

From: [Christine Sylvester](#)
To: [Moffitt, Christine \(cmoffitt@uidaho.edu\)](mailto:cmoffitt@uidaho.edu)
Cc: [Nichole Rutherford](#); [Chelsea Schnabel](#)
Subject: Christine Moffitt Public Comment
Date: Friday, March 14, 2025 5:00:12 PM
Attachments: [Public comments Moffitt .pdf](#)

Good afternoon,

Your public comments have been received and will be entered into the public record.

Christine Sylvester
Executive Coordinator / City Recorder
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From: Moffitt, Christine (cmoffitt@uidaho.edu) <cmoffitt@uidaho.edu>
Sent: Friday, March 14, 2025 4:01 PM
To: Administration <administration@coosbayor.gov>
Subject: sent but Chelsea out of office

I emailed this to Chelsea but she is out. figure i need this by 4 pm!!
will have more by Monday

Christine

Christine M. Moffitt, Ph.D.

700 Denise Place

Coos Bay, OR 97420

14 March 2025

Revised and clarified comments regarding the Empire Blueprint discussion and decisions at the Hearing for March 18, 2025.
Christine Moffitt, 700 Denise Place CB

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. I have submitted comments on the earlier draft.

I continue to note that some of the recommendations for changing from exclusive water related uses in the estuary management plan are still remaining and suggest more housing to be developed in these areas. In the consultant report, a mixed use (Figure 22) of the waterfront concept (long term) provides considerable development in high-risk areas.



Figure 22. Waterfront Area Concept (Long-Term)
Source: David Evans and Associates, Inc.

This infill would require changes in the existing CBEMP and must be considered with regard to the overall configuration of current and potential changes in the estuary. Specifically, I continue to point out the recommendation that the 54-UW and 54-DA segments be amended to allow residential uses that are not strictly water dependent.

However, my concerns about the potential impact of a major proposed development of the estuary, and the spit across from the Empire district have not been mentioned in any of these documents.

These actions will increase the risks for community members and infrastructure. The concept of a tsunami tower will save lives of folks that could retreat here. Also, infilling of the waterfront will reduce the open space of the waterfront. Moreover, this proposal is provided without consideration of the currently heavily promoted PCIP. If this Port project were to be developed, the potential effects of a proposed container port and its turning basin that is associated with this development will totally change the configuration of the estuary bottom, recreational access and hazards. The proposed configuration of this basin will create a substantially deeper and wider area abutting this proposed development change.

This concept of future development of water use should be part of this report and considered in the development of the city plans, proposed investments and risks. Where is the consideration of the hazardous potential of a container turning basin, and container ship running aground and spills? The port light and noise will be substantial.

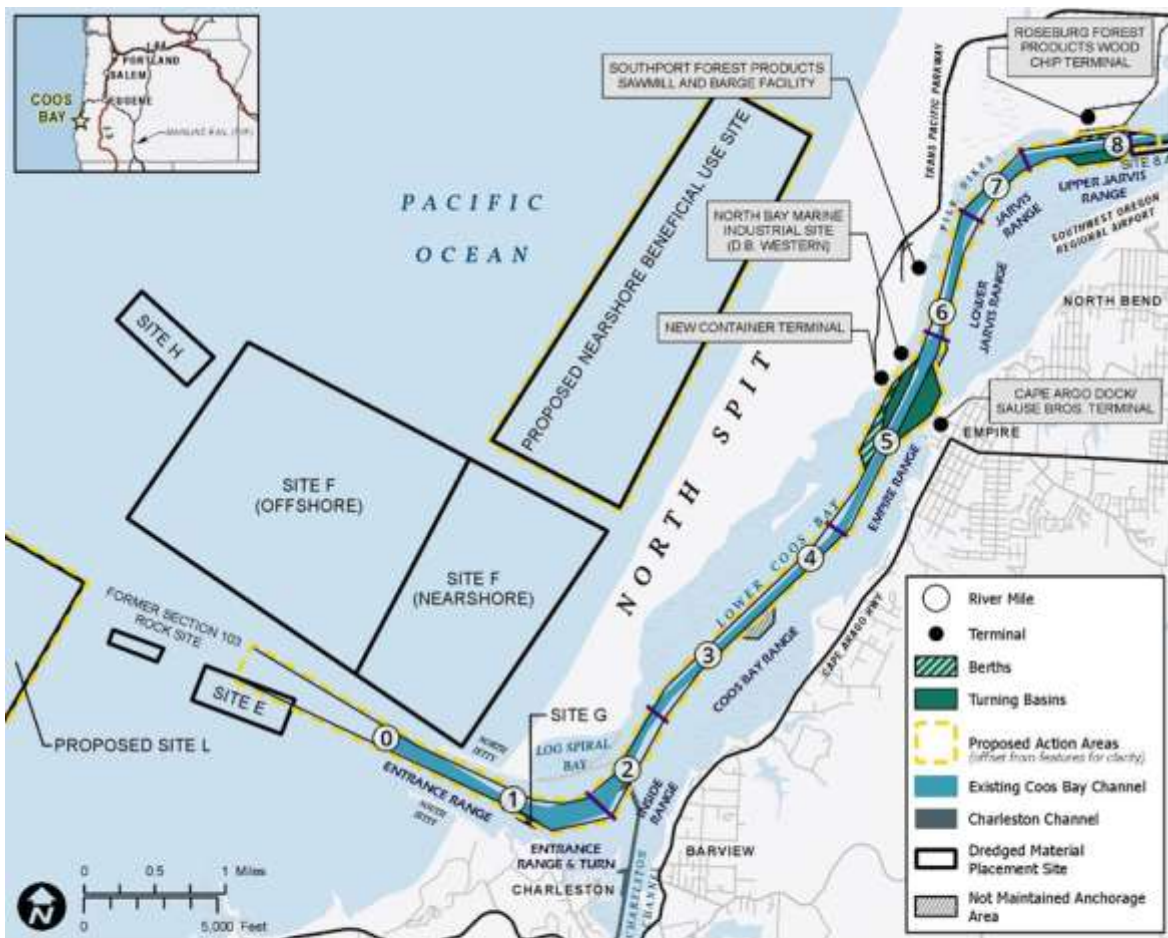


Figure 6-1: Summary of Proposed Alteration (PA)

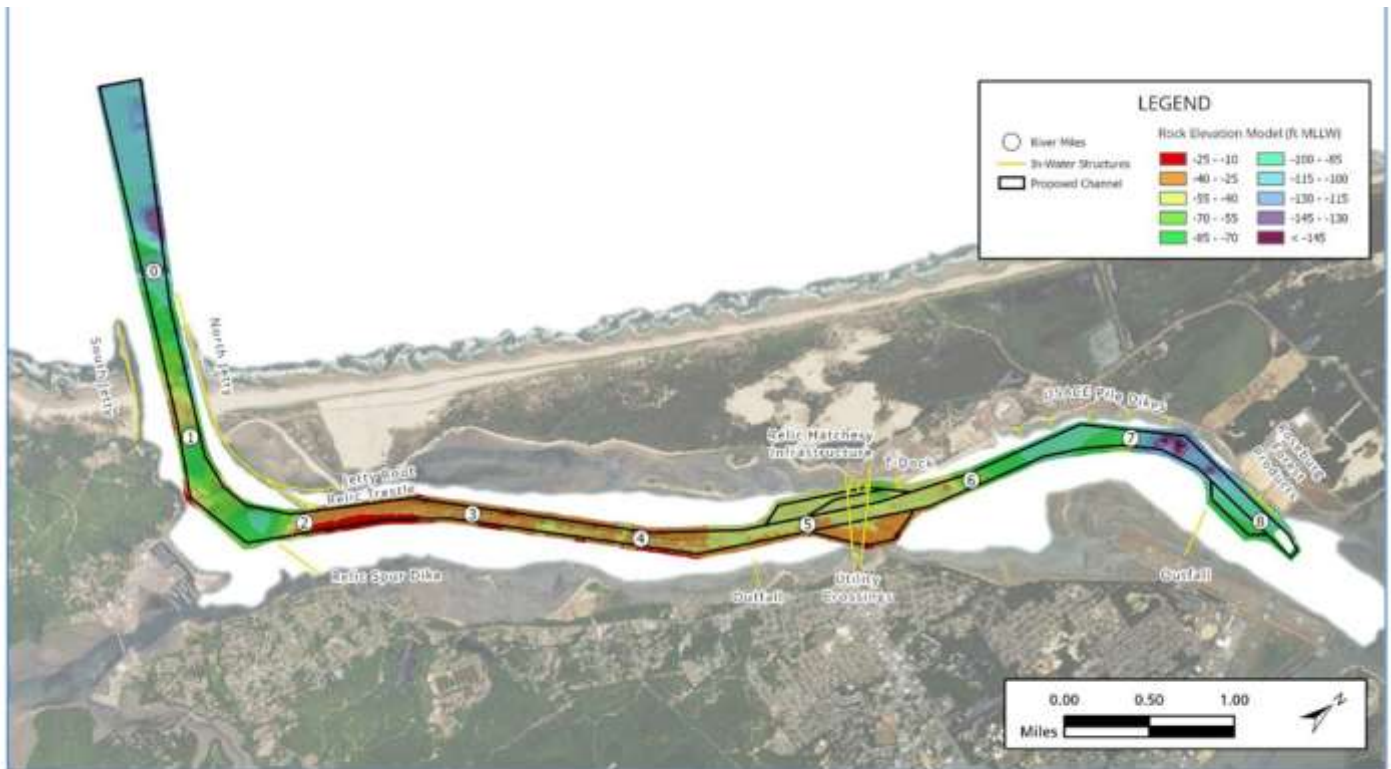


Figure 6-2: Depth to Rock in Coos Bay Navigation Channel

The substrate of the bottom channel now at the proposed turning basin is rock. The alteration of this portion will have consequences for the existing fishing pier and the boat ramp and docking structure.

The current tsunami inundation zone (next page) is provided on the map below clearly shows the inundation zone occupies all of the area along the waterfront. Increasing the number of dwellings will increase the risks to households.



Inundation zone outlined with boundary in yellow.

18 March 2025

**Comments of: Michael Graybill before the Coos Bay City Council
Regarding: Agenda item 5.a Draft Land Use Text aAmendments 187-24-
000174PLNG (Empire Area Blueprint)**

Good evening and thank you for your work to improve the Empire District. I am Michael Graybill, and I own a home on Salmon Street just behind the Bay Area Athletic Club in Empire and a residence in the Barview district along Cape Arago Highway.

I wish to express my support for the Newmark Avenue transportation and streetscape improvements proposed in the Draft Empire Area Blueprint. I believe the transportation enhancements proposed will improve safety for people traveling within the district as well as for people like me who regularly travel through the district between Charleston and destinations to the north and east.

In addition to my support for transportation and streetscape improvements I also support the value of using the low-lying portions of the hollering place waterfront within the planning as public open space.

I do, however, want to express my concern about a specific element of the proposed waterfront development strategy in the blueprint area. My specific comments regard the proposed changes to the earthquake and tsunami prone portions of the waterfront arease described on page 14 of your packet.

The current planning designation for the waterfront properties in this area is 54 UW Urban Water dependent. This zoning designation does not allow residential use. The Draft document before you proposes amending the Estuary Management Plan in order to allow residential use in this Urban Water dependent zone. Page 14 states: "The plan finds that a mix of commercial uses and high-end housing may be the highest and best use for waterfront properties and recommends amending the CBEMP to allow for residential use in CBEMP Unit 54-UW."

The consultant's report acknowledges that the low-lying areas of the waterfront are subject to inundation by tsunamis and that soils in the waterfront area may be vulnerable to liquefaction induced by earthquakes. The plan prepared by the consultants goes so far as to offer two examples of tsunami escape towers that might be built in the Empire area to

address these risks. The blueprint even provides a preliminary cost for a multi million dollar earthquake escape tower.

I hope you agree that changing zoning to knowingly encourage housing of any kind in a known hazard area is ill advised.

It is for those reasons that I encourage you to adopt the proposed portions of the plan with the exception of the provisions that encourage residential development in this small but extreme-risk area. The lessons the city of Hilo Hawaii learned from the 1964 tsunami should also apply to the Empire waterfront. Hilo learned the hard way that the highest and best use of earthquake and tsunami prone areas is public open space.

The draft recommendations before you state that future action will be needed to amend the estuary management plan in order to allow residential development in this known hazard area. I trust we are all aware that the estuary management plan was adopted long before we had the current understanding of the risks posed by earthquakes and tsunamis in our region. It is highly likely that revisions to our EMP will need to incorporate changes informed by our current understanding of these hazards. It is unlikely that any changes to the estuary plan taken to address these hazards will encourage the type of development that increases the risk of people and property.

One of my mentors was directly responsible for the construction of the tsunami evacuation tower on the Hatfield Marine science center in Newport. The circumstances associated with that project are very different from the situation in Empire. A tsunami safe area is just over a block away from the Empire waterfront district and can be reached in a very short time. If you act to limit uses of the low lying area of the Empire waterfront to low intensity infrastructure such as open space, walkways and parking, it is likely to eliminate any need to construct a multimillion-dollar evacuation structure.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.