

SUMMARY REPORT

Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment Project Open House

October 6, 2021

The Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment Project Open House (Open House) was held via Zoom on October 6, 2021. The Open House was hosted by the Port of Bellingham (Port), facilitated by consultants from Veda Environmental, and included presentations from Port of Bellingham staff as well as a facilitated Q&A with members of the project team.

The goal of the Open House was to share the current status of Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment Project and provide opportunities for questions and input.

35 individuals attended the Open House which included local residents, marine trades business representatives, local government and tribal representatives, and various community groups.

Presentations from the project team covered the following topics:

- High-level project overview and current status
- A discussion of the project goals and the work completed and/or planned work to achieve them. The project goals are:
 - ***Complete environmental cleanups at the Whatcom Waterway, Central Waterfront and I&J Waterway sites***
 - ***Protect and enhance Whatcom County Marine Trades business & employers***
 - ***Pursue habitat enhancement opportunities in project area***
 - ***Support public access and park improvements in alignment with City partnership***
- Results from interviews and a workshop with Marine Trades Representatives
- Project timeline

Following the presentation, there was a facilitated Q&A with a panel of representatives from the Port of Bellingham.

Key Takeaways from the Q&A

- The Working Waterfront Coalition supports the Port moving ahead with the plans for the cleanup and adaptive reuse of the ASB, and the incorporation of the resulting uplands and new navigable waters into the Marine Trades Area. The resulting facilities could form the nucleus of a maritime supercluster extending from the I&J waterway to the Whatcom Waterway that will sustain existing maritime businesses and attract new ones over the long term.
- The City of Bellingham Parks Department (Parks) recognizes that there are great opportunities for parks in the marine trades area, such as the Breakwater Trail and the pocket beach in the corner of the ASB and Marine Trades Area. The City and Port are early in the design process, which is why the Port has ensured the City team is involved early in the process to pull those components together at the right time. There is a lot

more planning that will happen with public input and stakeholders deciding what goes in these spaces and how it will all connect.

- The Port is early in the planning stages for redevelopment of the Phase 2 cleanup areas. There are many aspects that are yet to be determined; however, hearing interests at this stage is helpful for future planning.
- The Port is committed to protecting and enhancing marine trades businesses in the redevelopment of the marine trades area. This fits within what is already established for the defined land use of the marine trades area in the Waterfront District. The Port has discussed other uses in the project area, such as public access, parks, and habitat improvements, but from a commercial usage standpoint, an expansion of the marine trades sector that already exists in that area is the predominant anticipated use. This includes anything from a commercial fishing fleet to a barge terminal or ship building. The Port is very supportive of the marine trades and wants to see that expand in this area.
- One suggestion from participants was that the Marine Trades Area should include a Port-owned and operated heavy boat haul-out facility with covered and uncovered storage areas with the capacity to haul out (at minimum) 300-ton vessels to meet the current and future demands of the working waterfront.
- Stormwater management is one of the opportunities that the Port has explored. There is a lot of space, which could allow the Port to construct a site-wide, regional stormwater management system that could serve all the industries. How exactly that would come together is still to be determined.
- This project is located within the traditional ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people. The Nooksack Tribe and Lummi Nation are part of the Bellingham Bay Action Team, which has been briefed on the project. Additionally, the Port has agreements with the Lummi Nation regarding coordination and has engaged with Nooksack Tribe leadership as well. There are several ways that the Port is engaged collaboratively and cooperatively with local tribal interests.
- Since it is still early in the process, it is not yet clear what all the habitat improvement opportunities are. Habitat benches are one of the larger opportunities. The Port does not know the exact size of the open water area so doesn't know exactly how big these benches would be, but they could include eel grass plantings and create shallow habitat that doesn't exist currently. As the project moves forward, the Port will look around the waterway and see what other opportunities could get rolled in. Other habitat improvements will likely include removing the old GP wharf, a large overwater structure with lots of creosote, and replacing the failing bulkhead. Nothing is off the table, and the Port will continue to look at all opportunities while considering alternatives moving forward.