

EDMONDS WATERFRONT AREA REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Edmonds Waterfront Area Redevelopment Program is a cooperative effort focused on redeveloping properties located between 1) the Edmonds Marsh / Dayton Streets and BNSF Rail lines / State Route (SR) 104, and 2) Dayton Street / James Street and BNSF Rail lines / SR 104. Additionally, a secondary area under consideration or review is located within the general vicinity of Harbor Square and Antique Mall and includes the rights of way of SR 104 and Main Streets, Washington State Department of Transportation parking lot at the northeast corner of Main Street and SR 104, and parking area between Railroad Street and BNSF rail lines, just south of Main Street. Figure 1 depicts the geographic extent of the main and secondary study areas. As it exists now, the study area is underutilized and currently used to support a mixture of office, retail, restaurants and transportation functions.



Figure 1

Background

On April 25, 2006, the Edmonds City Council and Edmonds Port Commission conducted a joint meeting to review the status and history of Harbor Square and Antique Mall properties and discuss public/private development opportunities. During the meeting, Maritime Trust presented information about their work with the Port of Everett to redevelop the port's property into a mixed use environment in order to provide an example of the kinds of opportunities that may also be available to Edmonds. A review of the current Downtown Waterfront Plan took place and the potential to establish a railroad quiet zone was also discussed.

At the conclusion of the joint meeting, the City and Port officials agreed to create a Redevelopment Committee, herein referred to as the "Committee", to focus their efforts on redeveloping the study area. Ron Wambolt and Bruce Faires serve as the primary City and Port committee representatives respectively.

Why Redevelop?

Redevelopment is a process by which local governmental entities typically work in partnership with private development to enhance the social, economic, physical and environmental vitality of a city within specified project areas.

The primary and secondary subject area can best be described as large prime parcels of underutilized real estate containing structures with utilitarian architectural interest. Large areas of concrete also provide an unfriendly streetscape contributing to the lack of connectivity between the City's waterfront and downtown.

The City of Edmonds and Port of Edmonds agree that redevelopment of the study area is a high priority. Redevelopment of the study area will have a direct effect on the economic future of Edmonds because it will promote improvements that are focused on the growth and enhancement of the community. Improvement of the study area and the positive effect it will have on the rest of the City is a major goal of this redevelopment effort and consistent with the City's comprehensive plan.

Input from the City and Port of Edmonds officials, property owners, and the general public, will likely underscore the strong potential for a successfully redeveloped, high quality, mixed-use area. The redevelopment committee feels that an assessment of existing site conditions and redevelopment options, future real estate market potential, along with the need to connect the City's waterfront with downtown, confirms that many current uses, and their present haphazard arrangement, are not reflective of the site's significant potential value and strategic location. The study area has an untapped underlying value with strong economic/employment and recreation/connectivity public access components.

Benefits of Redevelopment

The committee envisions a much needed attractive citywide destination that will substantially contribute to current community efforts to improve the quality of life for city residents, visitors and businesses, while at the same time, improving the City's existing favorable image.

Positive effects of redevelopment reach far beyond the boundaries of the study area. Redevelopment efforts improve a community's image and economic and social climates. Improvements benefit the community and encourage others to invest in future development. By providing the framework for progress, the City and Port can attract a wider range of goods and services to the community.

There are several specific benefits that could occur as a result of redevelopment activity:

- New investment
- A wider range of available jobs
- Increased opportunities for shopping and recreation
- Improved infrastructure, public facilities, and open space
- New and renovated housing opportunities
- Diversified and increased tax base
- Improve the appearance and circulation of the project area
- Improved connectivity between the downtown area and the City's waterfront and Port of Edmonds

The Process

The process of designating an "area in need of redevelopment" can be commenced and completed very quickly, or over a longer period of time. The time necessary to undertake the process depends on a variety of factors, including the level of political and public support for the designation, the receptivity and participation of property owners, the amount of public participation, the availability and experience of professional consultants, and the community's vision for the area in question.

During the past few months, the committee has been meeting on a monthly basis to define a scope of work that could potentially lead to the redevelopment of the study area. In order to gain an understanding of the level of involvement that may be necessary to transform the study area, the committee invited staff and officials from the Port and City of Everett to the first redevelopment program meeting. Port and City of Everett officials shared their experiences with working on the Port Gardner development with Maritime Trust. Additionally, the committee views property owners as the major partners in this endeavor and believe it is important to structure the process to include them in all steps leading to eventual redevelopment.

During the next few redevelopment program meetings, the committee spent time discussing the following issues:

- Establishing a vision
- Reviewing existing conditions
- Opportunities
- Master Planning Process
- Public involvement
- Engaging stakeholders
- Interactions between the Port, City, property owners, citizens and development community
- Determining financial feasibility of redevelopment
- Project milestones

The committee believes that a collective effort, i.e., City and Port officials and staff, property owners, residents, business owners, investors, developers, engineers, and architects will be necessary to redevelop the study area in such a way as to achieve

positive results. As such, it is necessary to develop a process/plan that allows the involvement of these entities.

The Plan

The committee agrees that creation of a Redevelopment Plan, via a Master Plan process, is needed in order to reach the goal of eventually redeveloping the study area. While the formulation of conceptual master plan alternatives must be supportive of policy direction established by the City Council via the City's Comprehensive Plan, the committee recognizes that any development must be financially feasible. A realistic market based approach consistent with the alternatives developed, will hopefully demonstrate that this is possible. This being said, it is important to recognize that due to an existing high water table, the need to provide sufficient parking (while not creating a sea of parking), need to provide satisfactory vehicular and pedestrian circulation, existing code requirements, and the community's desire to develop a viable project, various design alternatives relating to setback, height, and use parameters need to be explored.

The following outlines a possible master planning process. This is subject to change based on discussions between a selected contractor, City/Port of Edmonds and property owners.

Master Planning Process

Project Commencement

Phase 1 – Master Planning Alternatives

This phase of the process will be structured around public workshops together with a program of public and governmental agency/Port staff involvement.

1. Public Workshop #1
Profile of Existing Conditions and Opportunities
User Group Needs and Concerns
Alternative Use and Development Strategies
2. Public Workshop # 2
Preferred Land Use Development Strategies
Preliminary Concepts and/or Designs
3. Public Workshop #3
Master Plan Alternatives (similarities and differences)
Economic Feasibility & Employment Impact Overview
4. Planning Commission Approval of Concepts
5. Port of Edmonds Port Commission review and approval of concepts
6. City Council Approval Concepts

Phase 2 – Environmental Review and Permitting

Phase 3 – Phased Site Redevelopment

Recommendation

The committee is recommending to the City Council and Port Commissioners to authorize the creation of a Redevelopment Plan, via a Master Plan process, and that a private-sector firm lead the planning effort. If City and Port officials agree, a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for the master plan could be issued requiring any successful responder to have experience conducting public/private partnerships, community outreach, developing mixed use projects and be capable of undertaking the development following the master plan's completion. In addition to placing advertisements in key publications, known developers should also be contacted asking them to submit responses.

Prior to issuing a RFQ, the committee would first meet to study what costs would be associated with preparing and soliciting a RFQ, costs associated with conducting the three phases listed below, and options for funding the work. The Committee would then return to the City Council and Port Commissioners to report on their findings.