

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR A PUBLIC PROCESS**  
To the Waterfront Futures Task Force

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It is dangerous to build too much house before a proper foundation is laid. Generally, development of a rational, comprehensive framework and anticipated schedule should precede substantive work on the issues. There are a number of existing plans or processes that need to be reorganized in the context of changes to Bellingham's waterfront. Failure to do so will create confusion, delay and poor product.

- + Integrate and rationalize a comprehensive framework with
  - Port master plan, Other Port plans
  - CCMP, Comp Plan, N'hood element(s)
  - Bay Pilot
  - SMMP
  - CZM (possibly useful tool)

This will require a deal more City initiative and leadership than has been conventional in planning affairs, but will hopefully avoid the "feudal" institutional conflicts that often surface in these projects.

The framework should include policies to guide the operation of the task force, particularly for expenditures and operations. A number of potential expenditures have already been discussed. Will these be administered through an open tender procedure or administrative discretion? It is important to make sure these disbursements occur in a transparent, open public process available to all. The appearance of fairness builds public trust.

- + List anticipated expenditures - develop a preliminary budget (examples below from previous meeting)
  - Facilitator
  - Web development, maintenance
  - Videotaping
  - Boat Charters
  - Group retreat
  - Outreach, Marketing plan
- + Establish policies for the
  - Introduction
  - Development
  - Solicitation, and
  - Evaluation of responses to requests

Also in the interests of transparency, individual members should publish written statements about their qualifications and specific personal or institutional interests. These should be stated explicitly even where self-interest seems obvious. This provides context for members of the public who may be unfamiliar with the players.

- + Detail member's interests and qualifications - what they bring to the process
  - Qualifications
  - Affiliation's interests, personal interests

Concurrently, existing conditions should be surveyed and a base map established well prior to plan development. A review of similar projects should also be prepared for Task Force review before the bulk of the public planning process proceeds. Much of the work facing the task force has already been successfully accomplished dozens of times. We are at the very tail end of a trend that started years ago. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.

+ Survey & Inventory Existing Conditions

- Develop Base map
- Identify local issues, opportunities

+ Assemble review of similar projects

- Planning principles (e.g. SWOT - assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
- Public processes
- All docs available on-line

There is quite a lot of information available on historic business trends for the waterfront of Puget Sound. These data could be very helpful in making decisions between competing claims for scarce waterfront resources and in helping to distinguish which elements from other plans have specific utility to our application.

+ Assemble available data for trends in

- Maritime industries
- Water related recreation
- Waterfront commercial

Investment is the engine of redevelopment. We will need to strike a balance between public and private uses and between competing uses in both categories. It is of vital importance that every available opportunity for developing public uses be explored from the beginning of this process. Privately financed redevelopment will not want to be fettered with unrealistic public components. However, public development opportunities should be prioritized and not foreclosed unless absolutely necessary.

+ Research & inventory available grants, programs & potential key investments

- Public uses (anchor uses e.g. Homeport, Maritime Historical Society)
- TEA, e.g. paths, trails, shuttles, fixed guideways
- Aquarium
- Private Development

Finally, the physical limitations of the site should be assessed. For instance, outgassing of toxic vapors could limit availability of certain portions of the site or dictate daily occupancy limits, etc. A realistic environmental assessment should proceed, including mercury vapor monitoring and soils sampling. Not knowing the physical constraints or the timing of remedial measures could become a major stumbling block for eventual plan implementation.

+ Assess environmental liabilities

- Toxicity problems
- Remediation strategies
- Remediation schedules

Taking the time to structure a systematic, rational and comprehensive approach will save time and money, preserve the public's trust, and substantially minimize the odds of painting ourselves into a corner or unnecessarily jamming sticks into the spokes of the wheels of change on Bellingham's waterfront.