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## Memorandum

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**TO:** Michael Bergstrom and Robin Cole  
City of Bellevue

**FROM:** Nancy Bird, AICP  
EDAW, Inc.

**DATE:** July 23, 2008

**RE:** **Technical Memorandum No. 1: Environmental Approach and Decision Making Criteria**

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### Overview

We are dedicated to a process that respects and considers the ecology of the regional and local landscape as a key input to the design and planning solution for the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan area. We also understand that there are multiple stakeholders involved in the planning process with varied interests in environmental data. The purpose of this technical memorandum (TM1) is to provide a clear “roadmap” for the integration of environmental data into the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan process by:

- 1) identifying the environmental data to be collected
- 2) identifying the primary stakeholders reviewing the data;
- 3) clarifying how the environmental data will be used and by which party; and
- 4) describing the SEPA and project evaluation tools that will be used to assist all stakeholders with decision making.

### 1. Baseline Environmental Data

The EDAW team has prepared several technical memorandums (TM#) to inform and support the planning and design of the Meydenbauer Bay Park. These include:

- **TM1 Environmental Approach Memo** – Outlines the project’s environmental approach and method for seamlessly integrating environmental data, plan goals and guiding principles, in the planning process (this document).
- **TM2 Land Use Technical Memo** – Evaluates the Meydenbauer Bay Land Use Plan prepared by Sasaki (2007) and describes potential land use challenges and CPA strategy.
- **TM3 Shoreline Site Conditions Memo** – Describes observations during the site visit (including dock condition and any specific biological or ecological resources), together with wind, wave, and water level and other waterfront design criteria. This report is supported by a hydrographic survey.

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- **TM4 Shoreline Regulatory Memo** – Outlines the guiding environmental and regulatory plans, codes, and regulations for the shoreline and in-water elements of the project.
- **TM5 Baseline Vegetation and Critical Areas Mapping Memo** – Ecologists will conduct a baseline vegetation and habitat assessment for the aquatic and terrestrial systems of the study area.
- **TM6 Wetland Delineation Report** – Ecologists will provide formal delineations for all wetlands discovered on site.
- **TM7 Cultural Resources Assessment Report** – Provides preliminary cultural resources assessment intended to support development of a project master plan.
- **TM8 Parking Capacity Spot Check** – Assesses a parking inventory/utilization survey conducted by TENW (2007) and spot checks parking supply in 2008.

This document, TM1, provides the strategy for environmental integration of all gathered data so that the information is presented and absorbed in a meaningful way by all involved parties. As the strategy lead, all other TMs follow this memo as attachments.

## 2. Data Use by Primary Stakeholders

The following section provides a brief overview of the key constituents that will be reviewing and working with the environmental information and their needs as part of this project.

**The City of Bellevue** – The City, Parks Board, and Planning Commission will be interested in the technical studies, feasibility of the design and planning, and public messaging of the environmental data. The City is responsible for working with the public, steering committee, regulating agencies, and the consultant team. The City must resolve environmental implications of the park and upland design and how it affects work in progress under all City departments. The City is also mandated to serve residents of Bellevue and listen to their input during the planning process. The ultimate decision-maker is the City Council, who will approve the plan and supporting regulations.

**Public / Steering Committee** – These groups will be primarily interested in the overall ecological conditions of the site and region and potential impacts or benefits to the area in non technical language. We anticipate close inspection of environmental impacts that affect specific properties and the quality of life of all Bellevue residents.

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**Regulating Agencies** – Federal, State, and local regulating agencies and departments administer policies and rules intended to protect the environment by regulating water quality standards, soil stability and erosion control, and vegetation and wildlife habitat preservation, to name a few. Under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), all local government actions, with limited exemptions, are subject to the environmental review process including the adoption and amendment of comprehensive plans, master plans, and development regulations (non-project actions) and the approval of development permits for on-the-ground projects (project actions). Detailed technical memorandums and a SEPA checklist with prescribed data will be carefully scrutinized by the regulating agencies to ensure all applicable regulations are followed.

**Consultant Team (Park and Urban Designers)** – This group is charged with the integration of ecological conditions and possibilities as a key component to the final physical solution for the Meydenbauer Bay Park. They will require an understanding of the design and planning constraints as well as the opportunities for environmental stewardship and restoration. Designers tend to be more graphically oriented and respond well to information communicated in a graphically communicated format.

### 3. Formats and Use of Environmental Data

Our intent is to provide a consistent set of data in different formats and levels of depth so that it meets the needs of all interested parties described above. The following formats will be targeted towards specific audiences and for specific uses, as described below:

**Technical Memorandums** – The City of Bellevue, regulating agencies and the Steering Committee (primarily) will be interested in all of the baseline data as presented within each technical memo. The technical memos will provide the baseline environmental data used to create the opportunities and constraints map, the SEPA document, and evaluation criteria summary, described below. If needed, these memos are also intended to serve as the basis for future environmental review as required under SEPA and determined by the City of Bellevue's SEPA Responsible Official (RO).

**Opportunities & Constraints Maps** – While all parties will be interested in the opportunities and constraints map, it is envisioned that this deliverable will provide a base upon which the consultant team will draw park and urban design alternatives. Regulatory buffers and setbacks, physical topographic and environmental constraints, existing structures and piers, slope and soil data, to name just a few, will be identified on the map with notable design opportunities to help guide physical solutions to the park design and connect it with the actual site. This map will be a major feature of the environmental summary and will be provided under separate cover prior to the first design workshop for use throughout the project.

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**SEPA Document** – While the City of Bellevue, regulating agencies, and the public will be interested in reviewing potential impacts identified in a required SEPA document, the SEPA analysis will also serve another purpose. Prepared earlier in the planning process than later, this analysis will help guide the consultant team in developing environmentally sound park alternatives by reviewing them against 16 environmental elements (refer to Section 4 for additional detail on the SEPA approach).

**Principle Evaluation Matrix** – For a successful process and physical solution, it will be critical for the City of Bellevue, Steering Committee, and park and urban designers to systematically evaluate plan alternatives against the principles established by the City and Steering Committee at the on-set of this project. A “Principle Evaluation Matrix” provides the framework for this evaluation and should be reviewed and revisited frequently to ensure the project is on-track to achieve desired outcomes (refer to Section 4 for additional details).

The SEPA document and Principle Evaluation Matrix are the primary tools for qualitatively and quantitatively measuring potential outcomes of the plan alternatives developed. A more detailed discussion of the approach to SEPA and evaluation of project goals is further detailed in the following sections.

#### **4. SEPA Approach and Evaluation Criteria**

##### **SEPA Approach**

The SEPA process provides information regarding a plan’s effects or impacts on the environment to regulating agencies, the public, government officials, tribes, adjacent businesses, residents, and interested citizens. In this instance, the City of Bellevue, together with the EDAW team, has decided to develop targeted technical memorandums (attached) that will accompany a robust SEPA checklist. The checklist will be completed as proposed Waterfront Park plan alternatives are developed.

Similar to the Principle Evaluation Matrix, the checklist asks questions about proposed plans and related impacts on the environment that can be evaluated against the alternatives to discern where the largest impacts may lie. In doing so, these questions will help the project team evaluate impacts and decide how they might be avoided, reduced, or mitigated. In doing so, the consultant team hopes to address issues head-on and establish forward-thinking solutions before they become “show-stopping” environmental dilemmas. The 16 environmental criteria that will be evaluated include: earth, air, water, plants, animals, energy and natural resources, environmental health, land use and shoreline use, housing, aesthetics, light and glare, recreation, historic and cultural preservation, transportation, public services, and utilities.

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After the final checklist has been completed for the preferred plan, the City of Bellevue's SEPA RO will review the checklist and supporting documentation about the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan and make a threshold determination as to the environmental significance of the project's impact. In doing so, the RO determines the future required level of environmental documentation and review. Assuming that the RO has enough information to determine that the plan is unlikely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, the City will issue a determination of non-significance (DNS) or mitigated DNS – which, assuming proper public involvement, will satisfy SEPA requirements. If the information indicates the plan proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, the RO will require the preparation of a programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS). If an EIS is required, the TMs prepared to date should provide the baseline technical studies required to support such an effort, thereby saving valuable time and money.

**Evaluation Criteria**

In addition to measuring the proposed plan against environmental criteria addressed in the SEPA document, the project also needs to be reviewed against the principles set by the City and Steering Committee. The following Principle Evaluation Matrix will serve as a tool that will be used to assist all stakeholders with decision making.

Principle evaluation criteria/questions will be used to assess the park design alternatives against goals and values that support sustainability, place making, connectivity and park vitality. This matrix will be used as a tool during the evaluation phase of the park alternatives to help guide decision-making towards a preferred alternative. As directed by the Steering Committee, deference shall be given to Principles No. 1 and 2.

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**Meydenbauer Bay Park Principle Evaluation Matrix**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Environmental Criteria / Questions to Address</b>	<b>Yes or No / Plan Considerations</b> [i.e. what considerations need to be given to meet Principle]
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Environmental stewardship</b></p>	<p>Does the plan respect its unique and sensitive waterfront setting?</p> <p>Does the plan acknowledge resource limitations, conserve land, water and energy, limit pollution, protect ecological systems and encourage sustainable building techniques?</p> <p>Does the plan improve the shoreline characteristics and water quality of stormwater discharged from the site?</p> <p>Does the plan provide an economically and ecologically sustainable solution for the long term?</p>	
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Remarkable and memorable shoreline experience</b></p>	<p>Does the plan increase waterfront access for all Bellevue residents?</p> <p>Does the plan provide visual contrast and sensory relief from the downtown urban environment? Does the plan provide experiences and visual delights that are unique to Bellevue? Is this a place where tourists would visit or where Bellevue residents would want to take out of town guests to visit during all months of the year?</p> <p>Does the park complement the surrounding neighborhood?</p> <p>Does the park design and planned upland area provide synergies with the Downtown that will encourage people to access the waterfront?</p>	

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Principle	Environmental Criteria / Questions to Address	Yes or No / Plan Considerations [i.e. what considerations need to be given to meet Principle]
	Does the design provide appeal, varying experiences to keep visitors returning, intrigued, and learning? Does it serve as a defining element of Bellevue?	
3	<p><b>Spectrum of activities</b></p> <p>Does the park provide a wide range of activities and experiences, from active recreation to passive natural areas?</p> <p>Does the park blend traditional park uses with new urban experiences?</p>	
4	<p><b>Complementary land uses</b></p> <p>Are the connections between the park and upland areas and the Downtown interesting, compelling, and pedestrian-oriented?</p> <p>Does the plan effectively improve the overall park landscape and meet functional requirements of diverse users?</p>	
5	<p><b>Increased physical and visual access</b></p> <p>Do pedestrian corridors visually facilitate pedestrian movement from Downtown Park to the waterfront?</p> <p>Do corridors and public spaces provide <u>easy</u> access to the shoreline for people of all physical abilities?</p>	
6	<p><b>Pedestrian priority</b></p> <p>Are pedestrian connections user-friendly and comfortable for walking?</p> <p>Does the park and upland area prioritize pedestrian mobility, access, and safety over vehicle mobility?</p>	
7	<p><b>Economic vitality</b></p> <p>Do land uses and urban design elements contribute to the economic vitality of the area as a whole?</p> <p>Does the plan support local businesses that</p>	

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Principle	Environmental Criteria / Questions to Address	Yes or No / Plan Considerations [i.e. what considerations need to be given to meet Principle]
	provide goods and services to park and upland areas?	
8	<p><b>Superior design</b></p> <p>Does the plan area reflect an integrated design approach to the park, landscape, streetscapes, connections, and buildings?</p> <p>Does the park and upland area reflect a high standard of design excellence?</p>	
9	<p><b>History</b></p> <p>Does the plan area incorporate recognizable heritage of Meydenbauer Bay? Does the plan preserve or adapt historic structures?</p> <p>Does the plan include artwork and interpretive programs that incorporate the Bay's heritage?</p>	
10	<p><b>Neighborhood enhancement and protection</b></p> <p>Does the plan provide a catalyst for revitalization of older uses while minimizing impacts on neighboring residential areas?</p> <p>Does the plan include development mechanisms that will assist with redevelopment that is consistent with the area's land use vision?</p>	
11	<p><b>Coordinated planning process</b></p> <p>Does the project streamline and coordinate the planning of the park and upland areas?</p>	
12	<p><b>Commitment to implement</b></p> <p>Is there an implementation strategy that leads to the fulfillment of the vision?</p> <p>Does the implementation strategy identify funding sources, regulatory processes, permitting, and scheduled milestones required for implementation? Does the implementation strategy have Council and Mayor approval?</p>	



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