

¡BIENVENIDOS A BELLINGHAM!

When people approach Bellingham by water, the first, major, close-up visual impression they receive is from the dry dock anchored at the northwest corner of the Fairhaven Shipyard. This vintage structure, 289' long and 26' high, provides an ideal space for displaying an engaging greeting and creating a lasting impression.

A sign could be painted on the dry dock having the word "BELLINGHAM" in red letters ten feet high, surrounded by the words for "WELCOME" in all of the languages that have been spoken by our historic ethnic groups in black letters five feet high (See sample sketch attached.) Creating the sign could be an exciting, community-wide project with highly visible results.

Public schools could involve students in identifying Bellingham's historic and current ethnic groups, in translating the word "welcome" into their respective languages and in designing the sign. Local artists and outdoor advertising firms could provide consulting assistance. Hardware and paint companies could furnish materials. Public and private organizations, ethnic groups and individuals could offer financial and/or "in kind" contributions. The local media could make the project a regional happening.

The dry dock could be turned around so that painting could be done from the adjacent dock by community volunteers, of all ages, after shipyard workers had cleaned and primed the surface. With the consent of the shipyard's owner and managers, the approval of the City and the Port, the participation of the Public Schools, the support of the wider community and, most importantly, passionately local ethnic and citizen groups, this project could be a huge success.

Ralph W. Thacker

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