2.4 CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

Together, the Tidelines and Folds create a framework which define a series of programmatic and sensory environments or ‘Places’ along the Waterfront. The Places are set between Central Seattle’s neighborhoods, as defined at the Urban Scale, and Elliott Bay’s water’s edge. Consequently the character of each Place is shaped by both of these environments. Each place creates a destination that will draw a diverse set of users. The Places provide space for large and small-scale gatherings, display and education-based activity, discovery and play, dining, sunbathing, and viewing and touching the water.

Critical to the development of the Places are the east-west street connections which will link them to existing urban destinations, attractions, transit and parking in the nearby areas. At the waterfront scale, the Framework Plan highlights direct opportunities to improve immediate connections from the waterfront to adjacent areas. These connections prioritize access to the waterfront from the surrounding areas, rather than the major streets that currently function well.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

RAILROAD WAY + STADIUM PLAZA

South of Pioneer Square, between the football and baseball stadiums and the Port of Seattle, is a large vehicular corridor leading into the future bored tunnel portal and Alaskan Way. Railroad Way South, which runs diagonally from the intersection of South King Street and Alaskan Way to Century Link Field, will be redesigned, as shown on the ROMA Plan, to be a safe and pedestrian friendly corridor connecting Alaskan Way to the Stadiums. The Railroad Way promenade will be curb-less, tree-lined, and culminate in a plaza fronting Century Link Field.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

PIONEER SQUARE

The gridded and flat streets of Pioneer Square make great perpendicular connections to the waterfront. South Main Street creates a central link through Pioneer Square between Pier 48, Occidental Park, Waterfall Park and the Danny Woo community gardens and has the potential to become a primary pedestrian corridor. South Washington Street links the neighborhood to the historic boat landing located on the waterfront.

These two streets can become important pedestrian connections into the neighborhood, while South Jackson and Yesler remain important vehicular and pedestrian connections. The north-south streets of Pioneer Square have a distinct character, with mature trees on First Avenue and Occidental Avenue and important landmarks on Second Avenue such as Smith Tower and CenturyLink Field Tower. Brick is used throughout the neighborhood, as both a building and paving material. There is opportunity to create of a weave between heavily treed north-south streets and brick-paved pedestrian-friendly east-west streets. Interpretive and directional signage, as well as educational opportunities can link passersby to the history as well as the geography and ecology of the place.
Pioneer Square hosted the first settlement of Seattle by Americans, along a shore line that did not extend past King Street to the south and that was marked by Yesler’s Mill to the North. This area is framed today by the Port of Seattle and Colman Dock. The creation of a beach between these two anchors would restore a more direct relationship between Pioneer Square and Elliott Bay. Residing in its original location, the historic Washington Street Boat Landing provides a compelling landmark in the context of this new landscape.

Pioneer Square Beach would ideally extend between the Port and Colman Dock with gentle slopes leading from the waterfront promenade down to Elliott Bay. The pebble beach would be marked with over-scaled boulders reminiscent of glacial erratics as well as majestic Douglas Fir trees. The beach will also serve as aquatic and intertidal habitat environment. The creation of a beach would also provide an opportunity to cap contaminated sediments deposited on the seafloor in this area.
Pier 48 extends into Elliott Bay on axis with Main Street, creating an extension of Pioneer Square onto the bay. Today, Pier 48 is owned by the Washington State Department of transportation, and the ideas outlined in the Framework Plan represent long-term potentials for the site. It is re-imagined as a Festival Pier, taking advantage of its close proximity to the Colman Dock and King Street Station transit hubs as well as the nightlife, commercial activity and parking in Pioneer Square and Century Link Field.

Festival Pier Discover Walk
The Festival Pier’s folded planes offer opportunities for sunning, picnicking as well as concerts, movies and theatrical performances. An amphitheater sits at the end of the pier and utilizes the drama and beauty of Elliott Bay and the Port as a backdrop for performances. On the south edge of the pier, a new dock allows for public mooring. On the north edge of the pier a network of catwalks hover between high-tide water levels and the pier surface, creating a discovery trail through pier piles.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

COLMAN DOCK

Yesler Way, Marion and Madison Streets all culminate at Colman Dock. These three streets are aligned on different urban grids and together form a wedge that channels commuters from downtown to the Ferry Terminal. Alaskan Way also brings commuters to Colman Dock and at certain times of day, this area hosts a significant amount of vehicular traffic as cars, bicycles and pedestrians load and unload from the ferries. With the removal of the viaduct’s exit ramp, space will open up along Columbia Street and serve as a transit plaza for city buses. The transit plaza will be designed as an extension of the Colman Retail gallery on the Promenade along Alaskan Way, and will include seating, rain shelters and a formal canopy trees overhead.

The existing Marion Street Bridge will be replaced to improve the pedestrian commuter experience between downtown and Colman Dock and a new pedestrian bridge connection is proposed at Yesler Way to allow safe and convenient access from the Pioneer Square, King Street Station, Light Rail Stations, International District and the Stadium District.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

COLMAN DOCK

Colman Dock has the potential to become a world-class destination reminiscent of its original design. At street-level, a retail gallery for shopping and eating would provide transit oriented amenities to this bustling stretch of the waterfront. The public space at the Terminal level could expand to create a deck, providing a viewing platform for the observation of harbor activities. Together along with the two new pedestrian bridges, these features would transform Colman Dock into a civic hub for Seattle’s residents and commuters.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

FIREHOUSE SLIP

The current redesign plans for Colman Dock’s Terminal and Parking facilities modify the pier surface open up a slip between the ferry terminal and the waterfront Firehouse. This Firehouse Slip could potentially be home to the King County and other Puget Sound passenger ferries, serving as a landing and waiting area for commuters. In addition, this area would feature a ‘Get-Down’ that will descend to just above high-tide. The Get-Down will be oriented for the best views out to Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains beyond.

SECTION BETWEEN MARION AND MADISON STREETS, LOOKING NORTH

The current redesign plans for Colman Dock’s Terminal and Parking facilities modify the pier surface open up a slip between the ferry terminal and the waterfront Firehouse. This Firehouse Slip could potentially be home to the King County and other Puget Sound passenger ferries, serving as a landing and waiting area for commuters. In addition, this area would feature a ‘Get-Down’ that will descend to just above high-tide. The Get-Down will be oriented for the best views out to Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains beyond.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

THE HISTORIC PIERS

Privately-owned and historically-designated landmark structures, Piers 54, 55, 56 & 57 each have their own distinct character and uses. The Historic Piers are a major commercial destination on the waterfront, hosting shopping, eating, drinking, working and touring programs. The viaduct currently makes this area feel disconnected from the neighboring areas in downtown Seattle.

University Street links Furniture Row (Western Avenue) to the Harbor Steps and Post Alley, as well as to the Seattle Art Museum, Benaroya Hall, art galleries, restaurants, hotels, and transit. The Harbor Steps between 1st Ave. and Western Ave. facilitate pedestrian movement up and down the steep grade. A pedestrian friendly extension of the steps, from Western Avenue to Alaskan Way, will strengthen the amenity and establish an ‘Art Walk’ to link the Historic Piers to the cultural institutions along University Street.

Seneca Street will be reconfigured to take advantage of the space left by the viaduct ramp. An escalator and elevator will be installed at Seneca Street and First Avenue to mediate 24 foot grade change. This will create a pleasant link between the Historic Piers and First Avenue.
Proposed Destinations

Public Transit

Existing Destinations

Scale: 1" = 250'

Framework Plan
The Historic Piers are set at an acute angle to the Waterfront promenade. A subtle reshaping of the pier edge at the base of the slip reorients views out to Elliott Bay. In addition to great views, the pier slips allow for small-scale gathering spaces and outdoor dining areas. The pier slips could be connected by a continuous "Pier Walk", extending the public realm to the pier ends for great views of the bay. The Tideline Promenade, which fronts the historic pier buildings, incorporates lush planting on linear terraces. The terraces have the potential to treat storm water runoff from the site and display native wetland and riparian vegetation. The promenade also provides generous areas for sitting and strolling in front of the pier buildings, allowing visitors to extend their stay in the area.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

THE PUBLIC PIERS

Waterfront Park, the Aquarium and Pier 62/63 form an agglomeration of public piers, they are nestled in a wedge creating by the converging city grids and cut off from surrounding neighborhoods by both the viaduct and the steep topography. The Union Street corridor will be renovated with new escalators and elevators to provide safer and easier access to the waterfront.

Pike Street and the Pike Place Hill Climb are an ideal connection to the Aquarium. Unfortunately they end in a sea of parking garages and lots beneath the viaduct today, which obscures and confuses access and circulation. A new plaza at the foot of the Hillclimb will front the historic Fix/Madore buildings and provide a clear landing and gateway to the waterfront.
Aquarium Plaza
A plaza devoted to the Aquarium will occupy the large open space between the piers and Alaskan Way—celebrating the Aquarium’s presence on the bay and signaling it’s location to visitors on the waterfront. Filled with large specimen trees, ample seating and display cases, the plaza will be an inviting entry to the Aquarium. The north edge of the plaza will be fronted by the Overlook Walk, with building activities and cafe seating spilling out onto the plaza.

Union Street Pier
Located at the Waterfront Park between the Seattle Aquarium and Pier 57 with its big Great Wheel, the Union Street Overlook provides a large open space on the waterfront with extensive views of the Bay and a flexible program area linked to the city through Union Street. It provides a meeting ground, gathering space, point of entry and place of learning and discovery on the waterfront.
Currently Pike Place Market is disconnected from the Waterfront due to the area’s steep topography, the Alaskan Way Viaduct, and the convergence of two street grids. With the removal of the viaduct and introduction of the Overlook Walk, this connection will become safe, accessible and enjoyable. The connection also needs to extend back into the city along Pike, Pine and Stewart Streets. These connections will link back to Freeway Park, providing a continuous linkage through the city.
Pier 62/63 is well-known for its former life as a performance pier that brought together people, music and sunsets over Elliott Bay. Now in need of structural repair, Pier 62/63 will be a primary public space on the waterfront. The Pier’s design remains open and flexible to allow for a wide variety of activities and events to take place but also includes amenities for active recreation on the waterfront, such as a roller-skating rink, grandstand seating with south-facing views of the port and bay, and a kayak launch. During the warm months of the year, a barge swimming pool will be docked at the pier, giving Seattleites an opportunity to swim on the bay. The pool can also be covered and used as a stage for outdoor concerts and performances at the pier.
OVERLOOK WALK

CONFIGURATION

Existing site conditions

Alaskan Way and Elliott Way

Overlook Walk building massing

Overlook Walk program zones
Overlook Walk

A highlight of the new central waterfront will be the Overlook Walk—a series of human-scaled connections that will invite people to Pike Place Market from the waterfront and Aquarium, provide dramatic and elevated views of the bay, and create a focal point for public life on the waterfront.

The Overlook Walk will host many activities and programs including: play slopes offering families entertaining and active ways to traverse the steep topography near Pike Place Market; a train overlook with views looking north toward the BNSF railroad; a new mixed-use building activating the Walk at all times of day; gardens offering quiet space to enjoy views of the bay; and amphitheater steps connecting to Pier 62/63 and the waterfront.
East-west connections between Bell Harbor and Belltown are limited due to steep topography, the viaduct and the railroad. Pedestrian Bridges at Lenora and Bell Street are the only existing connections. The Belltown neighborhood has already identified Bell Street as a green street connecting Bell Street Park to the Bell Street Bridge, and the waterfront. In addition, the Lenora street overpass, which will have to be reconfigured with the demolition of the viaduct, connects Belltown to the Harbor itself. Blanchard Street does not have a connection to the waterfront at this time, but was identified by members of the Belltown business community as a desirable connection between Restaurant Row businesses on First Avenue and the World Trade Center and the Seattle Marriott Waterfront. Improvements to Western Ave. will enhance the pedestrian street life, establishing a stronger connection between Pike Place Market and the Belltown neighborhood.
Proposed Destinations

Existing Public Transit

Existing Destinations

Scale: 1" = 250'
Bell Harbor
Between Pier 62/63 and Pier 66 sits Bell Harbor, a public marina with the longest stretch of open water along the waterfront. A boardwalk with large-scale seating is proposed along the marina’s edge, creating generous space for strolling, seating, sunning, gathering, picnicking and watching the nearby boats.

Belltown Bluff
The removal of the viaduct and construction of Elliott Way present an opportunity to design a lively, safe and accessible connection between Belltown and the waterfront. Belltown Bluff is conceived as a series of small destinations within a web of streets, stairs, elevators, bridges, overlooks and vegetation. The bluff leverages the existing steep topography to overcome the barrier of the BNSF railroad. The Battery Street Tunnel sits at the culmination of the Bluff. Once decommissioned, this area will become the home of the Belltown Balcony. This destination will take advantage of the site’s steep topography, by creating a roof deck at the level of First Avenue and a building underneath fronting Western Avenue. It will be a neighborhood destination with great views of the bay and a variety of community-based programs.
CONNECTIONS AND PLACES ALONG THE WATERFRONT

THE NORTH END

The north end of the waterfront is cut off from the city by the BNSF Rail Road. The most important connection is Broad Street, as it has the potential to create a strong link between Olympic Sculpture Park, Myrtle-Edwards Park and the Elliott Bay Trail; and Seattle Center, Lake Union and the Lake to Bay Trail. The North End also caters to the extensive needs of the cruise ship terminal, which is located between Bell and Wall Streets on the waterfront. North of Wall St., Belltown is connected via at-grade streets. Here the east-west grades remain quite steep, calling for assisted access to the waterfront for pedestrians. Vine Street offers an opportunity to create a direct pedestrian connection through a pedestrian bridge.
Proposed Destinations

Existing Public Transit

Existing Destinations

Scale: 1" = 250'
The North End

A great stretch for strolling and cycling opportunities with views to the Bay, the North End extends a half mile along the waterfront. The areas between the piers will be reshaped in a similar way to the Historic Pier slips and offer space for fishing and gathering. The Lake-to-Bay Square at the foot of Broad Street will provide an excellent opportunity for launching kayaks and canoes out into the open water towards the quieter northern part of the waterfront.