I. SUMMARY

Parkersville (also known as Parkers Landing National Historic Site and Parkersville Landing Historic Park) is located off State Route 14 on the Columbia River in Washougal, WA. It is located adjacent to the Camas-Washougal Port Authority at 24 S A Street, Washougal, WA, 98671 and Marina Park. A complete description of the physical location of the nominated site can be found in the Parkersville Clark County Heritage Register (CCHR) Nomination Packet.

The site has figured prominently in the state’s history from the time before European contact to the development of the southeast Clark County area. Native American artifacts have been found in the Camas-Washougal area on and nearby Parker’s Landing Historical Park. The site was added to the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington State Heritage Register in 1976 based on its archeological value and its association with the Chinook-speaking Native Americans of the area.

The site is now being nominated to the CCHR based on its historic characteristics. British explorers led by Lt. William Broughton were the first documented Europeans to visit the area in 1792. Lewis and Clark later explored the area in 1806. Parker’s Landing Historical Park commemorates David C. Parker, on whose Donation Land Claim this site is located.

David C. Parker was the first permanent American settler in Clark County. In 1854, Parker built a small dock (Parker’s Ferry/Parker’s Landing) on the Columbia River to accommodate river boats and platted the town of Parkersville. Parker died in 1858 and is buried somewhere in the vicinity of the site. Lewis Van Vleet was assigned as administrator of his estate. Van Vleet auctioned off half of Parker’s claim and eventually purchased 210 acres and platted an addition to Parkersville to allow for more growth. However, following challenges regarding property titles in Pakersville in the late 1870’s, development in Washougal boomed as Parkersville went into decline.

The Van Vleet family history at the Parkersville site continued from 1858 to 1978 with two more generations of the family. Dr. Louisa Van Vleet Wright (the daughter of Lewis Van Vleet) was the first woman doctor in the Camas/Washougal area. She purchased 10 acres of the Parkersville property from her parents in 1890 and an additional 35 acres in 1904. Her son, Cecil Van Vleet inherited the 10 acres at Parkersville and owned it until selling it to the Port of Camas-Washougal in 1977.

Since 1978, the Parkersville site has been a 3.88 acre public park owned by the Port of Camas-Washougal. It is currently zoned Public Facilities (PF, IP, UP). Today, the Park includes a walking path that connects commemorative features, such as the Van Vleet Historical Plaza and Chinook Plaza.
Staff recommends approval of the nomination to the Clark County Heritage Register based upon the criteria in 40.250.030(F), and the Rules and Procedures of the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission.

II.  CLARK COUNTY HERITAGE REGISTER AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES STATUS

This property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington State Heritage Register in 1976.

III.  HISTORIC NAME

Parkersville Landing Site

IV.  COMMON NAME

Parkers Landing National Historic Site, Parkersville Landing Historic Park

V.  BOARD RESPONSIBILITY

Under Title 40.250.030 (D)(4), the Historic Preservation Commission has the responsibility for hearing and deciding on nominations to the Heritage Register.

VI.  PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

SITE

The subject site (Parkersville) is a 3.88 acre park owned by the Port of Camas-Washougal, located off State Route 14 on the Columbia River in Washougal, WA. It is adjacent to the Camas-Washougal Port Authority at 24 S A Street, Washougal, WA, 98671 and Marina Park. A complete description of the physical location of the nominated site can be found in the Parkersville Clark County Heritage Register (CCHR) Nomination Packet.

BUILDING

There are no historic buildings left on the site. A full description of the built environment and memorials to the Chinook-speaking Native Americans can be found in the nomination.

VII.  STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENT

Criteria for Determining Eligibility for Designation in the Clark County Heritage Register:

Clark County Code 40.250.030(f), states:

- “Any building, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for inclusion in the Clark County Heritage Register if it is significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or cultural heritage of the community; if it has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; is at least 50 years old, or is of lesser age-and has exceptional importance”; and
“The property must meet the above criteria as well as fall into at least one of the categories identified in CCC 40.250.030(f).”

Findings:

a. The Parkersville site is locally significant as it is associated with the Chinook-speaking people who occupied the region for many centuries before European contact. The nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and previous archaeological surveys establish this site as having numerous native American artifacts located on or nearby Parker’s Landing Historical Park.

b. The Parkersville site is associated with David C. Parker, the first permanent American settler in Clark County, who came to the site in 1845. In 1854, Parker built a small dock on the Columbia River to accommodate river boats and platted the town of Parkersville as a Donation Land Claim, which was issued in 1871. Parkersville was a forerunner to the establishment of Washougal in 1878.

c. The site also has association with three generations of the Van Vleet family from 1858-1978. In 1861, Lewis Van Vleet purchased 210 acres of the former Parkersville, which went into decline as the city of Washougal started to develop in the late 1870s. Dr. Louisa Van Vleet Wright (the daughter of Lewis Van Vleet) was the first woman doctor in the Camas/Washougal area. She purchased 10 acres of the Parkersville property from her parents in 1890 and an additional 35 acres in 1904. Her son, Cecil Van Vleet inherited the 10 acres at Parkersville and owned it until selling it to the Port of Camas-Washougal in 1977.

d. The site’s period of significance dates from 2500 to 3000 years ago (native Americans), 1792 (Broughton), 1806 (Lewis and Clark), 1844 (David C. Parker settlement), 1850 (Donation Land Claim, 1854 (Platting of Parkersville), 1858 (death of David C. Parker), 1977 (death of Cecil Van Vleet).

d. The site falls into three of the categories identified in CCC 40.250.030(f), which are:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history.

5. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history.

6. It has yielded or may be likely to yield important archaeological information related to history or prehistory.

The property is locally significant under Criteria 1, 5, and 6 primarily due to:

Criteria 1: The site is associated with David C. Parker, the first permanent American settler in Clark County, who came to the site in 1845. In 1854, Parker built a small dock on the Columbia River to accommodate river boats and platted the town of Parkersville as a Donation Land Claim, which was issued in 1871. Parkersville was a forerunner to the establishment of Washougal in 1878.

Criteria 5: The site also has association with three generations of the Van Vleet family from 1858-1978. In 1861, Lewis Van Vleet purchased 210 acres of the former Parkersville, which went into decline as the city of Washougal started to develop in the late 1870s. Dr. Louisa Van Vleet Wright (the daughter of Lewis Van Vleet) was the first woman doctor in the Camas/Washougal area. She purchased 10 acres of the Parkersville property from her parents in 1890 and an additional 35 acres
in 1904. Her son, Cecil Van Vleet inherited the 10 acres at Parkersville and owned it until selling it to the Port of Camas-Washougal in 1977.

Criteria 6: The nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and previous archaeological surveys establish this site as having numerous native American artifacts located on or nearby Parker’s Landing Historical Park.

VIII. STAFF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the nomination of the Parkersville Site meets all four of the criteria. Staff recommends APPROVAL of the listing of the Parkersville Site to the Clark County Heritage Register.