

Clover Island mixed-use parcels expected to be available in fall

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Two commercial mixed-use parcels overlooking Clover Island's marina and shoreline improvements should be available to developers this fall.

"We'd hoped it'd be done at the end of June, but the (subcontractors) are really busy," said Tana Bader Inglima, Port of Kennewick deputy CEO.

The port has been working over the past several years to transform Clover Island, connect the community with the historic downtown area and attract new businesses and jobs to the waterfront.

"We're really trying to create a destination waterfront," she said. "We are currently under construction on improvements to Clover Island's south shoreline."

Enhancements include a public pathway connecting existing sections of sidewalk, new lighting, seating, landscaping, artwork and an interpretive area called the Gathering Place to honor Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's history and culture in the area.

"The Port of Kennewick owns Clover Island, some of the only waterfront commercial property in the Tri-Cities area; the Corps of Engineers owns most waterfront around the Tri-Cities. We're really trying to bring new attention to the island," Bader Inglima said, pointing out artwork already installed on the island, new infrastructure, roads and office buildings.

By September, the port will be able to offer two commercial mixed-use parcels — with residential opportunities — to developers.

"The port owns the island so there is no issue with these parcels being fettered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and we don't have to wait for the land to be transferred for development to occur," Bader Inglima said.

The parcels' exact sizes are unknown at this point and discussions about parking needs for different types of land use are under way, Bader Inglima said.

"The island is beautiful in the evening and mixed-use would be terrific," she said. "Our focal point right now is extending the public trail and sidewalk on the south side of the island. We want the public to have access to the entire shoreline."

The most exciting part of the improvements has been the port's partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Bader Inglima said.

"We're working on artwork to honor the tribes. There will be two bronzes in a pond area; one will be an older woman in traditional buckskin clothes who is gathering tule reeds," she said. "The second bronze is a younger gentleman in tennis shoes, shorts and a T-shirt who is also gathering tule reeds. The two will be looking at each other across the pond, to signify looking across generations. It will focus on their heritage."



A bronze sculpture of a Native American gathering tule reeds will be installed at Clover Island's new Gathering Place in Kennewick. A public event to commemorate the improvements is at 10:30 a.m. Aug. 4 with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. (Courtesy Port of Kennewick)

Port staff worked with a representative from the confederated tribes to make sure the dress was accurate and the portrayal honors the tribes' heritage, Bader Inqlima said. Artist Rodd Anborson was commissioned for the project.

A public event to commemorate the improvements is at 10:30 a.m. Aug. 4 with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The transformation of the island includes the popular 62-foot tall lighthouse and surrounding 15,000-square-foot plaza. It's common to see photographers and their clients in the area, as well as parents pushing strollers and couples walking hand in hand.

"The lighthouse has become an iconic element of the island. You will see it in photos, on the front cover of the phone book, and more than 100 weddings have taken place there," Bader Inqlima said. "It has given people a place to meet and has helped people realize the beauty of the shoreline."

The port continues to build landscaped pathways between the island's entrance and lighthouse because the path ended somewhat abruptly at the lighthouse. The first phase of work was made possible with financial support from the port, city of Kennewick and state Aquatic Lands Grant Project.

"The second phase will add a path all along the north shoreline to give people more places to walk," Bader Inqlima said. The port is working with the Corps of Engineers' habitat restoration project; continued riverwalk and plantings will be made possible through 75 percent federal monies and 25 percent local match.

"After we're done, we'll have more economic development projects available as well, which is exciting."

Less than 10 years ago, the port partnered with the Clover Island Yacht Club to tear down a 60-year-old building and build a new two-story, 6,000-square-foot facility that now houses the organization's club house and Wave 7, a software manufacturing company. The port shares a two-story building on the island with Ice Harbor Brewing Company.

"The important part is we're trying to bring new life, new energy and new jobs to the older part of Kennewick. All of our work helps people access and recreate the shoreline," Bader Inqlima said. "We're also changing the perception of east Kennewick as a gathering place and in turn, attracting new business to the area."

Positive comments continue amid improvements to Clover Island, Bader Inqlima said.

"There's a lot more traffic – people biking out to Ice Harbor for dinner, meeting at the lighthouse to go on walks. On my way to work in the morning, I see people walking, pushing baby strollers, and the hotel has bikes available for customers. All of the businesses have said the improvements are beneficial; their business has increased as a result," she said.

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