

Waterfront Redevelopment Position

Stan Snapp, 2007 ©

Port/City partnership and vision for redeveloping the New Whatcom

- I admire the Port for having the vision to acquire the GP site
- Initially the City and Port partnered well.
- The 18 month Water Front Futures process left us with some clear ideas for the potential of our waterfront. There was agreement for public access along with mixed use development to create living wage jobs and to include a housing component to compliment downtown.
- Now there seems to be a rush to build infrastructure before we have approved cleanup strategies in place.
- The current second phase of the development is beginning the Master Planning process that will lead to the Development Agreement.
- Currently, vision and participation from interest groups, especially from environmental, neighborhood, parks and open spaces, groups, are lacking.
- The City is rushing to build bridges, without a circulation or transportation plan. The Laurel Street Bridge is designed too high due to current location of the tracks yet they will later be moved closer to the bank. We are told the bridge urgency is driven by grant timing.
- The Port is saying they want a Development Agreement signed with the City by 1st quarter of next year.
- In the end we want an environmentally safe and friendly waterfront with public access that provides living wage jobs and some comfortable housing, while preserving Bellingham's unique flavor and doesn't deplete the Cities ongoing funding commitments.

Agreements between the Port and the City

- City to provide the infrastructure, in exchange for the Port doing the cleanup. Port insisted on impact fees being waved during the planning stages with renegotiation after that for the development agreements
- The current economic projection has the City facing an 80+ million dollar short fall between revenue and expenses. The council needs to take action to renegotiate some agreements with the Port and must resist the Port's urgency. This is a twenty-year or more long-term project.
- I would like a second opinion on the engineering for cap in place verses removal for the upland hot spots.
- For Whatcom Waterway I support "alternative 7" that citizens overwhelmingly supported at the DOE Public Hearing. It strikes a balance between improved protection and thin capping. The current lagoon cap is already in need of repairs and it's been in place only a short time.