

## Proposed cargo site also might handle garbage

A proposed south Thurston County cargo facility could be used to transfer garbage for depositing in Eastern Washington, Oregon and Idaho, according to a Port of Tacoma consultant's report.

The information is in **a report obtained by Maytown-area activists** opposed to the cargo project, proposed on 745 acres owned by the Port of Tacoma. Activists from the 500-member Friends of Rocky Prairie released the report to The Olympian on Friday.

The idea of handling garbage in the environmentally sensitive prairie has angered activists.

**"I feel like I've been kicked in the stomach,"** said Sharron Coontz, a member of Friends of Rocky Prairie. **"It will be noisy and stinky."**

The project, which is far from approved, is a joint venture with the Port of Olympia.

An Olympia port spokeswoman said it was premature to speculate on the use of the Maytown property.

The ports are doing further study not only of whether there is a market to transfer garbage in Thurston County, but also whether there might be a better site for a cargo facility, said Kari Qvigstad, the Olympia port's marketing and business development director.

She told The Olympian she was speaking on behalf of both ports.

The ports might make a site decision and have more specific knowledge of how the Maytown site could be used by the end of this year, Qvigstad said.

The report also mentions the Maytown property could be used to stage trains for cargo loading, for forest products transportation, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution.

What has set Maytown-area residents off are suggestions of using the site for garbage handling.

**"What got people upset is the announcement about the garbage; I almost puked,"** Coontz said.

The Port of Tacoma is exploring the cargo project with the Port of Olympia in hopes of moving cargo more quickly with trains than with trucks, which risk gridlock on Interstate 5. Trucks and trains could exchange cargo at the Maytown site with trains pulling cargo primarily into and out of Tacoma.

"There is a growing need for additional solid waste handling facilities, where trains can be loaded to carry waste to points in Eastern Washington, Oregon and Idaho, and where materials for recycling can be processed and shipped," the reports says.

A "municipal solid waste transfer facility" is mentioned in three design scenarios on the Maytown site. It is suggested in the northeast portion of the property in one part of the report because "it isolates the MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) function away from most of the other uses on the site, which may be preferable given the odor and noise typically associated with this use," the report said.

## Plans for a garbage dump were deliberately hidden from the public, e.g., prior references in Port documents were encrypted as MSW (Municipal Solid Waste), an acronym never defined.

The report suggests a Maytown garbage facility could serve Thurston, Pierce and Lewis counties.

If the Port of Tacoma proceeds with development, port officials have promised an environmental impact statement, including public hearings. The Maytown site is near Millersylvania State Park and an 809-acre state Department of Fish and Wildlife preserve that includes rare prairie habitat, oak woodlands, wetlands and wet prairie that is home to more than a dozen rare fish, bird, butterfly and plant species.

Municipal solid waste is "more commonly known as trash or garbage," according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Website. It could include product packaging, furniture, clothing, bottles, food scraps, newspapers, appliances, paint and batteries, according to the EPA. The EPA also notes that households often discard hazardous wastes such as paint, cleaners, oils, batteries and pesticides that contain hazardous components.