

OR4 – The Area for Marina Development should be sized to the “Parcel A” Footprint (1-15-23)

Observations and Recommendations for Consideration

Observations:

The development of the north end of the Marina had been previously focused on the Parcel A area. This parcel is the only area on the east side of the Marina which is vacant and easily available for development. The remainder of the Marina’s eastern property line is shared with residential properties. Primarily condominiums. When the Marina was originally created, this Parcel A remained as private property with several little cabins and a small store located there. The City, using the Marina Enterprise fund, purchased those properties many years ago. This expanded the operating Marina’s capacity and following the removal of structures the area was used for boat storage.

In the City’s recent planning for the Marina development, this area became an obvious place for development. Its location up against the bank would make any roll out of structure onto the Marina floor less intrusive or impactful to esthetics view corridors. It also provided the pedestrian gateway to the downtown businesses through Outlook Park and 223rd Street. The features desired by the City were to be a Marina Steps concept to provide pedestrian connection with the downtown and aligned with a boutique hotel.

In late summer and early fall of 2021, the City released its Request for Qualification (RFQ) for development of “Parcel A.” There were 3 proposals submitted. One was looking to expand the available footprint and include residential. After the City’s discussion with the principal, they decided to withdraw. The City review panel conducted a quantitative review of the two remaining submittals. At the November 18, 2021 City Council meeting, the review panel recommended the selection of the Embarcadero Hospitality Group to move forward on Marina redevelopment for Parcel A. The City Council approved the selection and authorized the City Manager to enter into negotiations of an exclusive agreement with that team.

Nearly a year after the Council approved proceeding with the “Parcel A” development, the City held a Public Meeting (September 27, 2022) announcing the Parcel A development plan was not achievable. Then a new plan was presented showing a placement of the hotel in the middle of the Marina’s north parking lot. It also showed other structures to be placed in the Parcel A location. These proposed structures included a parking garage, retail space, the Marina Steps feature and a refecton pond fed by surface water runoff from the City’s hillside.

This new plan does not represent the size and scope of Marina development project that residents were apprised of with the City's RFQ process in 2021.

Recommendations:

- If the boutique hotel is desired for economic development in the Marina District, move it to the downtown area where there are several vacant properties available.
- Size the north end Marina development to fit the Parcel A footprint.
- Retain the north parking lot as open space for public benefit.
- Having this public benefit area focused on the views and proximity to Puget Sound, there is no apparent need for a reflection pond. That feature would merely consume space that could be utilized for other purposes.