maintenance, flight instruction, hangars, and land/buildings for lease, all of which create direct economic impacts that the BERK team will estimate as follows.

Source of Impact	Method/Data Source
Port revenues from hangar and tie down rentals, leasing airport property to businesses, charging fees for services like landing and fuel and other sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request the number of jobs, revenue, labor income for the Port of Olympia related to airport operations.</li> </ul>
On-site activity by businesses located on airport property (including at the New Market Industrial Campus and Cleanwater Center in Tumwater)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assemble a list of businesses in related sectors with associated unique business identifier codes.</li> <li>Submit the list to the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) for custom employment totals by sector.</li> <li>Calculate average gross business income per worker and average wage per worker by industry using data from the DOR and BLS and multiply by the number of direct jobs from ESD.</li> </ul>

Source of Impact	Method/Data Source
Off-site spending by hangar and tie down tenants on items like food, lodging, retail goods, and entertainment in relation to being an airport tenant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Derive spending profiles for airport tenants using data and information from similar published studies and data on visitor spending by county from State of Washington Tourism.</li> <li>Apply the average spending per tenant by industry to the total number of hangar and tie down tenants from the Port of Olympia to estimate total expenditures by industry.</li> </ul>

### ***Economic Impact of Commercial & Industrial Real Estate Portfolio***

The Port’s real estate portfolio consists of a wide range of commercial (office, retail, etc.) as well as industrial properties. BERK will estimate the economic impact as follows:

Source of Impact	Method/Data Source
Port revenues from leasing out space at Peninsula properties and non-aeronautical real estate in Tumwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request the number of jobs, revenue, labor income for the Port of Olympia related to real estate operations.</li> </ul>
On-site activity by businesses located on Port property at Peninsula properties and non-aeronautical real estate in Tumwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assemble a list of businesses in related sectors with associated unique business identifier codes.</li> <li>Submit the list to the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) for custom employment totals by sector.</li> <li>Calculate average gross business income per worker and average wage per worker by industry using data from the DOR and BLS and multiply by the number of direct jobs from ESD.</li> </ul>

### ***Economic Impact of Port Events***

The Port of Olympia hosts and promotes a variety of events year-round, including large annual festivals like Olympia Harbor Days and the Olympic Air Show, as well as seasonal activities such as Movies at the Marina and Summer Nights at the Port. Local events create economic impact through spending by event organizers, vendors, and other participants, and attendees on things like food, lodging, and merchandise. The events also boost tourism, support local business, and enhance community identity. BERK will estimate the economic and fiscal impact of these events on the local economy. The Port of Olympia will provide data on number of events sponsored or hosted by the Port, number of attendees at each event, number and type of vendors, and vendor and event organizer revenue.

### ***Stakeholder Interviews***

BERK proposes conducting up to 10 interviews with Port tenants and users to better understand their operations and potential impact and refine preliminary direct impact estimates. We will work with Port staff to identify interviewees, develop interview questions, and coordinate introductions through the Port as needed.

**Deliverables:** Direct economic impacts by the four distinct Port business lines and for port events, with breakdowns by economic sector; Interview questions and interview findings summarized in the report.

## Task 3: Total Economic and Fiscal Impacts Analysis

The estimated direct economic impacts from Task 2 will be entered into the input-output model to generate indirect and induced impacts. Fiscal impacts will include direct taxes paid by Port tenants, as well as additional estimated state taxes paid through upstream business-to-business transactions (indirect) and household spending among tenant workers and suppliers (induced). For direct taxes, we will consult with the port and DOR, including a custom data request to the DOR based on company records. Indirect and induced-supported taxes will be estimated through computed ratios of effective tax rates per industry.

Economic and fiscal impacts will be estimated for 2025 (depending on data availability), for Thurston County and by city. BERK will start out with a county-level model for impacts and then allocate the impacts by city (based on each jurisdiction's share of countywide employment by industry).

BERK will provide a **comparison of economic and fiscal impact results** to the 2016 and 2021 economic impact studies and an explanation of what has changed and why. We will review the results of the comparison with Port staff and discuss the implications of any data shifts and ensure the messaging accurately distinguishes between methodology changes and organic growth. We will also **compare results to other Ports** for which comparable economic impact studies have been conducted and data is available.

Lastly, an important component of the economic impact analysis is the **evaluation of job quality**, moving beyond simple job counts to assess the value provided to the local and regional economy. Port of Olympia activities are highly concentrated in sectors that support high-wage, family-supporting employment, notably in longshore labor, specialized marine trades, and skilled aviation professions. Our team will provide an analysis of the type of occupations and their wages.

**Deliverables:** Total economic and fiscal impacts by the four distinct Port business lines; Comparison of results to past studies and to the impacts of other Ports from comparable studies.

## Task 4: Ongoing and Anticipated Costs Analysis

To provide a balanced economic perspective, BERK will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the economic and fiscal costs associated with the Port's operations and long-term viability. This analysis will rely on data provided by the Port regarding historical, current, and planned expenditures. The analysis will include:

- **Operational costs:** Based on data provided by the Port, BERK will analyze the ongoing costs required to operate Port assets across all four business lines, identifying trends in documented spending and facility upkeep.
- **Capital improvement and infrastructure costs:** Our team will review the Port's existing capital investment plan and related records to summarize the anticipated investments the Port has identified as necessary to keep facilities competitive and functional.
- **Climate change and sea level rise mitigation:** BERK will summarize the costs the Port has identified or projected in existing planning documents for protecting assets from climate-related risks. This includes a review of Port-provided data on necessary investments for sea-level rise adaptation and coastal resilience, with a focus on the 66-acre Marine Terminal and Peninsula properties.

- **Taxpayer impact:** We will also summarize the cost of public support provided to the Port by Thurston County taxpayers.

**Deliverables:** A comprehensive summary of ongoing and anticipated costs.

## Task 5: Community Impacts and Vignettes

The Port of Olympia has impacts extending beyond its traditional port functions. The Port develops and operates many public amenities and actively participates with many community organizations in programmatic economic development. The Port hosts and promotes various events that attract visitors to the area to support tourism and trade. The Port also makes strategic investments in infrastructure and public amenities, such as transforming the Port Peninsula into a Destination Waterfront. Additionally, the Port serves as a vital regional hub for emergency services and disaster response, providing critical infrastructure that supports public safety and essential service delivery during crises. BERK will include a qualitative assessment of the community impacts of the Port of Olympia to round out the story and understand the impact beyond the economic impact numbers. The interviews in Task 2 can also be used to gather information to support the community impacts assessment.

BERK can include storytelling vignettes throughout the report that go beyond the numbers to animate and personalize the Port's story. For example, these might feature particularly dynamic or growing businesses on Port property, recent Port investments, and their benefits to the community and local economy. The topics of these vignettes would be determined in collaboration with Port staff.

**Deliverables:** A comprehensive summary of community impacts + vignettes included in the report.

## Task 6: Draft and Final Report Development

Our team will work with Port Communications staff to develop a compelling, accessible **report** for sharing findings from this study with different audiences, including the legislature, local decision makers, and members of the public. We will blend quantitative data, narrative, and visual elements to describe the economic, fiscal, and community contributions of the Port of Olympia in clear non-technical language. Key data will be summarized through informative, well-designed graphs, charts, and other infographics. The report will also include a technical appendix detailing the methodology and all data sources used. We will submit a draft report to the Port for review and incorporate feedback in the final report. To ensure the study meets the highest standards of objectivity and rigor, the consultant team will also collaborate with university representatives to facilitate a review of the study and incorporate their expert feedback and suggestions for improvement.

As part of this task, we will also help the Port develop a **communication plan** to support roll-out of the report's findings and produce a **one- to two-page summary** to illustrate key findings.

BERK will develop **presentation** materials and provide one virtual interim briefing and one in-person final presentation of findings to Port Commissioners.

**Deliverables:** Draft and final report; Support to develop a communication plan; One- to two-page summary of key findings; Two presentations to Port Commissioners.

# Proposed Schedule

Assuming a kick-off date mid-June, BERK can complete the above scope of work within five to six months.

	Start	on	2026					
			Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
<b>Task 1: Project Kick-off + Ongoing Project Management</b>								
Kick-off + Ongoing Communication (~6 months)	1	6	★					
<b>Task 2: Direct Impacts Analysis</b>								
Economic Impact of Marine Terminal	1	4						
Economic Impact of Marina and Boatworks	1	4						
Economic Impact of Olympia Regional Airport	1	4						
Economic Impact of Commercial & Industrial Real Estate Portfolio	1	4						
Economic Impact of Port Events	2	3						
Stakeholder Interviews (up to 10)	2	3						
<b>Task 3: Total Economic and Fiscal Impacts Analysis</b>								
Total Economic & Fiscal Impact Modeling	4	2						
Comparison of Results	5	1						
Evaluation of Job Quality	5	1						
<b>Task 4: Ongoing and Anticipated Costs Analysis</b>								
Costs Analysis	3	2						
<b>Task 5: Community Impacts and Vignettes</b>								
Community Impacts	4	3						
<b>Task 6: Draft and Final Report Development</b>								
Draft + Final Report	4	3						
Communication Plan	5	2						
One-page Summary of Impacts	5	2						
Presentation of Findings (1 virtual + 1 in-person)	7	1						

# Cost Proposal

The table below outlines our anticipated level of effort by staff person by task. This initial estimate is based on the scope of work included in this proposal and our current understanding of the project needs. We are flexible in our approach and happy to refine this estimate after more conversation with the Port.

	BERK Consulting				HPS	Total Hours and Estimated Cost by Task
	Madalina Calen Project Manager + Lead Economist	Brian Murphy Principal in Charge	Oliver Hirn Analyst	Ruby Barnes Designer	Spencer Cohen Strategic Advisor + Economic Impact Analysis	
2026 Hourly Rate	\$200	\$275	\$155	\$110	\$300	
<b>Task 1: Project Kick-off and Ongoing Project Management</b>						
Project Kick-off Meeting	2	2	2		2	
Ongoing Communication + Coordination (~6 months)	12				2	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b> \$4,860
<b>Task 2: Direct Impacts Analysis</b>						
Economic Impact of Marine Terminal	16		30		8	
Economic Impact of Marina and Boatworks	10		16		4	
Economic Impact of Olympia Regional Airport	10		16		4	
Economic Impact of Commercial & Industrial Real Estate Portfolio	6		12		4	
Economic Impact of Port Events	6		24			
Stakeholder Interviews (up to 10)	6		10		1	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>183</b> \$33,840
<b>Task 3: Total Economic and Fiscal Impacts Analysis</b>						
Total Economic and Fiscal Impact Modeling (including impacts by city)	16	2	16		8	
Comparison of Results	4		10		2	
Evaluation of Job Quality	6		8			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>72</b> \$14,020
<b>Task 4: Ongoing and Anticipated Costs Analysis</b>						
Costs Analysis	8		24		4	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>36</b> \$6,520
<b>Task 5: Community Impacts and Vignettes</b>						
Community Impacts	8		24		2	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34</b> \$5,920
<b>Task 6: Draft and Final Report Development</b>						
Draft + Final Report	14	2	26	9	8	
Communication Plan	4	2	4			
One-page Summary of Impacts	4	1		6		
Presentation of Findings (1 virtual + 1 in-person)	8	2	10	2	6	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>108</b> \$20,195
<b>Total Estimated Hours</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>455</b>
<b>Cost (Hours*Rate)</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$3,025</b>	<b>\$35,960</b>	<b>\$1,870</b>	<b>\$16,500</b>	<b>\$85,355</b>
<b>Subtotal Consultant Cost</b>						<b>\$85,355</b>
<b>Estimated Project Total</b>						<b>\$85,355</b>