

SEATTLE DAILY JOURNAL OF COMMERCE · JULY 14, 2022

# Waterfront

## REDEVELOPMENT





# SPOKANE'S RIVERFRONT HONORS ITS RIVER AND FALLS

The reimagined Spokane riverfront heals the landscape from its industrial past.

Landscape architecture firm Berger Partnership developed a master plan for the full Riverfront Park in Spokane.



PHOTOS BY BUILT WORK PHOTOGRAPHY

In the heart of downtown Spokane, thundering waterfalls mark where the Spokane Valley meets the great gorge of the Spokane River. The site is a sacred gathering space and historic fishing grounds of the Spokane Tribe. It became the city's birthplace as the power of the falls drew settlement and spurred industry and freight yards. Eventually, hydroelectric power dammed the river while commerce and industry polluted the water in the name of progress.



BY GUY  
MICHAELSON  
BERGER  
PARTNERSHIP

In time, Spokane recognized the riverfront as an opportunity hiding in plain sight. A forward-looking vision to honor the river and falls reclaimed the industrial site for the home of the 1974 World's Fair (Expo '74), the first world's fair with an environmental

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focus. After the fair, the grounds became Riverfront Park, permanently transitioning the 100-acre site from industrial landscape to cherished park.

As the new century arrived and the park approached 50 years old, riverfront was showing its age as venues, programming, and infrastructure declined. Aware of the need for change and investment, Spokane's citizens passed a \$64 million bond in 2014 for park improvements, bolstered by over \$10 million in added funding as support for the project grew. Landscape architecture firm Berger Partnership developed a master plan for the full park, with implementation realized through phased construction completed in 2021. The reimagined riverfront heals the landscape from its industrial past in ways not possible or imagined in 1974, while enhancing access and experiences that reconnect the community to their river.

### RESTORING ECOLOGY

Harnessing the river for industry left a legacy of environmental damage and contamination, which shaped the park's redesign, planting, soil management, and stormwater treatment. The design removed upland fill and hardscape, creating shorelines of riparian plantings while embracing the realities of the site's dam and hydroelectric facility.

Addressing historic soil contamination from the railyards and industry that once occupied the site, all surfaces drain to lined stormwater gardens, eliminating percolation through underlying contaminants that would leach into the river. The project mitigated tons of "dirty dirt" onsite, shaping it as valued topography, covered with a protective barrier, and capped with 2 feet of clean soil and plantings.

### RECONNECTING

The river defines Riverfront Park, yet the park's hard edges kept visitors from fully experiencing the river. The redesign includes new features to bring people closer to the water. Planting and boardwalks replace paved shorelines while large local boulders invite scrambling to the water's edge. Terraced stone seating cascades waterward, and a new bridge features steel-grated cantilevers for people to "float" above the river's surface while enjoying iconic views.

Located at an important intersection of downtown and emerging neighborhoods, the park is an integral stitch in the city's fabric. The Howard Street Promenade spans north to south as a bike- and pedestrian-exclusive link, crossing three river channels on unique bridge experiences, each enhanced to strengthen the connection to the river. The promenade has become one of the city's great cultural gathering



The iconic Expo '74 pavilion was stripped of all structures but the historic net, tension ring and mast. Its cables feature programmable "light blades" that generate a magical light show at night.

places, Spokane's paseo, and a place to meet and be seen. Interwoven paths and amenities provide endless routes and experiences, all universally accessible. The design also completes a missing link in the 63-mile Centennial Trail.

At the park's north bank, new park space replaced a gravel parking lot, recapturing the area as a complement to the downtown-adjacent south bank. A new portal featuring the beloved Expo '74 Butterfly welcomes the surrounding community and connects directly to Spokane's arena, sportsplex (The Podium), and new soccer stadium, forming a contiguous public campus.

### REINVIGORATING PROGRAMMING

The park's south bank serves as a gateway and destination, with attractions including the historic 1909 Loeff Carrousel, rehoused in a building designed as a glass drum, which allows riders to fully enjoy proximity to the river and views of the native planting along the restored, naturalistic riverbank. Nearby, a new site design reimagined the beloved interactive Rotary Fountain.

Havermale Island is home to the iconic Expo '74 pavilion, which has long defined Spokane's skyline. Historically, the pavilion was intriguing from afar but underwhelming upon arrival, filled with closed and outdated novelty attractions. Renovating the pavilion erred on subtraction over addition, unburdening it of all structures but the

historic net, tension ring, and mast. The remaining space is transformed into a terrarium of terraces, paths, and catwalks with venue space for up to 5,000 spectators. Its cables feature programmable "light blades" that generate a magical nighttime light show.

The pavilion features a universally accessible elevated experience, a series of grated catwalks rising over the landscape into the volume of the cable net with views to the river and downtown skyline. Many great cities have icons, but all too often it is a private pay-to-play experience. The pavilion is proudly a public place, where all are welcome at no charge to bask in its glow.

### STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

The community shaped the reimagined park through extensive outreach. Engagement with the Spokane Tribe forged a richer and more genuine relationship between the city and tribe continuing beyond this project. The tribe helped shape both process and outcome, including renaming the island of Snx<sup>w</sup> Mene? (sin-hoo-men-huh), which means Salmon People. The island is a basalt stone outcropping between two falls, and one of the most desirable destinations in Riverfront Park, now recognized as a place of storytelling and culture.

### SURPASSING EXPECTATIONS

The impact of the project has surpassed all expectations. Since its reopening, the community has

embraced the park as "the" civic destination for passive gathering and life events including weddings, proms, and more. Weekly pop-up events with artisans and food truck rodeos are held along the promenade, and the pavilion hosts a concert series and weekly markets throughout the year. The park once again is home to the biggest community festivals,

including the return of Hoopfest, back from its COVID-19 hiatus.

Beyond physical change, the project has helped reshape and become emblematic of the city's psyche. Proud of its history, culture, character, and honoring its river, Spokane is a city on the rise.

*Guy Michaelson is a principal with Berger Partnership.*

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## ON THE COVER

Find out how Spokane's Riverfront Park reconnects the city to the river on page 2. PHOTO BY BUILT WORK PHOTOGRAPHY

## WATERFRONT 2022 TEAM

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# TREASURE, TRAFFIC AND OTHER TRADEMARKS OF WORKING ON SEATTLE'S WATERFRONT

For CPL, working on the waterfront is a bit like an archaeological dig, and the soil serves as a kind of time capsule.

A special urban shoreline, Seattle's waterfront presents a unique set of challenges and considerations to design teams. As engineers, we've learned what to expect on waterfront projects, each presents a combination of bad soil, buried treasure, tunnel and transit challenges, and demand to align with the city's evolution.



BY KYLE MALASPINO  
COUGHLIN PORTER LUNDEEN

Ask anyone with experience building on the waterfront about common challenges, and they're likely to say the same thing: soil.

Our city's soil is a well-known issue; a factor the team considers from day one. Design teams understand that signing up for waterfront projects mean signing up to build something on contaminated, wet, liquefiable soils that used to be underwater.

These waterfront soils are made up of two layers. The first, a pre-Denny Regrade layer, includes large timber and milling deposits and no-compaction (extremely wet) soils. Sitting above that is the second layer, a large deposit of poor soil. The result is a surface that's terrible at supporting loads. Projects are guaranteed lots of geotechnical issues to work through. Understandably, it's typical for waterfront projects to minimize below-grade square footage, usually capping at one or two levels.

## BURIED TREASURES

Working on the waterfront is a bit like an archaeological dig. Thanks to the area's history, the soil serves as a kind of time capsule, you truly never know what will show up. I find these encounters fascinating, a trait I inherited from my dad who worked construction in this area for years. As a kid, I remember marveling at his collection of "treasures" he'd pulled up on job sites.

While the occasional vintage Coke bottle is charming, not every find is quite so amiable. Timbers, big beams left over from milling, and even old industrial operations reveal themselves during drilling and excavation. Local teams are used to these finds. They come with the territory and we know that



With a front row seat to Seattle's ongoing transformation, Gridiron condos are situated at the intersection the Pioneer Square, the Stadium District and Waterfront Park.

PHOTO BY LARA SWIMMER

there's not much you can do in advance. Each is unique, so the best prep we can do is anticipate surprises and deal with them as they pop up.

Some of the area's most memorable finds: "Meg" the giant ground sloth was uncovered at Sea-Tac Airport in 1961. (The '60s yielded many prehistoric finds, five specimens are now archived in the Burke Museum's collection.) Then, in February 2014, a team unearthed a Columbian mammoth tusk at a South Lake Union construction site. More recently, Stadium Place revealed a large section of railroad operations and Breerton's Marina Square happened upon a buried privy.

## TUNNELS AND TRANSPORT

Another key consideration for any urban waterfront: tunnels and transportation. And while poor soils and buried treasure is something we've always encountered in this region, the complexities of tunnels and transit



An aerial captures Seattle's urban shoreline.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL WALMSLEY

TRADEMARKS — PAGE 11



# BOLD DESIGN TAPS FULL POTENTIAL OF UNIQUE WATERFRONT SITE

Developed by Vibrant Cities of Seattle, Infinity Shore Club will welcome residents later this year, capping a journey that began in 2017.

An iconic location demands inspired architecture. That was the mindset behind the Infinity Shore Club Residences. Designed by the Seattle firm of Tiscareno Associates, the Infinity Shore Club Residences brings 37 units of large, luxury homes to the celebrated Alki Beach neighborhood of West Seattle.



BY BOB TISCARENO  
TISCARENO  
ASSOCIATES

The Infinity Shore Club takes its name from the infinity pool tucked between two glass, steel and concrete residential towers on Alki Avenue Southwest. Each of the six-story wings provides panoramic views of Elliott Bay, the Olympic Mountains and the Seattle skyline.

Developed by Vibrant Cities of Seattle, the Infinity Shore Club will welcome residents later this year, capping a journey that began in 2017 for Bob Tiscareno, architect and founder of Tis-

careno Associates, and his team. In this Q&A, I share thoughts on the opportunities and challenges of creating a design for this unique waterfront property.

**Q: What was the biggest opportunity?**

**A:** This was a rare chance to create something spectacular on Alki Beach. We had the luxury of designing a project that spans five contiguous waterfront lots, which allows for a lot of innovative designs and features that you normally couldn't do with one or even two waterfront sites. Our goal from the very beginning was to design a highly identifiable building with amenities on the same level as luxury waterfront condos on the West Coast and around the world.

**Q: How did we get to this design?**

**A:** Our vision from the start was to have a lot of glass, large outdoor/indoor living spaces and community elements such as a clubhouse, pool deck, roof deck and backyard oasis. But we also asked a lot of questions about what would it be like to live in this vibrant neighborhood, wake up



IMAGES COURTESY OF TISCARENO ASSOCIATES

across from the beach and enjoy a more or less vacation lifestyle so close to downtown Seattle. We wanted to define the Infinity Shore Club experience and push the envelope of luxurious design in a way you haven't seen in the greater Seattle area before.

We spent many meetings discussing the design concept and

building layout with the neighbors to get their support on our vision. Additionally, we spent significant time with brokers to understand what program would be well accepted in the market. This led to providing two stalls per unit in a below grade garage.

**Q: What was the biggest chal-**

**lenge with this project?**

**A:** The rectangular lot is pressed between a steep hillside and the curving shoreline along Alki Avenue, which limited parking access and footprint options. We tailored our design to follow the shoreline's contour by splay-

BOLD DESIGN — PAGE 11

## Clear Water Services Successfully Executed Complex Dewatering Efforts to Support the Construction of the Elliott Bay Seawall

The City of Seattle completed the new Elliott Bay Seawall in 2017, and Clear Water Services is proud to have supplied water management services for the multi-year project that spread across 8-acres of active construction.

The previous seawall protected Seattle for more than 70 years; however, the marine environment caused cracks within the wall, allowing salt water to infiltrate and eat away at the timber piles providing structural support. The new seawall has been built to meet current seismic standards and includes habitat enhancements to improve the ecosystem and restore the salmon migration corridor.

The Elliott Bay Seawall project fell under the Department of Ecology's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, and the site contained known contaminated groundwater and soil, which had the potential to impact dewatering efforts.

An Administrative Order was attached to the Permit by the State to further protect the waters of Elliott Bay by placing stricter regulations on the project's construction methods. Clear Water's biggest project challenge was to maintain two distinct dewatering systems under varying flow scenarios while simultaneously supporting dynamic and often competing construction activities.

Clear Water Services was able to supply, install, and maintain two types of treatment systems - one process water system (with discharge to sanitary sewer) and one stormwater system (with discharge to surface waters). There were two process water systems, each operating at 500 gallons per minute (gpm). There were also two stormwater treatment systems, one operating at 3,600gpm and one at 1,200gpm.

Throughout the project, Clear Water discharged millions of gallons of clean effluent

water to Elliott Bay while remaining in compliance with all regulations.

The newly-completed Elliott Bay Seawall is slated to last more than 75 years and improve the near-shore environment with its habitat enhancements while seamlessly integrating with other planned Waterfront Seattle improvements.

Clear Water Services provides innovative stormwater, groundwater, and process water treatment solutions designed for each client's unique goals, challenges, and mission, including complex projects like the Elliott Bay Seawall. To start a conversation about your unique project, reach out to Clear Water through [clearwaterservices.com](http://clearwaterservices.com).

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# BRINGING A NEW MIX TO EVERETT'S WATERFRONT

Providing access to and from the waterfront is critical to the Port of Everett's redevelopment.

A dynamic waterfront-facing development is taking shape at the Port of Everett's Waterfront Place Central. The port's redevelopment project is bringing a new mix of commercial, residential, hospitality and public access to the waterfront. For the last several years, the port has been investing in upland cleanups, and restoring site infrastructure ranging from marine bulkheads to building roads, public access destinations, stormwater treatment and underground utilities placement.

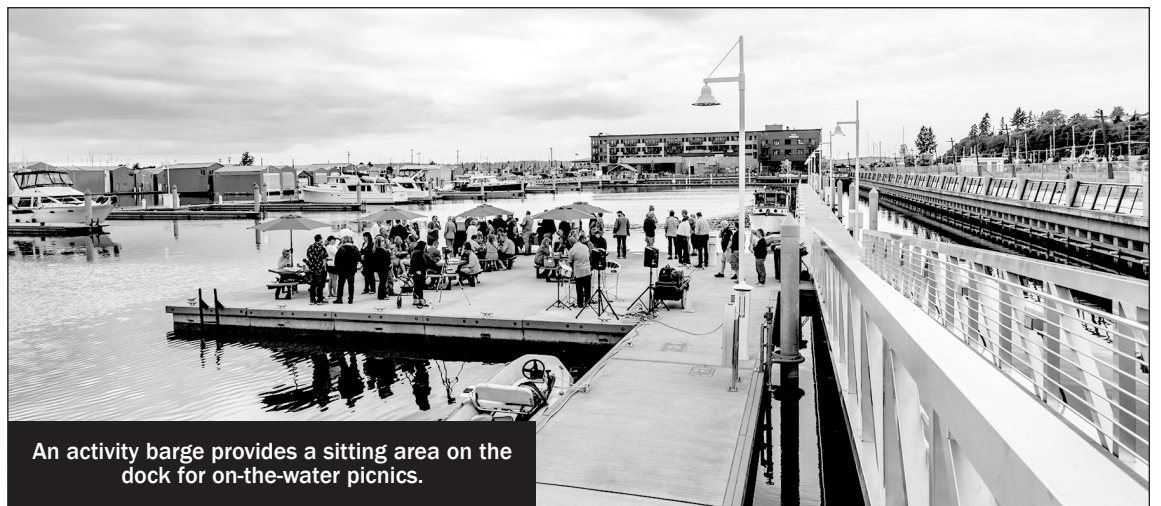


BY CHRIS WIEST  
PND ENGINEERS

PND Engineers has been leading a multidisciplinary project team since 2015 with planning, permitting, and design of the port's public infrastructure for the WPC project. Spanning 65 acres of waterfront property in Everett, the WPC project is a 1.5 million-square-foot mixed-use development that, at full build-

out, will include up to 447,500 square feet of new commercial office space; 63,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space; 20,000 square feet of marine retail; and up to 660 new waterfront homes. PND's suite of services for the expected \$650 million multi-phased development include project management, permitting, geotechnical engineering, and design of public infrastructure such as roadways, sidewalks and utilities, as well as select marine structures, public access and retail spaces. PND is also providing construction administration services.

Much of PND's completed work is now visible at Fisherman's Harbor — the first public/private development phase of WPC, where finished projects include the timber-built Seiner Wharf and nearby overwater viewing platform, Seiner Drive and 14th Street, Pacific Rim Plaza and Splash Fountain, and new Central Marina Docks. This work paved the way for private development of the new Hotel Indigo and Jetty Bar & Grille, the Waterfront Place Apartments, as well as future restaurants and retail. Focusing on



An activity barge provides a sitting area on the dock for on-the-water picnics.

IMAGES FROM PORT OF EVERETT

infrastructure, safety and accessibility, PND has been working with the Port of Everett to mitigate the impacts of future sea-level rise, high tides, and seismic events while creating welcoming spaces that serve water enthusiasts and landlubbers alike.

## WATERFRONT INFRASTRUCTURE

The existing bulkheads, which encompass Fisherman's Harbor,

were not designed to today's seismic standards and needed an upgrade to support new buildings. Older wall segments, which have outlived their useful design life, were replaced. Newer wall segments, still in the prime of their design life, were enhanced through soil ground improvements. The original timber bulkhead at Seiner Wharf, some areas of which were 100 years old, was replaced by a new

cantilevered Z-sheet pile wall.

By utilizing newer design methodologies, we were able to construct a more efficient cantilevered bulkhead, which was easier to install than a traditional deadman sheet pile wall. This helped minimize construction costs while providing seismic resistance.

## WATERFRONT ACCESS

Providing access to and from



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the waterfront is critical to the Port of Everett's redevelopment. The Central Marina sits west of Seiner Wharf and presented an optimal opportunity to create a waterfront open to multiple uses and myriad users.

In partnership with the port, PND provided design and construction support for new marina floats that connect into Fisherman's Harbor and serve to increase capacity for recreational boaters. Additionally, PND assisted the port in the relocation of an existing marina dock to better serve the port's commercial fishing fleets.

Completed projects include 1,400 feet of new floating docks, with floats featuring uninterrupted linear moorage, which are less expensive to develop and welcome a wide range of boat types and sizes. Utility connections for fresh water, electricity, and fire safety are routed throughout the float system. The new floats provide ramps and surfaces compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and are part of an interconnected trail system, where a waterfront stroll can take you directly to sea level regardless of tide. A recreational access float,

also known as an activity barge, provides a sitting area on the dock for on-the-water picnics.

PND also led planning and engineering services for Pacific Rim Plaza, which provides a dedicated open space at the heart of Fisherman's Harbor. The 18,000-square-foot plaza invites guests to play in a 36-jet splash fountain. Areas for lounging on benches or picnicking on alfresco meals from the recently minted "Restaurant Row" now in development make this popular area the social hub of the entire WPC neighborhood. The plaza connects to the esplanade, a 600-foot-long and 15-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian trail with benches, plantings, and elevated waterfront views. The timber-decked esplanade at Seiner Wharf links 3.5 miles of trail on the water's edge, creating a continuous promenade around the perimeter of the entire development. The esplanade, built as a multiuse pathway, is structurally tied to the bulkheads.

### ACCESS TO THE FUTURE

In cooperation with the port and new commercial developers, PND is currently leading

Private development on the waterfront includes the new Hotel Indigo and Jetty Bar & Grille.



the infrastructure design for the ensuing phases of the WPC development, which includes the Millwright, Wharf's Edge, and Esplanade districts. The nearly 10-acre Millwright District will include small- to mid-size businesses and offices, craft industry shops, housing, and open spaces such as the Timberman Trail and the Chamber Woonerf festival street. The Wharf's Edge District will include residential and restaurant buildings. The Esplanade

District is delineated by the waterfront promenade and Boxcar Park, which sits adjacent to the Snohomish River. When fully constructed, it will feature a perched riverfront beach, picnic pavilions, waterfront access paths, and open space for a new performance venue. The upland districts include 6,500 feet of new roadway and utilities within the public right of way and 4,200 feet of new and improved pedestrian access paths.

Providing water access for boaters and upland visitors is a priority for the Port of Everett redevelopment. Creating community interactions that activate the site and pedestrian use where none previously existed is key to the success of a vibrant port that serves all members of its community, and PND is honored to play a part in the WPC revitalization.

*Chris Wiest is civil engineering lead with PND Engineers.*



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Part of a fast-growing area, the Vancouver waterfront is nearing completion.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF COLUMBIA WATERFRONT LLC

## THE VISION: VANCOUVER'S WATERFRONT ALIVE AND ACTIVE

Three thousand housing units and 1.5 million feet of offices, restaurants, and mixed-use offerings provide a hub, with opportunities for corporate headquarters relocation/co-location and more housing.



The cable-stay pier at the Vancouver Waterfront is the most popular selfie area around and leans out over the shoreline.

Closing in on years of hard work and foresight, promises are now reality.

Vancouver's emerging waterfront lines the mighty Columbia River where explorers Lewis and Clark trekked over and through it. For centuries, the river has served as the central access point for the ebb and flow of life in our majestic and resource rich Pacific Northwest. This river, and its history, mean everything.

Fast forward to here and now: southwest Washington is among the fastest growing regions in the state with greater Clark County's population as the second highest growth county in Washington last year; its population is now estimated at 508,000. The greater Vancouver-Portland metro area's

population has exploded in recent years; it's now estimated at 2.48 million.

With such growth surrounding it, the Waterfront Vancouver is now home to a prolific renaissance. In 2005, when starting work on this property, we crafted the vision of what it could be. Now, the transformation is nearly complete and accomplishing our core community values to connect the community together with the water.

### WATERFRONT RISING

Bringing the waterfront to life has been a labor of love for us.

The work we and the city have accomplished at the waterfront's 32-acre property (in 22 city-sized blocks) comprises modernized infrastructure implementation and improvements, water access points and new amenities. All open for business, this new neighborhood is abuzz with popular retailers, amenities, Class A offices, and diverse living options.



BY BARRY CAIN  
GRAMOR  
DEVELOPMENT



The Vancouver Waterfront's 7-acre park and wide walkways brings everyone out to enjoy the views and amenities.



More than a dozen signature restaurants cater to crowds such as the ever-popular WildFin, Twigs Bistro and Stack Burger. Two Northwest favorites opening soon are El Gaucho and 13 Coins. In addition, some of the best Oregon and Washington wines are featured at 10 tasting rooms and eateries. Owners report high receipts owing to the area's popularity, consistent foot traffic and booked reservation options.

A condo tower, adjacent to the locally owned, boutique Hotel Indigo, is also coming online shortly. This new tower highlights the diversity of substantial market rent offerings in apartments. Additionally, we recently broke ground on the well-respected The Springs at The Waterfront senior living tower, which — at 12 stories tall — will offer 250 apartments. These options complement more than 2,800 housing options with rents exceeding the metro area's average.

We've seen how quickly this destination has become both a central gathering place for casual get togethers and memorable nights out, and as a business hub, as it's within walking distance of both the Vancouver Convention Center and business district.

Five blocks remain available for development, most of which have served as surface parking. These comprise blocks 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16, each of which offers exceptional waterfront access at the heart of both water and city views. With 75%

of the comprehensive development built, under construction or in planning, current space available is prime for a corporate campus or headquarters option, giving workers a premium office location and proud presentation for meetings, business lunches, after work happy hours and events.

These few available blocks, which can be developed independently, are also suited for additional residential options such as multifamily housing. On the 44,300-square-foot Block 7, we'll soon be breaking ground on an eight-story parking garage with 851 spaces and 11,200 square feet of ground-floor retail availability.

In a place to call home, many shopkeepers; winemakers and brewers; restaurateurs; housing developers; CEOs and industry leaders; condo and apartment residents and others now work, live and/or play at the Waterfront Vancouver. Each office worker, resident, restaurant patron, shopper and visitor can enjoy not only water views but the extensive waterfront park, which now connects to the local system of walking, hiking and biking trails.

Adjacent to the Waterfront Vancouver neighborhood is a 6-acre parcel of land owned and under development by the Port of Vancouver USA. The Marriott AC Hotel recently opened at this property. The port is also planning a complementary mixture of hotel, office and retail offerings, including bringing the West

The Headwaters Wall and water feature showcase the many waterways' confluence at the mighty Columbia River.



Coast headquarters of the highly successful tech company Zoominfo and its 3,500 employees next door.

Today the world at the Waterfront Vancouver looks vastly different. High rises of apartments and Class A office space, a senior housing complex, high-profile restaurants, taphouse-style eateries, popular retailers, signature retailers, on-demand business services, world-renowned wineries and a boutique hotel and condo tower are completing this new unique destination.

## WATERFRONT DESTINATION

Outfitting the residential and commercial activity, the architectural wonder of the new park nips the water with an interactive water feature detailing the region's and the river's shared history and natural wonders. Alongside it is the legendary cable-stay Grant Street Pier, affording a walk out over the river and arguably the most beloved feature of the Waterfront Vancouver.

We are grateful for not only

the support we've received as we envisioned this expanse at the river's edge, but also for the community's overwhelmingly positive response and patronage. Together, we see this region rising.

*Barry Cain owns and directs Gramor Development, a commercial real estate company that has developed more than 70 mixed-use projects in the Portland/Vancouver metro area over nearly 40 years.*



# NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS THE 'CITY OF WATER AND WOOD'

The Dunn family teamed up with local real estate development group Hess Callahan Grey Group and Weber Thompson to transform their original lumber yard into its fullest potential.

Seattle is a city of water. The Puget Sound and Lake Washington bound the city's eastern and western edges, and a canal connects both bodies of water into the city's geographic center, the heart, Lake Union. The lake provides an expansive visual connection between the varied and distinct neighborhoods surrounding it. The lake itself is home to several houseboat and floating home communities, public small watercraft recreation, and even a seaplane airport.



BY BRITTANY PORTER  
WEBER THOMPSON

Seattle is also a city of wood. The forests are a short drive away and facilitate a culture of outdoor recreation that permeates into the urban lifestyle. Like many other non-indigenous settlements in the Pacific Northwest, timber milling and logging were the original backbones of industry. In fact, a lumber company has existed on the north end of Lake Union since 1931: the Dunn Lumber Company. Dunn Lumber is a successful, family-owned, local business that believes in supplying craftspeople with the highest quality wood products.

The Dunn family teamed up with local real estate development group Hess Callahan Grey Group and architectural firm Weber Thompson to transform their original lumber yard into its fullest potential. Currently under construction and coming in the fall of 2023, Northlake Commons will be a four-story, mass timber, mixed-use workplace building above a two-story concrete podium that will house the new Dunn Lumber warehouse. This innovative project will bring new energy to a previously sparse industrial area with an improved park space that engages with Seattle's appreciable Burke-Gilman bike trail and an expansive public plaza looking out over Lake Union.

In respecting the project site's proximity to the Lake Union shoreline, stormwater management and restoration became vital design goals. Currently, stormwater sheds down a significant hill from the neighborhood to the north and into the



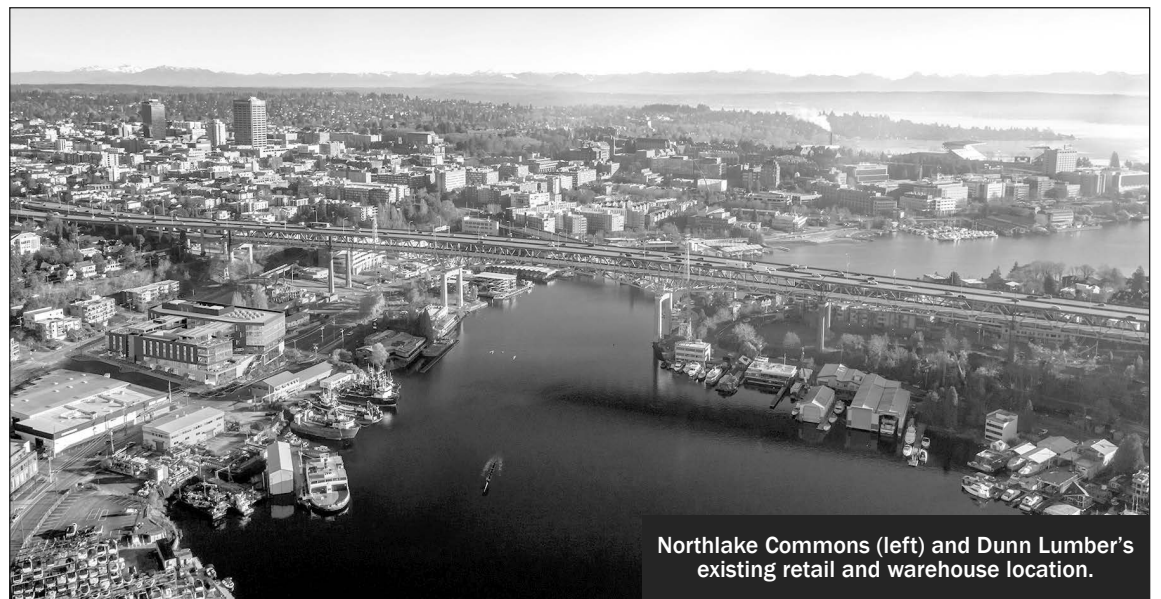
Northlake Commons, overlooking Lake Union and beyond to downtown Seattle.

IMAGES COURTESY OF WEBER THOMPSON

lake untreated. However, after the Northlake Commons project is completed, new stormwater infrastructure will divert the water into a swale capable of filtering up to 5 million gallons of stormwater before it continues its path to the lake. A generous building setback at the shoreline adjacent property line created this significant restorative swale area.

The design team also prohibited using exposed galvanized steel on the project because it leaches zinc which is harmful to aquatic life. Implementation of this holistic, beyond the project site, green stormwater swale infrastructure is a reoccurring, award-winning ambition for this development team. Part of its success is that it provides both water quality benefits and provides the urban public street with much-needed green space. Functional green spaces like the swales facilitate biophilia, or the innate human instinct to connect with nature and other living beings.

Biophilic design recognizes that the strongest foundation of sustainable behavior is a love or admiration for nature; it strives to create opportunities within our built environments and communities to connect people to nature. The human health and



Northlake Commons (left) and Dunn Lumber's existing retail and warehouse location.

wellness benefits of biophilic design are significant and well documented. One resource, the 14 Patterns of Biophilic Design by Terrapin Bright Green, was referred to often by the design team, and formed the basis of a design charrette.

One of the most direct examples of connection to nature at Northlake Commons is the exterior breezeways, which the design team dubbed connectors. These connectors are not only intended as a means of circulation but are 40 feet wide and

intended as legitimate outdoor office space. They are outfitted with overhead cover, lighting, electrical outlets, and capacity for outdoor heaters to keep them functional all year long. There are two such connectors at each level. The connector to the north has views of the bike trail and park, the connector to the south has views of the lake, and both overlook the landscaped courtyard below.

The sensory interaction provided by these connector spaces can offer people improved cog-

nitive function and reductions in systolic blood pressure and stress hormones. The ability to have a space where one can seek reprieve from their indoor environment has excellent psychological value, especially in today's context of a pandemic.

The true biophilic heart of Northlake Commons is the mass timber structural system: comprised of cross-laminated timber floors and glue-laminated timber columns and beams. Mass timber is highly regarded for its reduced embodied carbon



impacts, and studies find mass timber to take 25% less carbon to create the same structural system as a concrete building. Low embodied carbon is an important reason to investigate and advocate for mass timber on any project.

However, there are values to be toted beyond the carbon footprint. Northlake Commons elected to use mass timber for its structural system early in design. Despite the supply chain issues and materials escalation of the last two years, a different

structural system was not considered by the ownership and development team.

The commitment to mass timber is because the development and ownership team recognized the market value of differentiating themselves in the commercial office market. In a real-estate market where office buildings are typically constructed of steel and concrete, there is genuine value in the alluring aesthetic of wood that helps new construction stand out from the rest, thereby increasing leasing

potential. There are also cost saving impacts by designing a lighter building structure requiring less significant foundation design and therefore costs. This win-win reality of mass timber is very encouraging. Whenever a solution can function well on many fronts, it rises to the top as a viable answer to come back project after project.

It was, for this reason, that the building's design concept was able to revolve around wood reliably. The design concept is inspired by a walk in the woods

and the distinct layers of the forest. The forest floor, the understory, and the canopy. The multi-story timber columns and bark-like building cladding represent the understory. A sunken garden represents the forest floor.

The overhead connectors act as the canopy. True to the patterns of biophilic design, there are sensations of refuge, mystery, risk, and prospect throughout the plaza experience. Walking along a path, moving between tall timbers, crossing a bridge, and an ending with

an expansive view of the water. The connection to nature is not only referential but, instead, an authentic experience replicated in an urban environment.

*Brittany Porter is a senior associate at Weber Thompson in Seattle. Porter is experienced in sustainable multifamily and workplace projects, has a background in passive house design, and is passionate about low-carbon architecture that promotes health and wellness for all.*

## BOLD DESIGN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

ing the design into two wings united by a glassed-in courtyard. The visual effect of two buildings divides building mass while also allowing for two elevator cores for better circulation and resident privacy. The goal was for every unit to have a water view, although the hillside view is also really nice for units that have views in both directions. A major challenge was also to create unique residential floor

plans of mostly two- and three-bedroom units.

### Q: What do you find most intriguing about the architecture?

**A:** We set out to create a timeless design that will still look fresh in 25 years. When you look at Infinity Shore Club's overall design, the scale, proportions and articulation are all familiar. There is an expressed base, mid-

dle and top, yet at the same time the design is very contemporary with balconies, strong horizontal lines and abundant transparency. With more than 250 feet of waterfront, we were able to take the bold step of creating a two-tower plan that actually costs more to build but will add tremendous value by increasing daylight with windows and views. The centerpiece is an infinity pool in the courtyard that occupies the space between the two residential towers.

The courtyard also features a sun deck and a dramatic cascading waterwall at street level for pedestrians to enjoy. A soaring two-story entry leads to a variety of unit types that

incorporate warm woods, stone tile and ample windows for a residential resort aesthetic. Sliding NanaWalls open the indoor spaces to extra-large decks so that the residents can enjoy the outdoor space as part of their extended living area. Creative layout of the roof deck provides both private and communal areas with outdoor kitchens, fire pits, greenspaces and pathways.

### Q: How does the project respond to its surroundings?

**A:** We really paid attention to the interaction of the building with the community. The building is set back farther than zoning requires to allow daylight and landscape between neighboring

buildings. Having two distinct masses with a center courtyard is extremely helpful in this regard. We also wanted to create strong curb appeal and an attractive lobby because of the extreme visibility that comes with being located on one of the most utilized sidewalks in Seattle. To this end there is a lush, landscaped area and a waterwall. This is a large project for Alki. It's the same height as other buildings, but having five lots allows for larger unit sizes that take advantage of the expansive waterfront and hillside views.

*Bob Tiscareno is founder and design principal at Tiscareno Associates.*

## TRADEMARKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

is somewhat new.

As a team, we must navigate around these pieces, not only ensuring our designs fit into the city's puzzle but ensuring our projects create minimal disruptions when in construction. Of course SR 99 is the most notable, stretching the length of the waterfront, and finally open and operational. We know that Sound Transit is considering another commuter tunnel too.

Designs are drastically impacted by what lies below them. In the case of a tunnel, teams have to be careful about building above, usually opting for a plaza or similar non-weight-bearing solution.

## AN EVOLVING CITY

Building, renovating, reimagining — cities are places of constant evolution.

And the ongoing Waterfront Park development is a prime example, changing the way Seattleites interact with their urban shoreline. Anchored by Pier 62, Waterfront Park stretches from Belltown to Pioneer Square. The massive project is the brainchild of a collective including Friends of Waterfront Seattle, the city of Seattle and numerous community partners. The vision is for an open, accessible park with emphasis on public gathering spaces.


The full park is slated to open in 2025, and projects along the route must coordinate exten-

sively with the planning team. Teams must communicate early, understand current Waterfront Park phases and checkpoints, and ensure projects integrate with the master vision.

The ripple effect is real, especially for civil plans. Even blocks away, projects are impacted as pedestrian crossings and bridges, waterfront connections, safety improvements, and increased trucks and traffic must be considered. And the increased trucks and traffic shouldn't be underestimated. As the demand for connectivity increases, a pseudo freeway running to the south end of Colman Dock (each direction included two general-purpose lanes and a transit lane) complicates plans and designs. As civil engineers, we coordinate extensively with SDOT, but at the waterfront, that coordination is vital and complex.

Working at the waterfront presents a unique set of challenges and factors, but it also yields some of our most exciting and rewarding projects — projects that are cherished by the community, unique in their design, and unrivaled in their mountain and sea views. It's truly a special brand of build that's exclusive to Seattle.


*Kyle Malaspino is a civil associate principal at Coughlin Porter Lundeen, with extensive experience working with the city of Seattle and congested urban sites.*



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