

March 13, 2003

Memo To: Waterfront Futures Group

Memo From: Tom Livesay, Director, Whatcom Museum and  
Michael Burnett, Director, NorthWest Discovery Project

This brief note is to suggest consideration of the Whatcom Children's Museum as a part of the redevelopment of the Bellingham Waterfront, perhaps sharing a park-like campus with other amenities. We recognize that the current Bellingham Public Library building has been considered as a possible site for the Children's Museum, and that is certainly a viable option. However, we urge that a waterfront site be considered as another option, one that has several potential advantages:

- **Synergy with other uses being contemplated.** As an amenity for children and their families, the Whatcom Children's Museum would be a natural complement to--for example--the NorthWest Discovery Center, Whatcom Museum's contemporary art gallery, a children's art and theater academy, the farmer's market, and open park space. Programs and events could be coordinated between these amenities that could benefit all.
- **Shared Transportation:** The area around the current Bellingham Public Library is not well suited to the stopping and off-loading of school busses. A transportation nexus could be developed to bring residents and visitors to all the amenities at the waterfront site. Public transportation, bike routes and other alternative transportation, school busses, and the Discovery Center bus could be used for maximum flexibility and efficiency.
- **Parking:** In a related issue, parking—currently at a premium around the Library Building, especially for school busses—would naturally be designed to serve all the uses envisioned in the waterfront redevelopment plan. Ample space for off-loading and parking of school busses would be available for the Children's Museum, Discovery Center, and other amenities.
- **Safety:** If the Children's Museum were on a park-like campus with other amenities, children would be less likely to stray into busy city streets than they would at the current Library site.
- **Potential for Quality Re-Use of Industrial Building:** The Children's Museum could occupy all or part of one of the old brick Georgia Pacific buildings, for example. Children's Museums have occupied retrofitted old industrial buildings in several places around the country—Chicago and Washington D.C. are prominent examples. These buildings have a lot of character, and serve as wonderful homes for exhibits, programs, and learning experiences for children and their families.

We look forward to discussing these possibilities with you at a future date. Should you need further information, please contact Tom Livesay at 676-6981 X 210 or [tlivesay@cob.org](mailto:tlivesay@cob.org) or Michael Burnett at 384-6168 or [emburnett1@attbi.com](mailto:emburnett1@attbi.com)

Thank you.