

**From:** Dale Stirn [dalestirn@stirncosteel.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:49 PM  
**To:** 'Stephen Atkinson'  
**Subject:** Not Up to Speed, Sorry

Stephen, I apologize that I do not know where you are in the Shoreline Master Plan Review Process. And, I do not know if/when there is an opportunity for further public input.

But, I wanted to know when, where and with whom my small voice could be heard.

Your presentation today was graphically thorough and really helped me to better understand both existing and potential waterfront accessible areas around the Bay. The maps make obvious what really should happen in the Master Plan and you even voiced it near the end of the meeting: "Dome to Point Defiance".

Providing access in the Port industrial area is problematic, at best. The one public access I am aware of near the eastern side of Thea Foss Waterway is not user friendly and it seems that these "expensive" accesses will only result, once the word is out, in private keg parties/stoner parties for high school kids, etc. (Hey, I was a kid, once.) Police and Ambulance accessibility will probably tend to be limited. Focus on accessibility should be elsewhere, with businesses on the waterway paying for the right not to have to provide public access. They would prefer that option once they get past the grumbling. Current public access just makes them believe the City is "stupid", they can learn to think the City is "clever".

The only real positive future for Tacoma I can see involves opening up the water front from the southern end of Thea Foss Waterway (mission accomplished, quite nicely, the last time I looked) to Owens Beach. This stretch of Tacoma should be made user-friendly for both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. We currently drive or take the train all the way to Vancouver, B.C. to ride the glorious waterfront around False Creek, Granville Island, etc. The same is true of Portland along the river. We, like many others, are staying in downtown hotels and enjoying the urban settings in these two cities, leaving lots of dollars behind. We are NOT

alone. Tacoma has this same opportunity, an expanse of flat waterfront where families can easily walk and bicycle. Current available shoreline pathways make bicycling undesirable to destination visitors – the developed sections are just too short and riders are often forced out into streets. Does the City Planning Commission really understand the degree to which developing and promoting this shoreline pathway would improve the economic viability of the downtown area? Do they need to take a field trip to Portland or Vancouver to see just how many reasonably wealthy visitors are staying in downtown hotels, walking and riding bicycles and spending lots of money?

You pointed out the area in your presentation, the only real roadblock to a continuous pathway is the waterfront by the Grain Depot and the Sperry Docks. A walkway structure could be built around these areas, given grant money and money contributed “in lieu of” by industrial port area tenants. The Grain Depot adds historic significance to the waterfront, some might even find it architecturally interesting, passing by it can be a very interesting educational opportunity for children of visitors who have no idea what bread is made of. But, having both historically and architecturally uninteresting ships docked in this area blocking the views of the water front lends nothing positive to a shoreline experience. I am very puzzled as to why the City has, at a time when they haven’t really solidified a plan for developing waterfront accessibility, agreed to an expansion of this Dock and potentially more large ships blocking the water front when we have so much appropriate property available in the Port industrial area. The long term solution to a continuous pathway might need to involve buying this dock, but the bigger it becomes, the less likely that is to occur and we could easily miss our one window of opportunity.

Perhaps someone can explain to me why there would not be a City moratorium on any development in this area until the concept of a “Dome to Defiance” pathway was completely abandoned in the approved final Plan.

And, perhaps someone can guide me towards others who think like me and would like to help Tacoma reach the goal of being a tourist destination City with a thriving urban Center and understand that to accomplish that, we

need to show off our most valuable assets: Commencement Bay, Pt. Defiance Park and Mt. Rainier.

Or are Tacoma officials just bent on destroying the possibility of Tacoma becoming a great city to live in and visit? Would I just be wasting my time? (That's kind of a loaded question. I know.)

Thanks in advance.

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