



**A MASTER PLAN  
FOR EXPANSION  
JULY 2015**



SEATTLE AQUARIUM





**Our mission:** *Inspiring Conservation of Our Marine Environment*

In water is life. As we need a healthy ocean to sustain us, so must we sustain the ocean. The world’s ocean gives life to all of Earth’s creatures. It covers more than two-thirds of the Earth’s surface. It is home to most of the living organisms on the planet. It produces half of the life-giving oxygen we breathe. And it feeds 60 percent of the world’s population.

**It does not get more important than that.**

Everyone needs to understand that ocean health plays a crucial role in our survival. Fortunately, in the ocean there is also mystery, majesty and magic. It is the mission of the Seattle Aquarium to connect these dots—to move people to awareness, education, inspiration, and commitment to the critical role the ocean plays in our very existence, starting in Puget Sound.

How? The Seattle Aquarium is among the top 10 aquariums in the nation in attendance while emerging as a leader in marine conservation education, especially as a window on Puget Sound. To become truly effective at its mission, the Seattle Aquarium must dramatically increase its impact. The Aquarium exists to inspire people, both young and old, to conserve our marine environment by imparting new knowledge to every visitor about the life dwelling within Puget Sound and our one world ocean as well as what can be done to help preserve it.

**This is serious business. With the ocean at risk, it is our imperative.**

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# INTRODUCTION

Since 1977, the Seattle Aquarium has been a key institution on our Central Waterfront, engaging and educating visitors about the wonders of sea life—both in our own Puget Sound and in faraway waters. In 2014, the Aquarium welcomed over 811,000 visitors, making it the most-visited cultural attraction in downtown Seattle. Replacing the aging Alaskan Way Viaduct with an underground tunnel and reconnecting Seattle to its Elliott Bay shoreline will enable the Aquarium to educate, entertain and inspire many more generations of visitors. In fact, the City of Seattle estimates that visitors to the waterfront will double to more than 10 million each year when the redevelopment of the Central Waterfront is complete.

As an integral part of the waterfront project, the Seattle Aquarium has been working closely with the City of Seattle Office of the Waterfront and the Department of Parks and Recreation on **A Master Plan For Expansion** that includes a renovation of Pier 59, a renovation and expansion of Pier 60, the creation of a major new exhibit building, and seamless connections to a greatly improved public waterfront.

This Master Plan addresses prior planning that considered locations of new structures built over water, either to the south or north of the Aquarium on Pier 59, and a more recent opportunity to consider a new Aquarium building as part of the Overlook Walk—a direct pedestrian connection between the Pike Place Market and the waterfront. The Overlook Walk will be a major new urban connection that provides safe pedestrian routes from the north downtown retail core to Aquarium Plaza, Pier 62/63 and the waterfront. It will provide unobstructed views and new public open space to enjoy. Visitors will use stairways, sloping pathways, and public elevator to move between the Public Market and the waterfront. This opportunity would realize a major expansion of the Aquarium at the same time the Overlook Walk is built.

Over the past several months, the Seattle Aquarium has solicited feedback from a broad number of community stakeholders and sought early planning guidance from the Architectural Review Committee of the Landmarks Preservation Board, the Seattle Design Commission and the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners. Community input was carefully considered in the context of the Seattle Aquarium Strategic Plan, site evaluation criteria, and the guiding principles of Waterfront Seattle.

If the Master Plan is approved by the Seattle City Council, then the Seattle Aquarium would proceed with the next stage of design, consider phasing options and conduct environmental review. Master Plan approval would provide for timely design coordination between the Seattle Aquarium and the Central Waterfront project in the development of the Overlook Walk and the pedestrian improvements associated with the overall project.



View of the Seattle Aquarium after finger pier was removed for replacement in 2014.



Beach visitors learn about the wonders of Puget Sound from an Aquarium Beach Naturalist.



The existing Alaskan Way Viaduct separates downtown Seattle from its public waterfront.



# HISTORY AND BACKGROUND



More than 25 million visitors, including nearly two million school children, have passed through the Seattle Aquarium's doors since it opened on Piers 59 and 60 in 1977. Originally financed with \$5.4 million in King County Forward Thrust bonds, the Aquarium has benefited from an evolving public-private partnership between the City of Seattle and the Seattle Aquarium Society, a nonprofit organization.

In 2010, the City of Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation entered into a long-term Management and Operating Agreement with the Seattle Aquarium Society.

This agreement transferred day-to-day management of the City-owned Aquarium to the nonprofit, and established a process for development of a Master Plan to guide a long-contemplated future expansion. In recent years, the Parks Department and private donors to the Seattle Aquarium have jointly contributed to major capital improvements, including renovation and stabilization of Pier 59 and a new harbor seal exhibit on Pier 60.

Today, the Seattle Aquarium is governed by a 43-member Board of Directors. These community volunteers represent diverse backgrounds, skills and experience, and share a common interest in protecting Puget Sound and our world's one ocean through education and inspiration.

As Seattle redefines its relationship to Elliott Bay through the removal of the Alaskan Way viaduct, the Seattle Aquarium is well-positioned as the central attraction. The Aquarium's Board and expert staff will be instrumental in guiding the institution through the implementation of the Master Plan that furthers our connections to Puget Sound and deepens our understanding of the complex life within its depths.

The Seattle Aquarium reaches and teaches more than 811,000 children and adults a year. With our region expected to grow in population, the Aquarium will need to accommodate and inspire more people.



On May 20, 1977, nearly a decade after voters approved its construction, the Seattle Aquarium opened, with 1,524 visitors. Thousands of fingerling salmon were released into Elliott Bay with the hope that they would return to the aquarium fish ladder to spawn. Inside the aquarium, visitors walked along ramps viewing sponges, jellyfish, snails, clams, and crabs, most of them native to Puget Sound. The glassed-in Aquarium Dome allowed visitors to sit on benches and watch fish watching them. Mayor Wes Uhlman said the Aquarium and the crowd "expressed the relationship we in Seattle have with the sea." Source: historylink.org



# THE CASE FOR EXPANSION

## Strategic Planning

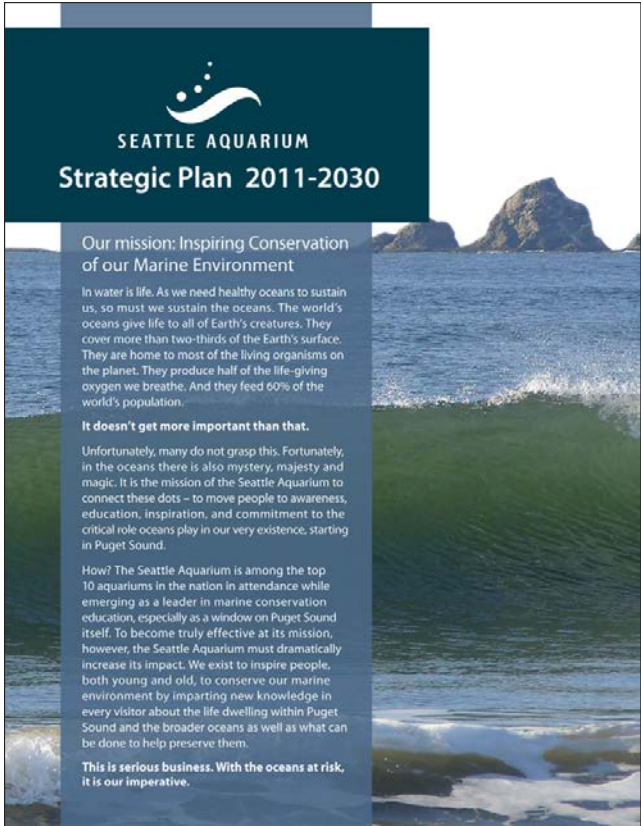
Following the transition to nonprofit management, and with generous support from The Norcliffe Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Seattle Aquarium developed its **Strategic Plan 2011–2030** to dramatically increase the reach of its **mission: Inspiring Conservation of Our Marine Environment**. The Strategic Plan recognized the need for facility investments and upgrades as well as broadened education programs that reached diverse audiences in order to help the Aquarium influence a growing regional population and lessen adverse impacts on our precious marine environment.

The development of the Strategic Plan was led by a Planning Committee of the board. Its publication was the culmination of more than a year of conversation and thought about the future of the Aquarium including three civic leader meetings with over 50 participants, a charrette with 10 educators, a ‘think-tank’ discussion with 16 local technology leaders, individual consultations with community leaders, a volunteer survey and staff workshops. The plan is a high-level framework for future operational and capital planning, and it serves as a blueprint for the Aquarium’s annual work program and budget.



“The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy cited aquariums as a key focal point to increase ocean awareness and action. The Seattle Aquarium is stepping up to its responsibility in exemplary fashion.”  
– William D. Ruckelshaus, past member, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy; former co-chair, Puget Sound Partnership

*The Strategic Plan helped define a new vision:*  
**“The Seattle Aquarium aspires, through its example, to help define the role of a great aquarium in the 21st century as a catalyst for public engagement in the wonder, science and future vitality of the oceans and Puget Sound. We intend to be a leader in each component: life sciences, interpretive exhibits, educational outreach, marine conservation research, public policy, and economic impact.”**



The Strategic Plan identifies a number of key goals and objectives for meeting the Aquarium’s mission, many of which would be furthered through major capital improvements and facility expansion. It also reaffirms the Aquarium’s role as a principal stakeholder in the redevelopment of the Central Waterfront.

Facility-related goals and objectives include:

### ANIMALS

- Energize each visitor’s experience with the power and impact of the Aquarium’s marine animals in all their natural awe and magic.
- Upgrade older exhibits to modern standards.
- Build new exhibits to elevate the visitors’ experience through close proximity and human interpretive experiences.

### OCEAN

- Integrate the stories and messaging of the Northwest waters and tropical exhibits to reflect the connections of Puget Sound to the Pacific Ocean and to global ocean issues and health.
- Support the health of wild populations and habitats through field conservation and the management of sustainable captive populations.

### LEADERSHIP

- Use facilities and programs to strengthen linkages with aligned public and nonprofit institutions and organizations in the marine conservation and education community.
- Operate an efficient facility that emphasizes a range of green conservation activities.

### WATERFRONT

- Build our role as an authentic and uniquely Seattle aquarium at the center of Seattle’s great new waterfront.
- Continue our deep involvement in the public participation and planning processes for the Elliott Bay Seawall and for the Central Waterfront redevelopment, articulating and advocating for the Aquarium’s operating needs, regional public access and future expansion.
- Make the Aquarium the single most compelling and fun element on the new waterfront.
- Enhance important linkages to the surrounding areas, including the Pike Place Market, nearby marine and cruise ship terminals, and downtown Seattle.

With respect to facilities, the strategic planning process specified the need for major improvements to Piers 59 and 60, new expansion space, and development of the physical infrastructure to meet increased attendance growth.



# EXISTING PIERS

## Pier 59

Today, the Seattle Aquarium occupies two piers on Seattle’s Central Waterfront. Pier 59, a designated Seattle landmark, was built in 1905 and is one the oldest remaining piers on the waterfront. Throughout annual maintenance and major stabilization projects, the Seattle Aquarium has retained the pier’s historic character while adapting its interior to meet the requirements of a modern aquarium experience.



In 2004, the Aquarium launched its **New Currents** campaign to raise funds for a major renovation and 18,000 square foot expansion within the existing structure on Pier 59. The project replaced nearly 800 rotting piers and significantly renovated the pier’s eastern end—creating a prominent and accessible new entrance, a flexible entry hall and gathering space, and the 120,000-gallon Window on Washington Waters exhibit. Housed within the Ackerley Foundation Puget Sound Hall, the exhibit is a dramatic focal point for visitors and school groups during the day, and doubles at night as a popular community event space. The \$41-million project was jointly funded by the City of Seattle and the Seattle Aquarium, which raised over \$17.2 million from donors and \$1.4 million from café/catering and gift shop partners, who now produce over \$1 million in annual net operating revenue for the Aquarium.



New Window on Washington Waters exhibit.



Pier 59 facade in 2005.



Demolition of the west end of Pier 59.



New Pier 59 facade and street-front Aquarium entry.



# Pier 60

Pier 60, as it known today, was designed through a collaboration between architect Fred Bassetti and Company, and the engineering firm of Kramer, Chin and Mayo. Completed in 1977, it houses major Aquarium exhibits including the famous Underwater Dome. It was designed with a direct connection to Pier 59 and views from outdoor viewing galleries west to Elliott Bay.

In early 2014, the Aquarium successfully completed the renovation of its largest outdoor attraction, the Harbor Seal exhibit and connecting finger pier. Through a combination of City funding and private contributions, the \$6 million project increased water depth, doubled dry resting space within the exhibit, and replaced the chain link fence enclosure with an acrylic surround and tiered seating for 100+ guests.

It was an important step toward the recognition that Pier 60 and its exhibits, at nearly 40 years old, are in need of structural improvements and upgrades to serve the needs of our animals and a growing audience.

Together, Piers 59 and 60 house all of the Aquarium’s public functions in a combined building footprint of 97,760 gross square feet. This includes all exhibits, life support and veterinary care, research facilities, classrooms, the café and gift shop. Administration is housed on Pier 59 and in offices on Western Avenue.



New harbor seal exhibit opened in 2014.



Pier 60 after new harbor seal exhibit and finger pier replacement in 2014.

# Sustainability

In operating today’s facility, the Seattle Aquarium has made a commitment to sustainability both in education and in practice. Through a partnership with NOAA Fisheries, a 70-foot-long graphic exhibit, Sound Choices, was installed in 2014. The exhibit explores the impact that community and individual decisions have on the health of Puget Sound and our ocean—as well as the social and economic benefits associated with marine conservation. In day-to-day operations, the Aquarium has made great strides to conserve energy, expand its recycling and composting program, and promote the use of public transportation by offering employees subsidized transit passes and providing showers and bike storage for bike commuters.

In partnership with Seattle City Light, the Aquarium completed installation of a 247-panel, 49-kilowatt-hour array on the roof of Pier 59. The project helps demonstrate how the use of clean, green energy reduces carbon emissions and supports healthy marine ecosystems. A \$1.1 million investment in eight major energy conservation measures reduced energy use, produced a utility savings of \$100,000 per year and generated over \$200,000 in utility rebates.

In 2014, the Seattle Aquarium was recognized for its leadership in sustainability with two awards for sustainable operations. The first was the 2014 Visionary Leadership Award presented by the Seattle 2030 District, which recognized the Aquarium for energy efficient retrofits, carbon capture through tree planting, and for its solar array. The second award was a Community Impact Award for sustainability in business operations from Seattle Business Magazine which honors the region’s most influential community leaders.



247-solar panel array installed on the roof of Pier 59 in 2013.

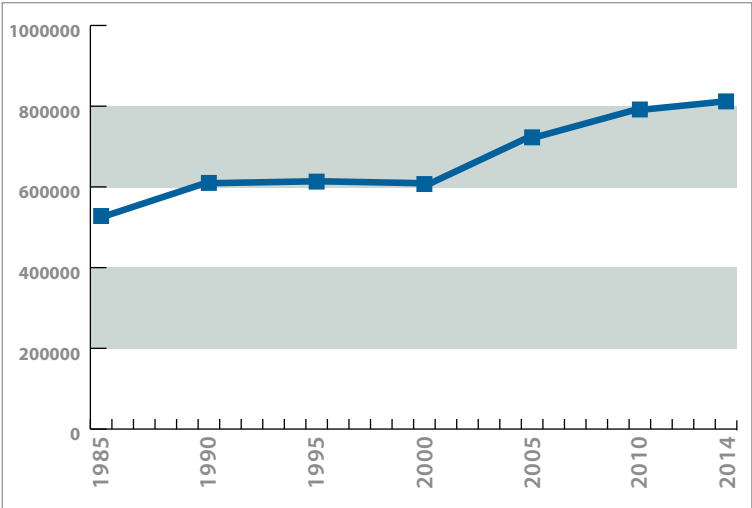


Sound Choices graphic exhibit.



# ENGAGING THE REGION

## Attendance



For many years after the Seattle Aquarium's 1977 opening, attendance remained steady with roughly 600,000 annual visitors. Modest but effective exhibit investments, including the addition of touch pools in 2002 and a giant Pacific octopus exhibit in 2003, led to a jump in yearly attendance to just over 700,000 guests. In 2007, with the major renovation of Pier 59 and Aquarium expansion—including the visible new entry on Alaskan Way—attendance grew sharply to more than 800,000 visitors per year. These figures confirm that capital improvements, from modest to major, reflect the public's interest in the Aquarium, and the Aquarium's ability to reach more people each year. With over 811,000 visitors in 2014, the Seattle Aquarium was ranked as downtown's most visited cultural attraction by the Downtown Seattle Association.

### TOP DOWNTOWN ATTRACTIONS

Downtown Seattle is home to some of the region's top attractions including the Pike Place Market with 10 million visitors per year and the Seattle Space Needle with more than one million visitors each year. Downtown is also home to some of the area's top performance, exhibit and sports venues.

Top Downtown Venues by Type	
Cultural Arts & Exhibits	2014 Attendance
Seattle Aquarium	811,829
Pacific Science Center	770,349
EMP Museum	558,544
Chihuly Garden and Glass Exhibit	400,000+
Seattle Art Museum	366,761
Olympic Sculpture Park	288,140
MOHAI	217,821
Seattle Children's Museum	182,334
Frye Art Museum	86,677
Klondike Gold Rush Museum	61,425
Wing Luke Asian Museum	43,802



Diver interacts with children in Windows on Washington Waters exhibit.



The Aquarium's face-to-face guest engagement strategy, adopted in 2002, keeps guests coming back and ensures that no two visits are alike. Exhibits previously housed behind glass with printed labels were redesigned for direct interaction and interpretation by a team of well-educated volunteers. For example, visitors to the Life on the Edge touch pools can ask questions about a sea anemone's diet, how a sea star can regrow a lost arm, or how hermit crabs find new homes. This unique one-on-one visitor engagement approach sets the Seattle Aquarium apart from other facilities, and ensures a custom experience can be delivered to our guests with every visit.

Volunteers teach people about the animals and nearshore habitat at touch pools.



# Public Programs

More than 1,200 volunteers donated 100,755 hours of talent and service to the Aquarium in 2014, roughly equal to \$2.2 million, or the equivalent of 48 full-time positions. Volunteers who join the Aquarium team participate in a rigorous training program led by the Conservation & Education Department. They provide a valuable service as educators within our facility, and as ambassadors for the marine environment outside of it. In 2013, the Aquarium recorded its millionth hour of volunteer service making it one of the top recipients of volunteer support in the region.

In addition to programs offered on-site at Piers 59 and 60, the Aquarium’s education programming extends to a dozen Puget Sound beaches on low-tide days each summer, when 240 volunteer *Beach Naturalists* share their knowledge of the Puget Sound marine ecosystem with beachgoers and encourage responsible enjoyment of this fragile habitat. Beach Naturalists are expected to have over 60,000 individual interactions with members of the public this summer alone. Another important beach program is supported by high school Citizen Scientists who monitor the health of 17 local beaches.



Sign language interpreter helps hearing impaired visitors enjoy presentations.



17 beaches monitored by Aquarium-trained high school students.

As the Aquarium continues to renovate existing facilities and considers new expansion space, it aims to meet another important Strategic Plan goal: ensuring that facilities, programs and services are relevant, accessible and affordable. In 2012, a community engagement section was formed within the Conservation & Education Department to increase Aquarium access for a variety of audiences. Notable programs include:

- **Seattle Aquarium Open House:** A free event designed for underserved and/or underrepresented audiences that may experience barriers to visiting the Aquarium. In 2014, 837 guests attended this event; they were welcomed by interpreters speaking 17 different languages.
- **DreamNight:** A chance for individuals with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities and their families to come and enjoy the Aquarium in a relaxed and supported atmosphere. Our spring 2015 events served over 850 guests.
- **Community Ticket Program:** Provides free Aquarium admission tickets to low-income and special needs populations via a number of social service agencies throughout King County and Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation community centers, and the Seattle Public Library Museum Pass program. In 2014, 34,788 tickets were distributed through 114 different agencies.



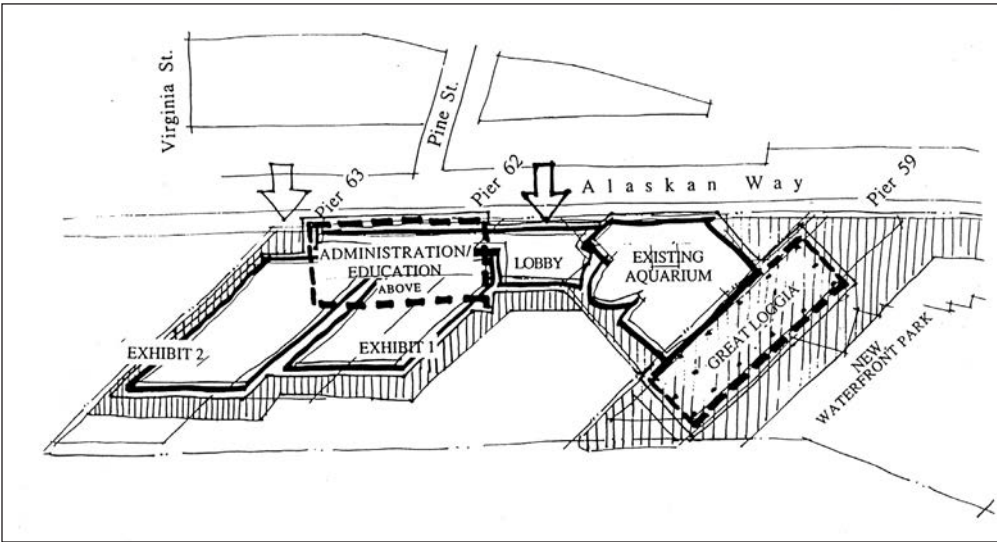


# PRIOR EXPANSION PLANNING

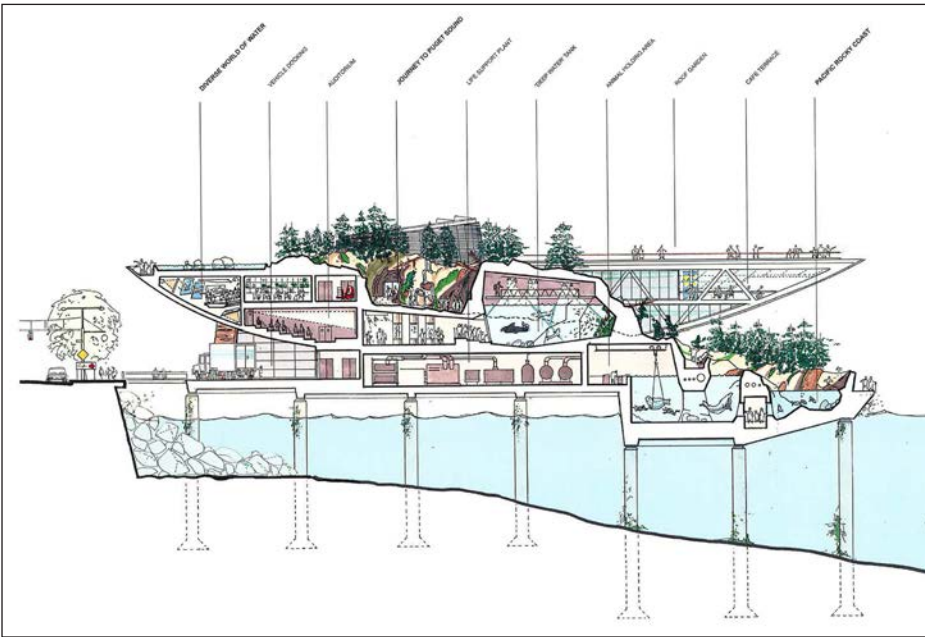
Since the Seattle Aquarium first opened in 1977, it has acknowledged the need to conduct major maintenance, refresh exhibits, expand programs and build new spaces to reach a growing and broadening audience and accomodate visitor growth. The first major plan for expansion was completed in 1994 as the *Portal to the Pacific Project: The Seattle Aquarium and Central Waterfront Master Plan*. The plan explored ways to integrate a new and expanded Aquarium facility with a renovation of Waterfront Park. The preferred plan located new exhibits at Pier 62/63, and the converted Pier 59 into a “Great Loggia” as part of a redeveloped Waterfront Park. In 1997, the City Council adopted a Central Waterfront Master Plan that included a new Aquarium building at Pier 62/63.

In 2000, the London-based architecture firm Terry Farrell and Partners, partnered with the local architecture firm Mithūn, was hired to develop initial design concepts for the approved site at Pier 62/63, and conceived of a dramatic new aquarium resembling an open basin designed to “cradle a microcosm of Puget Sound.” The iconic structure was conceived to create a dramatic new identity for the Seattle Aquarium and a significantly expanded exhibition program. However, strong community opposition to the view-blocking structure sent the Aquarium and the City back to the drawing board. A Central Waterfront Advisory Committee was formed by the City to evaluate alternative sites on the waterfront, including consideration of an expansion in close proximity to Piers 59 and 60.

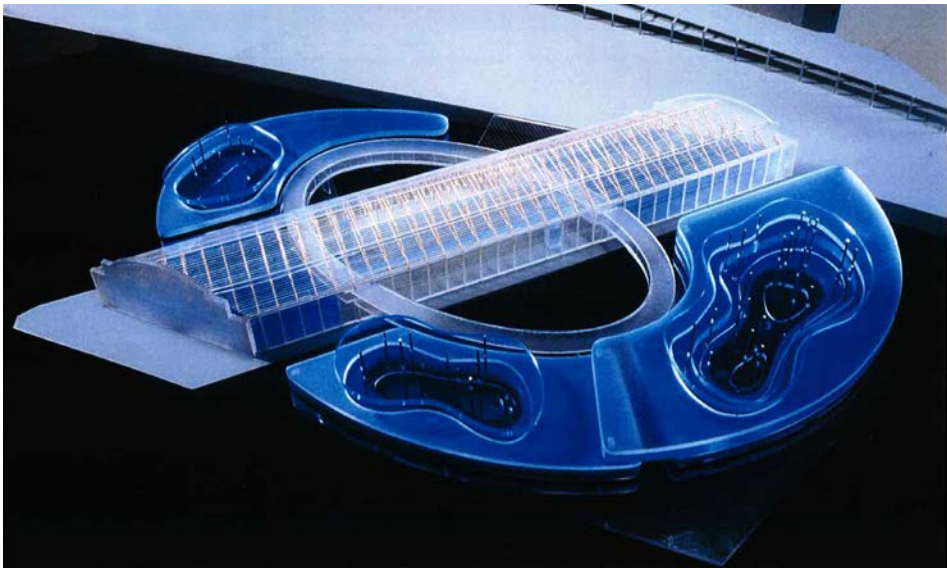
Based on the Committee’s findings, in 2001 Terry Farrell and Partners unveiled a revised plan that embraced existing Pier 59 with modern wings on both the north and south. The scheme was designed to preserve the historic Pier 59, replace Pier 60, and simultaneously create a multi-level circulation ring that would allow visitors to access the exhibits and public programs in any sequence, tailored to their specific interests and needs. A global economic downturn, coupled with the City’s need to refocus its waterfront planning after the Nisqually earthquake, temporarily postponed the Aquarium’s pursuit of the revised expansion concept.



In 1994 the Portal to the Pacific plan envisioned expansion to the north on Pier 62/63.



Aquarium expansion designed by Terry Farrell and Partners in 2000.



Aquarium expansion designed by Terry Farrell and Partners at Pier 59 in 2001.



# MASTER PLAN PROCESS

## 2012 Preliminary Concept

Despite a hiatus in expansion planning, the Seattle Aquarium moved forward with a major stabilization of Pier 59 in 2007 and executed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2009 (2009 MOU) that transferred Aquarium operations from the Parks Department to the Seattle Aquarium Society. Again, with long-range capital improvements and future expansion in mind, the 2009 MOU also identified a Master Plan process to guide future improvements. It was the parties' aspiration that this work be consistent with both seawall replacement and redevelopment of the Central Waterfront. The 2009 MOU identified the following elements for inclusion in the Master Plan:

- A description of planned or potential physical development;
- The development's public benefits and the way they will serve the Aquarium's public purpose mission;
- A strategy for preservation of designated historic structures;
- A strategy for preservation of view corridors;
- Consideration of pedestrian access and circulation around Pier 59, including improved connections to existing and proposed public spaces; and
- Strategies to activate and program adjacent public spaces, and support public access to the water's edge.

In advance of the Master Plan process, the Aquarium engaged Mithūn architects in 2012 to develop a concept plan that gave early visual definition to the expansion locations previously identified to both the north and south of Pier 59. The concept plan also included the allocation of Aquarium uses within the Overlook Walk.

The Central Waterfront Committee's Concept Design and Framework Plan for Seattle's Waterfront (July 2012) reflects both the expansion to the south of Pier 59 and the renovation and expansion of Pier 60, which was subsequently endorsed by the City Council by resolution as a guiding document for the long-term vision for the Central Waterfront.

In 2013, an Ordinance approved a second MOU between the City and Seattle Aquarium concerning renovation and expansion in the context of Waterfront Seattle, and an approval to proceed with design. The 2013 MOU identified four main elements of the expansion project:

- Pier 59 west end renovation;
- Pier 60 renovation and new elements;
- A new structure on the Aquarium Plaza and partially underneath the Overlook Walk; and
- A new south wing.



In 2012, Mithūn developed a concept for expansion to the south of Pier 59, a major renovation of Pier 60, and program at the Overlook Walk.



In 2012, the City of Seattle unveiled a conceptual design for the waterfront.



# DEFINING NEEDS

As an important first step in the most recent design process, the Seattle office of the SRG Partnership led a year-long effort to develop a Concept Program that identified square footage needs, spatial arrangements and adjacencies, and goals for a subsequent design process. The program also gave early definition to an exhibition program centered on three major ecosystems: Puget Sound; the Outer Coast; and the Tropical Pacific. Based on the site locations previously identified in the 2013 MOU, it considered a number of planning schemes for organizing a future program.


Through extensive planning with staff and outside resources, the 2014 Concept Program concluded the following net square footage needs by Aquarium function within Piers 59 and 60 and within the expansion space:

Public Areas	18,878
Education	12,310
Ecosystem Exhibits	55,688
Animal Husbandry	9,156
Support Spaces	4,117
Administration/Office	25,555
Total	125,704

Approximately 70% of a building's gross square footage is usable space. Other areas are used for circulation and necessary structural elements. The 2014 Concept Program concluded that approximately 184,858 gross square feet would be needed to accommodate the Aquarium's needs and that the necessary square footage could be accommodated in the following:

Existing Buildings:	97,760
Offsite Leased Space:	11,180
New Building:	75,918






The 2014 Concept Program did not determine how much of the required square footage could be realized within a renovated Pier 60, or within a new structure (at the time envisioned to be built over the water south of Pier 59).




SEATTLE AQUARIUM

### Concept Program

FEBRUARY 2014

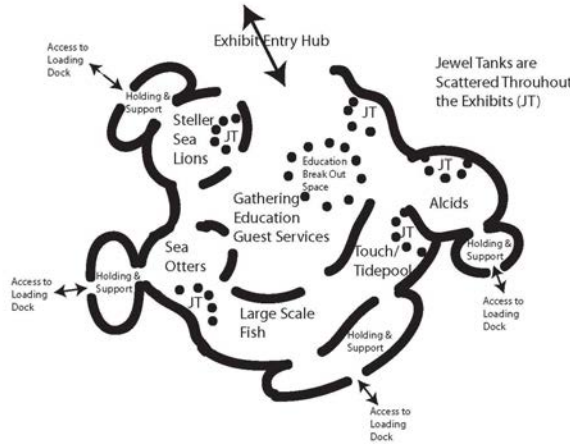




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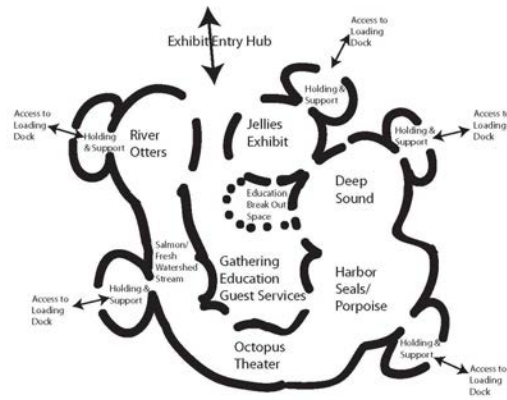
## ECOSYSTEMS

### Outer Coast of Washington



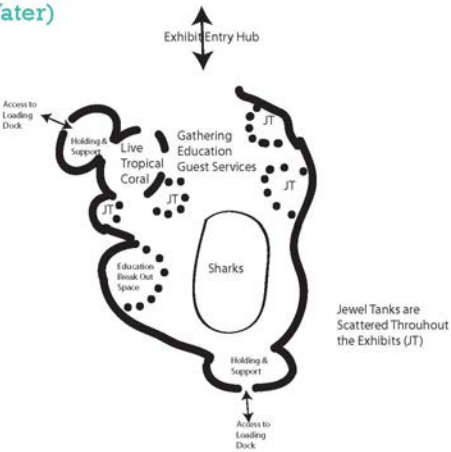
## ECOSYSTEMS

### Puget Sound



## ECOSYSTEMS

### Tropical Pacific (Warm Water)

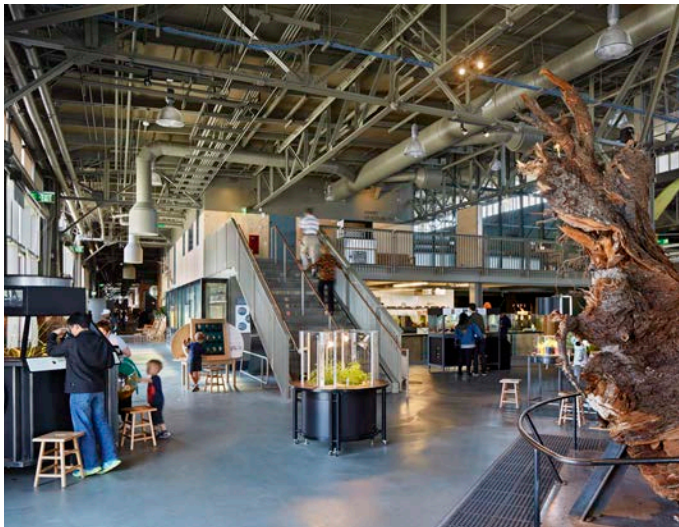




# MASTER PLAN DESIGN TEAM

Following completion of the 2014 Concept Program, the Seattle Aquarium named architectural firm EHDD of San Francisco to lead its Master Plan effort. EHDD was selected among a small group of firms internationally recognized for their aquarium and museum-related experience. Notable EHDD projects with demonstrated relevancy to the design ambitions of the Seattle Aquarium include: the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Exploratorium at Pier 15 in San Francisco, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation building in Los Altos and the Shedd Aquarium shark exhibit.

The exhibition design firm Thinc joined EHDD’s master planning team to establish early design goals for the exhibition program—from large exhibits to smaller touch pools. They were selected for their experience designing interactive exhibits for museums, science centers and aquariums, including the multi-story Steinhart Aquarium at the California Academy of Sciences and as the exhibit designers of the 9/11 Memorial Museum.



Exploratorium (San Francisco, CA)



Monterey Bay Aquarium (Monterey, CA)



The David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Los Altos, CA)

In addition to projects located elsewhere, the Aquarium’s design team has looked to completed projects in Seattle for their successful roles in shaping the Seattle waterfront; their ability to advance leading-edge sustainable design; and their contributions to the physical fabric of the city through dynamic and inspiring architectural form.



Olympic Sculpture Park (Seattle, WA)



Bullitt Center (Seattle, WA)



Seattle Central Library (Seattle, WA)



California Academy of Sciences (San Francisco, CA)



Seattle skyline with iconic Space Needle and Mount Rainer (Seattle, WA)



# CRITERIA AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Following an internal assessment of the 2014 Concept Program by EHDD, a broader consultant team was assembled to identify both a process and timeline for completing the Master Plan called for in the 2009 MOU, and to establish board-adopted site evaluation criteria. The criteria included an assessment of a site to meet mission impact and growth in attendance; a review of site conditions and the impact of new construction on nearshore habitat, views, and historic Pier 59; and its ability to align with the Guiding Principles in the 2012 Central Waterfront Strategic Plan.

**Guiding Principles from the Central Waterfront Plan**

1. Create a Waterfront for all
2. Put the shoreline and innovative, sustainable design at the forefront
3. Reconnect the city to its Waterfront
4. Embrace and celebrate Seattle's past, present and future
5. Improve access and mobility
6. Create a bold vision that is adaptable over time
7. Develop consistent leadership – from concept to construction to operations

Design Summary  
Concept Design and Framework Plan  
for Seattle's Central Waterfront  
July 2012

**Seattle Aquarium Site Evaluation Criteria**

The future expansion of the Seattle Aquarium shall:

- Substantially increase mission impact through the expansion of exhibit space and programs to feature three interdependent ecosystems of the Pacific Ocean: Tropical Pacific, Outer Washington Coast, and Puget Sound;
- Provide high quality educational and entertainment experience to a projected 1.3 million annual visitors by 2030;
- Maintain the Aquarium's national and regional standing as a platform for scientific research, marine conservation education, civic engagement and tourism;
- Promote restoration of the nearshore habitat and incorporate principles of sustainable design to minimize environmental impacts of new construction and long-term building operations;
- Maintain the Aquarium's position as a key waterfront attraction through coordination with public agency partners and community stakeholders working on the redevelopment of Seattle's Central Waterfront;
- Align with the Waterfront Guiding Principles as stated in the 2012 Central Waterfront Committee Strategic Plan;
- Honor the designation of Pier 59 as a historic landmark structure;
- Improve public access and circulation, building porosity, visibility to and from the site, and strengthen connections to adjacent facilities on the Central Waterfront;
- Allow for a multi-phased development approach with the first phase to be completed between 2020 and 2025 including a public/private financing strategy and long- term maintenance and operations plan;
- Enable the Aquarium to remain operational during construction; and
- Meet City, State, and Federal permitting requirements.

The Master Plan process began in April 2014 with an expected completion date of summer 2015. It included a number of planning sessions facilitated by the Office of the Waterfront between EHDD and James Corner Field Operations (JCFO), the lead designer of Seattle's new waterfront.

The Master Plan process included extensive outreach to stakeholders and members of the public interested in the Aquarium's expansion planning. This included individual presentations to over 20 independent groups and organizations from the downtown and waterfront business community, open space and park advocates, neighborhood groups and homeowner associations, Aquarium volunteers, and broad public interest groups.

In addition to briefings, the Aquarium communicated its planning process through its own website, and those of both the Friends of the Waterfront and the Office of the Waterfront. The Aquarium also received early design guidance from City boards and commissions, including the Board of Park Commissioners, the Seattle Design Commission, and the Architectural Review Committee of the Landmarks Preservation Board. Many of these open public meetings were attended by community stakeholders.

Meetings with individual members of the City Council were helpful in generating names of other groups to include in outreach, as well as to gain greater constituent feedback. An initial briefing to the City Council Select Committee on the Waterfront was held on May 18, 2015 during which a number of members of the public offered comments.

Through these meetings and opportunities for public participation, the Aquarium and the City have consistently heard support for an Aquarium expansion as part of the future Central Waterfront improvement project. The only concern heard was regarding the impact a south expansion could have on views of Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains from Waterfront Park. In response to this early concern, the Aquarium team met on three separate occasions with those stakeholders to better understand this concern for future consideration.

On June 9, 2015 the draft Master Plan was published on the Seattle Aquarium's website for public review and comment. City Council Waterfront Committee briefing held on June 16, 2015 offered additional opportunities for the public to learn about and comment on the draft Master Plan. On June 16, 2015 the Aquarium hosted a Public Open House to get feedback on the draft plan. In addition, participants were encouraged to submit their comments on notecards or by email. A second public meeting will be held on July 13, 2015 to answer any questions about the Master Plan before it is submitted to the City Council for final review and consideration for approval.





# LAND USE AND ZONING

Seattle's waterfront contains a variety of land uses, including commercial, marine industrial, multi-modal transportation, retail and restaurants, institutional, residential, commercial businesses and recreation. The redevelopment of the Central Waterfront will relocate Highway 99 in a tunnel, and more surface land will be available for enhanced pedestrian activity. Removal of the viaduct will also remove its noise and visual impact on all waterfront activities.

The existing Aquarium buildings (Piers 59 and 60), and the proposed location for the Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion at the Overlook Walk (Building C) all fall within the Shoreline District, Urban Harborfront designation, and are subject to Shoreline District overlay zoning. In addition, Pier 59 falls within the Historic Character Area, which regulates development of Seattle's historic piers.

The design of new structures and renovations to existing pier buildings would observe code regulations concerning height, lot coverage, site setbacks, and view corridors, and rely on appropriate levels of review from the Seattle Design Commission and the Landmarks Preservation Board.

An upland Aquarium location at the Overlook Walk (Building C) would dramatically limit the amount of additional overwater coverage that would otherwise be required with a new pier structure to the south or north of Pier 59. The renovation and expansion of Pier 60 would require additional overwater coverage, which would be determined in the design phase. During the design phase, early cost estimates, a development schedule and phasing options would be determined.



Replacement of the seawall is the first step toward realizing a new waterfront public space.



# CENTRAL LOCATION AND INTEGRATION

Over the years the Seattle Aquarium has considered a number of design proposals to expand its current waterfront location. During the conceptual design phase for the Central Waterfront project, the City and the Aquarium identified areas north and south of Pier 59 as potential expansion locations. They also considered the Overlook Walk (Building C) as a location for Aquarium programs. For purposes of pre-design review, the Master Plan team referenced these prior planning locations as South, North and Central.

With the review of these locations, the team determined that both the North and South locations offer enough site area to accommodate future growth planned for in the 2014 Concept Program. But they also recognized the challenges of these overwater locations with respect to permitting, the cost and complexity of in-water construction, the impact that an expansion in the South location would have on views from Waterfront Park, and the difficulty in expanding to the North without considering a full renovation of Pier 60 at the same time.

Through collaborative planning with the Office of the Waterfront and the Parks Department, the team took a new look at the Central or Overlook Walk location. As an integrated component of the Overlook Walk, this upland location has long been considered important to house certain aspects of the Aquarium program, including areas for education, storage or lab space. With further review and a reassessment of broader design goals, Aquarium and City teams determined that the Central site offered real potential as the principal expansion site to house one of the three planned major ecosystem exhibits.

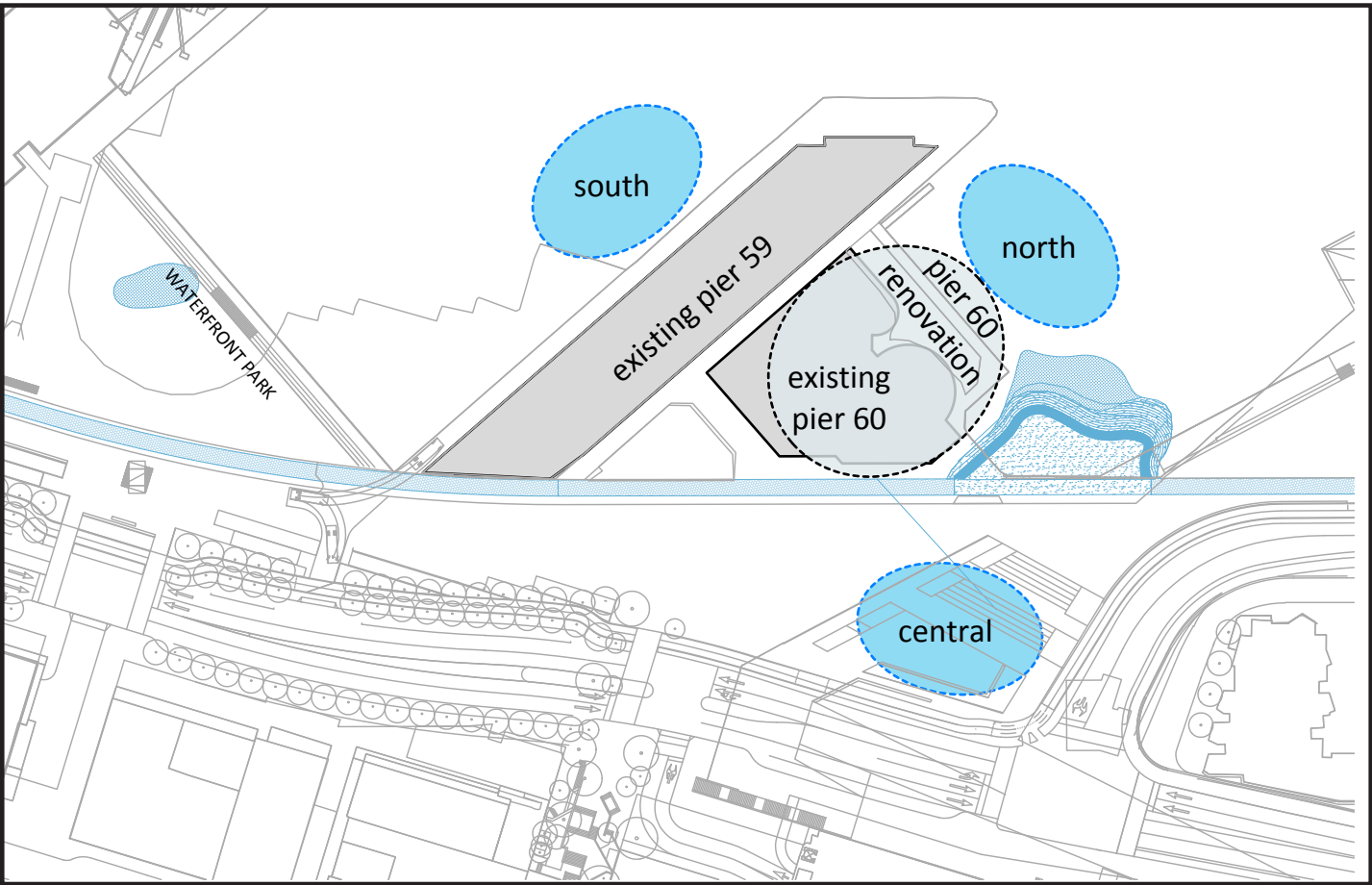
## MASTER PLAN GOALS

With the identification of the Central site as a strong expansion option, the Aquarium and City further defined the goals of the Master Plan to include evaluation of a new exhibit building at the Overlook Walk, in addition to renovations of Pier 59, and renovation and expansion of Pier 60.

Approval of the Master Plan would allow the Aquarium to advance the design and potential Aquarium expansion at the overlook walk, so that sufficient information is available for environment review. Approval of the Master Plan would also provide for continued collaboration between the Aquarium and Central Waterfront design teams on the integration of a major exhibit pavilion with the essential pedestrian functions of the Overlook Walk—namely to provide an accessible pathway between the Pike Place Market and the Central Waterfront via a bridge, “grand stair,” and elevator.

Coordination between the Central Waterfront project and the Seattle Aquarium expansion is a clear theme of the MOU 2013. Section I – M. states that the City and Seattle Aquarium...

*“... concur that in addition to meeting their respective project goals, their cooperation and coordination of their respective projects will achieve efficiencies and potential cost savings to both projects that are in the parties’ respective and mutual best interests and will accomplish numerous public purposes.”*



The Master Plan reviewed prior planning locations and a central location at the Overlook Walk.



# ALLOCATION OF PROGRAM

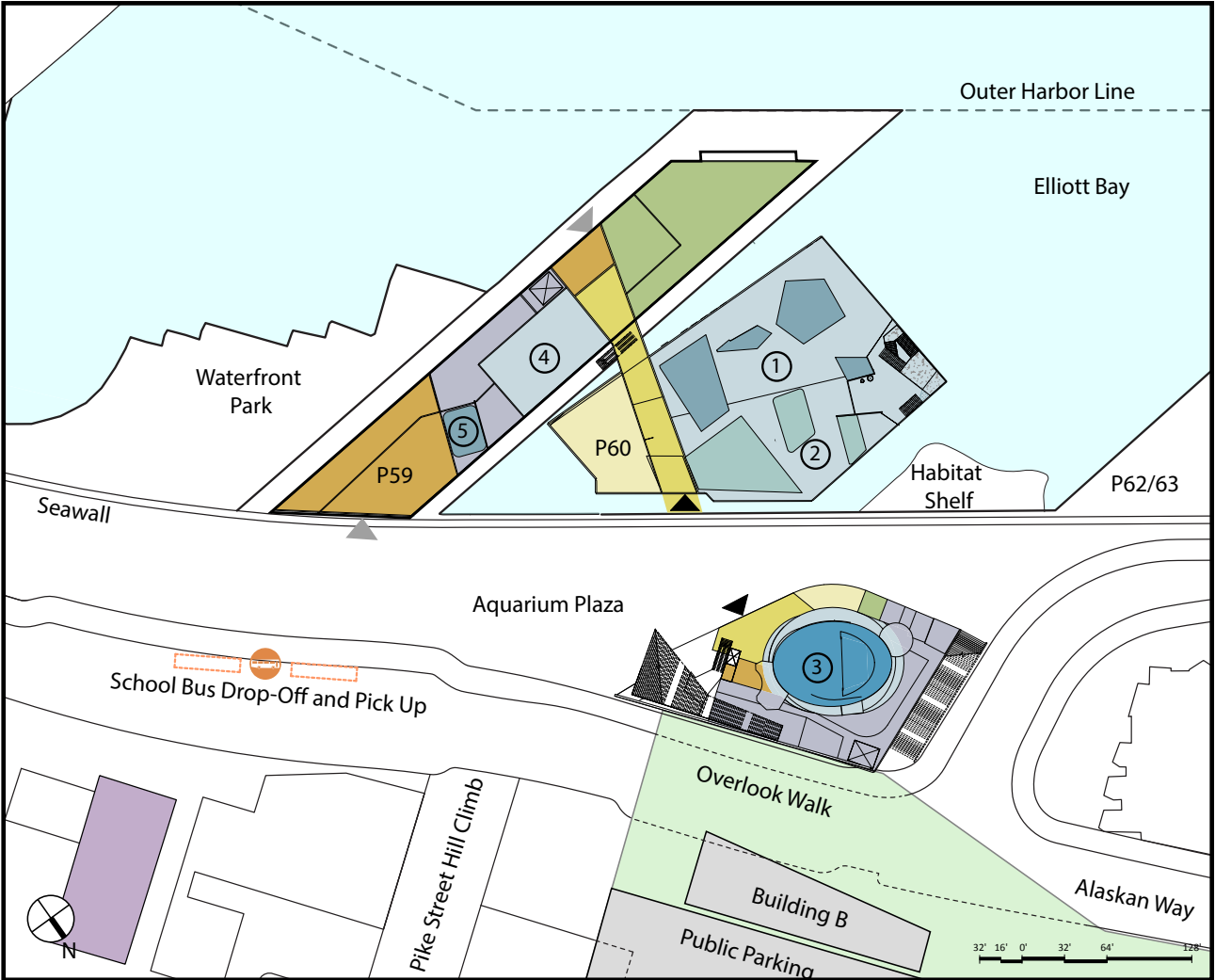
With the allocation of programs across Piers 59 and 60, and a new upland location at the Overlook Walk, the Seattle Aquarium would be transformed into a waterfront “campus” with multiple entry points serving the different buildings. Visitors who currently enter the Aquarium through one main entry point would have the opportunity to customize their experience by first visiting the waterfront piers or a new pavilion on the east side of Aquarium Plaza. This physical distance would create the need to establish clear visual connections between the separate structures, and to ensure that the subsequent design of the Aquarium Plaza supports both gathering and connectivity for Aquarium guests and visitors to the Central Waterfront.

Through plantings that enhance the ecological function of Seattle’s urban shore, porous building entries that invite and engage, and interpretive programs that are hosted both inside and out of the Aquarium buildings, visitors would begin to experience the Seattle Aquarium before they enter the exhibit buildings. A conceptual layout envisions that a shared entry to Piers 59 and 60 and the entry to the pavilion at the Overlook Walk would be located directly across from one another for visual connectivity and ease of access.

An early conceptual layout locates a new Tropical Pacific exhibit within the Overlook Walk, and two major exhibits on Puget Sound and the Outer Washington Coast within an expanded Pier 60. The two Pacific Northwest regional exhibits would be designed with a view to Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains beyond. Upon completion of the Master Plan, during the design phase we will determine what aspects of Pier 60 might be retained and the extent of a future expansion to accommodate the exhibit program. The Tropical Pacific exhibit, dedicated to the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean and effectively telling the story of ocean acidification and its impact on survival of life on earth, would feature a very large pool with multiple viewing levels from a descending pathway. Animal husbandry and life support are necessary components of each major exhibit area, and each building would need appropriate space and equipment to care for living specimens.

Upon entering the pier buildings, visitors would be directed along a principal exhibition pathway, and have many opportunities to reorder their journey to suit individual needs or respond to intermittent crowds that may occur in certain locations. An Aquarium gift shop would be located for easy access from the main lobby entry, and a satellite shop would be located near the entry to the Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion. New dining facilities would be located on the west end of Pier 59. The proposed renovation would open up the west end of the building with a new glass façade featuring dramatic views of Elliott Bay and offering outside dining in good weather. It is envisioned that a restaurant in this location could be designed and managed to be accessible to both ticketed visitors and those taking advantage of a future public pathway on the building’s exterior.

The proposed renovation of Pier 59 would include a dedicated entry for the large school groups that frequently visit the Aquarium. This entry would be close to the bus drop-off and pickup zone planned for the rerouted Alaskan Way. The redesign would also create a dedicated orientation and sack lunch area—not currently available at the Aquarium—as well as flexible classrooms with hands-on breakout areas adjacent to the major exhibits.



Seattle Aquarium Program

Visitor Entries + Lobbies

Aquarium Shop + Bookstore

Dining + Food Service

Education + Classrooms

Administration + Volunteers

Animal Husbandry + Life Support  
Back of House + Loading

Ecosystem and Exhibition Galleries

① Outer Coast

② Puget Sound

③ Tropical Pavilion

④ Changing Exhibit

⑤ Changing Exhibit

Visitor Entry

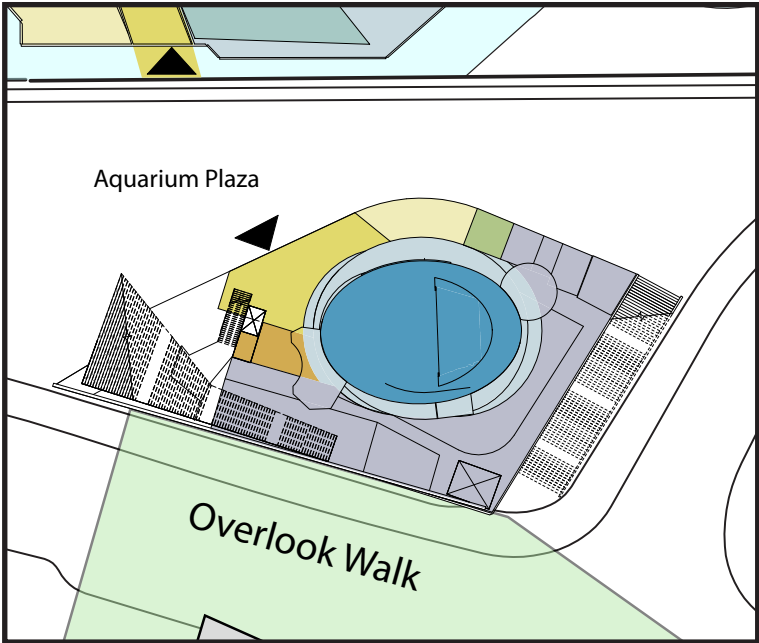
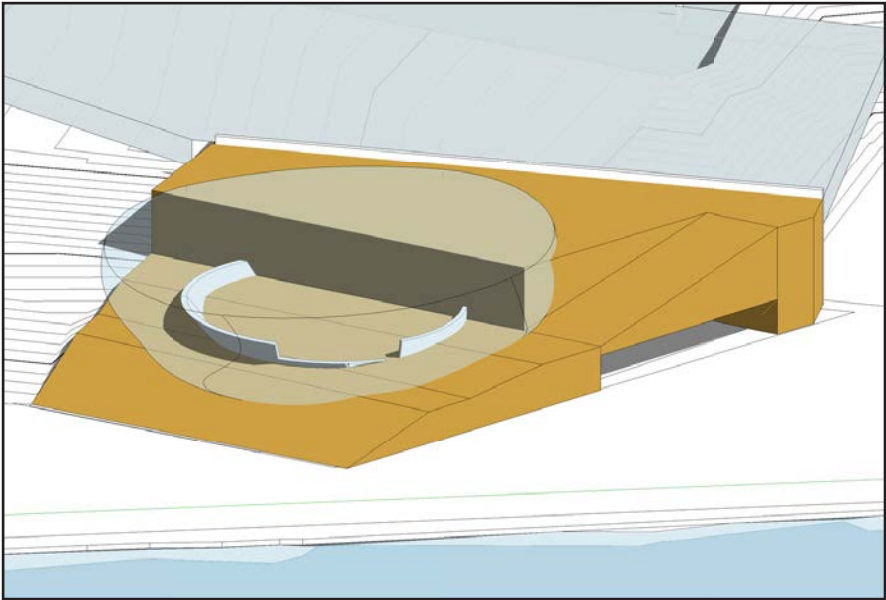
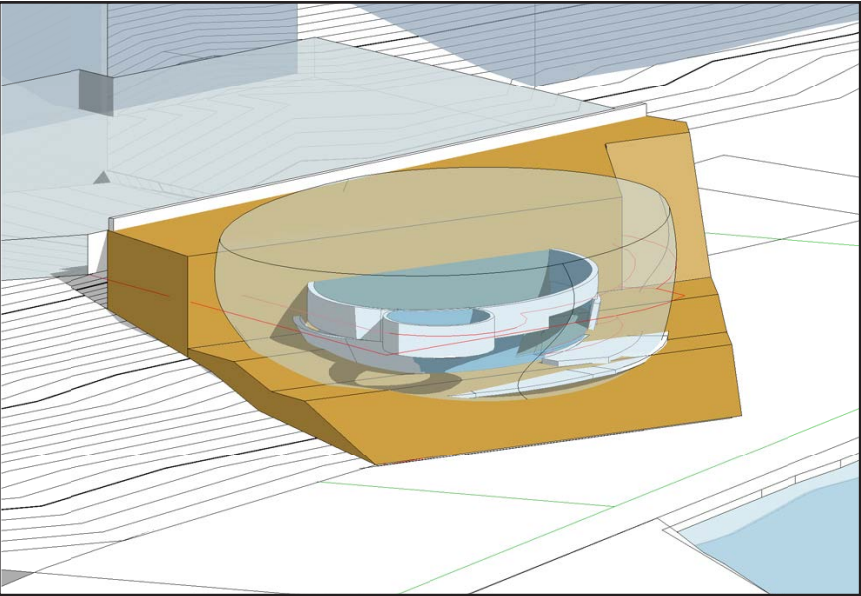
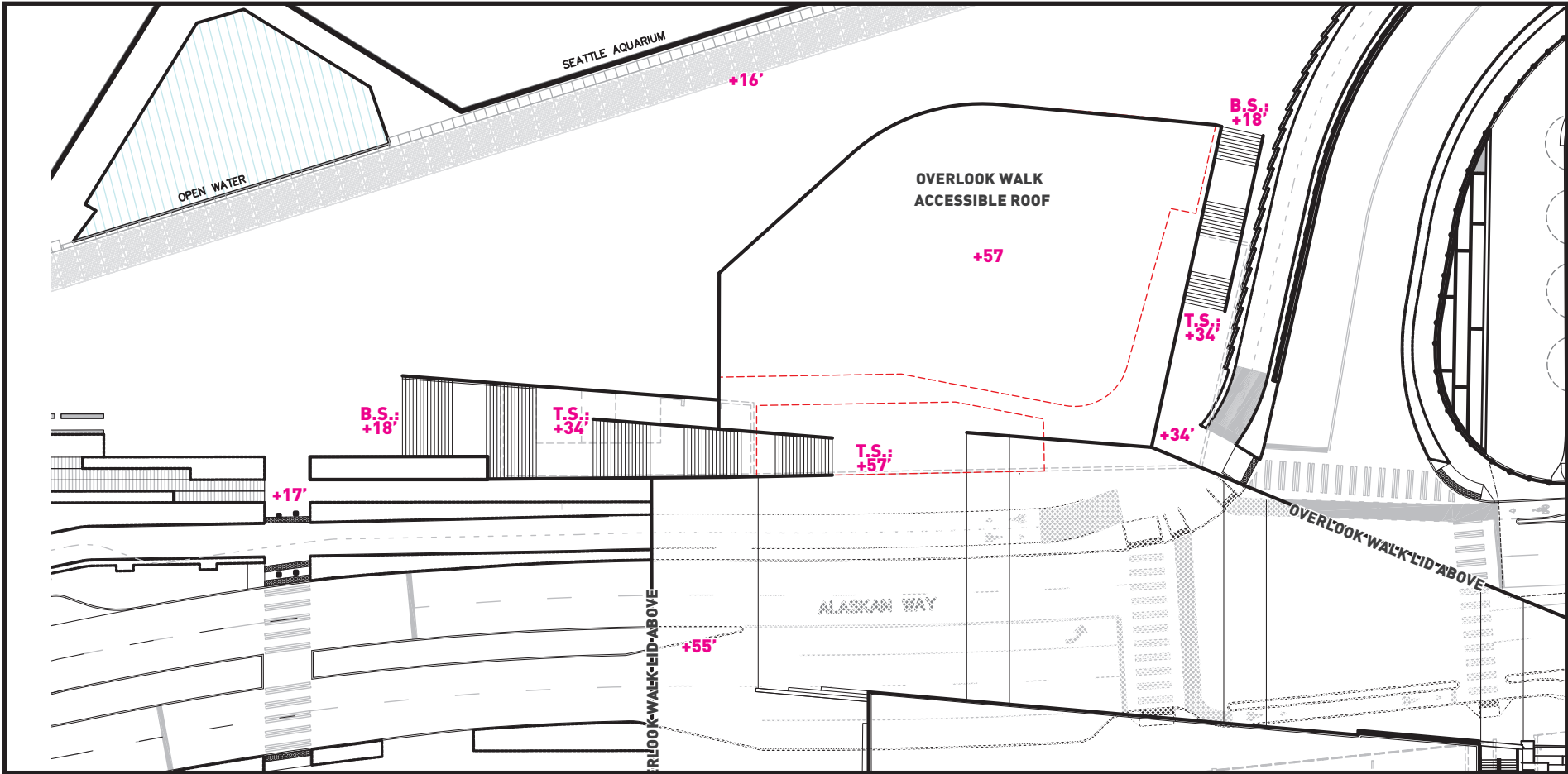
Education Entry



# CENTRAL LOCATION

Following environmental review, if an Aquarium expansion is approved at the central location, then the integration of the Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion would occur within the western terminus of the Overlook Walk (Building C) and would be built on City property. Under an early test fit by the Aquarium and City Waterfront teams, all of the public program functions of Building C would be retained, including overhead viewing, pedestrian pathways, a stair and elevator. Other planned uses, including restrooms and park maintenance, would also be accommodated.

The teams have given early consideration to the potential addition of a second staircase so that there is access from both the north and south sides of Building C, and the possibility of mid-level connections to interior building functions. The opportunity also exists to extend the Overlook Walk further west over the roof of the Tropical Pacific exhibit space. As part of the design effort, transportation and loading would be carefully considered, as well as need for back-of-house support and mechanical systems required to support the Tropical Pacific pavilion.



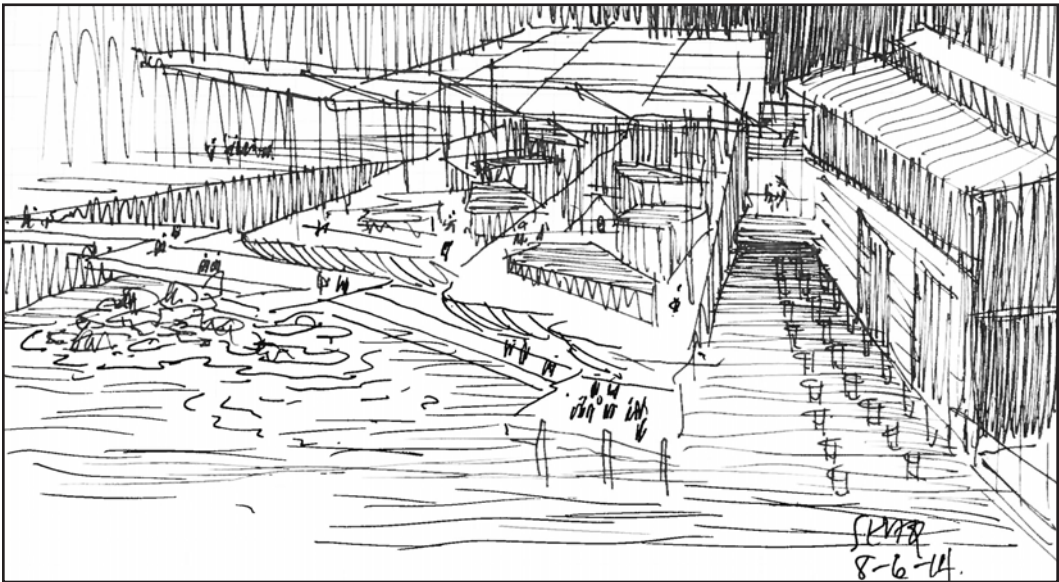
Early planning studies by EHDD and the Waterfront Seattle team illustrate the potential for integration of Aquarium within the Overlook Walk.



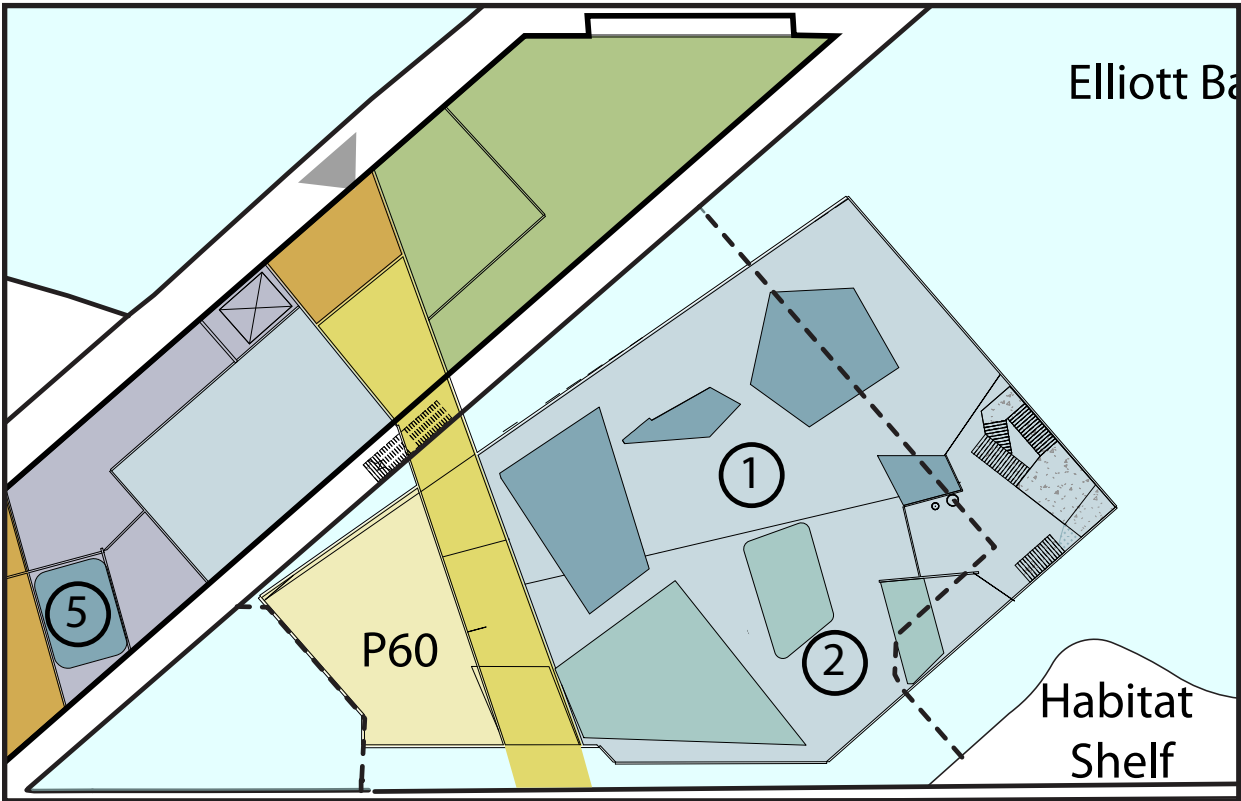
# PIER 60 RENOVATION AND EXPANSION

The Seattle Aquarium anticipates that the renovation of Pier 60 would expand both footprint and building square footage to accommodate two of the planned eco-region exhibits, Puget Sound and Outer Washington Coast. These exhibits would be designed with a direct connection to the water's edge. Early analysis by the design team shows this expansion occurring west of the current structure and north of Pier 59. Building heights would observe codes at the time of permitting, and future environmental review would further evaluate potential view and aquatic impacts created by additional overwater coverage requirements.

Renovation of Pier 60 would necessitate a full closure of the pier. Therefore, if the project is phased, ideally it would be renovated after the Tropical Pacific Pavilion is open at the central location.



Concept illustration to Pier 60's Elliott Bay connection.



- Seattle Aquarium Program
- Visitor Entries + Lobbies
  - Aquarium Shop + Bookstore
  - Dining + Food Service
  - Education + Classrooms
  - Administration + Volunteers
  - Animal Husbandry + Life Support Back of House + Loading
  - Ecosystem and Exhibition Galleries
- ① Outer Coast  
② Puget Sound  
③ Tropical Pavilion

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Current Pier 60 west edge

- Visitor Entry
- Education Entry



Pier 60 rooftop provides an opportunity for partial public views of exhibits.



# ECOSYSTEMS AND EXHIBITION GALLERIES

The exhibit design concept developed in the Master Plan phase includes a focus on three major eco-regions that communicate the interdependence of our one world ocean: Puget Sound, the outer Washington Coast and the Tropical Pacific. Under consideration are large ecosystem exhibits, artifacts, touch pools and interactive media. The large exhibits would be designed to provide visitors with above and/or near surface viewing as well as deeper underwater viewing. Visitors would be prompted with questions about the health of the ocean and its relationship to life on planet earth.

Within an expanded Pier 60, the conceptual design scheme would enable visitors to follow a narrative path from the Puget Sound watershed out through the Sound, and beneath the waters surface to explore lower-level views of the outer coast ocean environment. It would be designed to be purposely free of overly proscriptive pathways for a more individualized experience. A “hub and spoke” plan and a number of upper-to-lower-level transitions would allow visitors to easily decide for themselves which exhibits to visit and where to engage.

## PUGET SOUND

The Puget Sound exhibit zone would allow visitors to follow the transition from land to water, with Elliott Bay serving as a meaningful backdrop to reinforce a sense of place. The first highlighted encounters might include a fresh watershed salmon exhibit and a playful habitat for river otters, with a cascading waterfall for the animals to showcase their frolicking personalities and interact at eye-level with children. A visual connection would be established between the interior exhibits and the migratory salmon pathways and constructed habitat shelves on the building's exterior.

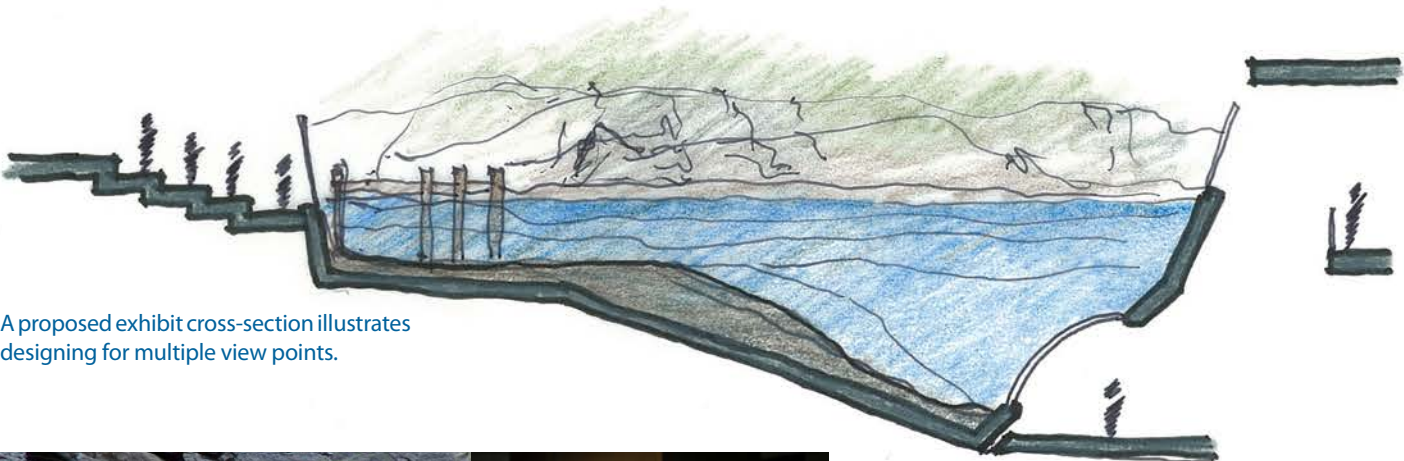
Visitors could experience a touch pool with live animals, and move on to the harbor seal exhibit at the outer-most part of the gallery. Visitors would be invited to experience a great view of the Sound beyond, with the exhibit in the foreground providing surface views of the seals. The design team would consider if a dock as resting platform, could effectively convey our relationship with harbor seals in an urban environment, as



well as use the pilings as a visual gauge of the tidal fluctuations in Puget Sound.

Continuing along the lower level of the Puget Sound zone, guests would approach the octopus theatre. Expanding on the success of the Seattle Aquarium's current octopus exhibit, the new one would be designed to increase the number of animals on display, and maximize opportunities to witness their behaviors. Visitors would have views of narrow crevices and resting spots, as well as sightlines from above the tunnels that connect various exhibit chambers.

Moving along, visitors might then encounter a large jellyfish exhibit and continue to the deep Sound section, with content illustrating deeper tidal activity and related species like sevengill sharks, skates and ratfish. Guests would then pass through an experiential transition from the deep Sound through the straits, and into the beginnings of the outer coast ecosystem—where the water becomes more active.



A proposed exhibit cross-section illustrates designing for multiple view points.





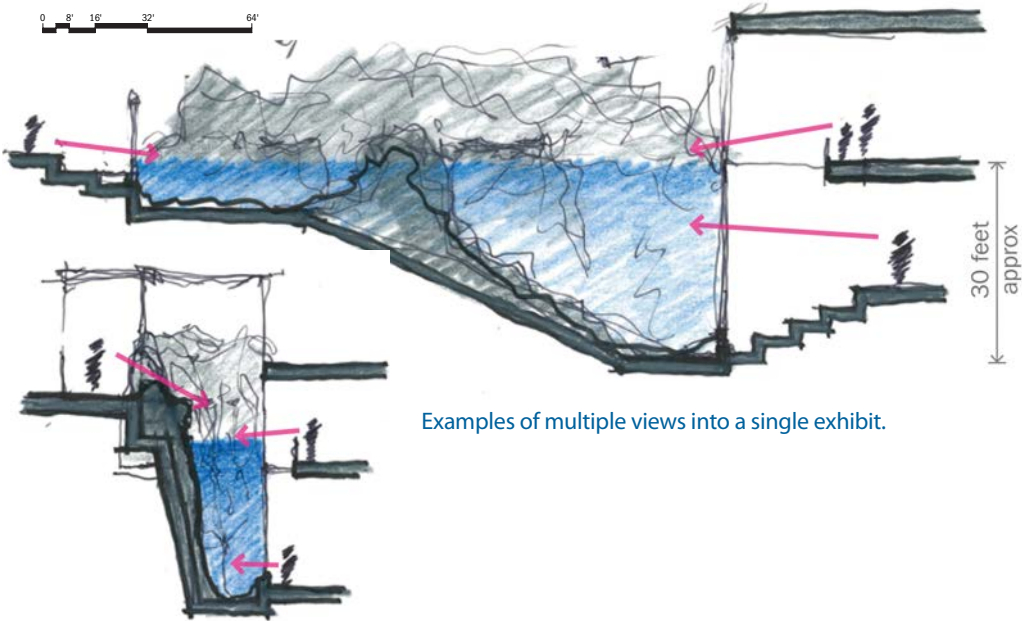
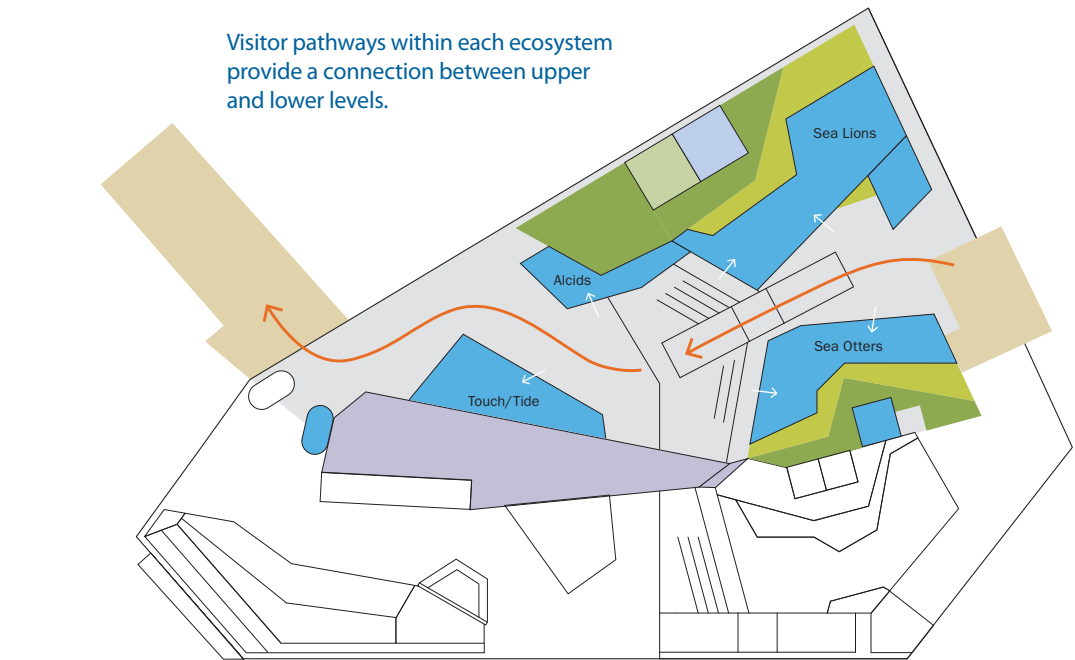
OUTER WASHINGTON COAST

Proceeding into the Outer Coast gallery, visitors would encounter large-scale coastal sea stacks. Increased wave action animating kelp, shafts of intermittent daylight from above, rock surfaces, and the variety of species associated with these geological landforms would all be features of the Outer Coast exhibit.

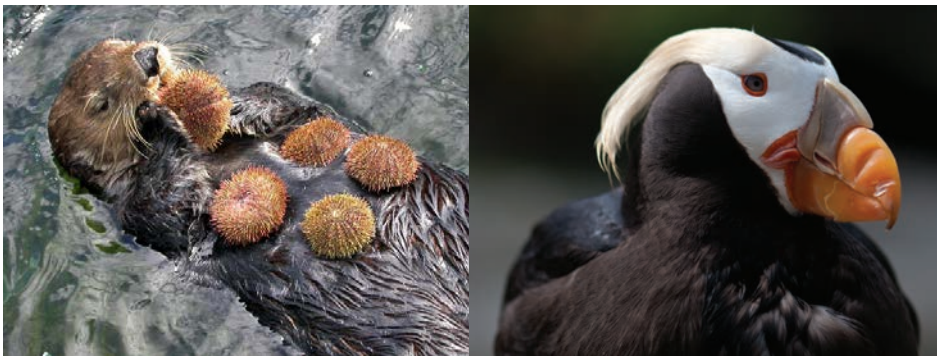
Visitors would continue on to see the view below the water into an exhibit that could feature sea lions and alcids (or diving birds). From this vantage point, they could watch the animals diving deep, and experience the special thrill of seeing birds and mammals swim underwater. Again, the design concept is to provide the user with as many multi-layer, multi-species views as possible, and to enhance the sense of immersion.

Visitors would then reach the charismatic and iconic outer coast residents: the sea otters. From a deep water view point, people would be able to see the otters’ diving and foraging habits, before circulating back upstairs to the near-surface views and “nose-to-nose” encounters.

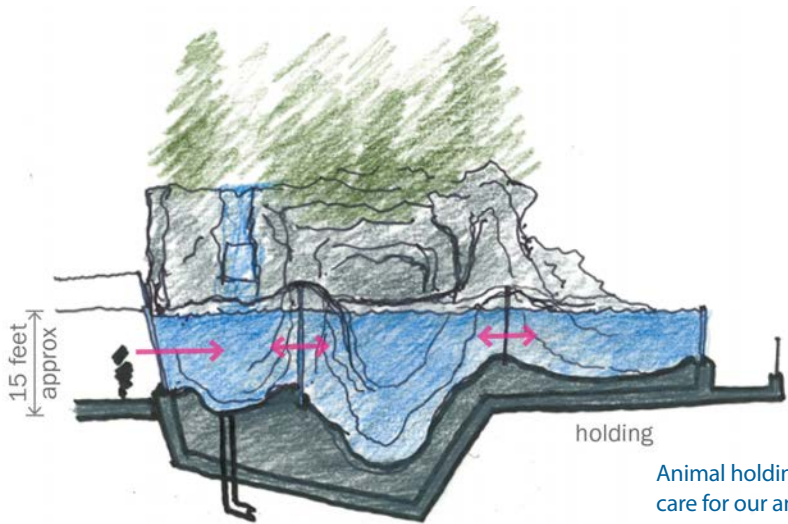
With Elliott Bay as the backdrop, the upper level of the sea lions and alcids exhibit would provide visitors with surface and near-surface views, and outdoor seating space to enjoy feeding events and other staff presentations.



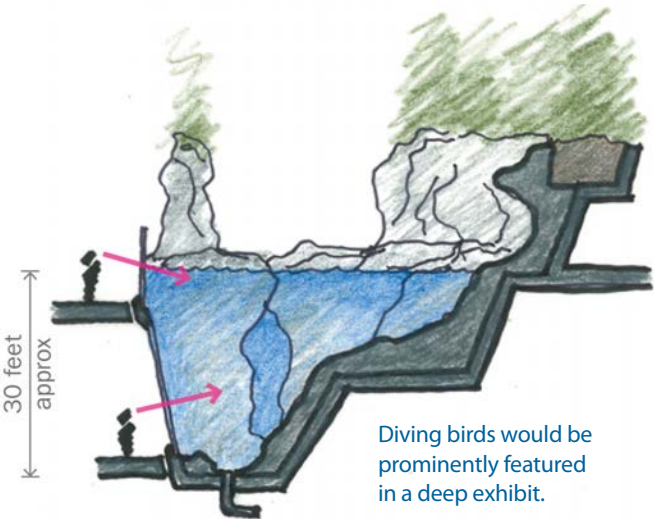
Examples of multiple views into a single exhibit.



Example of outer Washington coast ecosystem.



Animal holding spaces are important to care for our animals.



Diving birds would be prominently featured in a deep exhibit.





# Tropical Pacific

As a stand-alone exhibit conceived for the central location, a Tropical Pacific pavilion would greatly expand the Aquarium’s tropical marine exhibits and offer visitors a dramatic encounter with charismatic sharks, one of the most popular species associated with modern aquariums.

A large, multi-level tank would create various views—from surface to deep water—along a descending pathway. The tank would be constructed of multiple enclosed areas to allow a mix of species to live adjacently without risk of predation and permit visitors to experience long, layered vistas from a number of viewing locations.

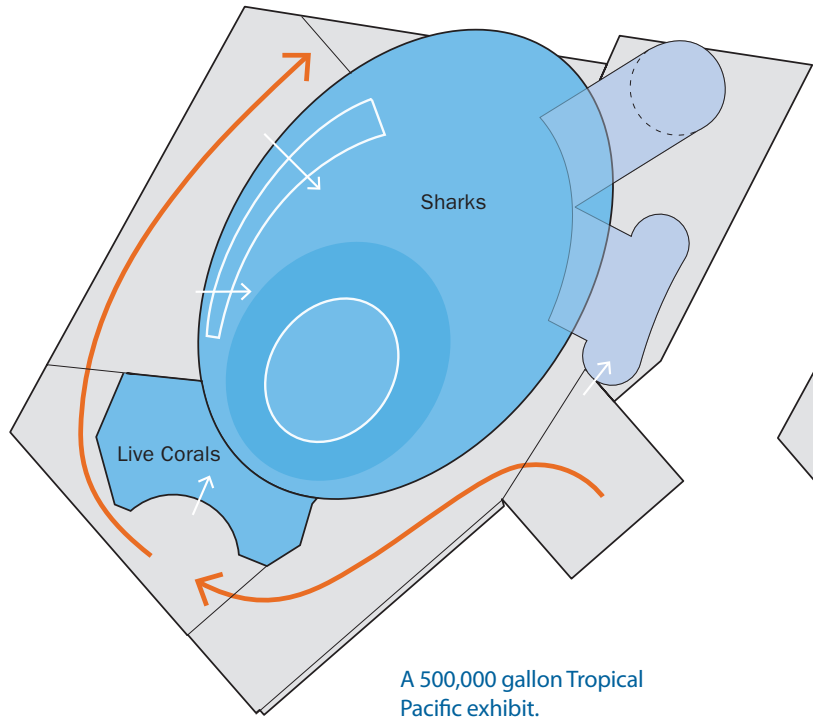
At the highest point, a large coral reef tank would feature an array of spectacular and colorful corals and a myriad of reef-dwelling species. This exhibit concept builds upon the success of Seattle Aquarium’s existing coral displays, but is currently envisioned to be about ten times larger to increase impact and viewing. An invisible window behind the coral landscape would allow visitors to look out past the reef and see schooling fish circling and gliding in the main tank beyond. The layered view may continue further still, with potential for a large media installation as a backdrop. Such an installation would create a virtual glimpse out into the blue (where lucky visitors may spot the occasional whale), and increase the sensory experience of the tropical gallery.



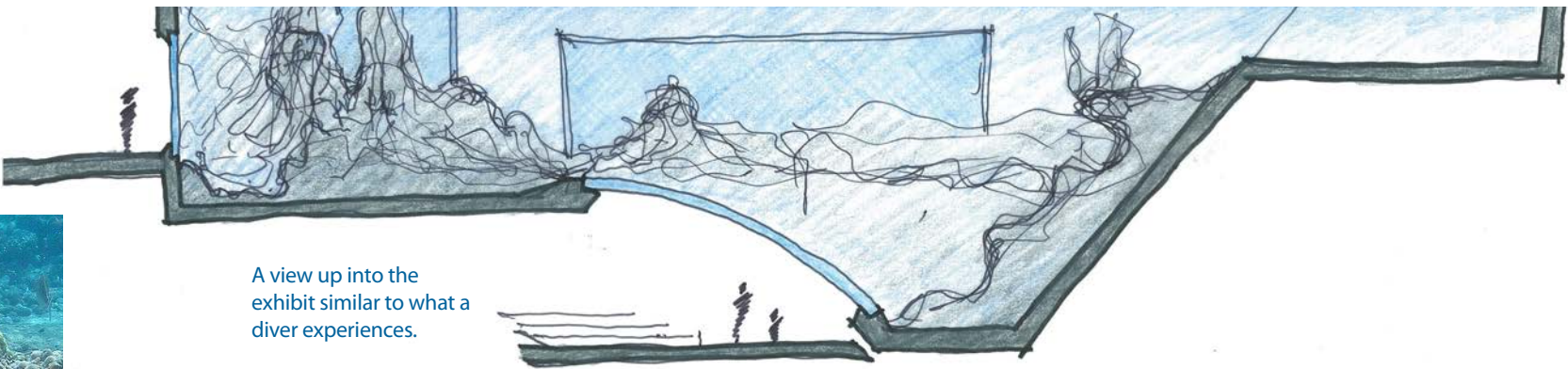
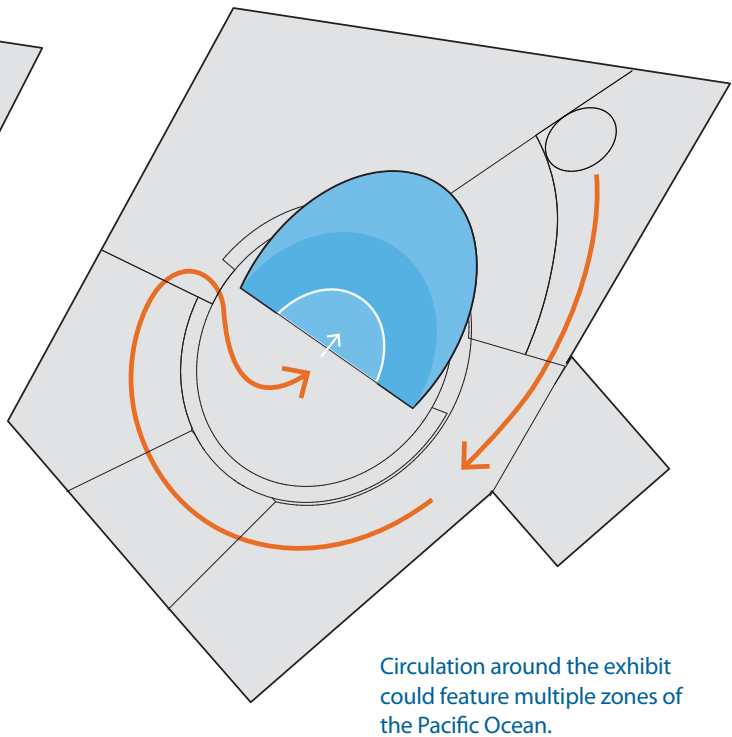
As people continue downward, they would encounter a number of surprising view points into the habitat, and ultimately arrive at a large, domed viewing oculus. Here, they look upward from the depths through a 30-foot diameter window. This design is inspired by the unique reef morphology of a “blue hole” and provides a vantage point usually only experienced by divers. Visitors have a stunning view toward the surface, outlined by sea fans and reef growth, and dramatically silhouetted fish, sharks and rays swimming overhead.

At one end of the large shark tank are two separate holding tanks, in which users can see juvenile sharks up close, watch feeding demonstrations and interact with volunteer and staff guides.

Level 2



Mezzanine





# KEY AQUARIUM SPACES

## EDUCATION AND CLASSROOMS

The Seattle Aquarium’s educational programs are well known, including on-site programs for children from preschool to Grade 12, outreach programs, off-site field trips, lessons for homeschooled children, and resources for teachers. The proposed expansion would enable the Aquarium to significantly expand classroom and teaching spaces, made possible by a dedicated education entry to Pier 59. This area could also serve as an orientation and indoor sack lunch space, and double for adult programs in the evening. Flexible classrooms would be designed for day and evening use to accommodate both large and small groups. Some would be equipped with life support systems for animals used in classroom demonstrations.

A volunteer resource center would be an important aspect of the Aquarium’s new education facilities, given the mutual benefit provided each year from the dedication and time of nearly 1,200 volunteers.



Future planning and design of an expanded Aquarium facility will need to carefully consider and identify a safe and adequate drop-off location for schoolchildren and tour groups arriving by bus.

## ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND LIFE SUPPORT

The Seattle Aquarium maintains a strong commitment to be the best stewards of its animals under the most stringent industry standards of ethics and care for collection and management. The Aquarium’s animal husbandry experts and staff veterinarian maintain the quality of the aquatic exhibition environments and the health of the Aquarium’s animals. Life support facilities include: a food preparation kitchen and refrigerated, frozen and dry food storage; laboratories for routine water-quality testing and research; space for larval fish and invertebrate rearing; central dive services including storage, a compressor, and changing facilities; and a veterinary hospital and animal quarantine area for examinations, treatment and surgery. With the consideration of the central location for the Tropical Pacific exhibit, many of these program spaces related to animal care will need to be duplicated under a decentralized campus plan.

## AQUARIUM GIFT SHOP AND BOOKSTORE

The Seattle Aquarium gift shop provides an important source of revenue to Aquarium operations, and offers visitors an opportunity to extend their experience through the purchase of souvenirs, books and educational materials related to marine life and conservation. The siting of an expanded gift shop would allow for easy loading, provide ample storage, and be visible from the main exhibition entry of Piers 59 and 60. A smaller shop would also be located within the Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion.

## CAFÉ AND PRIVATE EVENTS

The renovation of Pier 59 would provide the opportunity for the Aquarium to expand its food service program and create unparalleled indoor/outdoor dining experiences on the west end of the pier. The advantage of this location, with stunning views out to Elliott Bay, is in its ability to serve ticketed Aquarium visitors, the general public visiting the waterfront or working nearby and evening guests who may be introduced to the Aquarium mission from corporate events, a wedding or a mission-aligned marine conservation organization. Dining areas would be designed with flexibility to expand during peak summer months and contract during the winter. Kitchens, catering support, and storage areas will need to be adequate to serve daily diners as well as guests at the seated dinners and stand-up receptions that often accompany evening Aquarium and third-party rental events. Subsequent design phases will review both the need and the opportunity for a smaller satellite food service operation within the new Tropical Pacific exhibit, which could also be designed to serve daily visitors to the waterfront.



Animal care is a top priority.

## ADMINISTRATION

The Seattle Aquarium leases office space in an off-site facility on Western Avenue to house a significant percentage of its staff. This does not reduce the need to house departments with direct ties to public exhibition, animal care, and visitor services within Piers 59, 60 and the new Tropical Pacific exhibit. However, through the use of office space at an off-site location, the Aquarium would be able to dedicate more area within the waterfront buildings to exhibits, education and visitor services.

## LOADING

The complex needs associated with an aquarium’s operations require adequate and flexible loading areas that are easily accessible throughout the day and evening, and can be used to transport a variety of goods. The location and configuration of a central area for both Piers 59 and 60, and an independent loading area to service the new Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion, have yet to be determined but will need to be carefully sited and managed given their co-location in areas heavily used by pedestrians and bicyclists on the waterfront.



Café of the Exploratorium in San Francisco.



# CAMPUS HUB AND OPEN SPACE CONNECTIONS

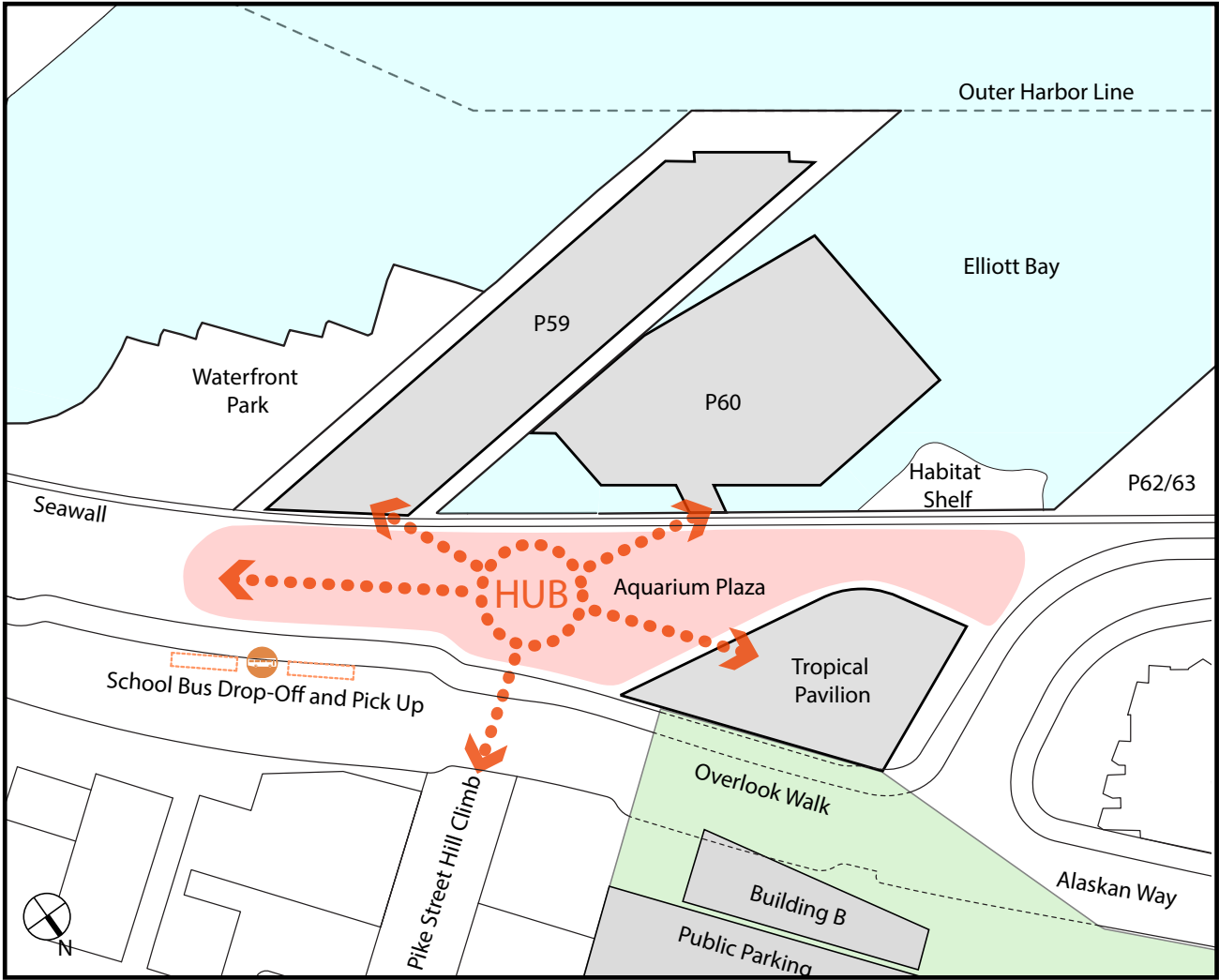
With the 2007 renovation to the east end of Pier 59, the Seattle Aquarium succeeded in creating a visible and accessible main entry. However, with the plan for a new exhibition pavilion at the Overlook Walk, there is a need to consider the Aquarium Plaza as a centrally located arrival “hub” from which visitors can easily access and move between separate Aquarium buildings. As part of the expansion, the Seattle Aquarium will consider moving its pier entry to the north so it’s centrally located between Piers 59 and 60, with an obvious connection to the Tropical Pacific entry across Aquarium Plaza.

Aquarium Plaza, envisioned as a public meeting and gathering space, would offer a clear place for friends to meet and school groups to gather. And, through plantings, art installations and other site features, it could create opportunities for interpretation that are directly related to Aquarium programs.

Similarly, the proposed redevelopment of Waterfront Park would remove existing physical barriers—such as elevated concrete, stairs, walls and planters—to create more seamless connections and open up views between Aquarium Plaza and the shoreline. These changes would offer more visibility to the Aquarium buildings and create larger areas for public events and gatherings.



Aquarium Plaza is conceived as a connection between all planned improvements to the Central Waterfront including major revisions proposed for Waterfront Park.



●●●➔ Aquarium Plaza Hub

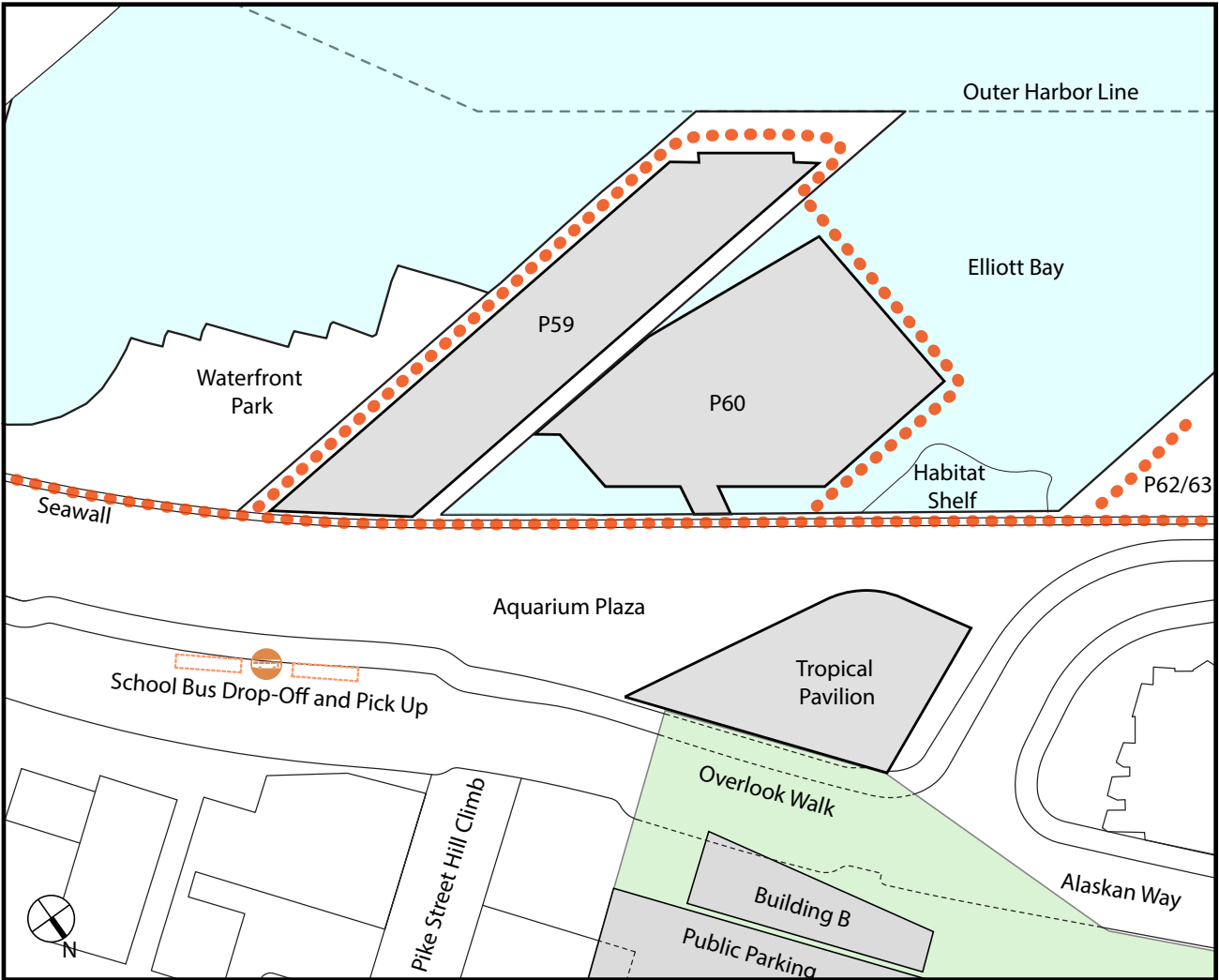


Waterfront visitors are estimated to double after the improvements are made.



# PUBLIC ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

The renovation of Pier 59 and expansion of Pier 60 present a great opportunity to create public access around the Aquarium piers, so that all visitors to the waterfront can experience Elliott Bay from the western edge of the piers. EHDD, the architectural firm hired by the Aquarium for the proposed expansion project, recently renovated a historic pier on San Francisco Bay for the Exploratorium, an interactive science museum. The “skirt” surrounding the pier shed was opened up to create a pedestrian loop around the pier. Similarly, the Seattle Aquarium is pursuing a strategy for visitors to reach the west end of Pier 59 during daytime hours, and potentially travel around the west end of Pier 60 to create a waters-edge “pathway” from Waterfront Park to Pier 62/63.



Proposed public access + circulation



Teens dipping plankton out of the bay for analysis.



A view of the San Francisco Exploratorium public loop around the pier.



# BUILDING POROSITY

In the design of new buildings and renovation of existing facilities, the Aquarium aspires to create more transparency on street-level façades, as demonstrated in their renovation of Pier 59's east end. Increased porosity between interior and exterior spaces would create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and offer visitors to the waterfront an opportunity to learn more about the Aquarium's offerings within its campus. In the future renovation, the blank façades that currently exist on Piers 59 and 60 would be opened up to reveal activities within the buildings and create a friendlier streetscape on the waterfront.



With renovation of Pier 59, the west façade could be opened up to maximize views.



Example of building transparency.



Renovation of Pier 60 could increase views in and out of the building.



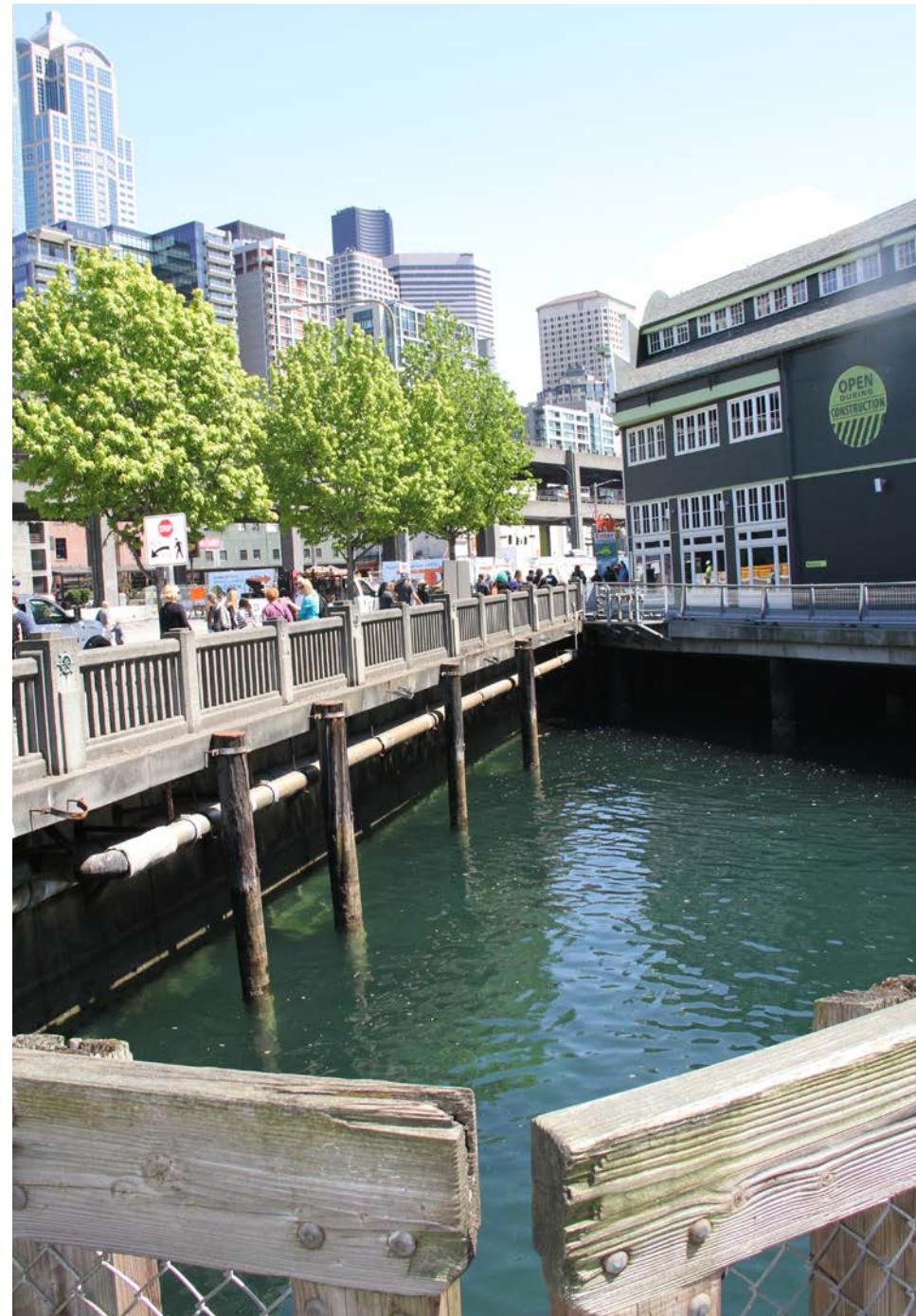
Monterey Bay Aquarium: transparency between interior and exterior spaces.



# NEARSHORE HABITAT

Elliott Bay's nearshore habitat is complex and ecologically rich. It is a critical pathway for migratory salmon and an accessible location for visitors to the waterfront to first experience the ecology of Puget Sound. It is the Aquarium's intent to work closely with the City and resource agencies to identify opportunities to enhance this area through the creation of shallow-water habitat in what is otherwise an unnaturally deep-water condition along the shoreline. Underwater benches could be built to elevate the substrate and promote the growth of kelp and other vegetation that supports marine life, provides safe resting and feeding areas for juvenile salmon, and is important habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl. Restoration of the nearshore environment adjacent to the Aquarium would help achieve goals of the waterfront redevelopment plan and offer a place for interpretation as part of the Aquarium's education program. These restoration opportunities exist south of Pier 59 in Waterfront Park, in the open water triangle between Piers 59 and 60, and north of Pier 60.

Open water zones in and around Piers 59 and 60 offer restoration opportunities.





# HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The pier shed on Pier 59 is one of the oldest and most cherished buildings on Seattle’s Central Waterfront, and a visible reminder of Seattle’s maritime history. The Seattle Aquarium and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (the building’s owner) have shown great sensitivity to protecting its original architectural form and ensuring that it is sustained for many years to come. The extensive pile replacement project in 2007 and the renovation of the pier’s eastern end provided critical structural stability, restored the façade in keeping with its original design, and also enabled the Aquarium to improve visitor arrival and ticketing and expand exhibition space.

Past planning efforts that proposed a future expansion project to the south of Pier 59 would introduce a new contemporary structure adjacent to the south façade. From early design guidance provided by representatives of the Landmark Preservation Board’s Architectural Review Committee, locating a future expansion at the Overlook Walk location would preserve more of the façade and maximize visibility of Pier 59’s historic structure. The future renovation and expansion of Pier 60 will also consider its design relationship to Pier 59. The Aquarium intends that any replacement structure would utilize the existing pilings, and simultaneously create an additional setback between existing and new buildings so that they read as independent structures and maximize transparency along their respective façades.



In 1912, what is now Pier 59 was used for hay and grain handling.



Pier 59 was declared a Seattle landmark in 2007.

In 2007, Pier 59 renovation replaced over one thousand compromised wood pilings.

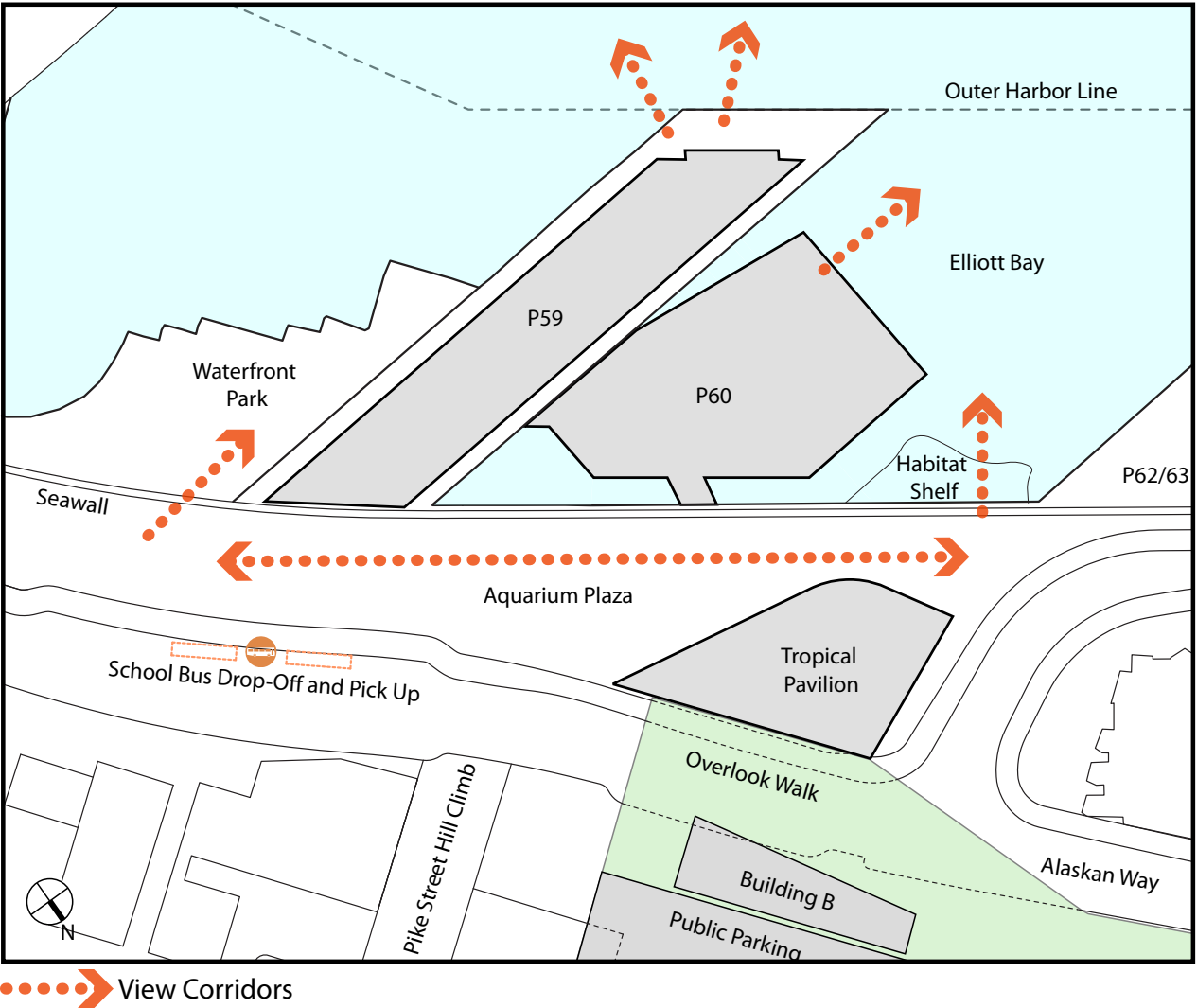




# VIEW CORRIDORS

Views of Elliott Bay, Puget Sound, West Seattle, Bainbridge Island and the Olympic Mountains are treasured features of our public waterfront. Efforts to preserve or enhance these views in the context of a changing waterfront would be carefully considered by the Aquarium in its planning and design. Past proposals to relocate the Aquarium north on Pier 62/63 were abandoned in a large part due to concerns over view blockage. In recent meetings with stakeholders, concerns have also been expressed over past plans to expand to the south of Pier 59, where a building would impact views west from Waterfront Park.

To comply with existing legislation, the Aquarium asked its planning team to consider the impact of a future expansion to the south of Pier 59, based on a conceptual footprint for a new Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion. What the team learned is that the impact would be considerably less than originally envisioned in Mithūn's 2012 conceptual drawing. However, a Central location for the new Aquarium building would eliminate any view impacts from Waterfront Park. Impacts, as well as the opportunity to create new public viewpoints, will be considered in subsequent design phases and as part of the environmental review process.



Current view west over Piers 59 and 60.



# REVIEW AGAINST SITE EVALUATION CRITERIA

As part of its Master Plan process, the Seattle Aquarium established site evaluation criteria to assist in the review of locations under consideration for its future expansion. Following is a summary of the evaluation for the Central location at the Overlook Walk:

**Substantially increase mission impact through the expansion of exhibit space and programs to feature three interdependent ecosystems of the Pacific Ocean: Tropical Pacific, Outer Washington Coast, and Puget Sound;**

- The Central location provides a suitable location for a new Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion, and allows Pier 60 to be retained as an appropriate site for development of exhibits that focus on Puget Sound and the Outer Washington Coast.

**Provide high quality educational and entertainment experience to a projected 1.3 million annual visitors by 2030;**

- Expansion and continued renovation of the Aquarium to coincide with the Waterfront Seattle project is well aligned with the Aquarium's attendance growth projections.
- Planned improvements to exhibits and education spaces will ensure that the Aquarium reaches more visitors with its mission: *Inspiring Conservation of Our Marine Environment*.

**Maintain the Aquarium's national and regional standing as a platform for scientific research, marine conservation education, civic engagement and tourism;**

- Today, the Aquarium ranks ninth in the country in attendance. As Seattle continues to grow and its waterfront is made more attractive to local, regional and national visitors, it is anticipated that the Aquarium will become ever more popular, and therefore ever more important in its role as researcher, educator and convener.

**Promote restoration of the nearshore habitat and incorporate principles of sustainable design to minimize environmental impacts of new construction and long-term building operations;**

- The opportunity to expand in an upland, Central location decreases the need for overwater coverage, and increases the opportunity for nearshore habitat restoration in keeping with the Aquarium's leading voice on Puget Sound recovery.
- In keeping with its longstanding commitment to environmental sustainability, the Aquarium will establish ambitious targets for energy and water conservation, reduce the use of toxic building materials, and incorporate opportunities for visitor education in all of its new building or renovation projects.

**Maintain the Aquarium's position as a key waterfront attraction through coordination with public agency partners and community stakeholders working on the redevelopment of Seattle's Central Waterfront;**

- A close collaboration with City departments and feedback from waterfront stakeholders has helped shape the current vision for an expanded aquarium as a central feature of the new Central Waterfront.

**Align with the Waterfront Guiding Principles as stated in the 2012 Central Waterfront Committee Strategic Plan;**

- Through strong integration with Waterfront Seattle, an expanded Aquarium will help meet goals for a bold waterfront vision, improve connections between public spaces, reconnect visitors to the shoreline, and embrace both the activities and visual reminders of Seattle's past, present and future.

**Honor the designation of Pier 59 as a historic landmark structure;**

- As evidenced by past capital improvements, Pier 59 will be lovingly restored to maintain its historic character, and simultaneously adapted to meet the modern demands of a contemporary aquarium.

**Improve public access and circulation, building porosity, visibility to and from the site, and strengthen connections to adjacent facilities on the Central Waterfront;**

- Central to the Aquarium Master Plan is the goal to increase building porosity and public access throughout a new campus environment. The Aquarium aspires to communicate its mission and programs to visitors within its buildings and visitors to the waterfront who are passing by.

**Provide for a multi-phased development approach with the first phase to be completed between 2020–2025 including a public/private financing strategy and long-term maintenance and operations plan;**

- The opportunity to expand within the location of the Overlook Walk will allow the Aquarium to evaluate phased development. Construction of the Tropical Pacific exhibit pavilion will be timed with the construction of the Overlook Walk and the timing of improvements to both Piers 59 and 60 could occur earlier, simultaneously, or later.

**Enable the Aquarium to remain operational during construction;**

- The Aquarium can always ensure that the public has access to a major ecosystem exhibit, as well as other offerings in education, public programs and visitors services.

**Meet City, State, and Federal permitting requirements.**

- All future capital improvements will comply with permitting requirements at all levels of government. Pre-planning and design will continue to benefit from guidance provided by City Boards and Commissions in areas of historic preservation, standards for public use as a Parks-department facility, and aesthetics.





# ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND PROJECT FINANCING

The Aquarium shifted to nonprofit management in 2010 and since that time has systematically strengthened its ability to generate resources to support strategic goals. The management transition was adopted by a 2009 City Council ordinance and was consummated by the execution of a twenty year Operations and Management Agreement (“OMA”). In the resource section of the 2011 Strategic Plan, the Aquarium outlined three areas of focus: earned revenue; community financial support; and internal fiscal control. In each area, the Aquarium defined financial growth and management goals to prepare the organization for a future period of significant capital investment. With leadership from the Board of Directors, the Aquarium is on track to achieve the financial aspirations detailed in the Strategic Plan. The annual budget for the Aquarium has grown from \$9.3 million in 2010 to a projected \$13.7 million for 2015. Earned revenue is 87% of the annual operating budget and gate revenue represents the largest income line at over \$10 million. Maintaining strong gate revenue during seawall construction has been the result of strong marketing and effective public awareness that the facility is open. To date, this effort has been successful and Aquarium attendance has remained strong with a 2% increase over 2013 and 811,000 visitors in the past year. The Aquarium has recorded consistently clean financial statement audits and since the transition to nonprofit management, the audits have been performed by an external audit firm and are available on the Aquarium’s website or upon request. Regular oversight review with the Board Finance Committee along with full Board review of quarterly financials is a routine aspect of the Aquarium’s operations. Additionally, the Aquarium provides regular structured reporting to the City of Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation and the Aquarium President & Chief Executive Officer as well as annual testimony to the Seattle City Council parks committee, as required under the OMA.

The Seattle Aquarium fundraising objective is to build philanthropic momentum with a strong case for support around emerging capital needs along with growing community awareness of the Aquarium’s impact. Since 2002, the Seattle Aquarium has methodically strengthened the contributed income capacity of the organization by increasing the professional capacity to shift from an event-centric model to a donor-centric model. The Seattle Aquarium will always recognize the City of Seattle as its principal donor in recognition of its ownership of the facility.

With regard to the preliminary work towards increasing fundraising capacity, the Aquarium has taken the following early steps:

- Secured \$815,000 from a small number of “Sustaining Sponsors” in 2003 to fund a three-year repositioning program to establish readiness for the future. Eight sponsors, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Barry & Ginger Ackerley Foundation, the Seattle Foundation and the Boeing Company participated.
- Moved annual gala auction Splash! from its previous off-site location to the Aquarium (for the silent auction and reception) and the Waterfront Marriott (for the dinner and live auction) in 2003. Bringing gala guests into the Aquarium to experience our mission firsthand has helped grow annual Splash! revenue from \$300,000 to over \$1,000,000.
- Leveraged the success of the creation of a branded \$1,000 Otter Club donor level to establish an annual donor club giving program in 2008 with six giving levels from \$300 to \$25,000. This program has helped us grow our individual giving base of support and has deepened donor relationships.
- Altered donor engagement strategies in 2009, resulting in a very successful “Be a Biologist” event to engage children and parents in activities including preparing food for animals, cleaning a touch tank, inventorying animals, and feeding sea otters.

- Added a grant officer, individual giving officer and a major gifts officer to the development team.
- Hired Campbell & Company in 2014 to guide the Aquarium’s fundraising development. Campbell & Company is a nationally recognized fundraising firm with expertise in quantitative and qualitative fundraising assessments to help measure philanthropic potential, execution of campaign planning studies, development of campaign operating plans, and crafting messages that inspire, excite and lend focus to conversations with donors.

The potential for the Seattle Aquarium to raise capital funds from public and private sources was clearly demonstrated during the New Currents Capital Campaign, an effort which culminated in 2007 and raised nearly \$41 million (\$22.4 million from the City of Seattle, \$17.2 million from over 2,000 private donors and \$1.2 million from its gift shop and food partners) to replace the failing infrastructure of Pier 59, expand the Aquarium by 18,000 square feet, move the lobby to Alaskan Way and add new exhibit and gathering spaces. The successful fundraising and construction management effort served as the catalyst to jumpstart negotiations leading to the successful execution of the OMA in 2010 as well as increasing attendance levels from roughly 650,000 per year to over 800,000 per year since 2008.

In 2014, the Aquarium successfully raised private gifts to match a City contribution providing for an overall investment of \$6 million in a successful renovation of the harbor seal exhibit and connecting finger pier located on Pier 60.

Similar local projects, including the Seattle Public Library and the Seattle Art Museum’s Olympic Sculpture Park, have demonstrated that public/private funding partnerships are a proven structure for financing capital projects with strong public benefit.

A cost estimate will be completed in early 2016 upon the conclusion of the first phase of design. With this information available, the Seattle Aquarium and the City will jointly determine appropriate project phasing and an associated financing plan. To date, the Seattle Aquarium has raised nearly \$750,000 in capital and in-kind planning support toward the effort. The City of Seattle has committed \$34 million through a multi-year capital improvement plan budgeting process.

The Aquarium has already launched the fundraising planning work. Past Chairs of the Board Committee formed in 2014 to assist with critical elements of the upcoming capital campaign. The Committee is working with Campbell & Company to help refine the case for support, identify and recruit community leaders, and manage the campaign committee. As noted above, Campbell & Company has been engaged to help develop the four essential elements of a successful capital campaign: case, leadership, prospects, and the plan. Case development is well underway. In 2016, Campbell & Company will present a draft campaign operating plan to the Board of Directors that will outline in detail a recommended strategy to achieve fundraising success and how private support can be leveraged from the City’s funding commitment.



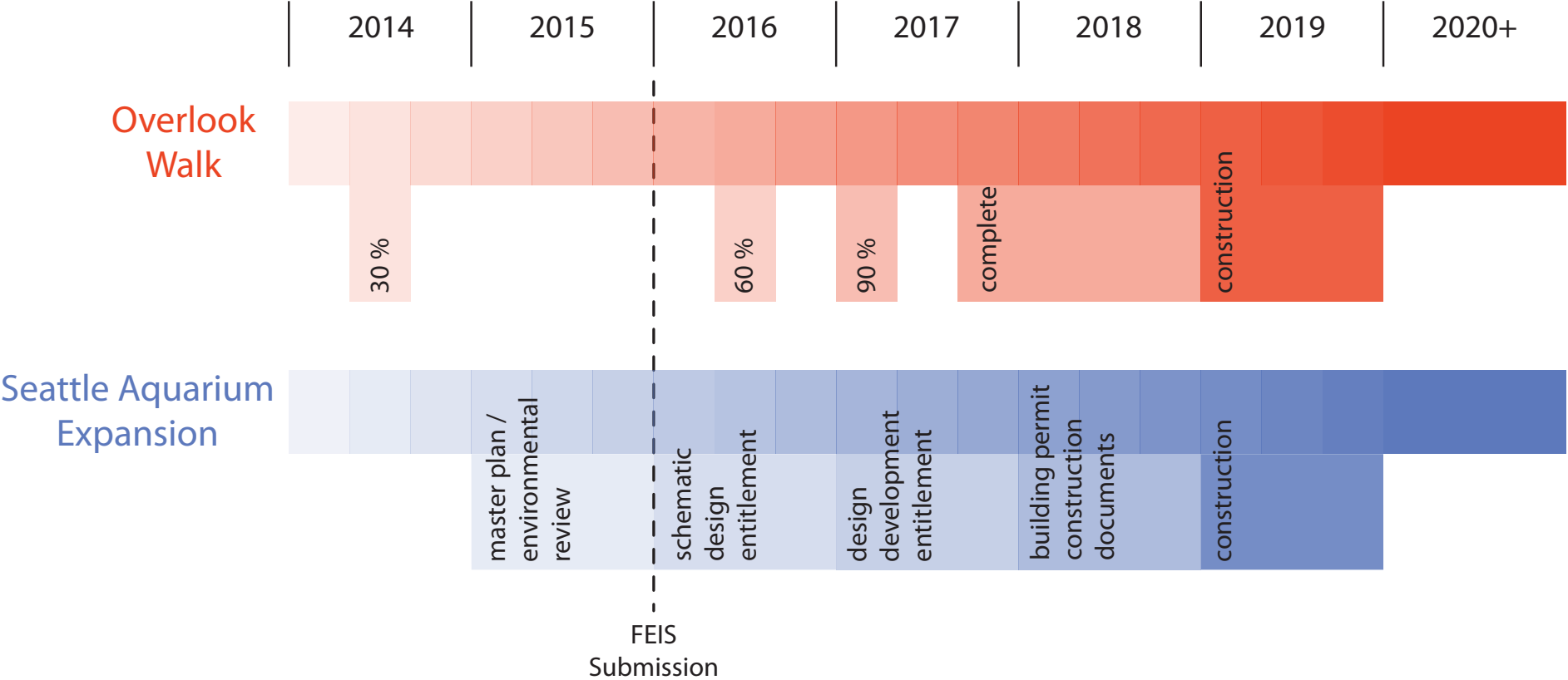


# SCHEDULE AND NEXT STEPS

The opportunity to integrate the Aquarium expansion within the construction timeframe of the Overlook Walk would require concerted design and project coordination upon approval of the Master Plan in mid-summer 2015. Currently, the Overlook Walk is at 30% design completion, and a final environmental impact statement is scheduled for issuance in late 2015. Approval of the Master Plan would enable the Aquarium project to proceed to concept-level design in the fall of 2015 for purposes of further environmental review of a new building at the Overlook Walk. It is anticipated that the final environmental impact statement for the new Alaskan Way, Promenade and Overlook Walk project would then contain more detailed information about the Aquarium's building design and uses at the Overlook Walk location.

To achieve this integration, and future coordination with design, permitting and construction, the Seattle Aquarium has identified the following next steps following Master Plan approval:

- Engage the Seattle Aquarium design and engineering team to advance concept-level design in the fall of 2015.
- Develop a full project schedule for the Aquarium expansion project, including a new structure within the Overlook Walk, renovation of Pier 59 and renovation and expansion of Pier 60.
- Plan and schedule the development of a schematic design-level cost estimate in 2016 to further inform project phasing and financing.
- Develop a project budget and spending plan that aligns with the anticipated private investment and annual contributions from the City of Seattle's Capital Improvement Plan.
- Continue to engage community stakeholders in the design and planning of the future Aquarium.
- Participate in the continued evolution of the design and programming for future elements of the Central Waterfront redevelopment, including Aquarium Plaza, Waterfront Park and Pier 62/63.





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