



AQUARIUM MASTER PLAN FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

Since 1977, the Seattle Aquarium has served as a focal point on Seattle’s central waterfront, and in 2014 had over 830,000 visitors. It is the most visited cultural attraction in downtown Seattle. In keeping with its mission of *Inspiring Conservation of Our Marine Environment*, the Aquarium is planning a renovation and expansion that will allow it to advance scientific research, further marine conservation education, and accommodate an increasing number of visitors to the central waterfront.

The Seattle Aquarium has begun a Master Plan process and is working in close collaboration with the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation and the Office of the Waterfront. The process will review prior planning efforts related to an expansion, as well as consider a recent concept for integration with the Overlook Walk.

The City’s 2009 Ordinance 123205 authorized the Department of Parks and Recreation to enter into an Operations and Management Agreement with the Aquarium, which required the Aquarium to prepare a Master Plan for City Council approval by resolution.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to describe planned or potential physical development of the Aquarium including purpose, strategy for preservation of historic structures and view corridors, and consideration of pedestrian access and circulation. A key part of the Operations and Management Agreement was a requirement that such development be consistent with the City’s overall waterfront planning.

KEY DATES

The Aquarium Master Plan process will include briefings to and a potential vote by City Council to approve the Master Plan and support further review and analysis – including environmental review – of a potential Aquarium expansion. Below is a list of key dates, including upcoming opportunities for public input.

DATE	ACTIVITY	NOTES
April-June	Aquarium-led stakeholder outreach	Share information and gather input
May 18	Council Waterfront Select Committee briefing	Share an overview of the Master Plan process, including outreach to stakeholders and the public
June 8	Publish Draft Master Plan on Aquarium website	Share Master Plan broadly and provide opportunity for public feedback
June 16	Aquarium-led public meeting on Draft Master Plan	Share the Draft Master Plan and gather input
June 22	Council Waterfront Select Committee briefing	Share Draft Master Plan and feedback from stakeholders and the public
July 1	Publish Final Master Plan on Aquarium website	Reflect additional public input



July 13	Aquarium-led public meeting on Final Master Plan	Share the Final Master Plan and answer questions
July 27	Council Waterfront Select Committee briefing and possible vote to approve the Master Plan	Share Final Master Plan including recommendation for further review of Aquarium expansion
August 3	Possible Full Council vote on Select Committee's recommendation	

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

The Aquarium is conducting stakeholder and public outreach from March through June, as part of developing its Draft Master Plan. During this time, completed and planned outreach activities include informational briefings and presentations, two public meetings, briefings to City Council and use of the Aquarium's website to share information and gather public comments.

Community input is being carefully considered by the Aquarium design and planning team as the Master Plan is developed, and will be summarized and included as part of the draft Master Plan. The public will continue to be encouraged by the Aquarium to provide their comments in writing, attend public presentations, briefings, and upcoming Council hearings.

Briefings

To date, the Aquarium has reached out to approximately 20 community stakeholders and organizations to gather feedback on its Master Plan process. Briefings completed or scheduled as of May 8, 2015:

- Downtown District Council
- Downtown Seattle Association
- Friends of Waterfront Seattle
- Hillclimb Court Condominiums
- Department of Neighborhoods (Landmarks Board Architectural Review Committee)
- League of Women Voters
- Pike Place Market PDA
- Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
- Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Seattle Design Commission Aquarium Subcommittee
- Seattle Historic Waterfront Association
- Seattle Parks Foundation
- Trust for Public Land
- Waterfront Landings Condominiums
- Waterfront Merchants Association
- Numerous condominium boards or homeowner groups

Public Meetings

The Aquarium is planning two free public meetings as part of the Master Plan process. The first meeting will be held on the evening of June 16 for the public to learn more about the Aquarium's Draft Master Plan and provide public comment. Representatives from EHDD, the San Francisco-based architecture



firm, and Point32, will join Bob Davidson, Aquarium President and CEO in a detailed presentation of the draft Master Plan. The meeting will include a question and answer period following the presentation. A second public meeting will be held on July 13 to share the Final Master Plan, demonstrate how public feedback was used and answer questions.

CONTENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The Aquarium Master Plan is a document that will describe planned or potential physical development of the Aquarium, although it will not make a decision about how or where the Aquarium will expand. The Master Plan is guided in part by a set of evaluation criteria adopted by the Aquarium Board of Directors:

- Substantially increase its mission to expand marine conservation education and advance scientific research
- Accommodate 1.3 million annual visitors by 2030
- Maintain national and regional standing
- Promote restoration of the near shore habitat
- Honor historic landmark status of Pier 59
- Align with the Waterfront Seattle's Guiding Principles and Strategic Plan
- Strengthen pedestrian connections
- Provide for multi-phased development
- Remain operational during construction

The Master Plan will review prior planning efforts related to an expansion, which included overwater locations to the north and south of Pier 59, and a recent concept for integration with the Overlook Walk. Below is the draft outline of the Master Plan:

- Case for expansion
- History and background
- Existing physical plant - Piers 59 and 60
 - Recent major capital improvements
- Public programs and visitor attendance
- Expansion planning
 - Prior planning
 - Current legislation and master plan goals
 - Strategic plan
 - Concept program
 - Design team selection and precedent projects
- Seattle Aquarium expansion program
 - Ecosystems and exhibition galleries
 - Education and classrooms
 - Animal husbandry and life support
 - Aquarium shop and bookstore
 - Food service
 - Administration and volunteers
 - Transportation (including school groups)

- Master plan process
 - Evaluation criteria
 - Site location analysis
 - Central waterfront integration
 - Stakeholder outreach
- Master plan
 - Campus design and program allocation
 - Land use/zoning/overwater requirements
 - Key design concepts
 - Expansion and renovation of Piers 59 and 60
 - Central location and Overlook Walk integration
 - Massing diagrams
 - View analysis
 - Review against evaluation criteria
- Funding
 - Early cost projections
 - Public/private funding approach
 - Project phasing
- Schedule and next steps
 - Integration with Overlook Walk timeline
 - Design advancement
 - Future environmental review and permitting

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the purpose of the Master Plan?

The City's 2009 Ordinance 123205 authorized the Department of Parks and Recreation to enter into an Operations and Management Agreement (O&M) with the Aquarium, which required the Aquarium to prepare a Master Plan for City Council approval by resolution.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to describe planned or potential physical development of the Aquarium including purpose, strategy for preservation of historic structures and view corridors, and consideration of pedestrian access and circulation. A key part of the O&M Agreement was a requirement that such development be consistent with the City's overall central waterfront planning. The Office of the Waterfront and the Department of Parks and Recreation are working closely with the Aquarium to ensure coordinated planning.

What is the effect of the Council resolution approving the Master Plan?

If adopted by the Council, the resolution would approve the Master Plan for the purpose of supporting further consideration of a new Aquarium building at the Overlook Walk, consistent with recent waterfront planning efforts. The purpose of such support is to allow the Aquarium to study this new building at a conceptual design level, so that sufficient information is available for environmental review. The resolution does not decide that a new Aquarium building can or will be located at the



Overlook Walk. No final decision on the location of an Aquarium expansion will be made until after completion of the environmental review process.

Consistent with the O&M Agreement, the decision on whether to locate an Aquarium building at the Overlook Walk would be made by the Department of Parks and Recreation, following consultation with the City Council, Office of the Waterfront and other City entities.

How have City policies on public view protection been considered?

City environmental policies generally call for protecting public views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains from certain public places, including Waterfront Park. Those policies have been taken into consideration in preparing the Master Plan.

Prior planning efforts proposed to locate a new Aquarium building over water either south or north of Piers 59/60. However, more recent planning has considered locating a new aquarium building at the Overlook Walk. The Master Plan will acknowledge that an over water location would have greater impacts to public views than a new Aquarium building at the Overlook Walk.

It is also relevant to note that the City's policies on public view protection are not absolute. Rather, they are limited in scope, and off-setting factors like enhancing public access to the shoreline are also considered before the City makes a decision on a project. Those policies do not themselves prevent development along the shoreline.

Would a new Aquarium building be consistent with shoreline policies and regulations?

Yes, we anticipate that it would be consistent. The shoreline regulations do require that view corridors be provided (30% of the width of the lot) for over water buildings so that from the street the public has views of the water and areas beyond.

Was environmental review done for the Master Plan?

No, Council approval of the Master Plan does not trigger environmental review. Rather approval of the Master Plan would provide guidance to the Aquarium to take additional steps to develop the proposal in order to facilitate meaningful environmental review of any future action. If Council supports additional consideration of Aquarium expansion at the Overlook Walk, then environmental review of that recommendation would be integrated into review of other Waterfront Seattle projects.

What is the timeline for completing the Aquarium Master Plan?

The Final Master Plan is anticipated to be complete and available on the Aquarium website on July 1, 2015. Prior to that, the Draft Master Plan will be available on the Seattle Aquarium website on June 8, 2015.

How is the Aquarium engaging and gathering feedback from the public?

The Aquarium is conducting stakeholder and public outreach from March through June, as part of developing its Draft Master Plan. During this time outreach activities include informational briefings and



presentations, two public meetings, briefings to City Council and use of the Aquarium's website to share information and gather public comments.

To date, the Aquarium has reached out to approximately 20 community stakeholder groups to gather feedback on its Master Plan process, and the consideration of the Overlook Walk as a possible future expansion location.

Additionally, the Aquarium will host free public meetings on June 16 and July 13 for the public to learn more about the Aquarium's expansion planning. The first meeting will be about the Draft Master Plan, and will include a presentation by Aquarium representatives, followed by a question and answer period, and opportunity for one-on-one conversations to address specific questions in more detail. The second public meeting will provide an opportunity for the public to see the Final Master Plan, learn how public input was used, and ask questions. The Aquarium will post information about the Master Plan process on its website and provide opportunity for the public to offer comments and feedback online.

How is public comment being incorporated into the Master Plan?

Community input is being carefully considered by the Aquarium design and planning team as the Master Plan is developed, and will be summarized and included as part of the draft Master Plan. Stakeholders will continue to be encouraged by the Aquarium to provide their comments in writing, attend public presentations, briefings, and upcoming City Council meetings.

When is the Aquarium briefing City Council?

The Aquarium will brief City Council several times before the Master Plan is complete. Currently, three briefings are planned:

- May 18, 2015 – Share an overview of the Master Plan process, including outreach to stakeholders and the public
- June 22, 2015 – Present the Draft Master Plan
- July 27, 2015 – Present the Final Master Plan

Who is developing the Aquarium's Master Plan?

The Aquarium has assembled a highly-regarded local and national consultant team that includes the San Francisco-based architecture firm EHDD, whose notable projects include: the Monterey Bay Aquarium, San Francisco's Exploratorium, and the Packard Foundation's net-zero energy building in San Jose. Other team members include: Anchor Environmental (Seawall) and Point32 (Bullitt Center, Olympic Sculpture Park).

Who can I contact for more information?

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