



TRIANGLE ASSOCIATES

April 9, 1982

Dear Interviewee:

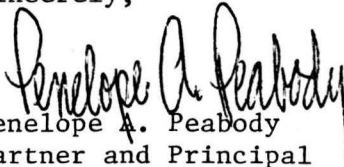
Since our recent letter to you regarding presentation of our community assessment, plans have changed somewhat, and we will not be making the presentation on April 13 as previously planned.


Given the length of the report and the complexity of its findings and recommendations, we feel that the small amount of time available for presentation would not allow for adequate understanding or discussion of the contents. Also, unanticipated delays in printing the full report mean that copies will not be available by April 13, making the presentation further inappropriate.

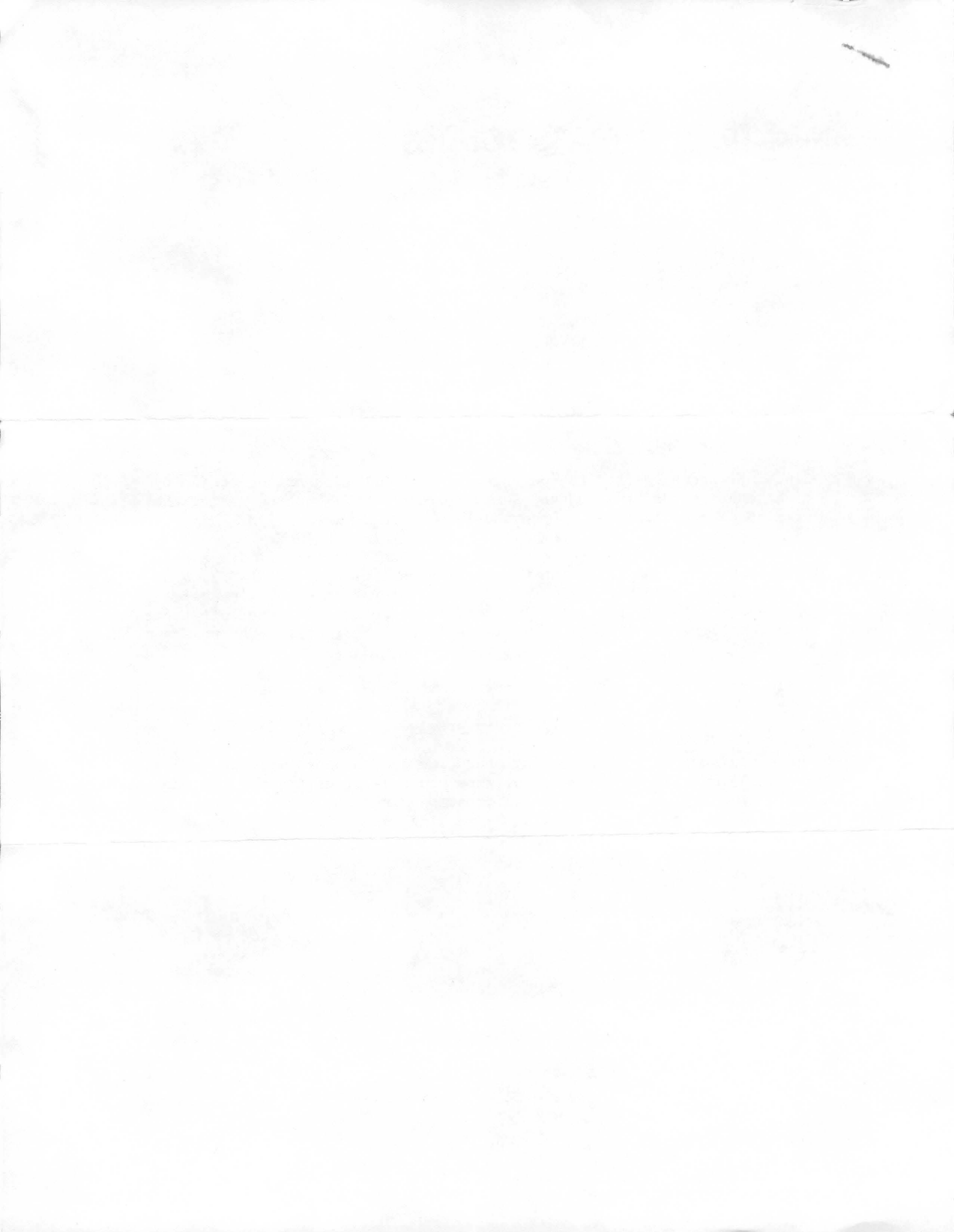
We do expect the report to be ready for mailing within a week, however, so you should expect to receive it soon. A copy of the executive summary of the report is enclosed to give you a preview of the full document.

Thank you once again for sharing your time and thoughts with us. We would certainly be glad to hear any comments you have after reading the report, as would Lynn Taylor, Port Public Information Director, whose department initiated the study and who will be working out a plan based on our recommendations.

Sincerely,


Penelope A. Peabody
Partner and Principal


Alice J. Shorett
Partner and Principal



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FOR THE PORT OF SEATTLE

PREPARED BY: Triangle Associates

PRINCIPALS: Penelope Peabody
Alice Shorett

ASSISTANT: Nancy Harrison

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Triangle Associates was retained by the Port of Seattle to assess the Port's relationships with diverse segments of the public it serves, and suggest ways in which the Port can build upon its effective relationships and correct some of the problems undermining and complicating those that are not so strong. The premise is that diverse networks of good working relationships throughout the community will enable the Port to serve the public with efficiency and sensitivity thus expediting the accomplishment of its basic purpose: the enhancement and orderly management of the flow of waterborne cargo and air passengers and goods into, out of and through the District.

The work was done in two phases: The community assessment phase involving personal interviews with 31 people on the Port commission and staff and with 32 leaders from various sectors of the King County community; and the recommendation development phase involving analysis of the information generated in the interviews and preparation of recommendations for accomplishing objectives and fulfilling expectations identified in the community assessment portion.

The Community Assessment sought to answer the following questions:

- . What does the Port want to accomplish in the next five to ten years?
- . What does the Port need from the community in order to accomplish its objectives?
- . What publics or constituent groups are essential to the "community" defined by the Port as important to its operations and the accomplishment of its objectives?
- . What does the community need and expect from the Port?
- . Which "community" relationships are effective and which need work?

Details of the method and process can be found in the complete report. It is important for the reader to remember, however, that this was not a survey or an attempt to obtain empirical data. We were attempting to learn the perceptions and attitudes of those interviewed, believing that the actions of those interviewed and the groups they influence are governed by their perceptions and attitudes as much as by empirical data. No judgment has been made about the validity of their perceptions. We looked for common patterns of perceptions among various groups and those led us to our recommendations for building upon some relationships and strengthening others.

In developing our recommendations we sought to provide the Port with ideas and approaches for a community relations plan which would:

1. Put the Port in a proactive position rather than a reactive position, making it more an orchestrator for mutual problem-solving with the community and less a "fireman" for crises.
2. Create an environment in which the Port's challenges and problems are understood to be the community's challenges and problems.
3. Develop authorship in the community for the Port's programs and plans.
4. Establish a network of effective working relationships to create an environment in which there is less conflict and opposition, more win/win and fewer win/lose kinds of situations.

Groups From Whom Support is Required to Accomplish Objectives

The key "communities" or "publics" identified by the Port Commissioners and staff as critical to accomplishment of the Port's objectives were:

1. Customers.
2. Tenants.
3. Local and state governmental agencies and elected officials and Federal agencies and elected officials.
4. News Media.
5. Communities neighboring Port facilities.
6. King County Taxpayers and Voters.
7. Organized Labor.
8. Port Employees.
9. Business.
10. Good Government Groups.

Community's Expectations of the Port of Seattle

Interviews with leaders from seven of the nine groups identified above (customers were not interviewed, nor was a survey done of the taxpayers and voters) indicate that they expect the following from the Port:

1. Enhance trade / Provide jobs.

The Port will continue to do what is perceived as a good to excellent job in attracting trade through its facilities and creating jobs.

2. Efficient management.

The Port will continue to manage all of its facilities in the efficient and business-oriented manner that generally wins it high marks from the community. The Airport and Shilshole were specifically praised for fine maintenance as well as for efficiency.

3. Prior consultation.

The Port will consult with people before an approach or a plan of action has been determined. The rule here is no surprises. "Come out to talk to us just to see what we think," one person said.

4. Timely information.

Information about Port activities, operations and plans will be available from the Port in a timely enough manner to allow other governmental entities, concerned tenants, neighbors (both industrial and residential) and citizens to assess the consequences to them of the planned action and to make their concerns and wishes known to the Port before a preferred alternative is singled out, a decision made or an action taken.

5. Access to policy and plan deliberations.

The community expects to contribute to the Port's planning and decision-making and expects that it will have access to policy deliberations so that it can make its views known to the decision-makers, hear them respond to those views and have some sense of policy direction.

6. Opportunity for dialogue with decision-makers.

The Port decision-makers and executives will go out to various community groups to talk to them, give them an update on Port activities and listen to what they have to say about the Port and what they would like the Port to do for them - or what they have to offer the Port.

7. Courteous and fair hearing.

The Port commission will afford citizens a courteous and fair hearing of their view points.

8. Cooperative "team-player."

The Port will actively cooperate in multi-jurisdictional projects for civic betterment or the community's well being.

9. Responsiveness.

The Port will respond to requests for information and complaints from various "communities" in a timely and forthright manner.

10. Credibility.

The Port will be factual and forthright in its people-to-people and institutional communications. The credibility expectation for some goes beyond anticipation of honest, factual responses and includes a desire for openness on the part of the Port in initiating the sharing of information.

11. Sensitivity towards neighborhoods.

The Port will carry out its mission without undue impact upon adjacent neighborhoods and will consult with them and recognize their needs and concerns in their projects and actions.

12. Sensitivity towards environment.

The Port will carry out its mission without undue impact upon the environment of the community at large.

13. Waterfront enhancer.

The Port will work with the city, concerned interest groups and local developers to enhance the amenities and environment of the Seattle Waterfront. The Port is regarded by most of the community's leadership as the steward of the waterfront and it is expected to exercise that stewardship with sensitivity, judiciousness and style for the benefit of the entire community.

How Are Expectations Being Met?

FAVORABLE FINDINGS:

1. Excellent rating in primary role.

The Port is viewed by all but its severest critics as doing a good to excellent job in its primary role and there is a high level of congruence among the leadership as to what that role is. Although they may have worded it differently, most agreed that its primary role is to enhance and manage the flow of waterborne cargo and air passengers and goods into, out of and through the Port District. A significant number of people broadened that definition to include that of job provider - or saw the creation of jobs as being inherent in that definition.

2. Praise for operations.

The Port also got very high marks as an efficient operator of facilities. Management of the airport received unanimous praise and those who had used the Shilshole facility praised its maintenance.

3. Good day-to-day media relationships.

Media people interviewed said they found Port staff and commissioners to be accessible, responsive and credible. They had some criticisms on other expectations which are discussed in more detail in the complete report, but most were favorable about their day-to-day working relationships.

4. Business support from "Blue-Chip" sector.

There is a reservoir of support in the business community for the Port - particularly from Seattle's "Blue-Chip" sector. Those who are part of the Seattle establishment view the Port with a great deal of pride as a real community asset. They recall the late 40's and early 50's when the Port was not competitive and when its facilities were antiquated and its leadership weak. They view the turn about they have seen in the past two decades as one of the phenomena which has given Seattle much of its identity and contributed to the vitality and diversification of the area's economy.

(Other segments of the Port District's diversified business community expressed some unmet expectations.)

5. Solid relationships with organized labor.

Those labor union officials interviewed were laudatory about the Port and the good job that the Port management has done in keeping them informed and working with them on a problem-solving basis when issues arise. There were a couple of concerns expressed about job-creation issues which are discussed in the complete report. Overall the Port was given high marks by labor as a responsible employer and a benefit to the area's economy.

Even those most laudatory of the Port, however, also had some criticism to offer. Those criticisms tended to be similar to those we heard from many of the other leaders interviewed. This common pattern of criticism can be summarized in the following general observations:

CRITICAL FINDINGS:

1. Lack of sensitivity to "secondary" roles or broader community concerns.

While the Port was given high marks for performance of its primary role, there was concern expressed by the leadership from a number of different segments of the community that the Port's mission orientation also gives it blinders about its broader responsibilities.

2. Not enough policy analysis or discussion by Commission

The Port's League of Women Voters observer testified at a commission meeting in October that policies made by the commissioners should be publicly discussed and clearly stated, both for the public's sake and for the staff's, which must implement the decisions. That sentiment was echoed in a number of interviews - particularly by those who have attended commission meetings.

3. Port is not sufficiently open about plans and intentions - potential allies are shut out.

The Port was criticized by a number of segments of the community for not sharing information about its plans and intentions with them. Other governmental officials, some business leaders and neighboring industrial tenants said they sometimes felt that they didn't know about the Port's plans and intentions soon enough to adjust their own plans or to take appropriate measures to protect their interests (even when their interests were not in conflict with the Port's.)

4. Commission too shielded and protected from community contact.

Port observers commented that they believed that the commission was somehow "insulated" from the community by the staff who seemed to think that the commissioners should be shielded from conflict or criticism.

5. It is difficult to gain access to the decision process.

Those community leaders who come from groups who have advocated a point of view or an issue before the Port commission were strong proponents of longer lead time for responses, earlier notification about action, the preparation of some kind of decision calendar or a decision tree on the Port's large planning projects or any project with a high level of community interest or concern and more discussion of policy alternatives and implications with the Port commission.

Chart B in the complete report attempts to document the interview team's analysis of how well the Port is fulfilling the expectations of community leadership. It is important to keep in mind that this represents a compilation of perceptions. Rather than focus on the exact amount of shading in any one circle, etc., it is more useful to focus on the patterns that become apparent across the spectrum of groups and expectations. A detailed discussion of the findings displayed on Chart B appears in the complete report.

Recommendations for a Community Relations Plan

The Port must build effective long-term relationships with its diverse constituencies similar to those it has established with organized labor if it is to accomplish its objectives and fulfill the community's expectations.

That need underlies each of the eight recommendations that the consulting team has prepared for the Port's consideration in adopting a community relations plan. The recommendations cover a wide gamut of activities from an ambitious and broadly-based community planning program to suggestions for changes in internal procedures. Each is intended to enable the Port to deal with a broader number of other institutions, organizations and individuals in a more personal and responsive way.

Specifics of the recommendations are available in the complete report and are summarized below:

I. ASIAN GATEWAY PROGRAM - Undertake a collaborative planning effort with the community which would involve establishing task forces to investigate different approaches for answering the question: "What must we as a community do in the next five years to assure that Puget Sound will be America's trade gateway to Asia in the decade of the 90's?"

The task forces would present their recommendations to the public for review and comment and to the Port commissioners for final evaluation and decisions.

II. PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE RELATIONSHIPS - Set up a system for regular contact with tenants and people in other institutions, agencies, and organizations.

III. TELLING THE PORT'S STORY - Expand some activities and initiate others to give the public more information about and accessibility to Port operations. These activities would help the public understand the scope of the Port's operations - the "HOW'S" and "WHY'S" as well as the "WHAT'S".

IV. ACCESSIBILITY TO DECISION-MAKING - These are suggestions for modifications in the Port's decision-making procedures which are designed to give the community more information about and, therefore, access to the Port's decision-making process.

V. A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PORT NEIGHBORS - This strategy is similar to some of the recommendations in the people-to-people program but is more detailed and more intensive in nature. The purpose is to move their relationships from a purely adversarial basis to a more working partnership basis by increasing and strengthening on-going, low-key contacts.

VI. COMMUNITY RELATIONS CHECKLIST - We've prepared a checklist for the Port staff to use as a tool in determining on a day-to-day basis which decisions, actions and projects require special kinds of community relations activities.

VII. PORT OF SEATTLE LECTURESHIP - Institute a Port of Seattle Lectureship co-sponsored by the Weekly and, perhaps, the School of International Relations at the University of Washington which would bring well recognized speakers with significant experience and expertise in international trade and international affairs to Seattle to further the community's understanding of the importance of free trade to the Seattle/King County and Puget Sound.

VIII. EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS - We are recommending three approaches which would help employees in their role of external interpreters and validators of the Port's actions to the public. All three are intended to help the Port deal with employee concerns about timeliness of information, predictability of decisions and prior consultation and involvement.

