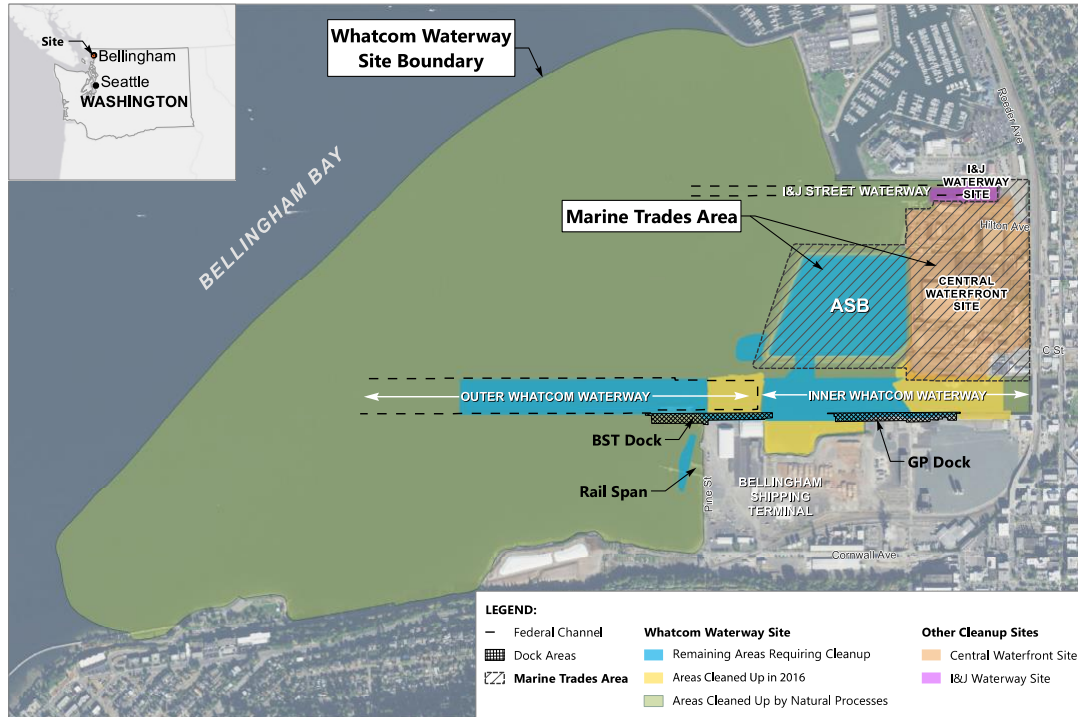


The Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment Project

DRAFT FAQs

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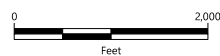


Figure 1
Cleanup Sites and the Marine Trades Area

1. What are the Port's goals for this project?

- The Port has four integrated and equally important goals for this project:
 1. **Complete environmental cleanups at the Whatcom Waterway, Central Waterfront and I&J Waterway sites**
 2. **Protect and enhance Whatcom County Marine Trades business & employers**
 3. **Pursue habitat enhancement opportunities in project area**
 4. **Support public access and park improvements in alignment with City partnership**

2. What is the cleanup component of the project?

General

- The Port is leading the cleanup work under the direction of the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). The Marine Trades Area includes portions of three cleanup sites: the I & J Waterway site, the Central Waterfront site and the Whatcom Waterway site; *see Figure 1*.
- Design activities for cleanup are underway at each of the three cleanup sites.
- All cleanup work must comply with state regulations established to ensure long-

term protection of human health and the environment. Land uses are considered as part of implementing those regulations.

Whatcom Waterway Site

- The Port completed cleanup of a portion of the site in 2016. Design is underway for the remainder of the site, including the ASB.
- The existing cleanup plan for the 29-acre ASB is based on previous land use plans to reuse all of the ASB as a marina. An update to the reuse plan for the ASB will require an update to the existing cleanup plan.
- Based on extensive input from Marine Trades Area stakeholders and industry experts, the Port understands that adjusting the existing reuse plan for the ASB will better address the needs of our community. The Port plans to update its Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements to reflect these proposals.
- The Port is keeping Ecology apprised of its land use planning efforts and of potential changes to the existing reuse plan for the ASB, including an evaluation showing that related changes to the existing cleanup plan for the ASB will significantly reduce cleanup costs and shorten the construction timeframe.
- Following updates to the Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements in January 2022, the Port will begin working with Ecology to modify the existing cleanup plan for the remaining areas of the Whatcom Waterway site.
- Subject to public review and Ecology approval, it is anticipated that the modified cleanup plan for the ASB portion of the Whatcom Waterway site will include the following changes to reflect reuse changes:

What is a Confined Disposal Facility?

A confined disposal facility (CDF) combines and safely isolates contaminated sediment removed from other areas of a site. An aquatic CDF is built underwater. A nearshore CDF is built along the shoreline, creating upland.

- Replacing the *aquatic confined disposal facility* called for under the existing cleanup plan with a *nearshore confined disposal facility*, reducing the facility footprint by about half
- Completing the nearshore confined disposal facility in a manner that provides 12 to 14 acres of usable land and a shoreline edge treatment that provides connectivity between the uplands and the in-water navigation areas
- Deepening the remaining cleaned up area of the ASB and removing a portion of the existing ASB berm; this will create a new marine area connected to the Whatcom Waterway to support a wider range of vessel movements

- To learn more about cleanup work at contaminated sites within the Marine Trades Area and other cleanup work in Bellingham Bay, please see Ecology's website: [Bellingham Bay Cleanup](#).

3. What is the redevelopment component of the project?

- While in the preliminary stage at this time, the modified reuse plan for the ASB will support expansion of marine trades uses by 12-14 acres of usable upland fronting a similar acreage of navigable marine waters with a working depth of

about 25 feet.

- Over the past several years, the Port has worked with the City, Port tenants and waterfront stakeholders in a planning process to better understand and document marine trades land uses and business opportunities.
- A key take-away from the planning process is the need to provide a multi-use area that
 - can support many different marine trades activities,
 - is sufficiently flexible,
 - and has excellent connectivity between the upland and in-water navigation areas.
- The outputs of this planning process help inform proposed updates to the Port's Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements, and the Port's planned request to modify the existing cleanup plan for the ASB portion of the Whatcom Waterway site.
- The redevelopment of the proposed expanded Marine Trades Area will continue to support the Port's commitments to provide habitat restoration and public access improvements.

4. *How is public access incorporated into this project?*

- The Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment project will support future improvements to shoreline access through new infrastructure and naturalized, sloping shorelines. Future work in the project area completed by the Port's partners will allow for increased recreational activities that may include kayaking, boating, fishing, and/or others.
- The Port and City are working together to retain and enhance the existing publicly accessible walking trail on the ASB berm.

5. *How are habitat improvements incorporated into this project?*

- The Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment project will directly improve and enhance habitat quality and quantity by removing or isolating contaminated sediment and opening up a portion of the ASB to the Whatcom Waterway and Bellingham Bay.
- In-water cleanup work will incorporate fish-friendly materials (e.g., gravels, sands, etc.) and soften shoreline slopes where possible to create shallow-water habitat for use by salmonids and wildlife.
- The proposed reuse plan for the ASB includes breaching a portion of the southeast edge of the existing ASB berm for vessel traffic, connecting the new marine area to the Whatcom Waterway. It also includes a small connection along the northwest edge of the existing ASB berm to Bellingham Bay. These new connections will support fish migration.
- Since it is still early in the design process for the Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment project, all the habitat improvements have not yet been determined. Creating habitat benches is one of the more significant habitat improvement opportunities associated with this project. These benches could include eel grass plantings and create new shallow habitat that would benefit

salmon and other species. Other habitat improvements may include the partial or full removal of the old GP wharf, a large overwater structure with lots of creosote-treated pilings.

- The Port will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with the City and Ecology to conduct habitat improvement projects throughout Bellingham Bay that could be combined with, or supported by, this project.

6. *What are the benefits of this project?*

- In addition to protecting and expanding opportunities for marine trades businesses, the overall project will also improve environmental quality by completing the site cleanup work, improving habitat for fish and wildlife, and supporting improvements that will provide opportunities for public shoreline access and recreation.
- The project will further the decades-long effort to put former industrial waterfront properties into sustainable reuse consistent with the community vision.
- By creating a multi-use area that can support the operations of many different marine trades activities, the project will provide improved economic opportunities for the people of Whatcom County by supporting good family-wage jobs and opportunities for existing businesses to expand and diversify.

7. *How long will this project take?*

- The cleanup and redevelopment of the Marine Trades Area is a long-term project that will occur in a number of phases. Currently, redevelopment activities are in the planning phase which will continue until the cleanup work is completed.
- Cleanup construction for remaining areas of the Whatcom Waterway site, including the ASB, is expected to begin in 2024 and will take about 2-3 years to complete. Potential early cleanup construction actions at the Central Waterfront site will likely occur in 2022. Cleanup construction at the I & J Waterway Site is slated to begin in mid-2022. These dates are subject to change based on design and permitting schedules.
- Some habitat and public access improvements will occur in parallel with the cleanup work. Other improvements will take place in the years to follow.
- Similarly, some redevelopment activities within the Marine Trades Area can occur in parallel with the cleanup work. Other activities such as the reuse of the ASB upland and in-water areas will proceed following completion of the cleanup.

8. *How is this project funded?*

- The Port is eligible for reimbursement by Ecology for up to half the cleanup-related costs through the state's Remedial Action Grant program, which helps pay to clean up publicly owned contaminated sites. The state Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a tax on hazardous substances.

- Funding for the balance of the project costs will come from the Port's environmental insurance policy, property sales, and the Port's operating and capital budgets.

9. *How are the local Tribes engaged in the planning process?*

- The Port recognizes that this project is located within the traditional ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people, specifically the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe. The Port is engaged in direct discussions with both the Nooksack Tribe and the Lummi Nation about this and other projects. The Port also has agreements on project coordination with the Lummi Nation and has engaged with the Nooksack Tribe leadership as well.

10. *How is the community being engaged, and how can I participate?*

- The community is encouraged to participate throughout the area redevelopment planning process. There will be numerous opportunities to obtain information, ask questions, and/or provide input, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - The Port hosted a Land Use Workshop on November 5, 2020 and an Open House on October 6, 2021 to share information about the project and hear input from stakeholders.
 - The Port has ongoing communications with marine trades representatives to identify needs, opportunities, and constraints.
 - When the Port's Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements is updated in January 2022 there will be a formal public hearing with the opportunity for public comment, and a commission presentation.
 - Future land use and infrastructure planning for the Marine Trades Area (2022-2026+) will provide opportunities where participants may ask questions and provide input.
 - If a future Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan Amendment is needed, there will be public meetings and opportunities for public comment during the review process.
 - During redevelopment, following the cleanup of the remaining areas of the Whatcom Waterway site and applicable land use permitting (2026+), there will be multiple opportunities for the public to acquire information, ask questions and provide input.
- Please regularly check the project page on the Port of Bellingham's website for updates and information on specific opportunities: [Marine Trades Area Cleanup and Redevelopment Project](#)
- Ecology will hold a formal public comment period on proposed modifications to the existing cleanup plan for remaining areas of the Whatcom Waterway site. Contact Ian Fawley at 425-324-5901 or ian.fawley@ecy.wa.gov to be added to Ecology's mailing list.