



AMERICA'S CENTRAL PORT

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2025-2028**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
A Look Back at the Past 25 Years	4
Our Mission & Vision	5
Core Values	6
Strategic Goals	7
Improve Internal Operations	8
Improve communication and information sharing	8
Address shortcomings in key competencies	8
Strengthen company culture and teamwork	8
Make Strategic Long-Term Investments	9
Stretch limited infrastructure investment dollars	9
Refine a data-driven capital investment process	9
Redevelop existing facilities and develop new Port assets	9
Strengthen Community Connections	10
Become a more visible, positive member of the community	10
Improve government relationships	10
Invest in region-wide economic development priorities	10

# INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment in 1959, America's Central Port (formerly the Tri-City Regional Port District) has served as an economic development engine for the cities of Granite City, Madison, and Venice, Illinois, as well as the broader Southwestern Illinois region. Over the last six decades, the Port has grown not only in terms of its industrial park footprint, but also in its jurisdiction, staff, and aspirations. While the Port's mission has remained the same, specific strategies that support this mission have evolved in the face of growth and changing market conditions.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to capture the strategies that best support the Port's mission over the next three years. This document will communicate the Port's vision, mission, values, and goals throughout Port staff, to its governing body, and to the communities it serves. The Plan will serve as a guidebook to Port staff to ensure it is constantly making forward progress in its mission of economic development.

Preparation of this plan included review of historical planning documents and meetings with Port staff. Staff participated in a SWOT analysis and brainstorming sessions in order to generate the vision, values, goals, and strategies contained in this document. The Port Board of Commissioners completed a survey providing input on the goals and strategies developed by staff.

# A LOOK BACK AT THE PAST 25 YEARS

Though the Port District has been in existence since 1959, a major milestone in its history occurred in the early 2000s. The Charles Melvin Price Support Center (CMPSC) of the United States Army, immediately to the south of the Port's existing development, had been declared federal excess property, and the Port successfully applied for redevelopment rights to the approximately 850 acres.

Through the process of applying for redevelopment rights and in the early years of embarking on this process, the Port had a number of major goals:

- Construct a new harbor and container yard on the CMPSC property, which would be the northernmost lock-free harbor on the Mississippi River and further unlock the potential of the rail-served warehouses and industrial land extant on the CMPSC property;
- Construct a rail track connecting the Port's existing Granite City Harbor complex to the warehouse district and harbor on the newly acquired property; and
- Generate leasehold tax revenue on the CMPSC site to benefit the communities of Granite City, Madison, and Venice by attracting industrial and commercial tenants.

As of 2025, the Port has made great progress on these goals:

- A new harbor, named the Madison Harbor, was completed in 2015;
- In 2024, the Port was awarded a grant to study the feasibility of the rail track connection between its Madison Harbor and Granite City Harbor; and
- Over the past 10 years, Port tenants have generated an estimated \$26 million in leasehold taxes that have benefited the local communities.



# OUR MISSION & VISION

## Mission Statement

*Develop multi-modal transportation, create business expansion opportunities, and facilitate job creation for the region.*

## Vision Statement

*Building local assets that harness global opportunity.*



# CORE VALUES

## Respect

*We show respect to all colleagues, customers, and partners.*

## Responsibility

*We are responsible stewards of our financial resources and our physical property.*

## Community

*We believe the Port's success is inherently tied to the success of our employees, our tenants, and our local communities.*

## Integrity

*We conduct ourselves and our business with a dedication to honesty and ethical behavior.*

## Entrepreneurialism

*We are ambitious and resourceful in all of our endeavors.*

## Teamwork

*We foster a collaborative spirit within our team and approach our partner organizations with the same attitude.*



# STRATEGIC GOALS

In order to fulfill its mission, the Port will pursue strategies supporting the following four goals, described in detail on the following pages:

- 1. Improve internal operations**
- 2. Make strategic long-term investments**
- 3. Strengthen community connections**



## Improve Internal Operations

### Improve communication and information sharing

- Supplement board presentation materials with additional background information, maps, photos, and other resources to provide context and learning opportunities for new(er) board members and staff.
- Update the Port's job descriptions and organizational chart to more clearly define roles, responsibilities, and approval processes.
- Routinely ask employees to identify gaps in communication between departments, among co-workers, and to tenants. Promote increased communication and opportunities to learn more about what the Port is doing/planning.
- Build a culture of teamwork. Identify and eliminate "information silos" where possible. Expand access to non-sensitive information across the organization.

### Address shortcomings in key competencies

- Improve the Port's Property Management capabilities and oversight of railroad operation with new/updated written policies, procedures, and accountability measures.
- Continue to make investments in data and technology that improve Port operations. Further integrate data and measurement as part of the Port company culture.

### Strengthen company culture and teamwork

- Take steps to increase ownership and a sense of responsibility among staff. Make employees feel part of projects and wins.
- Make improvements to employee gathering spaces, company-wide social events, and employee perks.
- Review workplace policies to ensure the Port is able to hire and retain top talent amidst changing workforce demographics and current labor market expectations.



## Make Strategic Long-Term Investments

### Stretch limited infrastructure investment dollars

- Review and aggressively pursue potential state, federal, regional, and local funding opportunities to leverage limited Port resources.
- Develop plans and budgets for priority projects in advance of funding notices so they are prepared as opportunities become available.

### Refine a data-driven capital investment process

- Complete the Master Plan to serve as the Port's primary guide for future capital investments, including the completion of the redevelopment of the former U.S. Army Depot property.
- Prioritize and systematically pursue investments in the Master Plan based on greatest need and highest return as well as alignment with the Port's land use plans and the Strategic Plan.
- Develop an Asset Management Plan to prevent deferring routine repairs and prioritize preventative maintenance of Port infrastructure and facilities.

### Redevelop existing facilities and develop new Port assets

- Acquire rail-served property to expand the Port's capabilities and provide additional transportation-related infrastructure development potential in Southwestern Illinois.
- Create redevelopment plans for long-vacant, under-performing, and at-risk buildings. Systematically reinvest in these assets through the Port's 5-year capital improvement plan.
- Explore development partnerships that would add new multifamily, senior housing, and/or single-family development or acquisition.
- Investigate and pursue financing, outside funds, and/or development partnerships for new warehouse development on the Port's primary development sites.

## Strengthen Community Connections

### Become a more visible, positive member of the community

- Develop, articulate, and begin testing a coherent community/economic development strategy outside the fence.
- Dispel lingering "Army Depot" image of the property by implementing high-impact recommendations from the Landscape Vision Plan, Signage Design Guide, and Mixed-Use District Plan.
- Engage with existing partners to ensure they have recently toured the property or are otherwise aware of the Port's full real estate and FTZ offerings.
- Participate in advocacy organizations that support manufacturers, transportation, and workforce development in Illinois or the St. Louis region.

### Improve government relationships

- Increase visibility and participation at the municipal, regional, and state level.
- Create annual reports and an open house to educate and give updates on performance including leasehold taxes generated, number of employees on the property, and upcoming projects.

### Invest in region-wide economic development priorities

- Proactively market to rail users and manufacturers through direct outreach as well as indirect outreach through industry influencers, associations, and events to create opportunities for business expansion and growth both on and off property in fulfillment of the Port's mission.
- Promote Foreign Trade Zone #31 and educate existing businesses on the program's benefits.
- Develop recurring program to educate local, small and DBE contractors in the availability of work at the Port and at other local businesses / governments