



February 25, 2003

Patricia Decker, Project Director  
Waterfront Futures Project  
1801 Roeder Avenue  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Subject: Comments of Waterfront Futures Project.

Dear Patricia:

I have a few comments, concerns and suggestions for the Waterfront Futures Group. Not wanting to upset anyone on the committee I have chosen to send this letter to you personally rather than make some of these comments in a public meeting.

Things we know. "Every Site is Site Specific"

In reviewing the current mix of people on the committee I'm concerned that you are missing one important link. At some point in the future do you plan to employ a professional visioning consulting firm? I'm afraid that some things that occur in the public comment sessions and in the regular meeting of the "Group" may be lost if that person is not part of the group from the beginning. A person from the outside may pick up on something that was said or talked about that could be very significant to the master plan or concept, but missed by the locals as not significant.

I appreciate the fact that getting suggestions from the citizens of Bellingham about what they want in the community is very important to the process. I just feel that the current mixture of people on the committee doesn't include a person of experience in developing a vision of this magnitude. Few if any in the group have any experience in waterfront developments and few have seen many examples of developments in the United States and around the world. I think that you need some people with these talents in the group from the beginning.

I would like to suggest that you incorporate an attendance spread sheet that is posted on the website so that everyone can see who is in attendance at the committee meetings and public comment sessions. This will do two things it will point out who is really participating and who is not, it will have a self policing effect on making committee members more dedicated to attendance, as you know from Rotary without good attendance, (or in this case participation) you will have trouble making progress and those that attend will become frustrated, if a lot of the members are not showing up for the meetings.

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You probably already have done this but I will mention it just in case. Do you have a business plan or model of what your goals are for this group, if yes please include the mission statement and the plan on your website. In addition I would develop a critical path schedule with predetermined milestones to measure your progress. This will help to keep the group focused and on a time table to completion. They can also take pride in the fact that you have a way to measure the success of the group.

The following is a list of ideas or thoughts about the concept itself. The waterfront areas of Bellingham cover a large area and it may be difficult to organize a development that covers the entire waterfront area. It may make sense to cluster the projects together in maybe three zones, Bellwether, current GP site and Fairhaven. They could be connected with trails and rails to link them together.

For many years Georgia Pacific has use millions of gallons of untreated water, would it be possible to tap into that pipeline and create a series of cascading water elements that might start on Rail Road Avenue, through town part going down to the GP mill site and part going down in old town in front of the current Museum where the steps are now. Maybe you don't use flowing water; maybe you have a loop system that pumps the water back up for use, maybe the energy that runs the pump could come from the falling water or a device in a pipe line that runs a generator that drives the pump. The Waters of Bellingham concept links Lake Whatcom and Bellingham Bay as one. The concept of cascading waters could also be linked to the three creeks that drain into Bellingham Bay, (Padden Creek, Squalicum Creek and Whatcom Creek) and link them to the developments.

I would prefer to see the GP Lagoon turned into another marina basin, and the land area between the I&J Waterway to Whatcom Waterway developed into a marine business zone. A prime example of this exists on the Gold Coast of Australia. This might include the conversion of the new GP warehouse into a large dry stack storage building for boats 20 to 32 feet in length. Also part of the building might be set aside for boat building or repairs. The area along Roeder Avenue could have street front businesses and landscaping that would buffer the more commercial area behind.

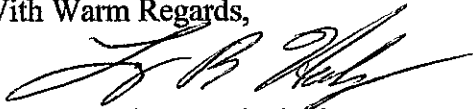
The GP Site speaks for itself and will evolve into a great asset for the community. We know that it will include housing, waterfront hotel, restaurants, commercial and recreational businesses. The Ports terminals may become hosts to cruise ships, both large and maybe a fleet of smaller vessels that would be 200 to 500 feet long, taking people into the Canadian waters for 3 to 7 days trips.

I would look at using the Bellingham Bay sediment project to create a land fill area that could provide for an island to protect more of the developable shoreline and protect it from the wave energy of the bay. This might look something like Dana Point or San Diego, California.

We have a lot of great examples around the world to help generate ideas, Sydney, Australia has some great developments that have been done around the city, Brisbane is location on a river and they have also been very creative. Melbourne is also on a river and the Docklands project currently under construction includes a major soccer stadium as well as a number of marinas and commercial spaces and high rise housing. Barcelona Spain did some very interesting things for the Olympics. London, England has also done a lot to improve its waterfront areas. Auckland, New Zealand has totally redeveloped its downtown area call the Americas Cup Basin along with the work at Hobson Wharf and other wharfs along the waterfront. They also have a very nice maritime museum built on a pier along the waterfront, something that would be easy to include in the GP site plan or in Fairhaven as a stand along element. This only scratches the surface of some wonderful examples of things done to improve the waterfront probably the best in the United States would be Baltimore. Someday if you get the chance take the guided boat tour of Baltimore Harbor it is extremely interesting.

I wish you good luck in your project and I will be interested to see how you progress.

With Warm Regards,



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Enclosure: book "Town Planning with Pleasure Harbor"

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