

9.0 Conclusions

The Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan describes a long-term redevelopment project which will convert an under-utilized Brownfields industrial site on the Bellingham waterfront to a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood, and restore three miles of shoreline for habitat and public access. The Waterfront Futures Group charted the course when they completed the Vision and Framework Plan for the Central Waterfront in 2004. The City and Port have been working together over the past fourteen years to complete the detailed planning, environmental review, development regulations and implementation strategies to allow this vision to move forward.



The initial Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan, Development Regulations, Development Agreement, Planned Action Area Ordinance and Interlocal Agreement for Facilities was adopted in December, 2013. This set of documents established five planning areas, a network of roads, trails and parks, development regulations and design standards to guide development, and agreements between the Port and City to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Port and City to implement the plan. The Port of Bellingham entered into a Master Development Agreement with Harcourt Bellingham LLC. to develop a portion of the Downtown Waterfront area, and Harcourt Bellingham is making progress to redevelop the historic Granary Building. Several additional development projects are proposed. The Port has completed cleanup and bank restoration projects in the Downtown Waterfront to prepare this area for redevelopment, and the City is under construction to install the roads, utilities and parks to serve the first phase of development.

The proposed 2018 amendment to the Sub-Area Plan, Development Regulations and agreements was jointly developed by the Port of Bellingham and Harcourt Bellingham, LLC, with input from City staff and the public. These amendments would modify the location and alignment of several roads, parks and view corridors to improve access to and through the site and better support proposed development projects.

The following additional actions will to allow the next phases of development to begin, and will set the stage for a long term cooperative relationship between the City and Port as the site fully develops:

9.1 Implementation Strategies

1. Adopt the 2018 Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan Amendment as an amendment to the City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and the Port of Bellingham Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements.
2. Amend the Waterfront District Planned Action Ordinance with an updated table of required mitigation measures, consistent with those identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and 2018 Addendum to the EIS, to assist potential developers and agency regulators in the processing of permit applications for projects within the Waterfront District.

3. Continue to implement the established process which requires mitigation measures identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for anticipated impacts associated with specific types of actions to be implemented either before or concurrent with the specific action.
4. Continue the established partnership structure, with representatives from both the Port of Bellingham and City of Bellingham, working together for long-term cooperation in the phased installation of public infrastructure and mitigation implementation.
5. Updated the Development Agreement and associated Development Regulations to establish clear, predictable standards and review procedures for development.
6. Amend the Facilities Agreement to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the City and Port to implement the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan.
7. Update the Waterfront District Permit Handbook, which describes the efficient permitting process, predictable time lines and determinations, for both prospective developers and the local community, for review and approval of Waterfront District development projects that are consistent with the Sub-Area Plan.
8. Prepare more detailed park and infrastructure plans, with additional opportunities for public input, as specific parks and public spaces are designed and funded.
9. Periodically review the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan and prepare amendments to the plan and development regulations, at least every ten years, to respond to development trends or changes in technology.

