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The Port of Pasco and the Tri-Cities Airport Host Open House for AIM Center

PASCO—The Port of Pasco and the Tri-Cities Airport invite the public to an open house to learn more about the Aerospace Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Center proposed for development at the Tri-Cities Airport. The AIM Center is a major industrial area catering to businesses that support aviation and aerospace industries. The open house is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 15, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at McGee Elementary School, 4601 Horizon Drive, in Pasco**. The meeting is an open house format, so people can stop by at their convenience, discuss the project with the project team, and voice any comments or concerns.

“We want to be very intentional about this project,” says Randy Hayden, Executive Director at the Port of Pasco. “The state has set an ambitious goal to increase manufacturing jobs across Washington and right now, we have an opportunity to work with the state and build an industrial center that will attract steady, family-wage jobs in one of the state’s fastest-growing industry sectors.”

In 2021, Washington State passed the Best Economic Strength Through Manufacturing (BEST) Act, calling for the creation of 300,000 new manufacturing jobs over 10 years. In 2022, the Port received grant funding from the State Department of Commerce to participate in an Industrial Site Readiness pilot program. The Industrial Site Readiness grant funds preliminary engineering and site investigation to confirm a specific land area is adequate to serve manufacturing companies and accelerate future development. To those ends, the Port released the AIM Center Master Plan in June 2023. The plan outlines goals to build the AIM Center within the existing Tri-Cities airport boundary, adjacent to the current runway system. The hope is that the proximity to the airport and airport amenities will attract companies that provide research, science, and technology related to the aviation and aerospace industries. These companies could manufacture systems such as electric and hydrogen-powered aircraft, vertical take-off and landing aircraft, autonomous flight systems, artificial intelligence, additive manufacturing, or other technology.

The AIM Center development encompasses a total of approximately 460 acres. The land west of Runway 12, identified as AIM 1, contains approximately 300 acres, while the eastern portion, identified as AIM 2, makes up the remaining 160 acres. The AIM Master Plan proposes the Port construct AIM 1 first, which would take about six years to complete at a cost of approximately \$118 million. The full build-out would take about 20 years to complete with a total project cost of approximately \$215 million.

The Master Plan identifies the need for improvements to the surrounding infrastructure to support the project, including roadway, power, and sewer system enhancements. Hayden says these and other impacts on the surrounding environment will be studied more as the project progresses.

“We recognize that this is all very preliminary, and we still have a lot of work to do,” says Hayden. “But we

want to be sure we gather community ideas and concerns early enough in the process that we can consider and address or mitigate issues in the design and engineering of the project.”

The Port of Pasco emphasizes that public comments are welcomed and encouraged throughout this project. In addition to the open house, the Port is taking comments through an online survey located at [TriCitiesAIM.com](https://www.tricityaim.com), where additional project information will be posted as it becomes available. The survey will remain open until November 24, 2023.

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