

AAPA 2022 Communication Award Program Port of Vancouver USA

Classification: Periodicals

Entry title: Port of Vancouver USA Community Report

[November 2021 Community Report](#)

[May 2021 Community Report](#)

Summary

The Port of Vancouver USA (POV) is a major economic engine for Washington State. Like many ports, much of POV's key operations take place behind secured areas, making it difficult for the general public to see the important work taking place. This presents a challenge to demonstrate the benefits we provide to Southwest Washington and beyond.

We view our biannual *Community Report* newsletter as a prime opportunity to showcase our mission-driven policies and activities, marine and industrial development, job creation, environmental stewardship, and industry and community leadership efforts that help our region thrive.

The *Community Report* newsletter is printed and mailed to all residential property owners in the port district, is available online and is emailed to a growing list of subscribers. It is an invaluable tool for raising awareness about the port and showing residents and taxpayers the value they receive from their investments in the port.

1. Challenges and opportunities

Challenges:

- Most port district residents and taxpayers never attend a port-related meeting or event, making it a challenge to understand the port's mission and community benefit. The *Community Report* addresses a general lack of awareness about what POV does and why it matters to the community.
- Getting the *Community Report* to as many residents as possible. Information consumption habits have changed with the advancement of technology. Though there is



Terminal 1 Progress Zooms Into Focus

As we transition to fall and winter, port staff are busy preparing for the new year ahead. Fall means budget season at the port and we are in the process of developing the 2022 budget, which will be adopted by port commissioners in late November. In this budget you will see some targeted actions that were identified in the port's Climate Action Plan, which was given the



Port CEO Julianna Marler hosts Governor Jay Inslee as he tours large wind blades that are destined for a wind project in Oregon. Also pictured is Cager Clabough, president of ILWU Local 4 and port commissioner Eric LaBrant.

an increase in people who prefer to receive information digitally, there are still many who rely on print media.

Opportunities:

- Deliver comprehensive information about the port, demonstrating to taxpayers the value they receive from their investments in the port.
- Design the report with a clean, dynamic design, incorporating more images, captions and infographics to enhance engagement.
- Produce the report in multiple formats to address the many ways information is consumed. More than 95,700 port district property owners receive a printed copy in the mail. Each biannual issue is also available for download on the port's website.
- Tell the port's own story in an approachable format rather than rely on outside media or other sources.

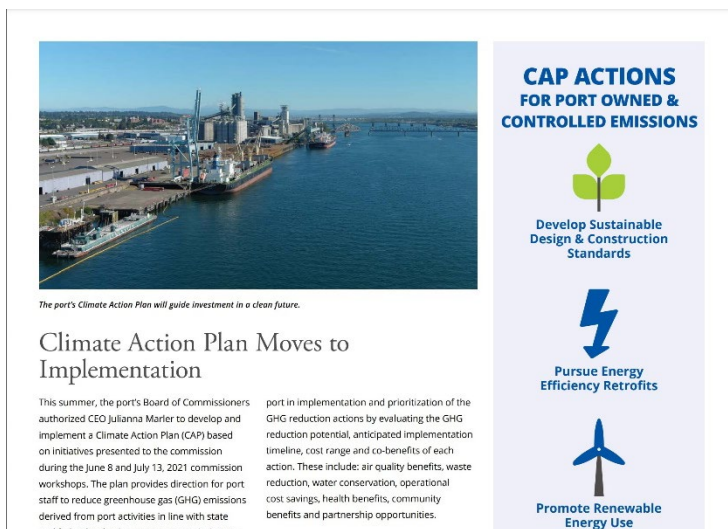
2. Incorporation of mission

The Port of Vancouver's mission is articulated in our Strategic Plan: *To provide economic benefit to our community through leadership, stewardship and partnership in marine, industrial and waterfront development.* Part of our Strategic Plan focuses on community goals. The first of these community goals is to strengthen community outreach and communication.

Each issue of the *Community Report* incorporates this mission by sharing interesting stories, engaging images and informative graphics. The newsletter is POV's primary tool to share successes and challenges with taxpayers in the port district.

3. Planning and programming components

Goal: To produce a print and digital newsletter twice a year that shares the port's marine, industrial, tenant and environmental news.



CAP ACTIONS FOR PORT OWNED & CONTROLLED EMISSIONS

- Develop Sustainable Design & Construction Standards
- Pursue Energy Efficiency Retrofits
- Promote Renewable Energy Use

Climate Action Plan Moves to Implementation

This summer, the port's Board of Commissioners authorized CEO Julianna Marler to develop and implement a Climate Action Plan (CAP) based on initiatives presented to the commission during the June 8 and July 13, 2021 commission workshops. The plan provides direction for port staff to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions derived from port activities in line with state and federal reduction targets. Commissioners port in implementation and prioritization of the GHG reduction actions by evaluating the GHG reduction potential, anticipated implementation timelines, cost range and co-benefits of each action. These include: air quality benefits, waste reduction, water conservation, operational cost savings, health benefits, community benefits and partnership opportunities.

We achieve this goal by presenting the content in a friendly, easy-to-understand way. By reading the newsletter, port residents are better informed about the various activities taking place at the port and see that the POV is key to economic prosperity in our region.

Objectives:

- Write an engaging newsletter with stories about the port as well as our tenants
- Present port statistics through the use of engaging infographics
- Print and mail to 95,700 residential property owners in the port district
- Produce it in a digital format for those who do not receive a printed copy

Target Audience:

- Port district residential property owners and taxpayers
- Partner organizations
- Elected officials
- Local businesses and leaders
- The general public

4. Actions and communications outputs

Strategies

POV produces the *Community Report* twice a year, with content focused on sharing port activities, accomplishments and challenges. The External Affairs team develops a content plan for each issue that highlights important work that has recently taken place while also previewing what's ahead. We then gather input and buy-in from port leadership and staff to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the content and to gather additional insights, context and details that the audience will find of interest.

Tactics

- Throughout the year, the External Affairs team identifies stories to possibly include in the Community Report which we feel the readers would find interesting and relevant.
- The port commissions a community survey each year to gauge community opinions, beliefs and level of awareness about the port and its activities. The results of this survey help us to consolidate the content of the Community Report.
- Understanding our readers have busy lives, a concerted effort is made to keep stories short and succinct with engaging graphics and images.
- To increase the reach of the report, a digital copy is posted to the website and shared through Mailchimp and social media.
- The port uses a freelance graphic designer to create infographics used to communicate statistical data or other information in colorful and creative way.
- The newsletter is printed on newsprint through the local newspaper, The Columbian, to support their business and to ensure it can be recycled easily by our readers.



Timeline

- 6 weeks: The External Affairs team develops story ideas and sends to departments for approval
- 5 weeks: Write stories, schedule time on the press, hire a graphic designer
- 4 weeks: External Affairs edits stories and sends to departments and CEO for final approval
- 3 weeks: Meet with graphic designer to finalize infographics, images and layout
- 2 weeks: Final copy is given to designer to prepare files for print
- 1 week: Final art files are sent to printer, press check is performed, newsletter is mailed and digital file is posted to website and social platforms

Implementation

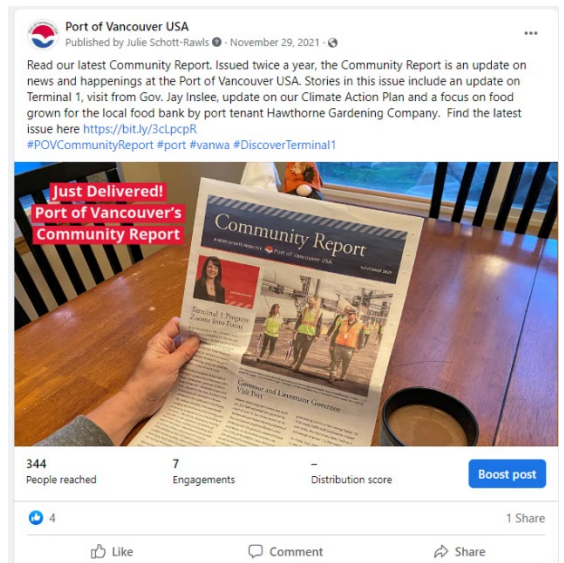
Each *Community Report* costs approximately \$31,000 to design, print and mail to 95,700 port district property owners. The newsletter is printed on newsprint to control costs and to support the local newspaper. It also supports our sustainability efforts by being 100% recyclable.

In 2019, we also introduced an email version of the *Community Report* that we are able to send out to a growing list of subscribers. This allows us to increase the reach of our newsletter without significantly increasing costs. Beginning in 2020, we expanded the reach again by sharing it on our social media channels, directly linking the publication through our website.

5. Communications outcomes and evaluation methods

Adding a digital version has allowed the port to maximize the reach by sending the newsletter to a larger section of the community. This addition gives measurable outcomes through tracking email open rates and click through rates. Social media metrics also allow for additional engagement through clicks, comments and likes.

In addition, port staff analyzed the annual community survey for feedback on the newsletter and general awareness trends regarding the port. The *Community Report* is consistently one of the most requested pieces of content by citizens and staff. We print a few hundred extra copies of each edition to ensure that we have plenty to hand out to elected officials, citizens, partners and others who wish to keep up to date on port activities. When we staff a port table at community events, we also take extra copies to hand to the public.



The annual community survey continues to show increased awareness of the port. Our 2022 survey of 450 port district residents showed that 54 percent of those surveyed were familiar with the Port of Vancouver, up from 46 percent in 2019, the last time a survey was conducted.