



## 2 Vision



## 2.0 Vision



Much to their credit, the people of Bellingham and Whatcom County have responded to the recent closure of one of their main industrial employers with an energetic commitment to redefine the future. Because of the unique waterfront location of this property, the future possibilities and challenges are inspiring. The chance to redevelop more than 220 acres of property adjacent to a city's Downtown core represents phenomenal opportunities to the community. And when that land is located alongside one of the most stunning marine areas, on the edge of the San Juan Islands, the opportunity is unparalleled anywhere on the West Coast.

Today The Waterfront District is an urban brownfield, burdened by contamination from decades of industrial use and municipal landfills. Cut off from the community since its creation more than 100 years ago, this waterfront property has never been available to the general public to



explore and enjoy. Instead it has been a true working waterfront providing steady employment to generations of people from Whatcom County. Now, with the closure of the Georgia Pacific mill, the land is in transition and the only activity inside its chain-link fence is that of demolition.

Yet the community's vision and enthusiasm is taking shape into a very real plan for the creation of The Waterfront District. Beginning well before the final mill closure, the community came together through the Waterfront Futures Group to transform their enthusiasm for this redevelopment into a shared vision of transforming this aging industrial site into a vital, energized urban waterfront with a myriad of opportunities for people to live, work and play on their public waterfront.

The greater Whatcom Community is dedicated to finding the right balance among uses so that property for new businesses and manufacturing is valued as much as property for people to picnic on and shorelines they can truly enjoy. The Port of Bellingham and the City of Bellingham, as well as the entire community, have a national reputation as leaders in the environmental movement. The Water-



front District will provide the place to showcase those shared values as one of the Puget Sound's largest marine cleanups be-

gins here and as an entire shoreline is transformed. On the land side, The Waterfront District will be one of the nation's first LEED-Neighborhood Design projects and it will become known throughout the world as the premier location that demonstrates that economic vitality and environmental sustainability can thrive together.

Education, innovation and new jobs will be driving forces in this project with Western Washington University already planning to develop a campus setting here with its Huxley College of the Environment as well as other University programs. The values and programs at Huxley will meld with the vision for this redevelopment. Innovation also will define The Waterfront District, with the State of Washington already designating the entire 220 acre site as an Innovation Partnership Zone. This

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designation will present new opportunities for partnerships between educational institutions and private manufacturers to bring new technologies to the marketplace. The growth of marine trades and marine manufacturing in The Waterfront District will ensure the authenticity of this redevelopment, while the Innovation Zone will help those traditional job sectors remain competitive.



New parks, trails and public spaces will make this section of the waterfront available to everyone. More than 30 acres of new public spaces will provide a wide variety of opportunities for people to enjoy and explore their waterfront. In addition, development of the Clean Ocean Marina, a new boat launch and numerous kayak beaches will make it easy for boaters to gain access to Bellingham Bay and for visiting boaters to come ashore and enjoy Bellingham.

The citizen-led Waterfront Futures Group crafted the overarching vision for this transformation in 2004. Today the community is working together to reach consensus on a more detailed plan to bring this vision to reality. Innovation, Sustainability, Environment, Recreation, Education, Employment and Housing all are parts of the complex equation that is The Waterfront District. Combined with enthusiasm, dedication and stewardship, these elements are the beginning of an amazing transformation.

