

Inherent in all our questions, is one over-riding question: How much influence can we as community members have in the process, and what do you recommend we do to assert that influence? What has already been decided with regard to waterfront development that is “carved in stone,” so to speak, and what has yet to be decided? Is there a way for us to set certain things in stone so this is not a continually moving target?

Specifically. . .

1. What are essential watch/read resources for getting up to speed on the history and status of waterfront planning?
2. Climate change:
 - a. Given recent developments in coastal climate change science, how robust are the resilience assessments for the proposed waterfront developments?
 - b. What sea level rise projections were used in waterfront planning?
 - c. How did they specifically plan for the risks associated with sea level rise, storm surge, & wave surge?
 - d. Do we need to do something to make sure that these issues are given the proper attention they deserve?
3. Open space:
 - a. How do the estimated economic, ecological and cultural benefits of the proposed open space in the development plans compare to other waterfront cities, where open parks and space attract diverse social events that add to the local/regional economy.
 - b. The new waterfront has the opportunity to restore lost and greatly needed open space and access along Bellingham’s shoreline. Are there remaining opportunities for redevelopment design efforts to consider more efficiently locating industry and commercial uses within the central footprint and open/restore open space and access along the southern and northern shoreline boundaries? For example, recent designs appear to route pathways inland on the south where there is more (perhaps the only opportunity) to restore the shore back to actual beaches and access points to the water for recreation and habitat/ecosystem function.

- c. why can't the citizens of this community and our elected officials determine the best park and open space design, carve it in stone — preferably even build it Immediately — and tell the damn developer to deal with it? The connectivity and the park space is, ultimately, the only public benefit that will be lasting and knowable (jobs and buildings can change) so why are we leaving this as an afterthought and opening design to meddling by people who have zero connection to our city?

4. Earthquakes

- a. Building to withstand earthquakes: What seismic site class will be used for building construction? The 2004 hazard maps from the DNR label the area as Site class E, but denote the waterfront as the highest category of liquefaction susceptibility. Usually liquefiable sediments are designated Site class F, which requires more significant remediation for seismic strength, but in this case the DNR report simply says "Site class F is reserved for unusual soil conditions where prediction of the amplification of earthquake shaking can only be determined by a site-specific evaluation. On this map we delineate areas of peat soil as site class F. Liquefiable soils also fall into site class F, but we have not included them on this map; please refer to the liquefaction susceptibility maps in this series for more information." In short, will the area get the site-specific geotechnical evaluation required by the state for liquefiable sediments? Or will they be built to the standards of site class E, which is how the regional is labeled on the map?
- b. Community recovery: Has a thorough resilience (e.g. disaster recovery) assessment been conducted to robustly evaluate Bellingham's ability to recover from what might be lost in the new waterfront development in a large seismic event given the area's unconsolidated, liquifiable sediments and ad-hoc fill material? Losing parks and open space along the water while preserving industry/commercial infrastructure located on hard rock set back from the present shoreline would be easier and less expensive to recover from, protecting our communities and economy. What kind of geological survey has been done on the site areas that are currently planned for housing?
- c. Disaster response: Are there detailed emergency response plans in place (such as seismic site class designations, building codes, etc.)? If not, how do we make sure such planning is included in the process?

5. Toxic waste:

- a. There are areas on the uplands - the chemfix site and the caustic groundwater plume - contaminated with mercury and other serious toxins. Past plans left these

contaminants in place and capped. Around 2005 a coalition of environmentalists, downtown business owners and developers pushed to have the mercury removed from the site because a) human health and b) the increased land value of a clean v. a contaminated site would more than cover the cost of cleanup. What are the current plans - will the toxic sediments be removed or will we cap them and build over them? And if we cap them, how will we ensure they remain beneath the cap?

6. Moving people:

- a. Lane widths and cycle tracks: Chapter 5 of the subarea plan shows diagrams with 12 foot vehicle traffic lanes (page 55). Twelve foot lanes are specified on freeways and are conducive to fast vehicle speeds. This is at odds with the stated goals of slow speeds, bike/ped friendly streets. Why not spec 10 foot lanes (which are known to be conducive to slow vehicle speeds) and protected cycle tracks set on the sidewalk side of street parking?
- b. Parking minimums: We know parking minimums are a barrier to building the spaces we want to inhabit, and cities all over the nation are reducing or eliminating these minimums to achieve human-scale (re)development. BMC 20.37.450 deals with parking minimums for the waterfront district. In 2009, [Wes Frysztacki wrote about the vast minimum parking requirements of the waterfront district - 12,892 spaces at that time. He recommended cutting those requirements at least in half.](#) Have the minimums been changed since then? Why are we not granting the planning director the authority to waive parking requirements when consistent with a parking plan/district as is specified for the central business district in BMC 20.37.540?
- c. Automated vehicle planning: Are there any plans for the waterfront related to how to integrate automated vehicles that will eventually be available? For instance, how will that impact parking structures and mobility? Are self driving mini buses that could circulate the waterfront under consideration?

7. Housing

- a. What can be done to make sure that housing included in the development plan will be guaranteed to foster economically diverse communities? How do we ensure that a portion of the homes are priced at below market rate? How do we decide what percentage of below market homes makes best sense? How can we ensure that there are a variety of types of homes - from studios, to one-bedrooms, to multiple bedrooms - that reflect the diverse ways in which families in our community live?

8. Zoning: Is the planning process to the point where zoning is being discussed? If so, what are the ideas regarding zoning for light industrial/craft industry? Due to seismic danger, I don't believe housing of any sort should be included in the plan. I can envision a combination of robust public access/park and craft industry, something along the lines of a cross between Granville Island and the Irongate neighborhood - with perhaps start-ups incentivized in some way. What are your thoughts about zoning of the development area?
9. Public process:
 - a. I have heard that Port Commissioner McAuley is disappointed and somewhat alarmed by the latest version of the Waterfront Plan that was submitted by Harcourt. Some significant features that the public had been led to believe were part of the project, such as the large swath of park/greenspace, were no longer proposed, and members of the community were not made aware of this. What are your impressions of these changes? What will you do to fully inform community members about what the Waterfront project will include while decisions are still in the process of being made? What opportunities for citizen input will you advocate for on this project and in the future?
 - b. What can we do to help move the port forward in a positive, progressive fashion? How can we be most helpful in supporting your effective leadership?
 - c. What is the timeline for future decision-making and what are the dates of those meetings so that the public can participate?
 - d. Could an Oversight Committee be formed to oversee the process, bringing a layer of accountability that seems to be lacking in some ways? It could have that function as well as providing a dependable, objective means of communicating with the community what is happening, current challenges etc.
10. Governing documents: There are a lot of documents. Can we draw a diagram of how they are related? Subarea plan, development regulations, design review, permitting handbook, planned action ordinance, development agreement, interlocal agreement, oh my!
11. Architecture and design
 - a. Because the look/design of a waterfront is crucial to its appeal, who will speak for interesting, meaningful architecture? Have the commissioners and council googled photos of Harcourt's other buildings?
 - b. given the screaming deal we gave Harcourt, why did we punt on design standards and any mandate for LEED certification? The economic landscape has changed, but we still

are buckling to Harcourt and seem way too eager to let them have their way with us — including proposing buildings outside of their 10.8 acre allotment. Can't we get a better deal? Can't we do a new RFP and get a better developer, preferably one located at least on this continent?

- c. “these designs were done by a project manager from Ireland and an architect from Philadelphia — neither of whom know anything about Bellingham; why are there no criteria mandating specialized skills in urban design, waterfront development, solar aspects, stormwater control, park connectivity or non-motorized access, etc.? We have wankers slapping brutalist crap on our waterfront and a complicit Port of Bellingham (also devoid of specialists) communicating with the lone employee of Harcourt, Loius Parr, as though no other inputs matter. Why doesn't design matter? Why is this sketch a 'solution' to anything other than the profit motive of the developer?”
- d. “if Loius Parr stays as the project manager then there is zero prospect of good construction jobs during his tenure; over 20 employees have tried working for him and have quit — perhaps a tactic to intentionally make sure there is no historical record of the various corners he cuts and his lack of interest in building to code, safety, or meeting inspection requirements, or bothering to use (or pay) certified architects or engineers for the plans he attempts to submit. Does the City or Port have any interest in the quality of work done, the quality of the jobs provided, or the legality of standards currently being offered by Harcourt? What happened to the 'Blue' or 'Green' components of the Waterfront District that we once heard about and, if it exists, what oversight and compliance can the City or Port enforce to get decent results?”

12. Rail noise: What is the plan for creating a “quiet zone” with the railroad as a part of reducing noise pollution in this area? Who's holding up progress in this area?

13. Port operations

- a. The port outsources all of its legal work to a private firm. How do you feel about hiring a port attorney to represent the port's interests?
- b. The Bellingham Public Development Authority didn't succeed largely because the port refused to participate. Would you support a port-driven PDA?
- c. Is there a main project manager for this huge project? Who is that exactly? Rob Fix or the Commissioners? Who is the waterfront's champion? Whose job is it to hold Harcourt's feet to the fire and keep them in compliance and accountable? How is this working so far?