

Waterfront Seattle's first public event was held on February 17, 2011 at the Seattle Aquarium. Over 1,000 people attended to engage in the waterfront vision and hear the project team present their approach. Nearly 2,000 responses were collected around the time of the event from a broad cross-section of the public on the future vision and potential uses of the new waterfront.

## HOW THE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED

Input was collected in two ways:

1. A survey was posted online from January 24 to March 9, 2011 and handed out in hard copy at the event itself. This survey was widely advertised using the city's email lists of individuals interested in the project, the distribution lists of 26 Waterfront Seattle event partners, and social and print media. The survey was answered by a total of over 1,200 people with approximately 80% responding online.

The survey asked the following eight questions:

- What makes a great waterfront?
- What is unique about the Central Waterfront in comparison to Seattle's other waterfronts?
- The Central Waterfront needs to achieve many goals and will ultimately include many of the uses listed below. That said, which of the following uses are MOST important to you? [multiple choice, participants were asked to select only one response with the option to select 'Other' and write their own response.]
- Which of the following uses is LEAST important for you? [multiple choice, participants were asked to select only one response with the option to select 'Other' and write their own response.]
- Please indicate two main uses that would attract you to the waterfront regularly. (examples: places to eat, places to stroll and sit, pathways to run and ride bicycles, concerts and events, public art, shops, etc)
- What would you most LOVE to see on the new waterfront?
- What would you be most disappointed to see on the new waterfront?
- If we could do one thing to improve the Central Waterfront now, what would it be?

2. Two activity stations with large boards were used at the February 17<sup>th</sup> event to gather input in a graphic and visual way. Approximately 600 people participated at each station.

- **Places Station:** Participants were given stickers and asked to put a mark on a large aerial site photograph in response to the question: "Looking forward, where do you most want to be on the Waterfront?"
- **Uses Station:** Participants were given stickers and asked to put a mark on a series of images showing a wide range of possible waterfront uses in response to the question: "What activities would most attract you to the Waterfront?" Participants were also given stickers and asked to put a mark on a series of activity icons responding to the question "What would you most want to do on the Waterfront"?

## SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

When the results from the online and hard copy survey and the boards at the February 17 event are taken together, the following trends emerge.

### Vision

'What Makes a Great Waterfront?' was the primary question aimed at understanding the public's larger vision for the waterfront. This question was asked in a variety of formats including the website survey, hard-copy survey as well as large graffiti boards and one-on-one video interviews at the February public workshop.

According to respondents, the following attributes make a great waterfront:

- Opportunities for views, including the possibility of saving a remnant of the viaduct;
- Better access to the water – from downtown and adjacent neighborhoods;
- Activities, events, destinations and reasons to gather; and
- Promenades, parks and open spaces.

In response to the question, "What is unique about the Central Waterfront in comparison to Seattle's other waterfronts?" people highlighted:

- Connection to the bustle of the downtown through proximity to commerce, density and city life;
- Diverse views of the mountains, the city, ships and ferries; and
- The waterfront's history of working maritime culture and present use as an industrial working waterfront.

When asked what they would most love to see on the waterfront, responses were extremely varied with equal weight placed on many attributes. Respondents generally focused on:

- Opportunities for views, including the possibility of saving a remnant of the viaduct;
- Opportunities to touch the water, either through stairs or beach restoration and natural habitat; and
- Parks and open spaces.

In contrast, in response to the question about what would be most disappointing to see on the waterfront, respondents focused on:

- View blocking structures and large-scale private commercial development including condos, hotels and offices;
- Oversized roads and parking lots and too much hardscape; and
- Tourist-oriented uses including chain restaurants and shops that do not feel authentic to Seattle.

When asked questions about their vision for the waterfront and hopes for the overall character of the place, respondents tended to highlight a wide variety of attributes, as the questions above demonstrate. Responses were disproportionately affected by web traffic driven to the survey in early February by a Seattle Times column promoting saving a portion of the viaduct as a viewing platform. While responses in favor of the idea showed up in great numbers the day the article was published and are heavily represented in our results, they dropped off precipitously immediately thereafter.

### Places

At the event, the top responses to the question “Looking forward, where do you most want to be on the Waterfront” were:

- Pier 62/63;
  - Olympic Sculpture Park/Myrtle Edwards Park;
  - Pier 48; and
  - Waterfront Park/Seattle Aquarium.
- Other popular places were the Washington Street Boat Landing, locations on the existing Viaduct, Colman Dock Ferry Terminal, Victor Steinbrueck Park, and Elliott Bay.

### Uses

At the event, the top response to the question “What activities would most attract you to the Waterfront?” was ‘Strolling, sitting and viewing’.

Other categories that scored high were ‘Destinations, festivals and events’, ‘Aquatic and natural habitat’ and ‘Arts and culture’. Participants responded to visual images of different waterfront uses organized by category, however when images were ranked individually (instead of by category) the ranking shifted slightly, although the top three activities were the same; ‘Sitting’, ‘Outdoor gathering’ and ‘Beach’, in that order.

At the event, the top responses to the question “What would you most want to do the Waterfront?” were:

- Walk
  - Touch the water; and
  - Eat
- Other activities that scored high were ‘Attend a Concert’, ‘View and Experience Habitat’.

Written survey responses mirrored results at the event, with the most popular uses chosen from a multiple choice list being:

- Passive recreation (examples: parks and pedestrian areas for walking, picnicking, lounging, sitting, relaxing, viewing),
- Public gathering spaces and destinations;
- Aquatic and natural habitat; and
- Mobility and access including a waterfront streetcar (examples: streets, transit, ferries, bike facilities, parking)

When asked about which uses were least important to respondents, the answers were nearly opposite with the least important uses listed as first 'Active Recreation (examples: fishing, boating, volleyball, basketball, skateboarding)' and second 'Shops and Restaurants.' It is interesting to note that 'Running, biking and walking' were viewed differently from 'Active Recreation' and scored quite high as potential uses for the new waterfront in the question below.

Responses to the survey question "What are the two main uses that would attract you to the waterfront regularly?" provided parallel results, with one interesting anomaly. When respondents were given the option to separate eating and shopping, places to eat jumped up on the list. The top uses respondents listed that would attract them to the waterfront were:

- Parks, places to stroll and sit;
- Concerts, events, public gathering spaces and destinations;
- A diverse range of eating experiences including places to eat that appeal to locals as well as tourists; and
- Pathways for running, walking and biking.

### **Early Wins**

When asked for ideas about ways to activate and improve the waterfront in the short term, before the large-scale project is complete, people responded with an amazing array of ideas.

The top responses were:

- Improve access and connections to the waterfront for all types of transportation and make interim pedestrian streetscape improvements;
- Tear down the viaduct; and
- Provide a reason to go there now with events on the waterfront of all types, large and small.

Other popular responses were 'Add interim green space and plantings', 'Make it safer and cleaner', 'Provide places to hang out with food carts, benches, tables and chairs', 'Make an elevated park with a portion of the viaduct', 'Repair, replace or remove unused piers', and 'Provide temporary noise abatement.'

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

The information above will be used by the project team to better understand public preferences for the future waterfront and will inform development of the waterfront framework plan and concept design, to be completed in the Fall of 2012.

There will be many additional opportunities for the public to provide input on the concept design as it is developed in the coming months. As a next step, we invite everyone to join us at our next public event on May 19, 2011, at Bell Harbor Conference Center to hear the project team present on how this input is reflected in the initial design ideas for the new waterfront.

Additional information available at:  
[www.waterfrontseattle.org](http://www.waterfrontseattle.org)  
[www.facebook.com/waterfrontseattle](http://www.facebook.com/waterfrontseattle)  
[www.twitter.com/waterfrontsea](http://www.twitter.com/waterfrontsea)