



The Waterfront District

Public Involvement Process



DRAFT
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A Community Designed Waterfront

The redevelopment Proposal for Bellingham's central waterfront has been shaped by over two decades of community visioning and planning. Thousands of citizens have participated in this effort through public meetings and workshops, focus groups, waterfront tours, written surveys, web page responses, and other venues. The community's passion and support for a revitalized downtown waterfront empowered the Port and City to acquire most of this privately owned industrial property and begin the difficult and expensive task of cleaning up historic contamination, restoring salmon habitat and building new roads, parks and trails to access the waterfront. The community has been actively engaged in designing plans for a new mixed-use waterfront and elected officials have heard - and benefited from - the collective wisdom of the public. The result is the framework for a Master Plan to guide renewal of the waterfront, which represents the values and priorities of Whatcom County residents. The following section details how community voices are shaping a Master Plan for The Waterfront District.

The Waterfront Vision

The community's interest in defining a sustainable future for the waterfront intensified over the past several decades as the natural resources which fueled the traditional waterfront economy slowly became less abundant and less affordable. Replacing lost jobs and finding new uses for vacant and contaminated waterfront property became the focus of a number of planning and strategic investment efforts. While done at different times and by different stakeholders, these actions all recognized the immense importance of the waterfront to the city and region. The following efforts represent the full range of community interests and perspectives on the waterfront which have collectively informed planning for The Waterfront District.

- Waterfront Futures Group (2003-2004): The most significant and extensive of the waterfront visioning efforts was conducted by the Waterfront Futures Group (WFG) in 2003-04. The Port and City each contributed \$250,000 and appointed a 10-member citizen led task force to take a fresh and independent look at the Bellingham Bay waterfront. The WFG held 41 public meetings from January 2003 to June 2004 and had 26 guest forums and special events. The WFG recommended a departure from the traditional heavy industrial working waterfront economy with a new mixture of waterfront uses including residential, educational, commercial, institutional, retail services and public access.
- Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot (1996-present): The Pilot project is a partnership of 14 different federal, state, local and tribal agencies working cooperatively together to improve the environmental health of Bellingham Bay through comprehensive strategic environmental planning that integrates the cleanup of polluted sediments, the restoration of historically lost habitat, the control of pollution sources, and revitalized land uses. The Pilot project is co-managed by the Port and the Department of Ecology.
- Shoreline Master Program Update (2005-present): Local governments are required by the State to adopt a Shoreline Management Program to manage the use of shorelines for the long-term benefit of all citizens of the State by giving preference to water-oriented uses, protecting shoreline natural resources, and promoting public access.

- Bellingham Comprehensive Plan (2005-06): The Comprehensive Plan is a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the physical development of the City. The vision articulated by the Waterfront Futures Group has been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan designated the central waterfront an urban center in which density should be concentrated.
- Central Business District Neighborhood Plan (amended in 2005): The City's Central Business District (CBD) Neighborhood Plan includes strategies to ensure the CBD neighborhood of the future will continue to be the cultural, social and economic center of the region. The vision, guiding principles and recommendations from the WFG were added to the City's plan in 2005.
- Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (2004): The Port updated its Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvement to include the development of a marina in the Georgia Pacific's (GP's) wastewater treatment lagoon. The development of a marina in the ASB was a key element of the Port's purchase of the GP properties in 2005.
- Design Assistance Team (2003): The Bellingham Waterfront Design Assistance Team (DAT) consisted of twelve individuals with expertise in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, planning, transportation and development. The DAT identified ways to encourage desirable change on the waterfront by identifying opportunity areas and issues, obstacles, a vision for development and implementation strategies. The DAT was sponsored by the Northwest Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Waterfront Futures Group.
- Visions for Bellingham (1992): In 1990, the State adopted the Growth Management Act requiring local jurisdictions to plan to accommodate the projected population growth. The City's process to develop a new plan started with a visioning exercise in which over 200 citizen delegates participated in the "Visions for Bellingham" project. This process established a long-term vision for a revitalized city center with Bellingham Bay and Whatcom Creek as the centerpieces.

The most significant of the waterfront revitalization public involvement efforts was conducted by the Waterfront Futures Group (WFG) in 2003-04. The Port and City each contributed \$250,000 and appointed a 10-member citizen-led task force to take a fresh and independent look at the Bellingham Bay waterfront. The WFG engaged the community in an open dialogue about the future of the waterfront through open houses, websites, newspaper coverage, televised meetings, mailings, and other outreach efforts. The WFG gathered input from comments submitted online and at open houses, detailed proposals in the form of white papers and letters, and on-going discussion during waterfront walks, boat tours and public meetings. Professional consultants attended bi-monthly public meetings to capture the community's thoughts and ideas and translate them into a living document, which would guide policy-makers as they made future decisions about the waterfront. The WFG also looked to state and federal agencies, local tribes, the City's Planning Commission, elected officials, consultants, and other successful waterfront communities for ideas and solutions for securing a successful waterfront future. The WFG held 41 public meetings from January 2003 to June 2004 and had 26 guest forums and special events.

The WFG dominated local headlines for 18 months and would become one of the most ambitious public planning processes ever undertaken in Bellingham.

Many thousands of working hours later, the WFG published the 48-page “Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan,” which charted a momentous departure from the traditional heavy industrial working waterfront by proposing a new mixture of uses including residential, educational, commercial, institutional, retail services and public access; while maintaining traditional maritime trades. The WFG recommendations represented the culmination of more than two decades of community planning and strategic investment on Bellingham’s central waterfront. The WFG recognized public acquisition of privately held industrial property on the downtown waterfront was the best way for the community to realize its vision for the future of the waterfront. GP was the largest property owner on the central waterfront with 137-acres dedicated to a complex pulp, paper and chemical facility. GP started shutting down operations in 1999 and the WFG recommended a local public agency acquire and develop this key property in order for Bellingham to become a truly great waterfront city.

Leadership

Public ownership of the GP property would require bold leadership from local agencies. Historic industrial contamination, dilapidated industrial infrastructure, hardened shorelines, heavily impacted salmon habitat, limited access and the railroad’s main line running through the middle of the site were just a few of the problems that would require comprehensive solutions and strong partnerships with local, state and federal agencies. Despite the challenges, the community’s directive was passionate and clear—improve waterfront access, restore the health of the land and water, promote a healthy and dynamic waterfront economy, and reinforce the inherent qualities of each place on the waterfront.

With clear direction from the community, the Port initiated an intensive 6-month study of the GP property to determine liabilities and assets, and to negotiate the terms of a potential property acquisition. The City and the Department of Ecology (Ecology) supported the property acquisition and pledged the financial support needed to make the project work. The City agreed to build the roads and infrastructure necessary to access the site and Ecology agreed to provide grants to help offset the high cost of environmental cleanup. With strong project partners, the Port determined acquisition and redevelopment of the GP property would be economically feasible. The Port discussed the potential property acquisition at a series of public meetings and encouraged the community to submit questions or comments about the project—all of which were answered on the Port’s website. With strong community support and committed project partners, the Port purchased the GP property in January 2005 to help realize the community’s vision of its waterfront future.

From Vision to Master Plan

Shortly after acquiring the GP property, the Port and City began collaborating with the community to move from the vision to a concrete Master Plan for renewal of the waterfront. To ensure the Master Plan was consistent with the community vision, the Port and City appointed a 10 member citizen-led task force called the Waterfront Advisory Group (WAG) to integrate recommendations of the WFG into adopted plans, projects and regulations. The WAG would hold regular public meetings to continue the strong community voice in determining the future of

the waterfront and ensure public awareness and participation in waterfront planning, revitalization and redevelopment activities.

The community Master Planning discussion started with the introduction of several alternative waterfront *design concepts* which met the core objectives of the WFG vision. The advantages and disadvantages of each design concept were publicly discussed and alternative design concepts were proposed. Popular design elements were combined into a *draft Framework Plan* which underwent *economic analysis* and *environmental review*. The initial environmental review raised key redevelopment questions about the Draft Framework Plan which have been answered in a *Proposal* for Waterfront District. This Proposal will be analyzed as the supplemental to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in fall 2008. Following this environmental review, a *draft Master Plan* will be published for stakeholder consideration and adoption by Port and City as the *Master Plan* to guide long-term redevelopment of the central waterfront.

The ongoing development of a Master Plan has generated a real and meaningful community discussion about the future of our waterfront. The public has received frequent updates about the project through community meetings and workshops (many of which are videotaped and shown locally on public access television), weekly guest columns in the Bellingham Herald (Whatcom County's largest newspaper), informational booths at local events, stakeholder presentations, site tours, and other methods. A complete list of public outreach tools is listed in Appendix A. From January 2005 to October 8, 2008 the WAG held 30 public meetings and the Port and City hosted 14 community workshops to gather public comment and keep the community informed about the master planning process. Project milestones were publicly reviewed and discussed at 53 Port Commission meetings and 27 City Council meetings. In addition, the Port held 185 discussion sessions with stakeholder groups including downtown business owners, WWU, maritime interests, tribal representatives, environmental groups, neighborhood groups, and affordable housing advocates. During this time period, the Port and City received 323 formal written comments and thousands of informal comments about the development of a Master Plan.

Step 1-- Design Concepts

The Port and City hired professional consultants to develop four different waterfront design concepts that met the WFG vision for the central waterfront. These design concepts illustrated how public parks and trails, new habitat, road plans and development might take shape on the waterfront. The public was offered blank waterfront maps and encouraged to create their own independent design concepts. A robust community dialogue followed in which the Port and City received feedback and recommendations from the public, the City's Planning Commission, the WAG, environmental resource agencies, and professional consultants. After a series of WAG meetings, public workshops and open houses; waterfront design concepts which met core environmental, economic and community objectives were combined into a Draft Framework Plan.

Step 2—Draft Framework Plan

The Draft Framework Plan was presented to the City Council and Port Commission at an open public meeting on September 26, 2006. The Draft Framework Plan included an economic analysis to help the community and decision-makers understand the anticipated public investment costs for environmental cleanup, parks, infrastructure, shoreline restoration and a variety of potential project amenities. The financial analysis also examined the anticipated economic benefits of the project including new jobs, increased local property taxes to support community needs and services, revenue generated by the sale or lease of property, and private sector investment. After careful consideration, the Port Commission and City Council voted unanimously to approve the Draft Framework Plan for further analysis on October 9, 2006. Since this time, the Draft Framework Plan and corresponding economic analysis have been presented to the community through public meetings, project presentations, websites, mailings and other venues. Some public amenities identified in the Draft Framework Plan including pedestrian bridges over the Whatcom Waterway and Roeder Avenue, were removed due to stakeholder concerns about cost. On April 17, 2007, the Port began a formal process for the environmental review of the waterfront master planning effort.

Step 3—Draft Environmental Review

The Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires state and local agencies to identify significant environmental impacts of their actions (ie: noise, views, traffic, air quality, etc.) and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. The SEPA process is helping the community and decision makers better understand how to thoughtfully design the central waterfront so it complements the surrounding neighborhoods. As was anticipated, the draft environmental review raised questions about several key redevelopment decisions. These questions focused on the following areas:

- Sustainable development strategies
- Preferred density
- View impacts
- Phasing of development
- Park acreage
- Shoreline setbacks
- Building a road, trail and transportation grid which:
 - creates strong connections between the surrounding neighborhoods and the water
 - creates a walkable and bikeable neighborhood
 - supports relocation of the railroad
 - supports phased development over 20-30 years
 - deals with the substantial grade and slope changes from downtown to the waterfront

In March 2008, the Port Commission directed staff to pause in the completion of the Environmental Impact Statement in order to conduct further research to determine answers to these important questions.

Step 4—The Proposal for the Waterfront District and Final Environmental Review

The waterfront redevelopment Proposal is an important step in the community master planning process which was developed to provide a path forward by answering key questions through additional research, engineering and analysis. The Proposal provides a clear set of recommendations to define the elements needed for a Preferred Alternative, which can be fully evaluated by the Port, the City and community in a supplemental to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The supplemental to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be released for a 30-day public review and comment period and a public hearing in fall 2008 in preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement. This environmental review will include the equal analysis of two alternate street grids developed to address traffic impacts identified during the initial environmental review of the Draft Framework Plan street grid. The Proposal will serve as the framework for a Master Plan which will guide renewal of the waterfront over the next 20-30 years.

Step 5--Review & Approval of Master Plan (Early 2009)

A Draft Master Plan will be released for public review and comment after the supplemental to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is completed. This document will first be evaluated in open public meetings by the City's Planning Commission. The Planning Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor which is tasked with reviewing and making recommendations to the City Council on the adoption and implementation of plans and regulations for the physical development of the city. The draft Master Plan will then be forwarded to the City Council for further public review and consideration with recommendations from the Planning Commission. The Port Commission will also consider the Master Plan in open public meetings. Both the Port Commission and City Council must ultimately approve the draft Master Plan before it is considered final and the transformation of the city center waterfront from heavy industrial to mixed-use can begin.

The Community Voice

"Have my comments been heard and how are they reflected in redevelopment plans?" is a common question from community members. Community input is a fundamental consideration for policy-makers, and elected officials monitor many forms of public comment including written and verbal comments, formal public testimony, conversations, and letters to the editor. Each month, decision-makers receive the full text of all written comments submitted to the Port and City. Elected officials are also given regular updates from Port and City staff on public comments about the project. Occasionally one big idea from the community catches on (like the Sunset Boulevard concept in which streets are angled from east to west to maximize water views and sunlight), but typically recurring themes from the community are combined at specific locations on the waterfront in a convergence of big ideas. Ultimately, the elected representatives of the Port and City are responsible for approving a Master Plan which reflects the collective community vision.

“I read every written comment and have asked our professional staff to research a variety of issues based on these comments.” Port Commissioner Jim Jorgensen

A deliberate master planning process is allowing multiple phases of public review and input before final preparation of a Master Plan. However, this careful master planning process has also raised concerns from the public that comments submitted months or years ago are no longer valid or have the same influence. The WFG’s Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan is a valuable resource for newly elected officials and political incumbents which summarizes nearly two years of public meetings, hearings and community conversations on the waterfront. The WFG gathered advice, insights and knowledge from property owners and businesses, community groups and interested citizens to create the foundation for this living document. The WAG meets regularly to review planning documents for consistency with the WFG vision and to ensure community voices are reflected in waterfront redevelopment plans. The WAG begins each meeting with an open public comment period to provide an ongoing forum for public comment in the context of changing conditions, new information and evolving community priorities.

What did we hear from the public?

The following is a summary of public comment and recommendations from the Bellingham Planning Commission, the Waterfront Futures Group, the Waterfront Advisory Group, and environmental resource agencies. The Waterfront District redevelopment Proposal has been informed by the full range of interests, perspectives, opinions and needs that are present among those who will be affected by this redevelopment. Each of the following sections begins with a range of public comments received by the Port and City. A more detailed summary of public comments is listed in Appendix C.

Environmental Considerations

“Preserve and enhance existing habitat features. Preservation efforts should focus on Whatcom Creek estuary, the log pond, eelgrass meadows and pocket beaches.”

“Address shoreline impacts from redevelopment such as habitat, views, and public access changes.”

“Our Bay is a precious and a finite natural resource. It not only represents a deeply aesthetic and beautiful feature of our City, it is part of the larger ecosystem of the Puget Sound and Salish basin.”

“We are privileged to have this ‘Once in a Lifetime’ opportunity to help restore & nurture the Bellingham waterfront & Environs to its natural health & ecological balance.”

‘Restore the Health of the Land and Water’ is a guiding principle of the WFG that has been reiterated by the community throughout the master planning process. Many members of the public strongly advocated creating high-value salmon habitat to support salmon recovery efforts as well pocket beaches for people to access the water. Some citizens expressed concerns about

sea level rise, tsunamis, environmental contamination due to past industrial activities, and seismic activity given the site's waterfront location on man-made fill. Some people asked the Port and City to pay for environmental cleanup beyond state and federal regulatory requirements.

Environmental sustainability and innovation are central themes and defining features of The Waterfront District Proposal. The Port and City have looked to environmental resource agencies like Ecology and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for guidance on how to clean-up historic contamination to support the mixed-use redevelopment envisioned by the WFG, and how to build a salmon-friendly waterfront. The Port and City defer to stringent state and federal cleanup standards as appropriate levels of environmental cleanup. Following the advice and recommendations from environmental agencies and experts, the Proposal incorporates widespread restoration efforts including cleaning up historic contamination, removing old creosote pilings, creating soft, shallow banks, and extensive habitat restoration. Many community members noted the importance of water-dependent jobs and the Proposal strives to balance this significant economic consideration with environmental sustainability by preserving some areas of the central waterfront with lower habitat restoration potential such as the deep-water Shipping Terminal for future shipping uses.

The Waterfront District redevelopment Proposal is significant in that it is the first generation of planning efforts that addresses the potential risks of global climate change over the next 100 years. As part of site redevelopment, site grades are proposed to be raised several feet above existing grades to address the impacts of sea level rise and offer protection against potential tsunamis. Community concerns about potential earthquakes have been studied and will be addressed through the engineering design and permitting process. *A description of environmental cleanup plans can be found in The Waterfront District Proposal, section 3.0, and an illustration of the new shoreline environment can be found in section 7.2.*

Sustainable Strategies

“The process for identifying, defining, managing, and measuring specific values within economic, environmental, and social dimensions is our principle challenge to effective and fair adoption.”

“We need to look at new, cutting edge uses.”

“The new waterfront should serve as a model of modern, clean energy, environmentally friendly development.”

“Our first priority should be to add to the livability and enjoyment of the local citizens.”

“Bellingham should use the waterfront to augment cultural activity.”

“We must create a living trust for those who follow us.”

The community has clearly and consistently articulated the importance of integrating environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability into waterfront planning. The WAG hosted several community discussions regarding the relevance and importance of this Triple Bottom Line approach toward master planning on the central waterfront, and has also examined other waterfront projects like Dockside Green in Victoria for examples on how to best achieve a Triple Bottom Line outcome. Many community members suggested using incentives and credits for “green” buildings and incorporating Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) intentions and requirements in the design and construction of The Waterfront District.

The Waterfront District Proposal reflects a careful balance of land dedicated to jobs and industry, areas set aside for community amenities like parks and trails, and land allocated to environmental restoration. Rebuilding the waterfront economy with living wage jobs is at the heart of the Proposal with strong support for Whatcom County’s marine trades activities. A vibrant, mixed-use waterfront with Western Washington University (WWU) as an anchor tenant will create conditions attractive to jobs of the future. Large and small parks with braided trails and extensive public access to the shoreline provide important community amenities and promote a walkable, bikeable community which de-emphasizes the importance of the car. Innovative infrastructure solutions will improve water quality in Bellingham Bay, reduce energy consumption, and complement environmental cleanup and habitat restoration activities.

The Waterfront District is being developed as a pilot project under the LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) pilot program. LEED-ND is a rating system for evaluating and rewarding development which uses the principles of smart growth, new urbanism and green building. The LEED-ND standards include access to active public spaces, efficient use of renewable energy resources, compact design, proximity to transit, green building, mixed housing types, pedestrian-and bicycle-friendly design, and 55 other sustainable design criteria. The commitment to environmental restoration and sustainable strategies on the waterfront is giving Bellingham national recognition as an environmental showcase community. *A description of sustainable strategies can be found in The Waterfront District Proposal, section 4.0 and on pages 25, 40, 42, 45, 48-57, 83-85, 94-97, 99-102.*

Land Uses

“Building design should be open, waterfront accessible, and include public piazzas, small business spaces and open-air cafes/coffee houses.”

“Numerous smaller parks or ‘green spaces’ can accommodate public space and access, reduce traffic congestion and parking problems.”

“Plan housing for middle income people. Many younger professionals want to own homes downtown, but there are few options.”

“Plan ahead to integrate parking below buildings. Parking issues can kill even a great idea. And, Not often do we get a second chance to do things right. Let’s not blow it!”

“It’s not enough to say we have a museum and theater up the block.”

The WFG vision for the city center waterfront calls for *‘the creation of a mixed-use neighborhood that combines commercial, institutional, educational, retail services and residential uses, and that over time will provide many new job opportunities and a substantial amount of urban housing.’* How land will be divided between competing uses such as jobs, housing and parks has been a lively topic of community conversation with important considerations such as the local economy, growth management, and quality of life. Increased density offers more employment opportunities and additional capacity to absorb projected population growth and avoid rural sprawl. However increased density also results in more traffic, taller buildings and other impacts. Public comments strongly support making the waterfront a part of people’s everyday lives by increasing public access to the water and enhancing views of the water. There have been many recommendations on strategies or specific projects that would help people interact with the water. Carefully designing the new waterfront neighborhood so that it *‘reinforces the inherent qualities of each place on the waterfront’* is a WFG guiding principle. Many people commented on the importance of celebrating the history and culture of the waterfront and offered suggestions like a totem park, a Coast Salish museum, interpretive walks, and the preservation of buildings or industrial icons. Many citizens favored specific reuse opportunities for GP’s 37-acre wastewater treatment lagoon including as a new marina, a community park, a stormwater treatment facility, or as a habitat restoration area. Some people suggested using underground or structured parking to improve walkability and reduce stormwater impacts to Bellingham Bay

The Waterfront District Proposal is intended to support a medium density sustainable development that is phased in over 30 years and includes a healthy balance between new jobs, new housing opportunities, and public amenities. This live/work environment supports a walkable community and provides a critical mass of jobs and housing. The large planning area has allowed the inclusion of land uses which reflect diverse community interests--large public parks will be within walking distance to areas reserved for waterfront jobs. New beaches will be sculpted from industrial shorelines to provide public recreation opportunities while some waterfront trails will be set back from restored shorelines to support salmon recovery efforts. Housing and shops will be mixed together with a new campus for WWU. The Waterfront District is broken up into five distinctive areas which have been synergistically located so as to construct a vibrant new neighborhood and create a unique sense of place in different waterfront locations.

The Waterfront District provides opportunities to expand and improve upon public access and public views to the water. Approximately 80% of the shoreline will be accessible to the community and visitors helping make the waterfront a regular part of people’s lives. Spectacular new parks and trails will be one of the defining features of The Waterfront District. The Waterfront District will include the celebration and integration of the historic working waterfront into the new mixed-use neighborhood. The Port has identified several industrial icons from GP for future historical interpretation including two tall ceramic cylindrical towers used as high density pulp storage towers, a large drive motor and chipper wheel, a large metal spherical acid accumulator, a Hooper screen, a rotating glass tube separation device and a log loader. The

adaptive reuse of buildings and the preservation of additional industrial icons are also being considered. Several GP buildings identified by the public as having historical value (including the Granary Building) have distinct economic and feasibility reuse challenges, which are being evaluated. The proposed road grid could be adjusted to accommodate preservation of specific buildings if reuse is determined to be feasible.

Policy-makers evaluated potential reuse options for GP's wastewater treatment lagoon and decided on a marina for its ability to serve as an economic driver for the project and help meet the demand for boat moorage from Whatcom County residents. The marina is being designed to include nearly a mile of public access around the breakwater and habitat restoration features. The long-term strategy for parking is for underground or structured parking with little or no surface parking other than on-street parking. The parking strategy will support both the downtown and the waterfront, and reduce stormwater impacts to Bellingham Bay. *A description of land use can be found in The Waterfront District Proposal, section 4.0.*

Transportation

“Street location should be set back at least a block away from the waterfront, except in designated places where small streets allow access to the water. This would create a unique element that gives invitation to view the water from afar, and at the same time safe-guards the enjoyable experience of being at the water's edge.”

“Enhance/create connections that are pedestrian/bike/family friendly between Old Town and Old Town Extension and also Columbia neighborhood to the north, and, I bike from South Hill to Old Town and Squalicum Harbor all the time.”

“Non-auto based trips can be encouraged by creating a “park once” environment that makes it easy for pedestrians to connect to amenities, goods and services, jobs and housing within neighborhoods and districts.”

“Let's talk about existing industrial infrastructure that can be built around to make the area a ‘working waterfront’ and pedestrian friendly.”

‘Provide public amenities and infrastructure to support redevelopment’ is a WFG recommendation and the community has repeatedly emphasized the importance of developing strong transportation connections between downtown and the waterfront. Many people support the concept of a pedestrian/bicycle friendly transportation network which deemphasizes the use of the car. “Sunset Boulevard” is the name an independently submitted waterfront design concept in which roads are angled from east to west to maximize views of the water—a concept many people have commented as important. Transportation connections along the waterfront have been a lively topic of community conversation. Some people suggested locating streets along the shoreline to facilitate quick and easy access to the water—particularly for the elderly or disabled. Other people recommend keeping roads away from the water to preserve the shoreline for habitat or public park features. Many people encouraged the exploration of alternate forms of transportation such as buses, boats, and a gondola from WWU to the waterfront. Parking close

to retail stores and delivery routes for trucks were cited as important for businesses to be successful.

The proposed transportation network creates signature roads which will function as gateways to the waterfront and create strong connections between the surrounding neighborhoods and the water. The street grid is angled from east to west to enhance visual access from community spaces to the water. Streets are gently sloped from the bluff to the water to maximize water views and support underground parking. The transportation network creates a walkable neighborhood by serving the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and using traffic calming features to slow vehicle circulation. Pedestrian streets provide slower paced enjoyment of The Waterfront District while bicycle-oriented streets offer quicker commuter options for cyclists. The transportation network provides easy access to new community spaces and several connection points to the waterfront parks network. The transportation network provides a cost-effective solution by supporting phased development of the site and also supports the relocation of the railroad. The core street grid provides future options to support increased circulation through alternative transportation solutions. *A description of transportation can be found in The Waterfront District Proposal, section 6.0.*

Parks, Trails & Habitat

“The Waterfront District must create a comprehensive public amenity system that builds on the existing open space networks, especially along the waterfront and Whatcom Creek.”

“Open Space, healthy ecosystem integrations, and light impact access are vital”.

“The area must be viewed as it truly is, part of, and connected to the city.”

“If one craves some fresh air and openness...”

‘*Improve waterfront access*’ is a guiding principle of the WFG and a strong directive from Whatcom County residents. Many people commented on the incredible opportunity to build new parks, trails and habitat on the waterfront which could define Bellingham as a great waterfront city for generations to come. Connecting open space networks along the waterfront and Whatcom Creek were also mentioned as important for creating a waterfront gateway to the city. Some community members commented the amount of parks would not be sufficient, while others were concerned about the cost of building parks. Some people advocated using available land for jobs to help rebuild the waterfront economy. The community was generally very supportive of creating public access to the shoreline and new linkages to regional trail systems and the Coast Millennium Trail. Many people identified specific locations on the waterfront for new beaches for kayak access and other waterfront experiences. The community strongly supported habitat restoration efforts in The Waterfront District including softening hardened shorelines and building new habitat in and around GP’s wastewater treatment lagoon. Some people advocated for a pedestrian bridge over the Whatcom Waterway or a pedestrian bridge from the Elizabeth Park neighborhood over Roeder Avenue to the waterfront.

Almost no public access to the shoreline is presently available in The Waterfront District. The proposed redevelopment will provide the community and visitors access to approximately 80% of the shoreline. Eighteen percent (33 acres) of the site is dedicated to large and small parks and open spaces connected by a braided system of pedestrian trails. The parks and open space are strategically located to provide strong community connections between the uplands and water with linkages to regional trail systems and the Coast Millennium Trail. The parks will be expensive but have strong community support and will increase private investment in The Waterfront District over the long-term. The Proposal includes extensive habitat restoration which will provide a diverse near-shore environment for endangered salmon. Pedestrian bridges over the Whatcom Waterway and Roeder Avenue are not included in the Proposal due to economic considerations but remain possible over the long-term. *A description of parks, trails and habitat plans can be found in The Waterfront District Proposal, section 7.0.*

Utilities

“The Co-Gen plant represents extraordinary potential for a step forward in energy/utility efficiency.”

Consider stormwater as an on-site amenity, rather than shunting it underground in a piped system.”

“Correct the existing utility infrastructure that is currently routed through residential areas to bring utility services to the waterfront.”

“A more detailed stormwater system site plan including proposed methods, system configuration and a management plan for system maintenance in contaminated areas.”

“Consider the potential impacts on all neighborhoods of new infrastructure and utility systems needed for the project.”

Innovation is a recurrent community theme for utilities in The Waterfront District. “Green” power, low-impact development strategies, water conservation and reuse and wastewater reuse have all been recommended by community members for further study and implementation. Many people commented that the use of sustainable infrastructure and utilities could define The Waterfront District as a world-wide model for how to build a neighborhood and have associated economic benefits.

Most of the utilities in The Waterfront District will need to be built or replaced, providing a tremendous opportunity to integrate sustainable design principles and functions within the planned infrastructure. Stormwater experts recently met with representatives from the Port, City, Sustainable Connections and Ecology to share ideas and strategies for using low-impact development stormwater management options on contaminated waterfront sites like The Waterfront District. It is the intent of the Port and City to continue pursuing innovative utility

approaches in the planning and design of infrastructure to create a sustainable development. A description of utilities can be found in *The Waterfront District Proposal*, section 8.0.

Cost

“Marine related operations are a major asset to the local economy. Passenger and charter operations generate direct employment as well as ancillary tourism including accommodation, dining and shopping revenues to city and county businesses including marine maintenance, trades and chandlery businesses.”

“There is always a bottom line and, in this case, the question is how do we pay for it?”

“Tourism is and should play a significant role in the redevelopment of the waterfront. I’m not suggesting “Disney Land”, however, a project that fits our community values and enhances our resident and visitor experience is a valuable component that should be incorporated into the plan.”

“A mix of private and public development is essential to afford clean-up costs and return economic as well as quality of life benefit to our citizens without a huge tax burden.”

“The natural beauty that everyone loves is can and did exist along with the heavy industry that enabled people to create a vibrant community here.”

‘Promote a healthy and dynamic waterfront economy’ is a WFG guiding principle and core objective for the Port and City. Many community members expressed concern about recovering the substantial public investment in the project while others were concerned about not investing enough money in the waterfront...that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and the project needs to be done right. Many people suggested specific employers which could be located on the waterfront to promote a sustainable economic future.

The Port and City are considering investing \$347 million to support the long-term redevelopment of the waterfront. This investment is estimated to stimulate over \$1 billion in private investment and produce thousands of local jobs and other community benefits. Education, innovation and new jobs are the driving force of the project and a marine industry “Innovation Partnership Zone” has already been established to develop partnerships between education and industry, generate lab-to-market technology, and create conditions attractive to jobs of the future. The anticipated public investment will support water-dependent activities and uses; and will help achieve the appropriate balance of jobs, housing and goods and services needed to establish sustainable economic conditions on the waterfront. A description of cost estimates can be found in *The Waterfront District Proposal*, section 9.0.

Thought-Provokers or Innovative Ideas

Many people offered original ideas or suggestions which challenged the community vision and/or the City and Port's current approach. All ideas and suggestions are an important part of the community dialogue and were considered as thought provokers or innovative ideas. The following are some of these ideas or suggestions:

- *Maintain the entire site for heavy industrial uses*
- *Locate Western Washington University at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal*
- *Redevelop the Bellingham Shipping Terminal for mixed-use development*
- *Use the water main from Lake Whatcom to GP to supply water to the Waterfront District for attractive streams, pools, rapids, etc.*
- *Rebuild Citizens' Dock*
- *Maintain deep-draft navigation in Whatcom Waterway to Roeder Avenue bridge*
- *Relocate the sewer line under Roeder Avenue to allow vessel traffic further up the estuary*
- *Restrict vehicles and make the entire site pedestrian accessible*
- *Build canals through the site to create more waterfront*
- *Completely remove GP's wastewater treatment lagoon*
- *Turn the entire area into a public park*

Economic considerations or competing values did not support the inclusion of these concepts in the waterfront redevelopment Proposal. All public comments are evaluated by Port and City officials within the context of Triple Bottom Line principles: a format which allows environmental and social components of the waterfront redevelopment project to be considered in conjunction with economic viability. By evaluating public comments using Triple Bottom Line principles, the community is designing a waterfront Master Plan which will result in an innovative and successful development that is both environmentally and economically sustainable.

Specific Projects

Many community members suggested specific development projects which might work well on the waterfront such as a new concert hall, a performing arts studio, a logging museum, an alternative energy research center, or a gondola from WWU to the waterfront. These ideas, along with many others, are supported within the framework of the mixed-use waterfront redevelopment Proposal and could produce new economic and cultural opportunities for Whatcom County over the projected 20 to 30-year build-out.

Conclusion

The redevelopment of Bellingham's central waterfront is a generational opportunity to make Bellingham a truly great waterfront city. Public ownership combined with strong leadership from local and state agencies has afforded the community with unprecedented control to define a vision and plan for renewal on the waterfront. Since the closure of GP's pulp mill in 2001, the public has engaged in the most intensive planning effort in Whatcom County's history. Thousands of citizens have spoken—and been heard—at 85 public meetings and workshops, 53 Port Commission meetings, 27 City Council meetings, 12 joint City Council / Port Commission

meetings and over 200 discussion sessions with project stakeholders. The community has challenged the Port and City with big ideas and emphasized and re-emphasized the importance of the waterfront to the city and the county. Restore the health of the land and water, improve public access, promote a healthy and dynamic waterfront economy, and reinforce the inherent qualities of each place on the waterfront are the community's guiding principles for waterfront redevelopment and central themes in the Proposal for The Waterfront District. In early 2009, the Proposal will be shaped into a Master Plan which will be adopted by the Port Commission and City Council. The Master Plan will guide renewal on the central waterfront over the next 20-30 years and make the community's vision of a revitalized downtown waterfront a reality.

Appendix A

Public Outreach Tools: These tools allowed the community to stay tuned in and speak out during the development of the community vision for the waterfront and Master Plan for The Waterfront District.

- **Waterfront Futures Group:** In 2002, the Port and City each contributed \$250,000 and appointed a 10-member citizen led task force to take a fresh and independent look at the Bellingham Bay waterfront. The WFG held 41 public meetings from January 2003 to June 2004 and had 26 guest forums and special events. The WFG recommended a departure from the traditional heavy industrial working waterfront economy with a new mixture of waterfront uses including residential, educational, commercial, institutional, retail services and public access.
- **Waterfront Advisory Group:** In 2004, the City and Port created a 10 member citizen-led task force to continue the strong community voice in determining the future of the Bellingham waterfront. The WAG holds regular community meetings to ensure public awareness and participation in waterfront planning, revitalization, and redevelopment activities. Work with the Port and the City staff to consider and integrate recommendations of the Waterfront Futures Group in adopted Port and City plans, projects and regulations. Review and comment on the consistency of proposed plans, projects, and regulatory amendments concerning the waterfront. Advise the Port and City on benchmarks of progress on waterfront visions and goals and periodically reporting to the Port Commission and City Council on the progress in achieving those goals. Serve as an advocate for waterfront development, consistent with adopted plans.
- **Weekly Guest Columns in the Bellingham Herald:** The Bellingham Herald is Whatcom County's largest newspaper. Weekly guest columns document all news and events related to the community master planning process on the central waterfront.
- **Port Commission and City Council Meetings:** The Port Commission and City Council have important approval roles at key stages in The Waterfront District project. The City Council and Port Commission also review and discuss key project milestones in open public meetings.
- **Community Open Houses and Design Workshops**
- **Presentations and Site Tours:** Since 2005, the Port and City have responded to waterfront redevelopment information requests by delivering over 170 presentations groups such as neighborhood groups, rotary clubs, the chamber of commerce, city club, Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, and local high school students
- **Public Access Television (BTV-10):** All key community meetings are videotaped and aired regularly on public access television.

- **Informational Booths at Local Events:** The Port and City have distributed information about the waterfront redevelopment project at local events like the Whatcom County fair, Bayfest, and Sand in the City. Informational booths are a great outreach tool for people who have not been actively following the waterfront redevelopment effort.
- **Websites:** The Port and City websites are updated regularly to inform the community and share presentations and technical documents. www.portofbellingham.com www.cityofbellingham.com Western Washington University also has a project website at www.wvu.edu/president/waterfront/waterfrontnews.shtml
- **Phone Hotline:** Citizens are encouraged to call the Port at 360.676.2500 to ask questions about the waterfront redevelopment project and schedule group presentations.
- **Standing Exhibits** with presentation boards, artistic renderings, and 3-D models are used help community members visualize this large-scale project. The exhibit is currently on display for the general public during regular business hours at the Port Commission chambers, 1801 Roeder Avenue.
- **Informational Videos:** The Port and City have produced several informational videos for broadcast on project websites and/or BTV-10. These videos include *Waterfront Vision (2008)*; *Bellingham's Waterfront 2007 (2007)*; *Bellingham's Waterfront: Industrial Past, Promising Future (2006)*; and *Portfields: Charting a Course for Port Revitalization (2005)*.
- **Newsletters** (electronic newsletters and neighborhood mailings): Several informational mailers were distributed during the waterfront visioning and planning process. These brief "newsletter/fact sheets" included project information, advertised opportunities to comment, and encouraged public feedback through a variety of mechanisms. They were distributed to the project's mailing list, as well as made available on the project's website.
- **Newspaper Advertisements and Inserts**

**Waterfront Advisory Group Meetings
May 24, 2005-October 8, 2008**

May 24, 2005
July 13, 2005
August 10, 2005
October 12, 2005
November 9, 2005
November 28, 2005
December 8, 2005
January 12, 2006
January 24, 2006
February 8, 2006
February 15, 2006
March 14, 2006
May 24, 2006
June 19, 2006
December 13, 2006
January 31, 2007
February 21, 2007
March 21, 2007
May 16, 2007
June 20, 2007
September 19, 2007
October 17, 2007
December 12, 2007
January 15, 2008
February 6, 2008
March 12, 2008
May 14, 2008
June 11, 2008
August 13, 2008
October 8, 2008

**Community Open Houses & Workshops
(2005-October 8, 2008)**

Date	Purpose
November 15, 2005	Strategic Guidelines Public Meeting
November 16, 2005	Strategic Guidelines Public Meeting
December 8, 2005	Waterfront Site Design Concept Community Open House
January 24, 2006	Waterfront Site Design Concept Community Open House
January 31, 2006	Waterfront Site Design Concept Community Open House
February 1, 2006	Waterfront Site Design Concept Community Open House
February 13, 2006	Waterfront Site Design Concept Community Open House
March 28, 2006	New Downtown Marina Community Open House
September 26, 2006	Draft Economic Framework Plan Community Waterfront Update/Open House
April 4, 2007	EIS Update Community Waterfront Update
April 18, 2007	EIS Update Community Waterfront Update
September 19, 2007	Master Plan Concept Planning Session #1
December 12, 2007	Master Plan Public Update
February 1, 2008	Master Plan Concept Planning Session #2

**Port of Bellingham
Stakeholder Presentations & Briefings
(2005-October 8, 2008)**

Date	Organization
1/20/05	G-P Property Transfer Ceremony
5/4/05	WWU Waterfront Forum
6/5/05	Bellingham Bay Foundation
7/15/05	Marine Mammals
7/15/05	G-P Public Site Tour
7/22/05	G-P Public Site Tour
7/29/05	G-P Public Site Tour
8/5/05	G-P Public Site Tour
8/8/05	Lummi Nation Site Tour
8/12/05	G-P Public Site Tour
8/15/05	NW Washington Fair
8/16/05	Governor's Economic Development Commission
8/16/05	NW Washington Fair
8/17/05	NW Washington Fair
8/17/05	Sierra Club
8/18/05	NW Washington Fair
8/19/05	G-P Public Site Tour
8/19/05	NW Washington Fair
8/20/05	NW Washington Fair
8/21/05	NW Washington Fair
8/26/05	G-P Public Site Tour
9/1/05	Bellingham Planning Commission-CBD Neighborhood Plan
9/2/05	G-P Public Site Tour
9/9/05	G-P Public Site Tour
9/15/05	Soroptimist Club
9/16/05	G-P Public Site Tour
9/23/05	G-P Public Site Tour
9/29/05	G-P Public Site Tour
9/30/05	G-P Public Site Tour
10/7/05	G-P Public Site Tour
10/14/05	G-P Public Site Tour
10/18/05	Inbound Investment Committee
10/21/05	G-P Public Site Tour
10/28/05	G-P Public Site Tour
11/3/05	WWU Class
11/5/05	NOAA Ship Rainier Tour
11/14/05	G-P Public Site Tour
11/21/05	G-P Public Site Tour
1/3/06	Chuckanut Firefighters Association
1/24/06	Inbound Investment Committee

2/7/06	Bellingham Arts Commission
2/7/06	G-P Public Site Tour
2/8/06	Whatcom Maritime Association
2/9/06	WWU Economics Association
2/13/08	Waterfront Site Design Concept Community Open House
2/15/06	Mt. Baker Foothills Economic Development Association
2/15/06	Bellingham Senior Center
2/21/06	Partnership Meeting
2/21/06	Sehome Neighborhood Association
2/22/06	Coffee with a Commissioner, Deming
2/22/06	Downtown Renaissance Network
2/23/06	Coffee with a Commissioner, Ferndale
2/23/06	Chamber of Commerce Business Forum
2/24/06	Coffee with a Commissioner, Lynden
3/1/06	COG: Community Transportation Advisory Group
3/2/06	Lummi Nation
3/2/06	Coffee with a Commissioner, Sumas
3/3/06	Coffee with a Commissioner, Everson
3/08/06	Coffee with a Commissioner, Blaine
3/8/06	Whatcom County Board of Realtors
3/9/06	Bellingham Yacht Club
3/27/06	Rotary Club
3/28/06	Marina Advisory Committee
4/5/06	People for Puget Sound
4/18/06	Port of Camas Washougal
4/28/06	Whatcom Community College
5/9/06	Nooksack Tribal Counsel
5/9/06	Whatcom School Retirees
5/11/06	Spyglass Homeowners Association
6/6/06	Rotary Club
8/1/06	Trust for Public Lands Conference
8/7/06	State Legislators
8/14/06	Whatcom County Fair
8/15/06	Whatcom County Fair
8/16/06	Whatcom County Fair
8/17/06	Whatcom County Fair
8/18/06	Whatcom County Fair
9/7/06	Governor's Economic Workforce Development Conference
10/5/06	Marine Resources Committee
10/10/06	Re/Max Realtors
10/16/06	Dock and Marinas Conference
10/17/06	Whatcom County Housing Authority Board
10/18/06	Bellingham Herald Staff
10/19/06	WWU Huxley College Tour
10/21/06	League of Women Voters

10/24/06	Bellingham Bay Rotary Club
10/26/06	Whatcom County Housing Authority
11/2/06	Salmon Summit
11/2/06	Rotary Club
11/8/08	Inbound Investment Committee
11/14/06	National Brownfields Conference
11/17/06	Northwest Indian College Faculty
11/22/06	Bellingham Navy League
11/27/06	Board of Higher Education
12/13/06	Whatcom and Skagit County American Society of Civil Engineers
12/14/06	Sustainable Connections Green Building Conference
1/11/07	Bellingham Sail and Power Squadron
1/16/07	Corinthian Yacht Club
1/23/07	ROMEOS
1/24/07	Elks Club
1/27/07	Developer Open House
1/30/07	Kiwanis
2/8/07	Bellingham Sail and Power Squadron
2/12/07	WWU Class
2/28/07	Kiwanis of Lake Whatcom
3/13/07	WRBA
3/14/07	Whatcom Maritime Association
3/16/07	Waterfront 2007 and Beyond-State Legislators & Staff
3/30/07	LSI
4/11/07	Planning Commission EIS Update
4/20/07	Bellingham Masonic Lodge
5/2/07	Whatcom County Bar Association
5/2/07	WWU Academy for Lifelong Learning Course
5/4/07	Inbound Investment Committee
5/8/07	WWU Waterfront Development Committee
5/17/07	Rotary Club
5/17/07	SpyGlass Homeowners Association
5/29/07	Whatcom Community College
6/12/07	Whatcom Museum – Brown Bag Lunch
6/14/07	Building Partnership for Environmental Cleanups and Sustainable Communities Conference
6/21/07	Site Tour-Birch Equipment
6/21/07	WWU
6/29/07	Kinship Conservation Fellows
7/14/07	Bayfest
7/19/07	Western Washington University Class
7/19/07	Festival Square Condominium Association
7/23/07	Delegation from Cheongju, Korea
7/27/07	Korean Science Teachers
8/3/07	Sand in the City

9/1/07	Site Tour-Japanese Delegation
9/6/07	Sustainable Communities and Land Use Workshop
9/11/07	Bellingham Rotary
9/17/07	Delegation from Japanese University
9/18/07	Bellingham Rotary
9/20/08	Consent Decree for the Whatcom Waterway Site Signing (Meet with City of Bellingham, DNR, DOE officials)
9/24/07	CFMA
9/25/07	Certified Financial Manager Association
9/26/07	AIA Northwest and Pacific Regional Council
10/5/07	NOAA Ship Ranier Tours
10/5/07	Green Building Council
10/10/07	CCIM Institute
10/15/07	WWU Foundation Division Staff
10/25/07	WWU
10/30/07	Re/Max Realtors
11/15/07	Washington State House and Senate Capital Budget Committees
11/27/07	Get NOAA Community Update
11/30/07	North Whatcom Rotary
12/14/07	Associated General Contractors
1/11/08	North Sound Democratic Women
1/17/08	WWU Class
2/5/08	New Whatcom Landowners
2/7/08	Whatcom Community College
2/15/08	WWU Recreation Class
2/26/08	Coldwell Banker staff and agents
3/6/08	American Fisheries Society
3/7/08	WWU Conference
3/10/08	Whatcom County Democratic Women's Club
3/11/08	Chemical Engineering Society
3/13/08	Developer Open House
4/3/08	Sunrise Rotary
4/10/08	Georgia-Pacific Retirees
4/23/08	Bellingham City Club
4/29/08	Bellingham Yacht Club-Whatcom Recreational Boaters
5/14/08	Association of Pacific Ports
5/15/08	Bellingham Power Squadron
5/16/08	WSBA
5/22/08	WWU
5/29/08	Coldwell Banker
5/30/08	Coldwell Banker
8/19/08	Congressman Rick Larsen's Staff
8/19/08	Bellingham Kiwanis
9/4/08	Sustainable Communities & Land Use Conference
9/8/08	Washington Republican Party

9/26/08	WPPA
9/30/08	WWU
9/17/08	Merrill Lynch
9/23/08	WRBA
9/25/08	Whatcom Volunteer Center
9/30/08	WWU / JE Dunn Construction
10/1/08	Lynden Kiwanis
10/1/08	Blaine Chamber of Commerce
10/2/08	North Bellingham Grange
10/2/08	Edgemore Neighborhood
10/8/08	Bellingham Harborview Lions
10/8/08	Whatcom Maritime Association

**Port Commission Meetings
Regarding the Waterfront 2005-October 8, 2008**

January 11, 2005
January 18, 2005
March 1, 2005
April 5, 2005
April 19, 2005
May 3, 2005
June 7, 2005
June 27, 2005
July 18, 2005
September 6, 2005
November 15, 2005
December 5, 2005
January 17, 2006
February 7, 2006
March 6, 2006
April 19, 2006
May 2, 2006
August 15, 2006
October 3, 2006
October 9, 2006
November 30, 2006
December 5, 2006
December 12, 2006
February 14, 2007
March 6, 2007
March 20, 2007
April 3, 2007
May 1, 2007
May 14, 2007
June 5, 2007
June 19, 2007
July 3, 2007
July 17, 2007
August 21, 2007
October 2, 2007
November 6, 2007
November 20, 2007
November 30, 2007
December 18, 2007
February 19, 2008
March 18, 2008
April 15, 2008
May 6, 2008

May 7, 2008
May 20, 2008
June 3, 2008
June 10, 2008
July 1, 2008
July 15, 2008
August 19, 2008
August 21, 2008
September 2, 2008
October 7, 2008

**Bellingham City Council Meetings
Regarding the Waterfront 2005-October 1, 2008**

February 28, 2005
March 14, 2005
April 18, 2005
November 14, 2005
December 5, 2005
May 15, 2006
September 11, 2006
September 25, 2006
October 9, 2006
October 23, 2006
November 6, 2006
December 11, 2006
February 5, 2007
March 12, 2007
March 26, 2007
April 2, 2007
April 30, 2007
May 7, 2007
July 16, 2007
August 6, 2007
August 13, 2007
February 11, 2008
February 25, 2008
May 5, 2008
June 23, 2008
July 21, 2008
September 29, 2008

**Special Joint Port Commission and Bellingham City Council Meetings
Regarding the Waterfront 2004-October 1, 2008**

Date	Purpose
April 7, 2004	Update from Waterfront Futures Group.
May 12, 2004	Update from Waterfront Futures Group.
June 24, 2004	Final report from Waterfront Futures Group.
October 6, 2004	Port to give update on the acquisition of the Georgia Pacific property, and for the Commission and Bellingham City Council to review the concepts of an Interlocal Agreement.
July 19, 2005	Waterfront planning update
October 7, 2005	Update of the New Whatcom design process
November 29, 2005	Discussion of Draft New Whatcom Strategic Guidelines and an update on the Master Planning Process
March 7, 2006	New Whatcom Strategic Guidelines and New Whatcom Design Concepts
July 7, 2006	Explanation of the LIFT ordinance
September 26, 2006	City and Port economic analysis of New Whatcom
October 9, 2006	To consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interlocal regarding participation on Local Infrastructure Financing within the City of Bellingham’s Revenue Development Area ▪ Approve New Whatcom Draft Framework Plan presented on September 26, 2006, as the basis of developing a Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for New Whatcom
August 21, 2007	Update on the waterfront redevelopment project and to approve the Fourth Supplemental to the Interlocal regarding the New Whatcom Special Development Area.

Other Special Commission meetings not advertised as joint meetings, but the Mayor and City Council members were in high attendance.

Date	Purpose
March 15, 2007	Presentation titled “Waterfront 2007 and Beyond” given by POB, COB, and WWU for legislators and agency staff in Olympia.
September 20, 2007	Sign the Consent Decree to the Whatcom Waterway Site and to meet with officials of the City of Bellingham, Dept. of Natural Resources and Dept. of Ecology.
June 10, 2008	Presentation of The Waterfront District proposal that will be considered as the basis for the preferred alternative and reviewed as a supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Appendix C includes a partial, summarized list of comments received since the community master planning process started in 2005.

The Proposal Elements	<p style="text-align: center;">New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008</p>
<p>Vision</p>	<p>Strategic Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An opportunity to change the legacy of historical industrial practices and create a working waterfront where economic prosperity and the environments exist side by side. ○ New Whatcom should complement, not compete with, the downtown area and the historical character of other neighborhoods ○ The new waterfront should serve as a model of modern, clean energy, environmentally friendly development. Pursue low impact development techniques to minimize runoff and prevent surface and groundwater contaminants along with considering the redevelopment area to be an opportunity for LEED certification. ○ Considerable concern about long-term ownership of the properties. Advocating for public rather than private ownership. ○ Greenbelts, trails, pathways, pedestrian linkages, bike facilities and shoreline access including support services for small boat enthusiasts. ○ Foster family-wage jobs and commit to returning this type of employment to the waterfront. ○ Affordable housing ○ Need for economic development and the need for taxable land base ○ Provide venues and financial support for the arts and for the area's cultural heritage ○ A cautious approach, a commitment to excellence, and a willingness to make considered, deliberate choices for the waterfront. ○ Waterfront Futures Group principles should be fully embodied in any new planning work ○ Unhappy with the term "New Whatcom" and urged that the project simply be called "The Waterfront" or "The Bellingham Waterfront" ○ Bellingham needs to be authentic, improve quality of life, and a community that shares values <p>Design Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Green Fingers design concept most popular of 4 LMN designs. ○ Very high priority on green spaces, parks, access to the water, and contiguous space along the waterfront. ○ Support for street grid angling ○ Mixed reviews for the potential for a new Cornwall roundabout ○ Strong street connections to the downtown

The Proposal Elements	<p style="text-align: center;">New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take maximum advantage of the views and the natural light in the area ○ Retain or reuse historic GP buildings ○ Oak Street flyover would provide a stronger connection between the site itself and the neighboring area ○ Green space considerations 1) area next to the deep water port off of Pine Street; 2) Pearl Parks” concept;3) Maximum green space at the foot of Cornwall. ○ Green space and habitat restoration along shoreline ○ Approximate equal response re: Pedestrian Bridge over waterway designed to allow boat passage commented a) Provide a strong connection between two separate areas of the site b) Concerns about the exact location and design of the bridge i.e. boat passage restriction, view blockage, detracting from downtown area. <p>Design Concepts Cont'd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Locate roads as far as possible from shoreline. Eliminate roads along the waterfront. Set streets and parking at least one block from the water. ○ Access at Cornwall & Laurel ○ Road connections at: Oak/Wharf, C & F Street, Commercial, City road grid south of Laurel, east/west angled road grid south of Laurel ○ Opposition to the idea of a waterfront boulevard that can accommodate cars...most favor a serene shoreline experience ○ Concerns about building heights and densities ○ Cornwall Landfill with high density residential no taller than bluff ○ Pedestrian/bike trails from neighborhoods and interconnected throughout site ○ Pedestrian bridge over waterway designed to allow boat passage ○ If a Marina is built, it has fish passage, larger park, and upland boat storage ○ Maintain deep water at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST) for future shipping use ○ Maintain land for marine industry ○ Numerous comments for and against WWU branch campus presence on waterfront ○ Restore pocket beaches ○ Use Nanaimo as a model to follow. It has done a great job of blending parks, trails, housing, tourist attractions and marine businesses. ○ Apply the concept of “adaptive reuse” to the historic buildings in the New Whatcom Redevelopment area.

The Proposal Elements	<p align="center">New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adaptive reuse may prove to be better economically, environmentally, and socially than demolition & new construction. It also serves to maintain the community's unique history, and it often promotes heritage tourism.

The Proposal Elements	<p align="center">New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008</p>
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Clean up all contaminated sites to levels protective of human and aquatic life. ❖ Protect Water Quality. ❖ Preserve and enhance existing habitat features. Preservation efforts should focus on Whatcom Creek estuary, the log pond, eelgrass meadows and pocket beaches. ❖ Enhancement through expansion or addition of riparian near shore habitat is recommended at the pocket beaches located at the following sites: I & J Waterway, G Street (west of the treatment lagoon), Central Avenue, Roeder Avenue, Cornwall and Pine Street, North end of Cornwall Avenue landfill, and South end of Cornwall Avenue landfill. ❖ Create or restore natural habitat to restore natural processes in the following highly impacted pocket beaches: C Street (east of the treatment lagoon), Cornwall and Pine Street, North end of Cornwall Avenue Landfill, and South end of Cornwall Avenue Landfill. ❖ Protect and plant native over-hanging riparian vegetation in pocket beach areas to protect spring and summer forage fish eggs from desiccation. Priority Location: G Street. ❖ Enhance the shoreline where appropriate with soft shore protection whenever possible at the following locations: Both sides of I & J Waterway, G Street, Both sides of Whatcom Waterway, Both sides of the existing Cornwall and Pine Pocket beach, and along the length of the Cornwall Avenue landfill. ❖ Remove certain over water structures, creosote piles and associated structural elements whenever reasonable at the following sites: Pilings in Whatcom Waterway along Roeder Avenue from Holly Street water ward, Central Street spur from Roeder Avenue water ward,

	<p>Over water structures on both sides of the Whatcom Waterway, excluding the deepwater shipping terminal, Pilings between Cornwall and Pine and the Cornwall Avenue Landfill, so long as this action would not hinder the effective cleanup of the remediation site at landfill, and the Over water structure at West Pine,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The proposed boat launch at C Street should be relocated to support existing and future habitat. ❖ Create habitat and hydrologic connectivity in the following areas so that restored and preserved habitats function individually as well as within an ecosystem context: Proposed marina area via a fish and water passage on the I & J side, Roeder Avenue mudflat and Central Avenue Beach (provide connectivity to the Whatcom Creek estuary), and C Street, G Street and the I & J Waterway pocket beaches (provide connection for fish that use the proposed marina as a migratory route). ❖ Salmon runs through Whatcom Creek should be facilitated as much as possible i.e. restore easy fish passage up the falls under Dupont Street.
The Proposal Elements	New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008
	<p>EIS Scoping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The projects proposed to be covered by the Planned Action designation are unclear ○ The project elements included under the No Action Alternative should be evaluated in this EIS. ○ Project elements, like the Marina, should not be part of the No Action Alternative. ○ The Marina should undergo environmental review ○ Alternatives to the elements comprising the No Action Alternative should be considered. ○ The range of alternatives is not broad enough; a wider range of alternatives or different alternatives should be considered. ○ The alternatives should not incorporate a relationship between development density and open space. The Port should consider developing the majority of the site in park and open space uses. ○ The EIS should cover National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) topics such as “environmental justice”. ○ The potential for impacts to the redevelopment from tsunamis, earthquakes and possible

	<p>collapse of the Nooksack River Delta should be analyzed in the EIS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The EIS should investigate the potential off-site “Hillside Springs” wetland. ○ The EIS should describe changes in storm water management on the site as a result of the redevelopment and should quantify any changes in water quality. ○ The EIS should discuss remediation of existing industrial contamination on the site including cleanup standards and methods for the Aerated Stabilization Basin (ASB), Whatcom Waterway, and the upland areas of the New Whatcom Redevelopment site. ○ The EIS should analyze the existing utilities on the site and describe the new utilities required to support the redevelopment. ○ The EIS should analyze potential vibration impacts from activities related to the New Whatcom Redevelopment project. ○ The EIS should include an analysis of the potential impacts from marina operations and large vessel activity at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST) ○ The environmental impacts of the relocation of the railroad should be analyzed in this EIS. ○ The EIS should analyze the impact of traffic pattern changes on pedestrian and bicyclist safety. ○ The EIS should include an economic analysis of different alternatives and scenarios, including the economic viability of providing additional parks and open space. ○ The provision of affordable housing should be discussed in the EIS. ○ Address shoreline impacts from redevelopment i.e. habitat, views, and public access changes.
<p>The Proposal Elements</p>	<p align="center">New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008</p>
<p>Sustainable Strategies</p>	<p>Cultural Arts and Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Potential community and cultural venues: Art Facility, Maritime museum, Community Hall, Plaza, Sailing Center, and relocation of the library to the waterfront. ❖ Do not subsidize an aquarium or public pool with taxpayer funds. ❖ Incorporate and integrate art into all City and Port capital projects by requiring a minimum of one percent of the particular project budget be designated for public art.

	<p>Green Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Concerns for impacts of building heights, bulk, and lighting on views and wildlife. ❖ Follow Low Impact Development (LID), LEED or Build Green concepts for managing stormwater. Retrofit existing port authority buildings with solar electric and solar hot water passive heating systems. ❖ Supports the concept of using Triple Bottom Line (TBL) as a value based measuring system for the waterfront redevelopment. The economic, ecological, and sociological dimensions need to be included. This process for identifying, defining, managing and measuring specific values within that three dimensional concept is our principle challenge to effective and fair adoption. There is a need for a TBL framework/methodology that can be applied and accepted (by the community/stakeholders) locally. ❖ TBL has several challenges that need to be met: How is our community going to be consistently and meaningfully be engaged throughout the necessary development period? How will specific and appropriate values for the three dimensions be defined? How many major projects and development efforts have really been produced under the TBL concept and how much time has gone by to be able to see the effects? What is the locality over which we would apply TBL? Are the measures the same for all of the different kinds of development within the Waterfront District? Does the same TBL apply to the Old Town and Lettered Streets redevelopments? How about the other sub-areas in the city? How will TBL be used over the life of the project considering the possibility that values and their relative weight may change? How does the TBL become codified in the municipal code?
The Proposal Elements	New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use architecture similar to the Edmonds waterfront ❖ You should look into using different cement and pavement options on streets. In Olympia, for example, along their waterfront they used stone-type looking pavement. Not only does it change the character to give it a different feel, separate from downtown, but it slows traffic. ❖ Any water oriented light industry should be confined to the north side of the waterway. ❖ Insert a canal in the center of the Residential/Commercial area of the plan to stimulate development into the inner core of the project. In the urban center, place a hardscape waters edge like those experienced in San Antonio, Venice and Vancouver. A place where people, restaurants and vendors can set up business right next to the edge.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Build a gondola from the waterfront to Western.❖ Art incorporated architecture & design elements. Local artist workspaces and presence on the waterfront.❖ Design streets to service facilities, but do not include through streets or major arterials.❖ Addition of large buildings, like a convention center or arena should be discouraged.❖ Encourage use of the Project for Public Spaces as a resource. They are adept at helping communities identify and create meaningful destinations. They also find great comparisons among many global waterfront redevelopments, so that we have a lot of models and ideas to consider.❖ Provide safe corridors for pedestrians & bicycles from WWU, South Hill area, Lettered Streets to the Waterfront.❖ Consider soccer/multipurpose playfields...design a park for more than roller bladers and kites.❖ Numerous smaller parks or 'green spaces" can accommodate public space and access, reduce traffic congestion and parking problems.❖ Preserve and enhance bay and islands view corridors.❖ Consider natural disasters and emergency management in design and planning processes.❖ Consider building an Amusement Park, IMAX Theater or Aquarium to attract tourism.❖ Concerned about bringing a large event center to the waterfront, because Bellingham could lose it's quality of life and become like a larger city i.e. Everett, WA.❖ Watch for overall vision from the current views of mountains & museum. More open space.❖ Need keel boat, dinghy and small non-motorized watercraft facility.❖ Plan for housing for middle income people. Many younger professionals want to own homes downtown, but there are few options.❖ Project seems way "out of scale" for Bellingham. I'd like to see a more "modest" plan for the site.

The Proposal Elements	New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Concept A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The City and the GP site are still disconnected due to the tracks and the two levels. - Support minimal acreage for WWU, height restrictions to protect views of existing homes, and medium density for apartments. - ❖ Concept B. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Takes advantage of the extremely valuable (and inspiring) view of the San Juans. - Vast majority of the park land is one continuous flow toward the waterfront--no park is isolated with no direct view or connection to the water. More of the buildings could front park land with at least some view toward the water. All of this has the potential to make the properties in and around the development area more valuable; hence more property taxes, etc. - Layout leads (draws) the visitor to the city center and the shops currently located in downtown Bellingham, hence more retail sales not only in the new development, but also for existing businesses. - B "feels" more open and less like a rather dense development that happens to be near the water. - The long promenade looking right from downtown to the islands would be a lovely attraction for Bellingham residents and visitors alike. - Better Street Layout. - More open for views, better trails, and open spaces. - Like the way the railroad is "covered" and helps create an open walkway area & eliminates pedestrians having to avoid the trains. It also appears to allow a smoother transition (elevation-wise) from downtown to the area. - Angle of the new streets is pleasing and the waterfront green space is nicer. - Though the engineering to construct the connection for Concept B may be more difficult and costly, we should make this investment for our future as a great city. - Suggestions for improving "Concept B": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1. The current plan to connect the heart of Downtown to the Waterfront District to Bellingham Bay is inadequate and ineffective. What is needed to achieve the universally supported, connectivity goal are straight line, visually appealing view corridors to link the three areas, not abrupt, angular bends that create visual barriers. - 2. Downtown should be connected to the Waterfront District by attractive staircases

	<p>descending from the top of the bluff from the current ends of Bay Street (as proposed) and Commercial Street. The stairs would be fantastic, aesthetically appealing entryways into Bellingham's Waterfront District.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3. In addition, the staircases would be far less costly than extending Bay Street and Commercial Street from the top of the bluff into the Waterfront District. A stunning view corridor and the focal point for the residents of the Waterfront District, the proposed Bay/City Pedestrian Mall would create substantial new economic value in the interior of the Waterfront District. Developers will want to build on the waterfront or adjacent to well designed parks because those are amenities which their customers desire.
The Proposal Elements	New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008
	<p>Marina and Marine Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Numerous comments for and against Marina based on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Best use of property, prime waterfront site. – Public access and use – Parks don't create revenue – Marina design can accommodate Park-like facilities and access. Public access to the marina breakwater – Bellingham is a maritime city with a long heritage of seafaring – Marina would serve a limited number of boaters – Marina is self sustaining, supports working waterfront businesses & industries, and creates revenue opportunities – Cost and maintenance issues for Park – Gentler slopes to the water, circumference trails, and salmon restoration enhancements – Taxes for public amenities not always tied to use by all individual tax payers – Legal considerations with GP agreement ❖ Consider an RV park, mooring for seaplanes, a living/working houseboat community that would include light industrial workspaces. ❖ Keep Hilton Harbor, the only dry storage facility, which has a capacity for about 100 boats and a provision for a travel-lift or method for launching dry stored boats. ❖ Minimize the impact of any new marina and boat traffic. Move the entrance to the proposed

	<p>marina from the southern corner of the lagoon to the western corner, so that it would face away from the Whatcom Creek waterway and towards the existing marina.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Charter operations should be co-located in the same dock area, or have an adequately sized common touch and go dock. ❖ Provide year-round moorage with dock box, water and electricity dedicated to skippered chart vessels. ❖ Enforced loading zone at the top of the moorage ramp for charter customers. ❖ Central location for operator offices close to parking and top of the ramp. ❖ Provide storage facilities 100sf-200sf/charter operator within ¼ mile. ❖ Standardized and clear directional signage from the interstate & other arterial surface streets to the dock. ❖ Clean heated rest rooms within 300' of the dock ramp. ❖ Marina should include dry storage area for dinghies and keel sailboats, launching ramp for boats on trailers and 2 small cranes for lifting keelboats up to 4000 lbs. Locked storage for dingy equipment. ❖ Reorient the marina so that the opening faced northwest, towards the existing marina, rather than southeast, towards the salmon-nurturing Whatcom waterway.
The Proposal Elements	New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Move the railroad tracks away from the coastline or put them underground. Railroad Quiet and Safety Zone for the City of Bellingham. ❖ Lobby the Washington State Ferry to come to Bellingham and provide service to Lummi Island and other Puget Sound communities. ❖ Making Laurel a thru-street to the waterfront could be a potentially dangerous and unpopular decision. ❖ Review how we can get people in and out of downtown via I-5. ❖ Elevate Cornwall Avenue between Maple and Laurel streets, with Laurel ramping downward northwest of Cornwall and Cornwall ramping downward southwest of Laurel. It has a number of advantages, such as reduced or zero slopes on the bridges over the BNSF railway lines (reducing vehicle noise near the residences on the bluff), and the lack of an unsightly diversion of Cornwall avenue around Laurel street. Furthermore, the area under the elevated section of right-of-way could serve as a city-owned parking structure.

Parks, Open Space, Public access, and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Encourage use of the Project for Public Spaces as a resource. They are adept at helping communities identify and create meaningful destinations. They also find great comparisons among many global waterfront redevelopments, so that we have a lot of models and ideas to consider. ❖ Provide safe corridors for pedestrians & bicycles from WWU, South Hill area, Lettered Streets to the Waterfront. ❖ Consider soccer/multipurpose playfields...design a park for more than roller bladders and kites. ❖ Numerous smaller parks or ‘green spaces’ can accommodate public space and access, reduce traffic congestion and parking problems. ❖ Access to the waterfront at the northern section of the waterfront-Bike/Pedestrian bridge connecting to Broadway.
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The industrial uses of the waterfront necessitated high pressure gas lines in a number of Bellingham neighborhoods. If these are no longer needed, they should be removed. ❖ Move the 48-inch sewer line that blocks maritime access to Maritime Heritage Park. This non-compliant structure (supported on decaying wooden pilings) presents a serious impediment to the rehabilitation of the central waterfront and restoration of historic small-craft navigability to Whatcom Creek.
Economic Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If we want the city to grow and be a place people want to live and work, we have to give them a reason to come. Businesses do not relocate in a city because there are businesses and condos already in place. They come because of the lifestyle the community brings. ❖ Marine related operations are a major asset to the local economy. Passenger and charter operations generate direct employment as well as ancillary tourism including accommodation, dining and shopping revenues to city and county businesses including marine maintenance, trades and chandlery businesses. ❖ Support for sustained, high-paying jobs.
The Proposal Elements	New Whatcom Redevelopment Public Comment Summary November 2005-June 2008
Expressions Public Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consider prioritizing the guidelines; this will surface more complex thoughts on the project and enable better “measurement” of the benefits of competing alternatives. ❖ It is recommended that there be a guideline that this long-term public project will be planned, controlled, and implemented using the project management standards of the Project

Management Institute.

- ❖ Create more opportunities for the public to comment and respond throughout the project phases i.e. additional EIS public hearings.
- ❖ Expedited processing of the waterfront redevelopment. I'd like to enjoy the new waterfront in my lifetime and I think Bellingham now needs the financial boost that would come with good news about moving forward on this great idea.
- ❖ Keep up the good work! Pleased to see so many agencies working together!
- ❖ We understand the many conflicting opinions that must be considered in the decisions concerning the New Whatcom area.
- ❖ The information station currently at the Port's Administration Building provides a level of inclusiveness in the Ports' planning process.
- ❖ Hold design competitions in order to get the best architects to design buildings of real quality. Ex: City of Columbus, Indiana.
- ❖ If any brick buildings are torn down, reuse the brick for new side walks.
- ❖ Some individuals are increasingly frustrated by the total lack of feedback to community proposals. Comments seem to disappear into a "black hole" and do not receive adequate analysis and evaluation.
- ❖ It would be a major improvement if there could be a public response to comments/proposals indicating either-"Great idea. This is how we are incorporating into the redevelopment plan" or "Bad idea. We will not use it because...."
- ❖ Include children, veterans, Native Americans, the Arts community and the broader community in various kinds of outreach and participatory activities.
- ❖ "What can be done to make sure the broader community is creatively involved, especially with regard to expressing and measuring the values our community wants for the waterfront?" Measures are our guideposts for determining whether our values are being fulfilled.
- ❖ We know that you are trying to reach the community. Based on our experiences, we believe that there needs to be some additional and perhaps new approaches to engaging our community. We believe that addressing the question of measures for the redevelopment is essential and needs to move forward sooner rather than later.