Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup Meeting
Meeting Summary #5
November 16, 2010

Meeting information

Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup
Meeting #5 – November 16, 2010
5:00-7:00 p.m.
Puget Sound Regional Council, Conference Room
1011 Western Avenue, Seattle, WA

Attendance

Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup Members

- Brett Allen, Triad Development
- Geoff Anderson, Orb Architects
- Richard Breslin, Waterfront Landings Condominiums
- Kevin Clark, Argosy Cruises
- Bob Davidson, Seattle Aquarium Society
- Bob Donegan, Ivar's
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Katherine Olson, Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Ted Panton, GGLO
- Lisa Parriott, Washington State Ferries
- Geri Poor, Port of Seattle
- Mickey Smith, Martin Smith
- Brian Steinburg, Allied Arts
- Heather Trim, People for Puget Sound

Presenting City and Project Staff

- Bob Powers, SDOT
- Bob Chandler, SDOT
- Stephanie Brown, SDOT
- Jennifer Wieland, SDOT
- Mark Williams, Tetra Tech
- Ridge Robinson, Tetra Tech
- Erin Taylor, EnviroIssues
- Jim Brennan, JA Brennan
- Bob Fernandes, Berger/ABAM
- Greg Baldwin, ZGF

Also in Attendance

- Brian Holloway, SDOT
- Sandra Gurkewitz, SDOT
- Paul Elliott, SDOT
- Steve Pearce, SDOT
- David Graves, Seattle Parks Department
- Merri Martz, Tetra Tech
- Jaci Anderson, The Feary Group
- Shelley Freedman, CDM
- Ethan Bernau, SOJ
- Wendell Hill, EQR

Welcome and Housekeeping

Bob Powers welcomed attendees to the fifth Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup meeting and thanked the members for their attendance and commitment to the subgroup. Erin Taylor asked attendees for comments on the summaries from both Subgroup Meetings #3 and #4, and the summaries were finalized.

Question: Will you identify deadlines for action items in the future?
Response: Yes, and the team will revisit old action items to identify completed tasks and communicate dates for completion.

- ✓ **ACTION:** Revisit old action items to identify and communicate deadlines.

Erin Taylor introduced the Peer Cities Case Studies document that reviews seawall projects in six peer cities—both nationally and internationally—and summarizes lessons from these projects that may inform the Elliott Bay Seawall Project design.

Question: Will the materials be available online?
Response: Yes, meeting materials will be posted to the project website (http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/seawall.htm) following the meeting.

Mark Williams provided an update on the Tetra Tech team's work to date. Highlights included further work with sea level rise targets, updated earthquake assumptions, parking and pedestrian surveys, traffic data collection, a dive survey, and salmonid habitat research.

Greg Baldwin provided an overview of different light permeable surfaces that the project team has explored, including discussion of how these surfaces could accommodate various pedestrian and vehicle loading requirements. Any system the Seawall Project uses must be durable, maintainable (e.g., able to be cleaned), and capable of transmitting a beneficial amount of light.

Some examples of light-penetrating surfaces under examination include grating, glass blocks, glass planks, and skylights. Grating can be challenging for pedestrians and may pass undesired wastes to Elliott Bay, but those issues could be resolved in design. Glass blocks in a trapezoidal shape would allow a significant amount of light to reach the water. A newer product is glass planks, which are currently available as for use in walking surfaces but not yet for driving surfaces. Finally, skylights have the potential to be an artistic object in a pedestrian zone.

Question: What is the relative cost of each system? Over a mile of waterfront, these systems could provide a consistent corridor of light, but are any of them more cost effective than others?
Response: There are certain zones where these treatments could be used, but they do not necessarily have to be used along the entire waterfront. The pricing is competitive, but these systems are likely three to four times the cost of cast-in-place concrete slab, mostly due to construction costs.

Stephanie Brown provided an update on the city's work to develop sea level rise standards that can be used across city departments. Joint research is underway, and the group will meet the week of November 22, 2010 for additional discussion. More information will be available at the next subgroup meeting.

Jim Brennan provided new information about open water portals and wall surface treatments, including photo examples. He reviewed important wall features such as function and aesthetics, alignment, and texture and noted that research on additional possibilities is underway.

Question: What lessons have others learned about these types of structures over time? For example, do they hold up, require maintenance, etc.? Can the subgroup see how these open water structures age?
Response: Some of those questions are answered in the Peer Cities Case Studies document. As the project moves forward, the team will illustrate the potential structures' size, permanence, and performance.

- ✓ **ACTION:** Illustrate proposed seawall structures and features, including references to other peer city sites.

Comment: These types of structures should be multi-functional and include art.

Concept Plan Evaluation Results

Jennifer Wieland reviewed the five concept plans that were presented in detail at Meeting #4:

Concept A: In-Kind Replacement—The seawall is replaced in its current location with habitat enhancements in all zones, including a beach in Zone 1.

Concept B: Ecological Waterfront—The seawall is pulled inland in every feasible location, with pocket beaches added in Zones 1 and 4.

Concept C: Urban Waterfront—The seawall is replaced in its current location, with some portions of the wall pushed out into the water to create additional gathering spaces.

Concept D: Context Connections—The seawall connects the neighborhoods to the water, with combinations of seawall alignments. Zone 1 includes a beach and short-stay boot moorage, and Zone 4 shows a pocket beach.

Concept E: Evolving Experiences—Experiences evolve as one walks along the waterfront, with combinations of seawall alignments. Beaches are included in Zones 1 and 4, and open water portals are shown in Zones 2 and 3.

Question: Have concepts C and D been cross-checked to ensure zero net gain of overwater coverage?
Response: The concepts have not yet been analyzed to that level of detail, but they will be further evaluated and these types of questions will be answered as the design progresses.

Jennifer explained that the goals, objectives, and evaluation metrics developed with the stakeholders during the first four meetings were used to qualitatively evaluate the concepts. The project team held a Concept Evaluation Workshop on November 3, 2010, bringing together subject matter experts from the Tetra Tech team, city departments, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In independent groups, these experts evaluated each of the five concepts against the metrics. The concepts were evaluated at "face value," including the program elements depicted in the concepts. In cases where assumptions had to be made, the group members were asked to document their decisions.

Jennifer noted that each of the concepts strives to meet all of the goals and objectives, and none were set up to fail. The evaluation workshop revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the concepts—including where design refinements may be needed—and will help the project team move forward to develop the strongest alternatives for environmental analysis.

Question: Can the stakeholder group make changes to the evaluations?
Response: The document presented to the stakeholders is a summary of the Concept Evaluation Workshop, with ratings of "less" to "more" to indicate how well the subject matter experts felt each concept meets the project objectives. This document captures the workshop's results, but the project team is interested in hearing the stakeholders' feedback as well. The ratings are not meant to be additive; rather, they can be used to help identify what aspects of the designs need further refinement as we move forward. Disagreements about scores will be addressed in future designs rather than in an update to the evaluation summary document.

Ridge Robinson reviewed the results of the Concept Evaluation Workshop, inviting questions and discussion from the stakeholders.

Goal: *Address critical structural public safety needs at shoreline.*

- All concepts address these objectives, as public safety will be ensured in all concepts and eventual alternatives.

Goal: *Respect cultural, archeological, and historic resources.*

- The evaluation team described an issue of "authenticity," and determined that beaches are not as historically authentic to the recent history of the waterfront as other elements; therefore, concepts with beaches included were rated lower. Beaches do, however, provide opportunities captured in other metrics, and were rated accordingly.
- Concepts D and E rated lower with regard to opportunities for cultural heritage because they increase overwater coverage.
- A seawall that is pulled inland has more potential to disturb archeological and historical resources, and therefore Concepts B, D, and E were rated lower.

Question: Is post-European design timeframe the threshold for "authenticity" in these ratings? Should that limit the designs?
Response: The evaluation team consisted of Section 106 experts, who considered excavation to have a much higher likelihood of disturbing or destroying archeological and historical artifacts.

Comment: Authenticity is not defined universally. The document should strike the term "authenticity" and replace it with a revised explanation of the group's evaluation.

Comment: An evaluation objective should be added, and concepts rated, regarding tribal reaction. The interpretation used is not up to date.
Response: The groups evaluated the concepts at the metric level, which is more specific than objectives. In order to present the results, the ratings have been rolled up into the objective level, but we do have a metric that addresses tribal concerns. Tribal coordination is underway as part of the design development, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the project's federal partner) is the lead agency.

Comment: There are many limitations resulting from each rating, and it is difficult to see them presented this way.
Response: The team is looking at this evaluation as once piece of a puzzle. Neither concepts nor elements will be eliminated from further consideration or design refinement as a result of this evaluation.

Goal: *Consider long-term vision for the Central Waterfront.*

- The biggest differentiating feature for the evaluation team was the inclusion of open water portals, as in concepts B and E. The group assumed that these portals detract from a cohesive pedestrian flow across the upland project area.
- The key item, with regard to flexibility, is the wall location. Options that had the wall pushed farther inland were rated lower because the team found the location to be more limiting for future opportunities.

Comment: Beach areas may limit growth and have large impacts, which take away flexibility. Washington State Ferries will be nervous about locating a beach next to their terminal. There may be unforeseen impacts that could be large hurdles to overcome at a later date.

Question: Why does the addition of a beach result in a lower rating? Pulling the wall back might not preclude opportunities but rather introduce them.
Response: For the purposes of this evaluation, the group assumed that the objective was referring to hardscape civic opportunities. When the wall is pulled inland, the space available for those areas is reduced.

Comment: Having a large beach could be a great civic space.

Goal: *Provide enhanced habitat and environmental quality.*

- The team noted that the relative opportunity for a naturally lighted corridor was the differentiator between concepts. Concepts B and E ranked highest because they provide the most light, with the most continuous corridor and largest habitat area. Concept C ranked lowest because it impedes the continuous corridor.
- Concepts B and E provide the best mix of shoreline habitats, while Concepts C and D ranked lowest because they minimally addressed the objective.
- The evaluators felt that balance was critical for diversity and connectivity of habitats. A concept that increases habitat diversity is desirable, but not to the point of lessening connectivity. Concept B rated the best with regard to creating a balance.

Goal: *Provide enhanced public gathering and recreational opportunities.*

- The team evaluated attainment of this goal based on how many opportunities were provided by a concept to access the water. Concepts B, C, D, and E provide many opportunities, while Concept A provides only one.
- Concepts B and E provide the greatest boating opportunities.
- The team noted that public spaces were seen as upland hardscape spaces rather than beach areas. Opportunities that pull the wall inland had a greater risk of diminishing civic space.

Comment: Many people do not own boats. Water enjoyment metrics tend to favor boaters.
Response: In addition to boating, the metrics also included opportunities for viewpoints, touch points, and other means of enjoying the water.

Comment: Hand launching any small crafts is very risky in areas near the ferry terminal and other commercial boating. Small crafts in navigable waters are not picked up on radar.
Response: The interest for hand launching has been in Zone 1, where historically there was a tribal launch area.

Comment: The premise of the evaluation document is unfortunate because if a good idea with a bad design is presented, people will not carry it forward.
Response: It is true that these evaluations are subjective; they are qualitative rather than quantitative. However, no concepts or program elements will be eliminated based solely on this evaluation.

Comment: A creative design team has been assigned to this project—this group should challenge them to make these ideas work. If open water portals are desired, the design team should ensure that those portals enhance civic life. The design team should not be limited before they begin.
Response: Due to the early stage of design for the concepts, the program elements must be taken at face value. There is a benefit to doing this exercise now in order to determine where certain design elements are the most appropriate along the seawall, but we recognize the group's concerns.

Question: Who were the subject matter experts for the Cultural, Archeological, and Historic Resources group?
Response: Those team members were Kittie Ford, Mimi Sheridan, Lorelea Hudson, and Lauren McCroskey.

Goal: *Support economic vitality of the waterfront.*

- The team indicated that habitat corridor lighting with open water portals was potentially detracting for businesses and access to businesses. Therefore, concepts B and E ranked lower.

Goal: *Minimize cumulative construction impacts.*

- The team felt that concepts where the wall was moved inland could result in a greater potential for construction impacts to local businesses and the transportation corridor.
- Potential complications with decking and lighting, especially in Concepts B and E, were the determining factors for objectives regarding public services. While every concept maintains access, Concepts B and E could complicate Fire Station access issues during construction.
- Wall placement has the greatest effect on impacts from contaminated soils, air and water quality, and noise. Concepts which included removal of overwater coverage, such as B and E, rated lower for water quality than Concept A, which provided the least potential disruption and turbidity.

Goal: *Support fiscal responsibility.*

- Beaches and moorage elements add maintenance obligations. Concepts A and C ranked highest because they do not include beach elements. Concepts B, D, and E are expected to have higher maintenance.
- Concept A was determined to have the best benefit-cost ratio.

Question: What is the expected maintenance for beaches?
Response: Different configurations and designs will result in different amounts of maintenance. Overall, a beach would be designed to have some maintenance but not an excessive amount.

Comment: There needs to be routine garbage maintenance, as well.

Comment: Myrtle Edwards Park beach is a good example of a beach that is self-cleaned by the tide. Generally, garbage accumulates in the areas with piers, not beaches.

Bob Fernandes presented relative cost drivers for the project elements. He noted that the basic observation is that Concept A is the least expensive, and Concept B is the most expensive. However, none of these concepts have been optimized, so overall costs could easily decrease (e.g., in the case of Concept B).

Bob noted that the seawall structure is expected to be the large majority of the project cost, at 60% to 80%. Setting the wall back will have expenses related to access and in-water work and is estimated to be up to 15% of the cost for concepts that include beaches. Beaches and habitat improvements have additional direct costs, while the costs for the seawall structure, roadways, and utilities are roughly equal for each concept. Design elements, which are estimated to be 5% to 10% of the project cost, include items such as lighted surfaces, architectural finishes, railings, and other details.

Question: Has the idea of encapsulating rain water as a secondary purpose of the seawall been included in these cost drivers, or would those elements be additional costs?
Response: Those ideas are not specifically included in this preliminary estimate, but they could fit into the contingency in the structural category.

Comment: The team should focus on trying to decrease the cost for the structure itself to allow more room for design elements to be included and stay within the budget.

Stephanie noted that the project team will revise the document for the project file to better capture the methodology of the evaluation process. She noted that the intent of the document is not to screen out any of the concepts, but rather to identify areas of weakness so that the concepts can be refined. The team does not plan to distribute the evaluation document but would be happy to have any additional input from the stakeholders. She asked that additional comments be submitted in writing to seawall@seattle.gov.

- ✓ **ACTION**: Project team will update the evaluation document for the project file with a more comprehensive explanation of the methodology.

Comment: The designs were more easily understood when presented in zones. It is difficult to paint the entire waterfront with one brush, so the idea of a continuous "concept" is a challenge for us to evaluate. This group wants to find the most appropriate element or design for particular places along the waterfront, zone by zone. Some project goals may need to considered comprehensively, such as habitat corridor elements, but others can be looked at in specific zones.
Response: The zone area designs worked well, and the team will look into expressing information in that way again as the design progresses.

Comment: This group needs to ensure that the Central Waterfront Project design team has the best information and input available to them.

Comment: The wall placement is a significant determining factor. The group would like to see what is and is not available if the wall is placed in certain locations.

Coordination and Partnerships

Jennifer explained the current and upcoming coordination between the Elliott Bay Seawall Project, the Central Waterfront Project, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Coordination with the Central

Waterfront Project is focused on key elements such as the wall location, roadway constraints, and potential opportunities in Zones 1 and 4. The Army Corps of Engineers is developing federal criteria for the seawall structure and habitat. The next step is for the project to move into 10% design for the National Economic Development (NED) plan and the National Environmental Restoration (NER) plans, which help determine the potential cost-share with our federal partner.

Environmental Process and Schedule

Stephanie Brown explained that the project team will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which requires a range of alternatives. The team will develop alternatives that bracket the full range of potential impacts so that the EIS will cover all possible scenarios. The project team plans to establish the range of alternatives for analysis by late February 2011. Stephanie Brown explained the process ahead for defining alternatives for the project, and noted that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be released to the public after the technical team's work is complete. The goal is to have the environmental process completed by the end of 2012. Currently the team is drafting discipline and methodology reports, which will be reviewed by the resource agencies.

Question: How have you coordinated with other agencies, with regard to milestones? Will there be one or two EISs for the Elliott Bay Seawall Project and the Central Waterfront Project?
Response: The team is working with the Central Waterfront Project to make sure the range of alternatives captured will be inclusive of their ideas. It is recommended that the two projects remain separate because of timing, so there will be two separate environmental processes.

Question: Can this subgroup have access to the discipline and methodology reports and their progress?
Response: The team likely cannot release the reports until they are vetted with the permitting agencies.

Next Steps and Action Items

Planning is underway for upcoming public outreach. A public meeting is tentatively being planned for the third week in January, along with an interactive online seawall survey. The team has coordinated a number of briefings in December and January with community organizations.

Jennifer announced that the next Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup meeting is planned for January 11, 2011. She noted that the group's membership will increase to the full Central Waterfront Stakeholder Group in early 2011 as well. Bob asked that all members of the subgroup submit additional comments to seawall@seattle.gov.

Action Items

- ✓ Revisit old action items to identify and communicate deadlines.
- ✓ Illustrate proposed seawall structures and features, including references to other peer city sites.
- ✓ Update the evaluation document for the project file with a more comprehensive explanation of the workshop methodology.