

## Integrated Public Engagement and Outreach Approach

### Definition and Context

**A once-in-a lifetime opportunity is upon us.** The City of Seattle has embarked on a major initiative to create a dynamic new front porch that will reconnect downtown with Elliott Bay and define a new civic heart for the city. This decade-long effort will include the construction of dynamic public spaces, new surface street connections, greatly improved pedestrian access to the waterfront, enhanced marine habitat, and a robust and innovative new seawall that meets safety requirements and provides opportunities to touch the water. Pursuing these projects today is possible because of the imminent need to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct and seawall structures.

These changes to the waterfront will be implemented through two **closely coordinated projects**: Waterfront Seattle and the Elliott Bay Seawall Project. The Seawall Project will replace the failing Elliott Bay seawall from King Street to Broad Street, providing the foundation and structural support for a new waterfront. Waterfront Seattle will capitalize on the removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct to provide a new surface Alaskan Way, improve connections to the waterfront, replace utility infrastructure, and develop a series of new public spaces that will serve the entire city and region.

The City of Seattle aims to set a **new standard for innovative and robust public engagement** with these projects. The projects will work in partnership with each other; with local, state, and federal agencies; with project stakeholders; and with Seattle's civic, community, and business leaders. These partnerships will play a key role in ensuring that all Seattleites are aware of the projects and have a direct opportunity to help shape them.

Providing the public with a **clear message about the "big picture"** of waterfront changes and how the two projects contribute to those changes is critical. The Elliott Bay Seawall Project—managed in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—and Waterfront Seattle are managed separately and will be completed as independent projects to address different federal and state environmental requirements as well as implementation timelines. However, both city projects are important steps in the overall reimagining of Seattle's waterfront, and the seawall can be an exciting early win in the large scheme of waterfront redevelopment. Therefore, the design and public outreach for the two projects are closely coordinated to eliminate potential conflicts and to appropriately direct public input.

Given that the Elliott Bay Seawall Project and Waterfront Seattle, as well as the state's viaduct replacement project, share a project area and are underway simultaneously, there is potential for the public to be confused about what is happening on each project and how the projects' activities fit together. This document presents an **integrated approach to public engagement and outreach** for the two projects, describes the key elements and phases of that work, and begins to identify how success will be measured. With this approach we are:

- highlighting the unique opportunity ahead to create a great waterfront;
- setting a benchmark for transparent project planning and delivery; and
- reducing misinformation and public confusion about the relationship between the two projects.

### Shared Outreach and Engagement Goals

#### Near-term

- ✓ **Mobilize interest and establish positive momentum** for the waterfront transformation process. Generate excitement for opportunities these projects afford to improve the natural environment and human experience.
- ✓ **Communicate the Waterfront Seattle Guiding Principles** and engage the public in using them to help develop innovative design solutions.
- ✓ **Articulate the relationship between the two projects** in the context of a shared vision for the future.

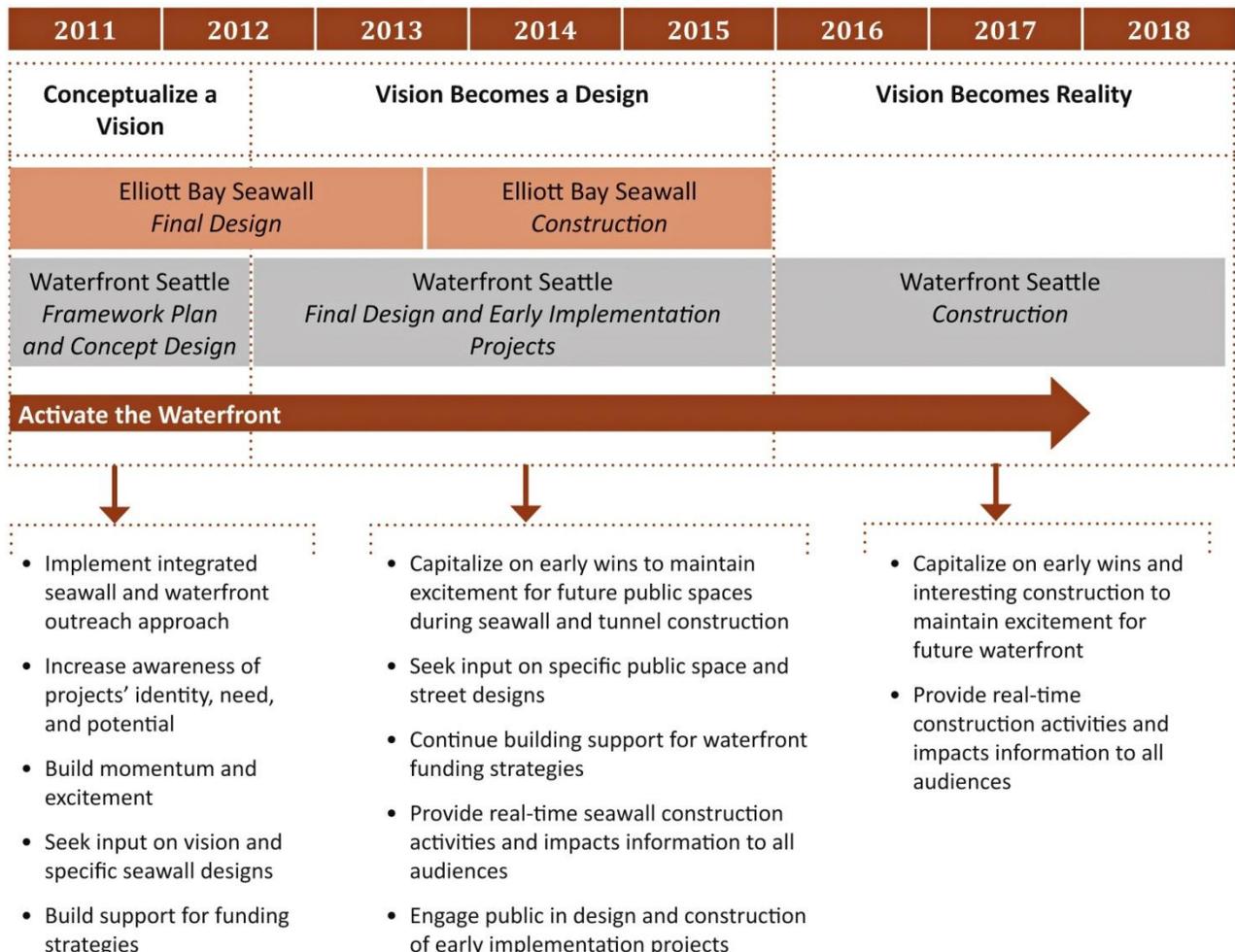
- ✓ **Develop awareness of the Elliott Bay Seawall Project’s public safety urgency**, including the need to replace the failing seawall and protect utilities, mobility, and commerce at the regional, state, and federal level.

**Near-term and long-term**

- ✓ **Meet and exceed public involvement regulations** associated with environmental processes and permits for all projects. To that end, communicate necessary separation of projects.
- ✓ Clearly **articulate which components of each project are available for public influence** and provide multiple opportunities and avenues to receive input.
- ✓ **Embrace the diversity of perspectives and audiences** by expanding our reach to include traditionally under-represented populations and building bridges between differing opinions.
- ✓ **Foster partnerships to support the developing vision** for the waterfront and generate enthusiasm for early implementation.
- ✓ **Build support and trust for a process that will span several years** through a paced approach to public outreach and engagement. Communicate the goals and key milestones of the process, share new information in a timely and relevant way, and keep a comprehensive record of how public input has shaped the process and outcomes.
- ✓ **Provide hands-on activities on the waterfront** through tours and events to engage people with each other and with the combined project area. We call this “activating the waterfront.”
- ✓ **Galvanize support for funding strategies through a broad-based understanding of the** need for and results from this comprehensive planning effort. This will result from meaningful engagement throughout the process.

**At-a-Glance Strategy**

**Approach for Key Project Phases**



## Intent of Public Engagement and Outreach

Informing the public (i.e., outreach) and engaging the public (i.e., engagement) result in different outcomes. Project leadership and team members of Waterfront Seattle and the Elliott Bay Seawall Project share a common understanding of the definition of and intended outcomes from the public outreach and engagement strategies presented in this document:

	<b>Public Outreach</b>	<b>Public Engagement</b>
<b>Definition</b>	Techniques, systems, and tools used to <i>inform and share information</i>	Techniques, systems, and tools used to <i>gather input and feedback</i>
<b>Timing</b>	Best used when raising awareness is the desired outcome	Best used when two-way communication is the desired outcome
<b>Value</b>	Extends the knowledge base of the projects' purposes and opportunities to a broad audience	Broadens group of people who are "in the know" about the projects, extending participation in decision making
	Drives toward and supports engagement	Brings voices—beyond technical staff and traditional decision-makers—into the project design and decision processes
<b>Intended Outcomes</b>	No surprises; provides broad understanding of projects' information (at any stage) and decision process	Provides improved, sustainable decision-making for the projects through incorporation of public desires, issues, and needs into the projects' processes, designs, and construction.
	Achieves coordinated approach goals	Achieves coordinated approach goals

## Tools to Achieve Goals and Intent of Public Outreach and Engagement

### Public Outreach/Communications

*Actions to inform and also promote engagement/input*

- Print resources (brochures, posters, etc.)
- E-newsletters/Emails
- Multi-media web site(s) and online exploration tools
- General social media updates
- Media releases/coordination
- Advertising (print/online)
- Displays
- Waterfront-area events and booths at existing fairs and festivals
- Physical presence/kiosk/office in project area
- Translation services
- "Place-based" outreach to traditionally under-represented populations
- Environmental and other technical documents

### Public Engagement/Input

*Mechanisms for collecting public feedback*

- Central Waterfront Committee meetings
- Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meetings
- Public workshops/meetings/hearings
- Major public events/celebrations on the waterfront
- Formal briefings to elected bodies
- Stakeholder/public briefings or roundtables
- Planning outreach liaisons
- Project tours
- Email or web comment forms
- Online questionnaires/surveys
- Social media-posed questions
- Event booths (fairs and festivals)
- Telephone hotline

On an ongoing basis, targeted work plans will combine the right suite of materials from the lists above to effectively notify audiences of upcoming milestones, activities, and opportunities to provide feedback.

## Audiences

The projects have many audiences to consider in the community outreach and engagement process: those who live, work, and play along the waterfront today as well as potential new stakeholders from around the city and region. These new stakeholders include “hard-to-reach” populations and those who have not participated to date in the public involvement efforts related to the waterfront and/or the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program.

Audiences include, but are not limited to:

- Advisory groups (Central Waterfront Committee, Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group)
- Arts community
- Boating community
- Business community and major employers
- City boards and commissions
- City of Seattle departments
- Design community
- Educational institutions (organizational leadership as well as visitors of all ages)
- Elected officials (local, state, federal)
- Environmental groups
- Fire, police, and other emergency responders
- Freight interests
- General public and future users of the new waterfront (not living or working in the area)
- Historic interests
- Local, state, and federal agencies
- Maritime interests
- Media
- Neighborhood and community groups (in Seattle and the region)
- Owners of nearby construction projects (public and private: SR 99 Bored Tunnel, Mercer, Holgate to King)
- Potential project funding partners
- Residential community (localized)
- Social service providers
- Stadium users
- Tourism and convention bureau
- Traditionally under-represented populations
- Traveling public (ferry, bike/ped, SOV, transit)
- Tribal Nations
- Youth/schools

## Measuring Effectiveness

A true measurement of success will be the degree to which the public engages with and takes ownership in the waterfront. This ownership may be years in the making, and measuring success of public outreach and engagement efforts is most often a qualitative assessment. The list below outlines quantitative mechanisms for monitoring effectiveness—to supplement ongoing qualitative analyses—that the projects may use at various points:

- Number of contacts in stakeholder database
- Number of comments received during comment periods
- Geographic origin of public comments
- Number of requests for briefings or information from interest groups
- Number of visits to project websites and openings of project emails
- Social media tracking: “friends” gained and re-tweets through hosted Facebook page and Twitter feeds
- Number of blog posts, links to and reposts from SDOT blog, waterfrontseattle.org, and seawall website
- Number and diversity of new vs. returning attendees at public meetings/open houses/events
- Number of people visiting/using the waterfront
- Accuracy of media coverage

As part of the City of Seattle’s Race and Social Justice Initiative, SDOT has developed metrics to gauge the level of engagement that is achieved on projects of different sizes and scopes. These metrics are currently being pilot-tested on several projects and are likely to be available for use by Waterfront Seattle and the Elliott Bay Seawall Project in 2012.

## Key Messages Regarding the Coordinated Project Approach

Each project has developed a detailed public engagement strategy and key messages relevant to the project's specific activities and phase of development. However, there is also a need to frame the projects' coordinated approach for the public, which the following key messages are intended to do. These are likely to remain relevant through fall 2011:

- **Now is the time.** We need to re-invest in our public infrastructure and seize the opportunity to create the foundation for a world-class waterfront by replacing the seawall, which is an urgent public safety need. This brings opportunities to restore fish habitat, re-connect people to the water, and create enlivening public spaces as part of Waterfront Seattle.
- **This is a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape Seattle.** Together, Waterfront Seattle and the Elliott Bay Seawall Project will re-imagine 26 blocks of Seattle's downtown. The James Corner Field Operations team and seawall designers are collaborating on potential seawall placement to help determine seawall alternatives and maximize flexibility for the future waterfront design.
- **Create a strong foundation.** Rebuilding the seawall—the waterfront's foundation—is the first step in realizing the vision of Waterfront Seattle. The sooner we replace the seawall, the sooner the vision for the waterfront can be achieved. Replacing this major piece of our city's infrastructure prevents negative impacts to our economic vitality through disruptions to utilities that are held in place by the seawall, loss of access to major transportation facilities, and loss of access to downtown buildings, residences, and the waterfront piers.
- **We are building a waterfront for all.** Diverse public input is a core component of the design process for both projects. We will continue to keep the community informed about design progress and opportunities to get engaged.

## Managing the Process

The following mechanisms will help the project teams manage the public outreach and engagement process:

- Integrated goals for Elliott Bay Seawall Project and Waterfront Seattle messaging, outreach, and engagement;
- Joint participation in the Central Waterfront Committee and Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meetings;
- Joint community briefings and public events, where appropriate;
- Coordination with the Central Waterfront Outreach Subcommittee to review proposed efforts and help assess the public input received;
- Shared stakeholder contact database and activity tracking; and
- Ongoing cooperation to address and track emerging issues, coordinate and clarify misinformation that may be identified through media coverage or the review of public comments, and confirm that outreach strategies are synchronized and targeted. Specific coordination tools include bi-weekly meetings and internal weekly updates on outreach activity status.