



Waterfront Futures

Project Sponsors
City of Bellingham Port of Bellingham

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Members of the Bellingham City Council and
Commissioners of the Port of Bellingham

Enclosed is the Waterfront Futures Project Annual Report summarizing progress over the last year. Our adopted Mission Statement includes the commitment to *"create a compelling vision for current and future generations"* as well as the commitment to *"identify the steps to get us there."* We are well on our way to drafting a Vision, Framework Plan and Action Plan. The Action Plan component will provide a focus for future action. At your April 7 joint meeting, we would particularly like to discuss implementation of the vision.

Implementation of the Vision

Futures Group members began discussing ways to reduce the lag time between plan adoption and implementation early in our process. In recent months, we have focussed in on the following key concepts:

Forming a leadership entity. One possibility is the creation of a Public Development Authority or PDA. Tacoma's Foss Waterway Development Authority has met with considerable success using this approach.

Financing and timing for public improvements and infrastructure. There is a clear need for both public and private investment in our waterfront areas. Public sentiment during our work to date supports investment in public access and amenities and environmental restoration. Continuation of the transition from heavy industrial to a mixed-use pattern of development will require significant infrastructure investments, particularly in the City Center area.

Enacting a planning and zoning framework. Amendments to existing plans and programs, plan adoption, zone change approvals and other enabling legislation will be required to implement the community vision.

Much work remains, including work that can only be carried out by the City and Port. The City-Port partnership used on the Bay Pilot and Waterfront Futures projects provides an excellent foundation and model for on-going joint efforts. However, City and Port responsibilities extend far beyond the Bellingham waterfront and the focus on the Waterfront needs to be direct, sustained, creative and fluid. We ask the City and Port to consider a partnership or separate entity for this waterfront work, to oversee and facilitate the many and various projects that will be recommended, and to commit to making the decisions in a timely yet inclusive fashion.

Art Anderson and Lydia Bennett
On behalf of the members of the Waterfront Futures Group