

RENEWING SEATTLE’S CENTRAL WATERFRONT

A SET OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The new Seattle Central Waterfront offers us the opportunity to transform the heart of civic life in our region. A well-designed Waterfront will enrich our community, enhance our relationship to local marine ecology, and enliven our urban core to support our highest ambitions for quality of life and sustainability in our region. To realize its full potential, the new design of our Viaduct-free Waterfront should be developed through an integrated process that expresses its regional context as part of the Puget Sound water's edge, reaching from Bellingham to Tacoma. It should engage Seattle's unique physical and social context in an environment like nowhere else in the world. It should honor the significance of the Central Waterfront as the heart of our region, the original epicenter of Puget Sound's success and identity. It should encourage creativity, provide a mix of public and private amenities and allow for a diverse range of activities and users.

Engage History – Past, Present, and Future

The new Seattle Central Waterfront should integrate present and future uses within the context of its rich civic and natural history. The historic workings of the waterfront should influence and inform our vision of its future, building a bridge between past, present and future uses as part of a continued evolution of this critical place.

Embrace Social Equity

The new Seattle Central Waterfront should embrace and support social equity, creating an environment that allows for diverse, multi-generational community gathering. It should create a place that is accessible to all of Seattle's communities, open to everyone and inspirational to all. It should represent the best of what we believe about our pluralistic, inclusive community, offering places for families and children, individuals, and diverse groups.

Promote Diverse Uses and Activities

The new Seattle Central Waterfront should provide a wide range of user opportunities that activate our public space during both day and evening, and throughout all seasons of the year. Varied spaces and activities should provide the framework for users to interact with the water's edge, engage our distinct ecology, and connect with adjacent city districts and open space while allowing for flexibility and expansion in the future. Uses might include public open space for informal activities and structured events, areas for organized and spontaneous play, community facilities such as a community center, playground, swimming pool, school, or music venue, and connections to the aquatic zone.

Create Urban Connections

The new Seattle Central Waterfront should link with the surrounding and immediately adjacent urban districts through a system of connections. Distinct connections should be created with all east-west rights-of-way, adjacent urban districts, view corridors, and the larger waterfront context. Mobility integration should address the individual needs of pedestrians, automobiles, transit, freight, service, bicycle, ferry, water taxi, trail network, accessibility, emergency, parking and the collective overlaps and opportunities where these modes come together.

Develop a Distinct District

The new Seattle Central Waterfront should be a distinct urban district that celebrates the intersection of Seattle's urban core with Puget Sound. The Waterfront District should integrate with the adjacent urban districts such as Pioneer Square, Pike Place Market, Belltown, as well as the Central Business District and Waterfront North and South. It should incorporate development guidelines to foster diversity and density of uses, including residential and commercial uses that contribute elements integral to a vibrant urban place. Integrated parking should be provided to support the comprehensive mobility plan.

Sustain the Ecosystem

The new Seattle Central Waterfront should engage and integrate the complex ecosystems that intersect at the water's edge – marine life and the health of Puget Sound, natural conditions along the shoreline, and the human ecology that is an extension of city life. The approach should embrace this complexity in a seamless integration that is both a steward and a healer of our natural environment. By integrating the marine ecosystem with human activity, our waterfront can become the first international model for a "living waterfront". Waterfront design, planning and implementation should consistently embrace and lead the best sustainable practices.

Accentuate the Water's Edge

The new Seattle Central Waterfront should accentuate and enhance the ecological function of the water's edge of Puget Sound. Flexibility in the configuration of the seawall can create beaches, habitat and diversity along its length so that there are extensive opportunities for human access and interaction with the water. Direct visual access from all points along the waterfront and from adjacent urban neighborhoods can foster active public uses located along the water's edge.

Create a Framework for Continued Development

The waterfront as a vibrant urban place should develop through an open-ended plan that comprehensively establishes the parameters for development and allows for broad based participation in continued discoveries. In its thoughtful planning today, it must allow for Seattle's future growth by creating a successful community-oriented, walkable, dense urban neighborhood. The waterfront should be conceived as a living and evolving urban and natural place which must be guided to be continuously enriched through change over time.

Design a Successful Process

The approach needs to be organized to create a knowledgeable, focused leadership structure with the authority to effectively direct the design and implementation process. The process should be organized to inspire high ambitions and foster creative discoveries. And the approach should involve a diverse, multidisciplinary collaboration which comprehensively integrates the broad range of issues. In addition, the process should be transparent insuring that our community remains informed and committed. The process should also become a learning opportunity that enriches and elevates our community dialog about long term sustainability, urbanism and its relationship to natural systems, and civic life in the Puget Sound region.