

3.0 WATERFRONT SEATTLE

Over the past few years, the City of Seattle has been actively re-imagining the future of its Central Waterfront. The imminent replacement of the Elliott Bay Seawall and removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct now present a tremendous opportunity to turn visions into reality and create a vibrant public realm that will reconnect the city and its people to their waterfront. With a new surface street, improved East-West connections and enhanced access to the waterfront, the vision for Seattle's Central Waterfront will extend into the heart of the city and claim a new and authentic front porch on Elliott Bay.

This planning and design document - Waterfront Seattle - represents the culmination of the first 21 months of conceptual work initiated by the City of Seattle's Guiding Principles. It comprises five volumes summarizing the ideas developed to date by the Waterfront Seattle planning and design team, based on a detailed planning-level analysis of the site, as well as an extensive outreach effort that engaged civic groups, property owners, stakeholders and the relevant city, state and federal agencies.

This volume - Book 3: Concept Design - draws on the vision outlined in Book 2: Framework Plan and develops design concepts for the initial core project area of Waterfront Seattle. This is not a legal or binding document, but a summary of conceptual ideas put forth during the Planning and Concept Design phases of the Central Waterfront Project.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles were created by a group of citizens working with the city and adopted by the City Council (Resolution #31264), to capture the key civic goals and objectives that should shape the creation of new public spaces on the Central Waterfront project. They expand on established principles from existing city policies and civic efforts.

1. Create a Waterfront for all.

The Waterfront should engage the entire city. It should be a place for locals and visitors alike – a place where everything comes together and co-mingles effortlessly.

2. Put the shoreline and innovative, sustainable design at the forefront.

The Waterfront will bring people to the water's edge to experience the water and ecology of Elliott Bay. It will improve shoreline ecology while preserving and enhancing maritime activities, and will reflect Seattle's commitment to sustainability and innovation.

3. Reconnect the city to its Waterfront.

The waterfront should provide a front porch to the downtown neighborhoods and the City. It will build a network of public spaces that connect the waterfront to important destinations, nearby neighborhoods, the city and region.

4. Embrace and celebrate Seattle's past, present and future.

The Waterfront is a lens through which to understand Seattle – from its natural history and early Native American settlements, to the rich variety of maritime, industrial, commercial and recreational activities today. The Waterfront should tell these stories in ways that are authentic and bring them to life.

5. Improve access and mobility.

The Waterfront is and remains a crossroads. The future waterfront should accommodate safe, comfortable and efficient travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles and freight.

6. Create a bold vision that is adaptable over time.

The vision for the Waterfront should clearly define how the waterfront will take shape and the essential character of key elements. At the same time, the vision must be flexible to adapt over time.

7. Develop consistent leadership—from concept to construction to operations.

It is necessary to have strong leadership tasked with realizing the Waterfront vision. This leadership needs to ensure design excellence and root the process in a broad and transparent civic engagement.



View looking northeast to the Overlook Walk and waterfront destinations

CONCEPT DESIGN

The Concept Design for the Central Seattle Waterfront strives to create a dynamic and lively public realm at the water's edge, build an intelligent and efficient transportation corridor to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct, establish dynamic and robust ecologies along the water's edge, develop a lively program of activities and uses, and promote smart and suitable economic development in and around the central waterfront.

Following the larger vision outlined in the Waterfront Seattle Framework Plan, the Concept Design focuses on the areas which will move forward first into design and construction. This Core Project Area begins at South King Street, moves north along Alaskan Way to Pine Street, extends up Elliott Way into Belltown and culminates at Bell Street and Western Avenue.

The Concept Design offers an integrated approach to the design of the Central Waterfront Core Project Area, and reflects the feedback collected through extensive public outreach. This report describes not only the physical design of the waterfront but also the ways in which it will be used and how it will be implemented over time. Together these focused topics address the complexity of the site with sensitive, imaginative and pragmatic design solutions:

- Public Outreach
- Implementation Strategy
- Public Space Programming
- Public Realm Design
- Bike Facility Design
- East West Streets
- Alaskan Way and Elliott Avenue Street Design
- Utilities