

**Port of Camas/Washougal Commission Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC)
Public Open House
March 28, 2007**

SUMMARY

Introduction

The Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) sponsored a public open house March 28, from 5 to 8 pm, at the Port of Camas-Washougal office. The architectural consulting team displayed many boards, organized by four categories—orientation, outdoor features, built development and planning process. WAC members greeted attendees and helped answer questions and record their comments.

The open house was advertised via a media release, subsequent articles in the *Camas-Washougal Post-Record*, *Vancouver Business Journal* and *The Columbian*, and on banners posted at several places through the community. Members of the media were invited to a press briefing 30 minutes before the start of the open house.

Approximately 260 people attended the event. While viewing the displays, they had the opportunity to write comments on flipcharts located at each of the four stations. They also were invited to complete comment forms and submit comments via e-mail. To date, the project team has received 91 comment forms and 11 e-mails. As these comments reflect a wide range of opinions on a variety of topics, the numbers for individual features appear low in comparison to the total number of comments received. A summary follows. A full transcription of the responses is included in an appendix.

Responses to Specific Features and Aspirations Reviewed Previously by the WAC

These are listed in order of preference by participants via comment forms, flipcharts and e-mail. Some may have made the same comment in more than one mode.

■ Natural historic site preserved

Twenty-nine participants place a high value on preserving the historic site. Comments: this is important to the community; the park should be left as it is.

■ Connectivity for pedestrians, bikes, autos

This also is ranked high by 28 participants, with 10 favoring consideration for pedestrians and bicyclists. Other comments: consider auto connectivity, including highway access at 6th Avenue; do not place trails adjacent to nearby homes.

■ Marina and supporting services/boat launch ramp(s)

Participants tend to refer to marina services and boat ramps interchangeably and place a high value on both (28 for marina and supporting services and 20 for boat launch ramps.) Comments: boat ramps and parking facilities are at capacity now; this as a primary function of the area, with no similar services nearby; parking goes hand in hand with these services and should be maintained, if not expanded.

■ Aesthetically pleasing designs; ability to see water

Twenty-seven participants value this feature. Comments: preserve views; keep the local flavor.

■ Unique restaurants/shops w/access to or river view

Twenty-seven people also rate this feature as a high priority, with 18 specifying they prefer more local restaurants. Comments: provide outdoor seating; attract unique shopping such as farmers markets, book stores or other small shops and boutiques.

■ Public access to/from river

Twenty-five participants rank this feature as a high priority. Comments: development should not supersede the connection to the river and greenspace by foot or boat; ensure that it is affordable to all; the marina is important.

■ Natural surroundings with trails, amphitheater, park, picnic

Twenty-three people say this as a high priority. Comments: protect natural, green and/or space and natural beauty; provide comfortable facilities and play areas. Six additional participants do not favor an amphitheater, citing noise and lack of demand, while three say they like the idea.

■ No “big box” stores, strip malls, or fast food

Twenty-one participants prefer small and/or local shops.

■ History of area integrated into the design

Seventeen participants favor preserving the historical integrity of the site. Comments: incorporate Native American or marine history.

■ Trails on water side of development

This receives a high ranking by 20 participants. Comments: favor a natural connection to the river.

■ Fun, safe, comfortable place

Thirteen participants say this is an important value. Comments: provide restrooms and drinking fountains.

■ Transportation connecting downtown Washougal and surrounding areas

Twelve participants support this feature. Comments: it is important to plan to minimize traffic congestion on SR-14 now and in the future on SR 14; there should not be roundabouts on SR-14.

■ Concerts and events

Ten participants favor this feature, while four do not.

■ Services accessible from/on water

Nine of participants say this is a priority, with none in opposition.

■ Signature development that reflects local flavor

Ten supporters; comments: complement the surrounding communities.

■ Hotel w/convention/conference center

Participants are divided, with eight opposed and twelve in favor. Comments: a convention/conference center is not necessary; there is a need for the hotel in the area, for visitors only, or as a destination.

■ Year-round in/outdoor activities-weather friendly; recreational opportunities on water and land; excellent lighting, signage & landscaping

All these features receive support by approximately six participants. Comments: they are “a given” in any development scenario.

■ Excellent design and tasteful facilities

This feature receives support by six participants. Comments: favor a hometown or Northwest “feel.”

- Access to healthy food

Six participants say this is a good feature, while four believe that it is not a high priority.

- "Brand name" restaurant

Participants are evenly divided, with three favoring and three opposing. Comments: quality and a unique environment are important.

- Residential with retail below

More respondents are opposed to than support this feature. Six want no residential development on the waterfront; three favor preserving views, two others prefer a mixture of commercial destinations. Three like the idea. Comments: oppose condos on the riverfront due to their high prices. There were four comments that housing would improve the area.

- Dry storage

Eight participants say it is not needed.

- Office buildings

Eight specifically do not favor. Comments: natural and historical features should be higher priorities.

- Other uses

Other uses suggested for the site include public art, a community center, tourist attractions, higher-wage employment, off-leash dog areas and athletic facilities.

Additional Responses

- Preserve current features

Thirty-two participants favor preserving current features, specifically the natural and historical environment, marina, local, small-town environment and local businesses.

- Use by entire community

Twelve participants are concerned that the ideas presented would benefit only the wealthy and cause the waterfront to be inaccessible to others.

- Parking

In addition to the marina parking mentioned earlier, 11 participants say that parking for the area, in general, needs to be addressed.

- Prefer smaller plan

Eight participants say the plans are out of scale for this area. Some suggest creating a smaller version of the proposal.

- A mixture of features

Six participants favor mixing the features described above with four emphasizing greenspace.

- Height restrictions

Five people say it is important to restrict building heights to two or three stories, particularly to protect views.

- Overall support of concepts

Thirty-five people generally favor the plans and proposed concepts. Comments: they will make the area more economically viable and compatible; they make good use of the waterfront as a valuable resource.

Other Comments and Concerns

■ **Planning Process**

Nineteen are concerned about the planning process. Comments: the process has not been open to the public; it has been advised by developers; the planners are not local.

■ **Implementation**

Concerns about implementation of the plans include the acquisition of private land to implement the plan, as well as environmental and economic impacts. Participants also question the amount of private money needed to implement it and a desire for process to be led by local people.