

**Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup
Meeting #3 Summary
September 28, 2010**

Meeting Information

Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup
Meeting #3 – September 28, 2010
5:00-7:30 p.m.
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 4050/4060
700 Fifth Avenue, Seattle, WA

Attendance

Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup Members

- Brett Allen, Triad Development
- Richard Breslin, Alternate, Waterfront Landings Condominium Association
- Bob Davidson, Seattle Aquarium Society
- Bob Donegan, Ivar's
- Brian Steinburg, Allied Arts
- Katherine F. Olson, Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Lisa Parriott, Washington State Ferries (WSF)
- Geri Poor, Port of Seattle
- Mickey Smith, Martin Smith, Inc.
- Heather Trim, People for Puget Sound

City and Project Staff

- Bob Powers, SDOT
- Bob Chandler, SDOT
- Stephanie Brown, SDOT
- Brian Holloway, SDOT
- Jennifer Wieland, SDOT
- Sandra Gurkewitz, SDOT
- Paul Elliott, SDOT
- Steve Pearce, SDOT
- David Goldberg, DPD
- Mark Williams, TetraTech
- Ridge Robinson, TetraTech
- Erin Taylor, EnviroIssues
- Greg Baldwin, ZGF
- Jim Brennan, JA Brennan
- Tanja Wilcox, JA Brennan
- Bob Fernandes, Berger/ABAM

Welcome and Housekeeping

Bob Powers welcomed participants and staff to the third Elliott Bay Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup meeting. He thanked the subgroup members for their effort and input. He began a round of introductions, and reviewed the agenda. Bob stated that the core of the meeting would be a robust discussion about zone area designs.

Erin Taylor provided highlights of the Seawall Walking Tour held on September 11, 2010, which included participation of more than 100 people and many positive conversations with the public. Erin reviewed the Meeting #2 summary; she clarified that edits or comments can be emailed to seawall@seattle.gov.

Stephanie Brown reviewed the planning and conceptual design process. She explained that the zone area designs will be strung together into conceptual plans for the length of the waterfront in October, to support development of alternatives for further analysis.

Comment: Some elements on page four of the issues and opportunities memo appear to be wrong. The last bullet should clarify historically listed landmarks.

✓ **Action:** The error will be corrected.

Question: To clarify, will the concept designs have full-length waterfront designs, or will each of the zones remain distinct with different options?

Response: We will develop concepts for the length of the waterfront so that the engineering and environmental teams can analyze alternatives across all zones. A great deal of flexibility to mix and match options will remain after October.

Comment: Will stringing these together hinder the Central Waterfront design team's thought process?

Response: There are different approaches that will achieve the goals of both projects, but looking at concepts for the entire waterfront will not reduce the options available to the Central Waterfront Project. Showing combinations of the zone area designs is likely to benefit the Central Waterfront design team by answering questions about which designs are compatible.

Comment: The dotted lines should remain to show the separation of zones. We should strive to show the design team bookends of the approaches.

Response: We will maintain the zone boundary lines as we develop the conceptual plans.

Zone Area Designs

Bob introduced Greg Baldwin to provide framing comments for the zone area designs. Stephanie clarified that the designs have not yet been fully vetted, are still conceptual, and have been developed so that the team can better understand the possibilities for locating the seawall. Some considerations still remain and need to be clarified, especially for property owners. She explained that lines on the maps should be considered "thick;" they are not definite, as this is the beginning of the process. These details will begin to come into focus as we move forward, and interaction with the Central Waterfront team will help us reach a solution that works for many different purposes.

The intent of zones is to explore the existing conditions and the opportunities. There is activity in the water and activity on the upland side. The zones were developed as a foundation, and the following questions were considered during the design process:

- What is significant about the vertical profiles?
- Where is the seawall?
- What exists there now?
- What existed before?
- What are the cultural resources?
- What are the navigational requirements?
- What may change about property ownership?
- What may change about property activity? Now? In the long run?
- What will change during the various construction phases?
- What are the opportunities to move the seawall in or out?
- Can hydrological cycles be reconstituted?
- What are the opportunities associated with habitat restoration?

Greg explained that there are varied dynamics and relationships within each zone that dictate the feasibility of setting the wall back in any one location along the waterfront. Greg used the example of Marion Street to explain that the considerations for pulling the wall back in certain areas hinge on the size of the work zone for construction and the location of the temporary roadway. The location of the viaduct, as well as existing and future traffic on the waterfront, will play a role in determining where the seawall feasibly could be placed. This influences the potential designs for each zone.

Comment: I didn't hear about the use of roads in creative ways downtown, especially during construction. I would hate for the seawall to thwart creativity. Is it possible to use Western Avenue differently?

Response: We are being conservative in keeping four lanes along Alaskan Way at this point to maintain something close to the existing throughput of traffic. However, we understand that the discussion about where lanes should be located might be reopened in order to keep traffic moving.

Comment: We should eventually hear from property owners about what they want during the construction process. Maybe they will want parking in front of their piers or stores, or maybe they would prefer something else.

Response: Yes, this will be an important piece of future conversations.

Jim Brennan and Ridge Robinson provided an overview of the zone area designs for each zone. Jennifer Wieland stressed the importance of hearing from the stakeholders about their initial reactions to these designs. Ridge explained that each zone has different opportunities, as well as different considerations related to science and engineering. The primary focus of the team at this point is to determine where the wall is located and begin to explore the opportunities created by that decision.

Jim described the zones in more detail. He explained that the graphics show shoreline systems and that elevation and depth are key questions when developing the zone designs. The public will be welcomed to Elliott Bay by what is created at the threshold of the water's edge, and the team has been thinking a great deal about how the public interfaces with Elliott Bay. The coastal engineering team has also been part of this conversation—the slope of beaches and the transition into deeper water are important elements of the designs. Jim explained that, in addition to the physical placement of the wall, there are potential program elements that could be overlaid in many different zones, such as lighting, new decking, and educational opportunities. These elements will be added to the designs in the future.

Zone 6 – North Pier

Characterized by sequences of piers and open water areas, Zone 6 includes the Edgewater Hotel and Port of Seattle offices, along with the Victoria Clipper on the south side of Pier 69. There are two possible designs for Zone 6:

- 6A: Seawall in place, enhanced with light wells
- 6B: Seawall set back, with light penetrating decking

Question: What is being done with the existing trolley line if the seawall is moved back?

Response: We are not talking about modifying the roadway as part of the seawall project.

Comment: There may be the potential to reduce road width, or it may not be possible.

Comment: The road will change drastically due to Alaskan Way moving up toward Elliott Avenue (when the viaduct is removed).

Comment: The Victoria Clipper passenger pick-up and drop-off creates a taxi queue, and this should be taken into consideration.

Comment: These north zones will be the last to be constructed; we will have the opportunity to learn from our previous work.

Stephanie explained that the distance the seawall could be pushed back would allow for the same roadway configuration that exists today, but there is flexibility in the roadway dimensions. However, there will be traffic impacts due to construction, and there are limitations for pulling the seawall back. All dynamics will need to be considered.

Zone 5 – Bell Harbor

Zone 5 includes Bell Harbor International Conference Center and the cruise ship docking area. Private and public moorage at Bell Harbor Marina provides a distinctive visual character to the waterfront. There are two possible designs for Zone 5:

- 5A: Seawall in place, enhanced with light wells
- 5B: Seawall set back, with light penetrating decking

There was a brief discussion about the expansion of temporary moorage, and Geri Poor stated that a meeting is being arranged to discuss this and other Port operations in greater detail.

Comment: Public access in Zone 5 should be noted; there is a gate, but anyone can gain access.

Question: Should critical pedestrian overpasses be identified, or should there be an acknowledgement of critical gateways where people enter the space?

Response: Yes, we will make those more distinct on the drawings.

Question: Is there any exploration of minimum requirements for the walkway and for the vessels to maneuver? Could we capture another three to five feet of walkway extension? What could we do to extend that walkway (e.g., cantilevered sidewalks)?

Response: Through the program elements, these types of questions can be explored in different zones.

Comment: There is a taxi line up at the cruise ships and at other multi-modal facilities, which might be accommodated in the design. There are also horse carriages, school buses, and large private buses. Part of having efficient operations is understanding current uses and integrating them into the design.

Comment: Taxi and other queues should be integrated into the construction process, too.

Comment: Bear in mind that the current multi-modal nature and transportation uses on the waterfront evolved organically; there is a whole set of transportation uses that was not planned for originally.

Zone 4 – Park/Aquarium

Publicly owned, Zone 4 has the potential to become a central focus of Seattle’s grand public waterfront space. This zone is home to the Seattle Aquarium, Waterfront Park, and Piers 62/63. There are six possible designs for Zone 4:

- 4A: Seawall in place, enhanced with habitat bench
- 4B: Seawall set back, with fine substrate pocket beaches and a floating park
- 4C: Seawall set back, with cobble pocket beaches and a floating park
- 4D: Seawall pushed out, with hardscape elements or stairs
- 4E: Seawall set back, with urban edge
- 4F: Seawall set back, with stairstepped wall

Zone 4 includes opportunities for a central public gathering space and for a variety of ways to provide people with access to the water. Jim explained that there are many options for Piers 62/63 that have been introduced in these designs. He identified the possibilities of having a beach or a cove as a large gathering space to bring people to the water. The configuration of the future roadway is a potential challenge for this zone, as Alaskan Way may need to climb the hill below Pike Place Market. Jim cautioned the group that these designs are not final—they simply outline the range of possibilities.

Jim provided information regarding slope transitions, water depths, and the challenges surrounding these aspects in Zone 4; he noted that beach materials could be selected based on maintenance requirements. The idea of a floating park was mentioned as a way to transfer existing overwater coverage from Waterfront Park and/or Piers 62/63 to a new gathering space. Overall, trade-offs in the size of public spaces should be considered.

Comment: The team should look at opportunities holistically and really understand how connections can be made topographically. Elevations should be a top priority going forward.

Response: The Central Waterfront team will be looking at these concerns as well.

Comment: The long-term plans of the Seattle Aquarium should be taken into consideration in the designs. Strategic planning being done at the Aquarium can incorporate the knowledge and options being suggested.

Question: Of the opportunities shown for Zone 4, are all of them feasible? For example, is the slope in 4B (pulling the wall back) possible from an engineering perspective?

Response: Yes, they are. At this point, the biggest technical issue is the roadway connection of Alaskan Way going up the hill.

Zone 3 – Central Pier

Zone 3 is an historic pier zone and represents the economic core of the downtown waterfront. The piers host a variety of restaurants, souvenir shops, and visitor attractions that create a lively public atmosphere. There are two possible designs for Zone 3:

- 3A: Seawall in place, enhanced with light wells
- 3B: Seawall set back, with light penetrating decking and open water portals

Because of commercial interests in this zone, there must be opportunities for window shopping and drawing people to the piers and businesses. The sidewalk and street need to flow together, and service vehicle access and parking should be maintained.

One big question for this zone is whether there are ways to increase habitat for salmon. The first option (3A) would leave the wall in place but create light tubes and other means for getting light to the water. The second option (3B) with the wall pulled back provides the opportunity to create open water portals and views down to the water, while modifying substrate and water depths for habitat. An additional sub-alternative includes riparian plantings along the edge, while extending the intertidal edge.

Question: What are the plans to clean up the contaminated sediment at those piers?

Response: There will need to be a plan for this as we move forward.

Comment: I immediately think of the maintenance issues—of the docks, facilities, etc.—that come with some of these plans. It should be a consideration whether the city can afford the long-term costs associated with maintenance.

Response: The objectives and measures will help to identify the maintenance costs of various elements.

Comment: There are opportunities here for outdoor seating pavilions, such as Ivar's having an outdoor café. The interaction of businesses into the public space is crucial, and flexibility for all uses needs to be maintained. The open water portals would take some of this public space and would have to be carefully designed.

Comment: This entire area could be built as an artscape.

Comment: While there may be a requirement for fish to use this area as a migration corridor, the habitat enhancements may overwhelm the public use opportunities. A balance should be found between providing light for fish and creating a viable public space.

Comment: This might be a case where we can have a two-for-one opportunity, where the open water portals become amenities in a public space.

Zone 2 – Ferry Terminal

This zone is a focal point for regional access for waterborne craft to and from Seattle. The ferry terminal is a multi-modal hub that forms the largest area of continuous over-water coverage along the waterfront, which creates challenging conditions for the migration of juvenile salmon. There are two possible designs for Zone 2:

- 2A: Seawall in place, enhanced with light wells
- 2B: Seawall set back, with light penetrating decking and open water portals

In collaboration with Washington State Ferries (WSF), Zone 2 designs have focused on the opportunity to improve the fish migration corridor and the potential for rain gardens or other water filtration. Pulling the wall back would provide options for getting light to the water and giving people a sense of the water. There are specific access requirements in this area, including plans for a potential bicycle entry. The designs account for the fact that future ferry terminal renovation is part of WSF's long-term plan.

Comment: The labels on the drawings should be changed so as not to give the impression that the ferry terminal might be expanding. There may be a trade of space in the future, which would provide many opportunities, but it is too early to commit to this.

Question: Is there more information available about the value of a lighted corridor for fish?

Response: The exact amount of light and the spacing of underwater light is still being explored by the habitat team; there are experiments happening right now that may provide useful information.

Comment: We know that fish will travel under docks, but further studies would give ranges of the distance they will travel in darkness. Generally, wherever the width of a dark area is narrowed, it is a good thing. Fish prefer to avoid swimming into a dark “wall,” and they often wait for the sun to go down to balance contrasts between light and dark.

Response: There are potential changes to the design—including modifying the approach to the docks—that would prevent the creation of sharp transitions between light and dark.

Zone 1 – Pioneer Square/Washington Street

Zone 1 includes the Washington Street Public Boat Landing, a waterfront icon listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This zone is closely linked to historic sites in the area, including the Pioneer Square neighborhood. Zone 1 includes Pier 48, which is currently owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). There are five possible designs for Zone 1, two of which show future possibilities for Pier 48 (if the city were to purchase it from WSDOT):

- 1A: Seawall in place, with pocket beach at Pier 48 site
- 1D: Seawall in place, with pocket estuary at Pier 48 site
- 1E: Seawall set back, with urban hardscape elements and moorage
- 1F: Seawall in place, with pocket beach
- 1H: Seawall pushed out, with hardscape elements or stairs

Jim explained that the shallow water bathymetry of Zone 1 is ideal for a beach or stairs leading down to the water. Developing a touchpoint with stairs would provide a harder urban edge but would give people a chance to interact with Puget Sound. There is also the potential to create a pocket beach as a southern bookend to Olympic Sculpture Park. This zone could include a non-motorized boat launch or short stay moorage as well. Throughout all of the designs, there are opportunities for the zone to serve as a focal point for cultural and historical interpretation.

Two of the designs include potential opportunities for the area that is currently Pier 48, although these designs are not options that could be implemented by the Elliott Bay Seawall Project in the near term. In the future, it may be possible to develop an upland public use area or a pocket estuary or lagoon, as well as new view points.

Comment: Washington State Ferries (WSF) currently has a 20-year long-range plan; however, the ferry system will be around much longer than 2030, so it is important to accommodate potential future growth. At this point there are no plans for Pier 48 after the viaduct team is done using it for construction staging, but WSF will need flexibility and open communication with the city to determine future plans. There is a very important east-west corridor in this location, and WSF wants to ensure that the future use serves tourists and residents alike.

Question: Would the King County foot ferry have to be removed if the over-water coverage of the ferry terminal was extended?

Response: Possibly, although it is too early to be certain. There is a long-standing interest in water taxis to and from West Seattle.

Comment: The project has been programmed through 2016, and it should implement something really great in this area to show folks what can happen.

Comment: Zone 1 really needs a lot of help, more than the other places. There are so many issues we can't get into tonight related to social equity and public safety, but ultimately this area is in disrepair and needs help.

Comment: This raises the maintenance question again. We can create a great space, but it will need to be maintained.

Comment: The entirety of the space may not be for public use; it may include some area for development. There are many decisions to be made about how the space will be used moving forward.

Comment: I watch how people use beaches in other Seattle parks. There should be parking nearby for people to unload their kayaks. We need to talk about boat rental, sheds, kayak rental, and other similar uses. A gradual slope into the water is better for people using the waterfront. Human interaction with the water is a very important aspect.

Comment: The potential of many of ideas is very stimulating, but sometimes we get painful lessons from reality, especially related to maintenance and long-term costs.

Response: That is true; as we move forward in design, we need to consider how facilities will be maintained.

Comment: Maybe there will not be a place where kayaks can launch. Maybe there will be a place where people can have lunch or just hang out. And urban edge may not be the place for hand-launch boats.

Developing Themes

Greg explained that distinct themes will be developed for the conceptual plans to guide the design team's development of options. Fixing the seawall is the core of the project, but strong themes can help to represent other aspects, such as the restoration of natural landscapes. Any concept that is developed will meet the goals and objectives. Subgroup members were urged to send thoughts on themes to the project email address.

- ✓ **Action:** Subgroup members should email their comments and ideas about concept themes to seawall@seattle.gov.

Objectives and Measures

Jennifer began the discussion about objectives and measures, explaining several changes that were made to the goals since the August meeting:

- New goal: "Support economic vitality of the waterfront." (A new goal to capture long-term vitality, in addition to short-term during construction.)

- Revised goal: “Consider long-term vision for the Central Waterfront.” (Revision from: “Consider long-term context for design of the Central Waterfront.”)
- Revised goal: “Provide enhanced public gathering and recreational opportunities.” (Revision from: “Provide enhanced recreational opportunities.”)

Comment: It is not only about economic vitality, but the designs should not impact long-term operations either. Have we captured wanting to maintain operations for everyone during construction?

Response: The goals are very high level. The objectives and evaluation metrics address the details, such as ensuring access along the waterfront.

Comment: Access to the waterfront is a good metric, but there should also be an explicit metric about not disturbing operations: “Minimize impacts to ferry operations,” or “Do not limit future flexibility for ferry operations.”

Response: Flexibility should be promoted for all of these activities.

- ✓ **Action:** Change metric to read, “Minimize long-term impact of ferry operations and meet vessel travel time expectations.”

Comment: It will be the responsibility of all projects along the waterfront to establish an ethic of sustaining existing businesses. The waterfront will need to flow in all ways, and transportation bridges all of these functions.

Comment: We need to think about the flexibility of overlapping opportunities. All metrics need to overlap. Transportation needs are also spaces, and spaces should blend together instead of being compartmentalized.

Response: Before the design ideas are presented to the public, there must be a way to measure what is being verbalized. The evaluation metrics are a way of doing this.

Comment: The public safety objective should be reworded so that it is clear it pertains to structural public safety needs.

- ✓ **Action:** Change goal to read, “Address critical structural public safety needs at shoreline.”

Comment: The objectives within the first goal should address private infrastructure as well.

- ✓ **Action:** Modify objective to read, “Reduce impacts to public and private infrastructure from seismic seawall collapse.”

Comment: The second goal (regarding respect for cultural and historic resources) should not translate into a half-hearted attempt to put Native American print on the seawall.

- ✓ **Action:** The first objective for this goal should be reworded to include iconic Seattle history elements.

Comment: The evaluation metrics for the second objective of the third goal (i.e., Central Waterfront flexibility) should mention longevity of the design, as longevity is the key term.

- ✓ **Action:** Include longevity in metric for Central Waterfront goal.

Comment: The last metric for the fourth goal (i.e., habitat enhancement) might be reworded to read, "Add aquatic, riparian, and upland habitat."

Comment: The metrics for the fifth goal (i.e., recreational opportunities) should include kayaking or recreational boating as a linear opportunity.

- ✓ **Action:** Reword metric to read, "Supports linear opportunities such as walking, jogging, bicycling, and recreational boating."

Stephanie thanked everyone for attending and Bob said he would email action items. Erin announced the next meeting on October 19, 2010, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Puget Sound Regional Council Board Room (1011 Western Avenue, 5th Floor). The meeting was adjourned.

Action Items and Next Meeting

- ✓ Subgroup members should email their comments and ideas about concept themes to seawall@seattle.gov.
- ✓ Change metric to read, "Minimize long-term impact of ferry operations and meet vessel travel time expectations."
- ✓ Change goal to read, "Address critical structural public safety needs at shoreline."
- ✓ Modify objective to read, "Reduce impacts to public and private infrastructure from seismic seawall collapse."
- ✓ The first objective for the second goal should be reworded to include iconic Seattle history elements.
- ✓ Include longevity in metric for Central Waterfront goal.
- ✓ Reword recreational opportunities metric to read, "Supports linear opportunities such as walking, jogging, bicycling, and recreational boating."

Next Meeting:

Seawall Stakeholder Subgroup Meeting #4

Date: October 19, 2010

Time: 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Location: Puget Sound Regional Council Board Room