

The Waterfront District

PROPOSED PLANNING FRAMEWORK ASSUMPTIONS

- **Long term planning effort** – Recognition that the Waterfront will be developed over the next 30 to 40 years, so a plan needs to remain flexible and predictable but within a defined framework. Final decisions will be made only after publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.
- **Engineering Feasibility** – Ensure any proposed planning framework is feasible and realistic from an engineering/construction perspective.
- **Waterfront Futures Group** – Vision and Framework Plan, and Guiding Principles (below) represent the community vision for the Waterfront District.
 - (1) Reinforce the inherent qualities of each place on the waterfront
 - (2) Restore the health of land and water
 - (3) Improve waterfront access
 - (4) Promote a healthy and dynamic waterfront economy (via flexible zoning and improved permitting)
- **Community Connections** – The Waterfront District should be designed to provide close connections with existing neighborhoods and create an economic lift to downtown Bellingham.
- **Street Grid** – Develop a “Core Street Grid” to use as a planning framework to inform other planning areas. Street planning should enhance the waterfront experience through effective solar orientation of streets and infrastructure and include transit access sufficient to support WWU.
- **Complete Streets** - Street design will be adjusted to land uses and encourage multi-modal activities such as pedestrian, bicycle and transit use. “Green” streets will include features to enhance open spaces, low impact stormwater management, traffic calming and connections to public parks.
- **Block Size and View Corridors** – Block sizes in the completed mixed use development will be similar to existing downtown Bellingham. Create new view corridors aligned with existing and proposed street grid.
- **LEED Neighborhood** – The planning project is accepted as a potential U.S. Green Building Council LEED Neighborhood Pilot. The LEED ND project is an important component of the strategy for environmental, economic and community sustainability for The Waterfront District. The deadline for final application for certification is due in July 2009 (extension is not anticipated).
- **Western Washington University** – Accommodate a proposed WWU campus on south side of waterway as an anchor tenant and incorporate WWU identified requirements, e.g. no arterial through campus and no arterial between campus and water.

4/20/09

- **Existing Operations** – It is assumed that the Port’s Bellingham Shipping Terminal and PSE’s Encogen Plant will continue industrial operations into the long-term future.
- **Existing Structures** – Review architects’ suggestions and community input regarding the remaining on site buildings and structures which were part of the now inactive pulp and paper mill operations. The architects recommended retaining five structures, including the Granary Building, the Steam Plant, the Board Mill Building, the Barking and Chipping Facility, and the ceramic-tiled Pulp Storage Tanks for consideration of potential adaptive reuse, or as memorials to the industrial history of the waterfront. Retaining other iconic structures and as part of an historical memorial is also under consideration.
- **BNSF Railroad** – The main line of the BNSF RR should be relocated as close to the bluff at the eastern edge of the site as possible. Evaluate options for including a high speed bike trail following relocated rail line.

The Waterfront District

OTHER AREAS OF CONCEPTUAL AGREEMENT

- **Port/City Partnership** – The Port Commission and City Council remain committed to the redevelopment of The Waterfront District, consistent with interlocal agreements and amendments from 2004 to 2009.
- **Clean Ocean Marina** – Cleanup and redevelopment of the wastewater treatment lagoon (Aerated Stabilization Basin, or ASB) should be performed to provide for a new community marina, including public park and shoreline habitat features.
- **Building Heights** – New structures within The Waterfront District will be allowed within a range of maximum building heights varying from 35 feet to 200 feet, depending on location, as specified in final plans and development regulations that will preserve primary view corridors, densities and setbacks.
- **Shorelines** – The transition from historically industrial activities to mixed use offers opportunities for shoreline cleanup and restoration that should be part of the master plan. As indicated by the architects, the plan should include natural shorelines, habitat restoration, and an active water's edge with a mix of urban waterfront experiences and overlooks.
- **WWU and adaptive reuse** – WWU plans to pursue for adaptive reuse the Board Mill Building and the Barking & Chipping Facility.
- **Alternative planning** – Explore alternative planning options if WWU is unable to move forward with plans for its waterfront development.

The Waterfront District

RECOMMENDED GOALS FOR NEXT STEPS

If City Council and Port Commission adopt the proposed Planning Framework and Planning Assumptions as a basis to move the Waterfront master planning process forward for further public review and consideration, the recommended next steps would be:

- **Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement** – Provide a proposed amendment to the existing Interlocal Agreement for consideration by the Port Commission and City Council, including budget authorization and estimated schedule for completing the Master Plan, FEIS, Development Agreement and Implementation Agreement.
- **Draft Master Plan** - Create a draft Master Plan for public review and comment, based on the proposed planning framework and planning assumptions.
- **Environmental Review** – Evaluate the draft Master Plan, as the preferred alternative for completion of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Waterfront District. If future proposed projects conform to the features analyzed and mitigation required in the FEIS, then no additional environmental review would be required.
- **Draft Development Agreement and Draft Implementation Agreement** – Complete these draft agreements between the Port and City for the Waterfront District, including, by way of example, the height and bulk of buildings, land uses, densities, block sizes, view corridors, setbacks, parking ratios, architectural design requirements, infrastructure and phasing, SEPA mitigation and other requirements.
- **Design Review** - Develop a clear and efficient process for design review to provide certainty to the community and potential public and private investors in The Waterfront District.