

Waterfront District – The “Package” of Master Planning Documents

The Port and City are engaged in a strategic partnership to gradually reactivate the Waterfront District from a contaminated “Brownfields” site into a neighborhood that will provide jobs, housing, parks and public access to Bellingham Bay shorelines. This effort requires a package of different planning documents that will guide redevelopment of 220 acres of waterfront property over a span of decades. These documents, their general purpose and functions are briefly summarized below and in attachment.

1. Sub-Area Plan (aka “Master Plan”) – Describes the community vision for the Waterfront. Defines five different subareas, each with a unique character and land use. Presents a multi-modal plan for arterial streets, transportation, utilities and a system of parks and public access. Includes an overall phasing plan and proposed regulatory standards for redevelopment. The draft Master Plan was published in September 2010 and is being revised prior to submittal to Planning Commission. Requires approval by the City Council and Port Commission.

2. Environmental Impact Statement – Analyzes the potential impacts and required mitigation measures for developing the Waterfront according to the approach defined in the draft Master Plan. Key elements of analysis include traffic impacts, views, stormwater, historic resources, seismic hazards and other environmental conditions. A Final EIS was published in July 2010 by the Port’s SEPA Responsible Official.

3. Development Agreement – Creates predictability and certainty for development on property currently owned by the Port. Defines applicable regulations and zoning described in the Master Plan for a defined period of time. Requires approval by the Port, as landowner, and the City, as land use regulator. Preliminary draft under review.

4. Planned Action Ordinance – Established as a land use planning tool in Washington State during regulation reform of 1995. Provides early and comprehensive SEPA analysis and public involvement for large scale development proposals. Defines mitigating measures for defined actions. Requires adoption by the City. Preliminary draft under review.

5. Capital Facilities Agreement – Replaces original interlocal between the Port and City to clarify future partnership obligations for phased implementation of capital improvements in the Waterfront District, including MTCA site cleanup, marine infrastructure, shoreline restoration, transportation arterials, public infrastructure, parks and any associated property transfers. Establishes “partnership protocols” for coordinated administrative decision-making, project management, project requirements, budget planning, cooperative funding strategies and implementation.

6. Design Review and Document Approval Handbook – Will provides project background information, permit application procedures and points of contact at the Port and City for potential developers of property within the Waterfront District.