

***Waterfront Futures Group  
Talking Up The Waterfront: Squalicum/ Little Squalicum Planning Area  
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**Environmental Quality**

- Keep Lawnmowers and asphalt out of Little Squalicum Park
- Creek Restoration/ Cleanup (Little Squalicum)
- Reconfiguration of Creek through Park
- Restoration of Park and Trails
- Connect Little Squalicum Park to other parts of Bellingham with trails
- Restore trail through bottom of basin to Nome Street – make loop out of trail
- Use Tilbury cement pier for recreation/ boardwalk
- Water and sediment testing for pollutants – is it safe to play in?
- Natural state of Little Squalicum Beach is an attraction
- Make the park avenue for beach bonfires
- Access to area below Cliffside – are there existing stairs (hard to find)
- Connect trail from Little Squalicum along beach and up Squalicum Creek to Cornwall Park
- Raised walkways to protect ground structure along beaches
- Improve access and preserve natural systems

**Jobs and Economic Development**

- Integration of Natural system and business/ industry to better take advantage of limited waterfront properties
- Encourage green energy
- Better linkage of waterfront retail/businesses to downtown, and improve signage to meet this goal.
- Examine appropriate integration of industry and public access – what is the liability of businesses re: access?
- Waterfront access as an industry = tourist dollars
- Encourage small fishermen to sell fish at harbor (direct retail)
- Public fishing infrastructure – i.e. fish cleaning station
- “Farmers market” at the dock
- Maintain working atmosphere while improving public access
- Maintain affordability
- Create welcoming atmosphere for general public
- Improve housing options in the subarea

**Character, Uses, and Design**

- Kiosk for public orientation
- Better orientation for visiting boaters

- Common architectural theme
- Continuity of structures in subarea
- Design standards to maintain characteristics of each micro-area
- Continuity – maintain existing characteristics of the area.

### **Access**

- Access to public transportation – as simple as phone call to taxis
- Get people Downtown from the harbor
- Groceries and eateries in the harbor area
- Water taxi – to Fairhaven or other waterfront areas
- Coordinated planning between regional governing bodies (Whatcom, State, Port, etc.)

### **Public Process**

- Include all governmental agencies in public process

## ***Art Anderson and Chris Morgan, Facilitators, Jori Burnett, Scribe***

### **Environmental Quality**

- Key Items: Maintain and enhance environmental quality
- No matter what is built, laws will require environmental protection (unnecessary to add more)
- The local area has so much to offer visitors, etc.
- People naturally flock to the waterfront – it is the place where things should be developed and where things will change
- People will come to visit, spend their money, and then leave – their lasting impact will be small – this is a good thing
- Have to be aware of what has taken place in the past when developing the waterfront – landfills, contamination sites, status of cleanup sites, etc. The sites have to be identified and made public.
- There needs to be access to sites without fear of being poisoned
- Squalicum Parkway takes people through a lot of nice areas – charming area
- Is the RR or coal tunnel entrance near the Squalicum Creek mouth hazardous?
- Are there records of contamination at this site and others?
- There are too many hoops to jump through before development can begin – drags the process along – development takes too long
- Are the coal mines that stretch beneath Bellingham well documented – there are numerous voids throughout Bellingham
- Will the city limits be difficult to plan – will the County cooperate with WFG/ COB planning?
- The area should be educational – children’s fieldtrips can educate on the natural environment – it would have a small impact and would teach children to preserve what we have

- For a long time, edible species like crab vanished from the waterfront, but they have returned – especially at Whatcom Creek
- The development/ redevelopment will take time
- The contaminants in Squalicum Creek are “scary”
- Talbot: If the Squalicum outflow is rerouted, it will create a natural salmon buffer, and will not only preserve natural elements, but will also enhance them
- Many industries have very bright lights that impact nearby residential neighborhoods – can the lighting be reduced – does it need to be as bright? Are there alternatives?
- Industry is important, but it doesn’t need to light up the whole neighborhood

## **Jobs and Economic Development**

- Make sure development has no negative impact on BCS, existing industries
- There could be a barge terminal/ container port on the waterfront – possibly at G-P, the ASB pond, or behind Mt. Baker Products – small (15-20 acres) – Talbot
- Current infrastructure/ access to I-5 is now good from the Squalicum/ Little Squalicum area
- Increased public access will result from Squalicum mouth rerouting
- Vacant fish processing plant has parking to watch ships come in
- Old shipyard near BCS is more or less vacant – BCS uses the site for storage
- People like to watch ships come in
- Fish co-op (AA) – Buy direct from fishermen
- Brings people to the waterfront to shop, etc. – good idea
- People in Whatcom County are hypocritical – they focus on the environment yet still allow motor boats in Lake Whatcom
- The marina already has a long waiting list – there is a market ready to be used if a new marina is created
- People don’t want to go up to the Blaine marina for their boat
- Dollar for dollar the marina brings a lot to the Port
- Talbot: Port should make sure that its focus does not go too far towards the marina and other recreation opportunities – should still prioritize industry
- *Port: the rerouting of Squalicum Creek is possible – spread the mouth of the creek – would require 3 new bridges – Roeder, Truck, and Railroad bridge. Would create habitat/ mouth near Mt. Baker Products. Potential cost: \$5 million*
  - *Squalicum Waterway is dredged by the Army Corps of Engineers and should continue to be so.*
  - *The planning process is on the shelf – interest must be renewed if the creek will be rerouted.*
  - *Two options: increase berthing on Squalicum Creek or add 3<sup>rd</sup> dock*
- Planned baseball fields up by cement factory will cause a potential truck problem.
- Little Squalicum Creek has an undesirable “human factor” – transients and the homeless – the best way to make sure that the area is not dominated by homeless is to call 911. The BTC area allows open access to the waterfront at night – despite the signs.

- The transient community is perceived to be undesirable and dishonest – public should be encouraged not to give them money or food. Safety concerns
- Character shouldn't be stifled as a result of transients, who can kill the ambience of an area
- An increased police presence is needed – lights are needed to keep transients out.

### **Character, Uses and Design**

- Jobs shouldn't be sacrificed for views or the environment
- Already enough parks – attractiveness is the affordability, Fairhaven, close to BC
- Run a small cruise ship from here to Olympia
- Fairhaven has changed a lot in the last two years – nice feeling – a lot of people go to Victoria for that feeling, but they could come here
- People like to see people walking and enjoying themselves
- There is a certain period “flavor” about Fairhaven – it ties things together – helter skelter buildings create a disconnect.
- There should be a plan
- Height and style guidelines are important – 2-3 stories, with commercial/ retail underneath and residential above – these spaces should be all along the waterfront, especially at Bellwether.
- The waterfront should be family oriented
- Is Squalicum a good place for industry?
- Bellwether – Eldridge residents don't consider it beautiful, but others do.
- Is Bellingham willing to make changes, or is it stuck in the past – there has to be progress
- Bellwether – the lighting situation has not been planned well, and neither was the G-P warehouse
- There should be significant retail along the waterfront – in places
- Development should be marine related
- Squalicum is physically close to Downtown, but it takes quite a while to walk to services
- People don't know how to get from Eldridge to Roeder, from the bluff to the waterfront
- The RR has “79 mph trains” going through all the time – whether we like it or not – the railroad will not change

### **Access**

- There needs to be some way to connect the city with the waterfront
- A pedestrian overpass should be created between Broadway and Bellwether Way
- Old Town should be redeveloped as a transition zone
- Old Central Dock (Citizen's Dock?) was handy for visiting boats to tie up and then walk to the center of town. The marina is a hike.
- Sailboats can't get under the Holly Street bridge due to the railroad, sewer line, etc. – only boats w/out motors can go up Whatcom Creek
- Georgia Pacific is an opportunity area to make a marina/ boat tie up

- According to one participant, original plans (?) had a bridge to the waterfront from the bluff near Broadway
- Parking on the waterfront is adequate – there are a lot of parking spaces on the - waterfront, though not necessarily at the right places
- There isn't good access or parking on Squilicum Creek
- Few know about Little Squilicum access
- Does parking limit the enjoyment of natural places?
- Bellingham Technical College should be linked to the waterfront with a trail and through other established roads leading to the water
- Little buses – Stella, Ruby, etc. should be used as waterfront shuttles linking to CBD
- View corridors should be created for people to see the waterfront from various areas.
- Many of the residents along Eldridge bought their homes for the view and are hesitant to share it with others through the creation of trails/ view points, etc.
- There used to be a trail from the triangle-shaped park by Eldridge to the waterfront
- There should be a view corridor/ outlook between Broadway and Marine Drive
- There are no view points behind the bluff – only residences on the bluff have a view
- Seaview Road should be widened up above Mt. Baker Products.
- Are trucks ticketed if they use Seaview?

### **Public Process**

- The WFG should find a way to get people involved
- People won't get involved unless they feel that they will be impacted directly, especially through the pocketbook– you need to hit them over the head.
- People will claim ignorance after the fact.
- The Waterfront Futures Group has put notices in the paper and through postcards/ radio. Also on TV
- People will be more likely to come to meetings in a nice setting – outside, for instance
- WFG represents the public – all the meetings are open, and the WFG tries to get good turnout – open to new, creative ideas.
- If there is a small meeting attendance, then the minority will decide – small interests thereby have a big sway.
- Everett used 3-D technology to address community concerns.
- A timeline of future events – where will we be 5,10,20 years in the future
- The WFG will release a report next June with action steps, etc.
- It doesn't seem like the WFG – or anyone else – has a real time frame. Things can happen fast – don't need to drag feet.
- Need to define a good goal and work towards it
- The Olympics are a good goal – I-5 and Bellingham will be a corridor to the event
- A plan should be on the table by the time the Vancouver Olympic plan is developed
- Elected officials and the public must step up and make it happen – through volunteering, participating, possibly contacting representatives, including federal people.

- Bellingham Cold Storage, despite being a large employer, hides their operations very well – it's hard to tell just how big they are
- AIA/ DAT/ Waterfront Center; Whatcom County residents should be included in the process