7. URBAN FRONTAGES

The quality of the public realm on the waterfront will depend on the development of city-owned properties within the project limits as well as on the development of privately-owned properties in the project vicinity. With few opportunities for private development within the project area itself, the urban development strategy focuses on ensuring that future development in adjacent areas will complement and reinforce the changed conditions planned for the waterfront. Preliminary guidance for the development of the East Frontage area between Alaskan Way and Western Avenue has been provided, building on the City’s existing design guidelines for downtown development. This work will assist with possible changes to downtown land use regulations and further development of guidelines addressing architectural massing and expression, historic character, streetscape, public amenities, and vehicular access and parking, which will be used in the review of future projects by the Downtown Design Review Board and Special Review District Boards.
The City of Seattle Guiding Principles commits this project to putting the shoreline and innovative, sustainable design at the forefront. The goals are to bring people to the water’s edge to experience the water and ecology of Elliott Bay, to improve shoreline ecology while preserving and enhancing maritime activities, and to reflect Seattle’s commitment to sustainability and innovation.

Urban Habitat Framework

The waterfront is particularly interesting from a local environmental perspective. It is located within a region of transition between two ecological communities, the aquatic communities of Elliott Bay and the upland communities in the urban neighborhoods abutting the waterfront. Both ecosystems have suffered decades of pollution and degradation, and are in great need of some repair. This framework plan focuses on identifying opportunities for enhancing ecological communities on the waterfront and improving the connections between them.

The primary components of the urban upland habitat are trees and pocket parks. The establishment of strategic upland habitat corridors, stretching from the aquatic regions to the upland and connecting existing and proposed habitats, will ensure the integration of the Central Waterfront with the existing urban open space network and its contribution to the creation of a more sustainable upland urban ecosystem.

The central waterfront riparian and intertidal zone has been replaced by the Elliott Bay Seawall. This has eliminated the functions of the riparian and intertidal ecosystems in this part of the Puget Sound and has made it hard for people to interact with the sea. While providing a wealth of educational opportunities the intertidal region also plays an important role in the food web, connecting the upland zone with the aquatic zone. The introduction of a beach, water terraces, storm water collection devices and get downs can simulate some of the functions of those ecosystems while helping to restore some habitat along the water’s edge and provide interesting opportunities for people to interact with the water. Working with the Seawall Team, the Waterfront Design will incorporate elements that will help marine habitat restoration such as a light penetrating surface (LPS) in the promenade and an intertidal habitat bench.
**FRAMEWORK STRATEGIES**

**SUSTAINABILITY**

**Water**
Managing the quality and quantity of storm water runoff is essential to the improvement of urban ecosystems along the waterfront. Although the rehabilitation of lost streams, wetlands and shorelines is not possible here, some of the functions of those elements can be restored to some degree through innovative storm water management techniques. Drainage control facilities can be engineered to use infiltration, evapotranspiration, and stormwater reuse, to more closely mimic natural hydrology within this urban setting. Well designed drainage control facilities can help prevent or minimize the generation, mobilization and transport of common storm water pollutants and watershed-specific pollutants through combined sewers or storm water systems to receiving waters, including marine environments, surface water and groundwater.

**GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

**TIDELINE TERRACE**

**INTERTIDAL BEACH**
Potable water use can be controlled through the design and maintenance of irrigation and water features that will use minimal or no make-up water from potable sources or other natural surface or subsurface water resources.

**Materials**
The selection of materials, fixtures and systems for use in the project will take into consideration their impact on the environment and support sustainable and innovative practices in production, energy use and management practices during construction, operations and maintenance.

**Health and Wellness**
The Central Waterfront is at the heart of some of the oldest communities of Seattle. It is easily accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists as well as by several types of public transportation, such as ferries, trains, light rail, buses and street cars. The project will promote human health and well being by continuously engaging those communities, protecting and maintaining existing assets, promoting healthy urban lifestyles and the local economy, supporting low impact means of transportation and informing the public.
The art plan considers the history of the site as a working waterfront, the physical conditions of its location along the shores of Elliott Bay, and its role as part of Seattle’s evolving urban and cultural landscape. As part of the larger Elliott Bay waterfront, the central waterfront is a connector that links old and new, organic and man-made, and the physical with the poetic. A site of great economic, geological, ecological, and cultural complexity, the waterfront can serve as a rich resource and site for art and cultural expression.

The central goal of the design is to reconnect the city with its waterfront, offering the Bay Ring as a new center of the city and region. The Art Plan will extend these links beyond the shoreline limit and beyond the physical, creating new cultural connections between the city and the rest of the world.

A CONSTELLATION OF SITES FOR ART

The Central Seattle Waterfront has long been a site of industry, exploration, and exchange. The incorporation of art will in turn encourage activity, production, and engagement, contributing to the development of new narratives about and encounters with the waterfront. As the design of the new waterfront is realized, art and culture will add layers of complexity, stimulation, and argumentation.

The plan outlines a vision that allows design and art to work together to reveal and develop the unique character and identity of this site. While the Design drafts strategies for reconnecting downtown Seattle to Elliott Bay physically, the Art Plan develops a program that will engage artists and the public in reconnecting Seattle to Elliott Bay culturally. The Art Plan considers Waterfront Seattle not strictly a design project or redevelopment, but as a process by which the city will be
transformed over time, bringing together the site’s history, its present condition, and its future identity. This vision for art on the waterfront, like the site’s future, must extend long after the last brick has been laid and construction for the new waterfront has been completed.
FRAMEWORK STRATEGIES
IMPLEMENTATION