

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 13, 2010  
**TO:** Justin Clary, City of Ridgefield  
**FROM:** Karen Ciocia, Consultant Project Mgr, Normandeau Associates, Inc.  
**SUBJECT:** Community Questionnaire Response Summary  
**CC:** File

---

On Wednesday, April 28, 2010, seventy-five Ridgefield stakeholders attended a workshop at the Community Center to develop a unified vision for the downtown/waterfront integration project and prioritize planned projects to help reach that vision. E-mail invitations were sent to nearly 400 email addresses and distributed by recipients to anyone they thought might be interested in attending. The invitation was also sent to the media.

At the meeting attendees were presented the following proposed unified vision based on previous planning documents:

*Ridgefield is a regional employment and residential center that drives a local, robust economy. It is a destination area for tourists and visitors – admired for its quaint, walkable downtown, “Main Street” feeling, and small-town character and charm. Ridgefield is pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly with strong connections between neighborhoods, the downtown/waterfront and adjoining activity centers. Ridgefield preserves and protects critical natural areas and is committed to community and environmental sustainability.*

Everyone at the workshop agreed that this was a fair representation of their vision of Ridgefield. The vision will be moved forward as we develop an action plan for integrating the downtown and port plans.

The remainder of the workshop revolved around small group discussions, reporting back to the larger group, and prioritizing input based on the questions below. The questions were also on comment sheets so individuals could make their own comments, take the sheets away to respond when they had time to process or distribute to family, friends, or colleagues who could not attend. Comment sheets and boxes were also left in four locations in Ridgefield until May 10 so that anyone who hadn't been able to attend the workshop could also give input. Materials from the workshop were placed on the City's website for review. The Columbian newspaper covered the workshop, before and after, helping to direct people to information and opportunity to comment.

The following is a summary of the comments received at the workshop and in the succeeding week:

### **1. Why is the downtown/waterfront important to you?**

- How they tie in together is important – There should be only one “Old Town” but waterfront should not be so different that you feel you’re no longer in Ridgefield. Waterfront building design could have hints of old town feel
- Provides more “depth” to the Old Town
- It’s part of back yard –we use it daily
- Access to refuge as well as Lake and Columbia rivers
- Port’s 40 acres important as the only empty land for development. It must compliment the river front as well as tie to the city’s business future.
- Waterfront is the reason for present location of City of Ridgefield – waterfront was squandered by poor planning and short sighted industrial development
- Connectivity to waterfront – economic (e.g. Eco-tourism)
- Could be heart of the community with more accessibility
- Needs to be thought of as one area – with different but complimentary uses
- I like being in small town as compared to Vancouver/Portland
- Waterfront is great - relaxing and a great getaway; residents enjoy how clean it is
- It will bring much needed commerce and attract a variety of business ventures
- Obviously recognized and valued by its residents for its large potential
- Area to enjoy the beauty
- A place to meet up with neighbors
- A place to walk and ride a bike for exercise
- Have an amphitheater for concerts, speeches, performances
- Unique, friendly, safe, relatively quiet
- Living outside city limits, am grateful for access to coffee, hardware, park; as sense of community
- Family togetherness – shopping, library, park, farmers market, etc
- Our family owns the Ridgefield Marina
- It has potential to be an attractive place for businesses and public access to the river
- Is vital for the community’s longevity
- The two need each other
- I own a large yacht and keep it at McCuddy’s Marina; I also live in Ridgefield
- An expanded opportunity to spend time with friends and newcomers
- Small town atmosphere is what makes Ridgefield unique – no big box stores
- Adds to the uniqueness of the area
- You can hunt, fish, recreate all within 10 minutes from my home
- Small town feel
- Boating and access to the river
- Expand definition of Waterfront
- Reorganize unique guidelines
- Development to compliment downtown and refuge
- Sustaining element to community – integration of opportunity
- Boating destination – clean up river
- Heart of Community
- More accessible to waterfront – needs to be something
- McMenamin’s restaurant on waterfront

- Restaurant on float
- I love Ridgefield and want to live here the rest of my life
- Unique opportunity to wisely build mixed-use recreation and business.
- Great opportunity to have trails/water access and enjoyment of natural resources
- Support boating/lodging
- I live on the edge of town
- Unique/quality place that can keep its uniqueness
- Refuge has site for oldest, biggest village for centuries; more bird species than anywhere in the Portland Metro area
- Ridgefield's town identity is easily understood as different from the junction
- Live and shop downtown
- Need to build a new seismic-safe fire station
- Would like to have new boat engine rescue facility in the Port area
- Small, downtown feel; access to the water
- Access to downtown resources, waterfront, small town feel
- Integrate community and recreation
- Water trails/water use
- Include Lake River from Vancouver Lake to the Columbia as the waterfront that is accessed through Ridgefield
- Ability to quietly access post office, small stores, library and not having to drive 10 miles.

## **2. What are the strengths, unique aspects of Ridgefield's downtown and waterfront?**

- View, wildlife, center of community
- Off the beaten track just enough to be accessible but not totally convenient
- One of few authentic feelings of a downtown area
- Good variety of shops, facilities
- Feels like it is still an entity of its own
- Distinct small feel
- First Friday is a great event
- Waterfront is mainly geared to recreation
- Historic sites nearby
- Bird watching
- Far enough from Portland to be an overnight destination by boat
- Boat access
- Small downtown, homey feeling
- Provides a unique area for a mixture of business and public access
- Geographical location is very unique, downtown really can't turn into urban sprawl situation
- Waterfront is a direct link to the Refuge and Columbia River
- Geographically unique
- Access from Lake River to Columbia and Lewis rivers
- McCuddy's Marina
- Two "main drags" – Main & Pioneer
- Overlook of wildlife refuge and staring point to explore area by canoe, boat, and hopefully biking and walking
- Charming and connects to the refuge, historical, water ways

- Uniform code for new buildings to have “old town” feel – brick, arches, brick work at top.
- Take advantage of the boat launch area and refuge to become a destination town
- Clean and colorful
- Proximity to friendly people
- Active merchant association
- Active garden club
- Quaint character of downtown
- Look at Tacoma as example for further discussions
- Undeveloped, on the water, quaint, wildlife refuge
- Locally owned businesses and compact area provide nice place to walk around
- Houses are being fixed up giving the area a cared-for feel
- Relationship with refuge and Columbia River
- Beginning of network of walking trails – need more
- Good geography – river and refuge, nice downtown buildings
- Educational opportunities at Port
- It’s like a destination area but affords rural look while being close to metro areas
- Events
- Small town atmosphere
- Connection between community and waterfront
- Unique regional attributes
- Destination
- Defines community
- Geography for waterfront access
- Nice buildings downtown
- Force traffic to refuge through downtown
- Walking community
- Refuge, Plank House, small quaint shops and the water
- Refuge
- Not a copy of any other area
- Locally owned businesses
- An abundance of wildlife and resources to be encountered from port site
- It is still “unspoiled” and a treasure
- North Refuge, events, South Refuge, Norman Rockwell feel, waterfront, Gee Creek
- It’s a unit – not to be spread out
- Be unique – a place that gains a reputation for being like nowhere else
- Native and cultural history; quality food; place to learn
- Small town, only real access from a town that is not heavily used
- Small and has great potential
- It’s character and feel of the past
- Open slate we can make what we want
- Clean up of brownfield site – what a unique story and history
- Unique community, stores
- Refuge
- Keep it non-chain
- Active transport (foot, bike, kayak) already big in community
- Small town feel
- Access to the river
- Close to the refuge

- Quiet, non-industrial aspect of waterfront
- Old town feel and how community works together on projects
- American Legion
- Proximity to refuge in relation to waterfront development
- Proximity one to the other: each can play off the other's distinctive characteristics

### **3. What opportunities/priorities should we pursue for the downtown/waterfront? (Be specific)**

- Area for events – farmer's market, fairs, merchants, park-like setting
- Limited growth
- Small business, except a Wal-mart type store at exit 14 would be a blessing
- An anchor to draw people into town from developments – a GROCERY STORE would be amazing
- More restaurants
- Something like proposed marine study area
- Merge recreation with downtown - opportunities for shopping, eating on the waterfront
- Parks/public space/transient moorage
- “Destination” – hotel, spa, restaurant on the waterfront
- Downtown shops, small town feeling – much as it already is
- Has great potential for business and public access to Lake River
- Access to Lake River provides attractive area where people can shop, work, recreate
- Finish clean up at the old Port site
- Build overpass to access waterfront
- Dredge Lake River and open up access to/from Columbia River
- Integration and collaboration
- Pioneer St overpass and overlook park
- Waterfront/marina needs fuel pumps, a market/café for boaters and water sports folks, etc ( a good \$ for someone)
- Better nightclub/bar/grill for a more sophisticated/younger crowd
- Showers at the boat launch/marina area
- River boat tours
- More boater access to Refuge, wetland/Lake River
- Rather than jet-ski heaven, seek harmony with the environment
- Not a place to launch a boat but quiet and peaceful with people milling about
- Become a gateway to NWR like Troutdale did to the gorge
- Ensure someone is at the Winter & Wine Alliance committee
- Trails – walking, biking, kayaking, canoeing – this will immediately bring people to town
- Downtown – “old town” look in new buildings – Post Office needs to get “old”
- Waterfront – promenade along water. Draw in boaters from the area (not all launched at Ridgefield)
- The waterway is a roadway to Ridgefield, too
- Condos and restaurants at water's edge
- Expand the Gee Creek hiking trails to include the waterfront
- Styles blend well; can be different but should go together well
- Need mixed use in the waterfront and downtown in order to have success and draw to our community
- Use refuge to draw people to downtown and make Ridgefield a destination
- Connection to refuge and Plank House.
- Offer services and support to visitors of the refuge as well as local residents

- Nice to have a gas station downtown somewhere.
- Guest marina with restaurants and stores
- Only “Green” development should be allowed
- Pedestrian access to waterfront with social and recreational spaces is critical
- Business development allowed only if it meets highest development standards.
- Downtown should place emphasis on the arts
- Need signage at the refuge for downtown and its buildings (economic activity)
- Dredging of Lake River
- Guest moorage at waterfront by restaurants and shops
- Place for river boaters to dock and spend time
- Locate refuge offices at North Pole yard
- Needs to expand boating possibilities - additional parking, restaurant, day moorage, etc
- Support unique shops enjoyed by residents and visitors alike
- Rules for building and homes appearance in old town – Upgrade
- Get railroad crossing arms to project across the road for safety; and noise reduction (no train horns)
- Access to refuge
- Jobs where you can live
- Low impact development
- Confluence Project (Ed/interpretive/pubic use)
- Guest: boater’s destination; growth is good. St Helens
- A visitor center on the water or downtown for the refuge would capitalize on our biggest asset
- That it will still be good in 30 years
- Please read: The Timeless Way of Building by Christopher Alexander (at the library)
- Trails!! On site and connecting surrounding community; connecting trails along watersheds
- Area-wide wifi system – live stream video for council meetings, baseball games, etc.
- Fewer cars – emphasize bike/walk
- Train stop
- Water trails
- Birding/photography/art center
- Place to relax – opposite of today’s crazy life pace
- Learn about nature, cultural history, art
- Sustainable jobs that keep residents working here
- Small business
- Public safety facility
- Over pass
- Small town atmosphere to share with visitors
- Keep current atmosphere but attract visitors
- Boating attraction (eco-tourism)
- Eco-tourism business opportunities, connection to water
- Integrate town and waterfront e.g. boating people could come to town for tea, shopping, etc. while residents could come to marina for waterfront recreation
- Ensure waterfront is part of the community, not an isolated housing/office area.
- Maintain family feel of Ridgefield, don’t turn into big city overnight
- Safety regulation for boating – more assistance needed to help boaters meet requirements
- Use school maintenance building as a small shopping mall to attract more customers to town rather than entirely to waterfront

- Beyond meeting the basic needs of its residents, it appears the bones, momentum and desire are present to make it a tourist destination

**4. What should the downtown/waterfront be like in 10 years? What should it mean to the community,**

**what should it provide?**

- A place to recreate, shop, eat and take families merged from downtown to waterfront
- Accessible, recreation, picnicking, entertainment
- Larger library with meeting rooms and gallery
- Beautiful environment
- Area for community connection
- Lots of trees, plants – Ridgefield is about nature and wildlife
- Remove “/” in downtown and waterfront – combined multi-use community
- Refuge offices and research facility (WSU) at waterfront
- Exercise outdoors
- Events, music, performances, merchants, farmer’s market
- Increase the health, enjoyment and foster a sense of positive community
- Should be about the same
- Current businesses should be thriving
- A draw for people from Van/Port to come enjoy small town life
- No box stores, just unique small businesses
- Ensure pending shoreline master program update permits potential business activities; update should anticipate future uses of the site
- Thriving with larger business district
- Provide quality services to a more populated community that can sustain a healthy living
- Look like it was always there
- Provide good access to the Refuge and the Columbia River
- Beautiful
- Capitalize on the “green” trends in all aspects of business and culture, make Ridgefield what it always has been – “the anti La Center.”
- A place to relax and feel close to the nature we come from
- More retail, restaurants, and livable spaces
- Walking and biking trails
- More off-street parking, open spaces, parks; a place people want to walk around, shop and enjoy.
- Possible to connect waterfront with downtown using walkway?
- Don’t let new Pioneer bridge be a roadblock to pedestrians
- A “happening” place that combines sports and culture
- Where kids can “roam” in complete safety
- Mixed use – residential and business bid for old port. Bid property – infill for downtown with same type of old architecture
- Have services and businesses to support the community, including restaurants, boutiques, fresh local market.
- Provide gateway to refuge with safe options for walking and biking
- A restored waterfront
- Interconnecting pedestrian and bike paths that connect downtown and waterfront
- Green businesses
- Destination arts events
- Boaters’ destination (needs dredging)

- Community of Bed and Breakfast
- Lodging for visitors; boaters, too
- Walking, jogging, biking paths
- Restaurants – floating?
- Welcoming to boaters, walkers, bikers
- Not concerned about too much growth
- St Helens a good example
- Mixed-use with condos above shops and office
- Walking mall (circular) through old downtown (side street parking)
- Should provide jobs
- A waterfront destination for boaters
- Residential opportunity on waterfront property so residents can take advantage of charm and businesses in old town
- Go slowly on commercial development so businesses can succeed and develop as population increases
- No big box stores
- Unique shops, stores
- Waterfront well used, homes cleaned up and upgraded – a place where people want to live
- Self-sustainable
- A destination for tourists and residents
- Backdrop to City’s corp (core?)
- Limit intensity of development
- Extend Pioneer into community
- Craft Beer
- Clean water
- Guest moorage
- Parking (trailheads)
- WSU
- Lodging
- Make downtown a walking mall
- Downtown should be connected to both waterfront and the junction
- Contamination on the water should be cleaned up
- A refuge visitor center downtown or at the Port
- Ridgefield should be a city where one (tele-commuter) who can live anywhere chooses to live in Ridgefield
- A mix of recreation and business that keeps flavor of downtown
- Should be a refuge from the hectic pace of life, should be why we come to live and enjoy a quieter life, away from the pollution of the city
- A railway destination stop to enjoy refuge and town
- Lots of native-based activities
- Restaurants, boutique shopping, boardwalks
- Become the destination, a place to live and enjoy life
- Small downtown area without high vehicle traffic
- Sustainable jobs
- Developed access to water; the beginning of “green” businesses moving in
- Jobs recreation, sustainable energy
- Would like to see use of solar, wind and habitat roofs in both areas
- Cleaned up river, deal with blue green algae – toxic and effects boating, tourism, water

- The schools and the street in front of the school should be upgraded.
- Expand library
- Controlled growth, not just open season for developers
- Assists boaters in all daily aspects; restaurant, fuel
- Fewer empty buildings
- Small shops and art enterprises
- Make destination for weekday use as well as weekend activities
- Everything a tourist looking for: recreation (walking, biking, kayaking, fishing, boating); play area/attractions for children; family dining; B&Bs/boutique hotel; bakery; wine/cheese is what the citizens of Ridgefield want.
- Residents have to feel proud of their town and be willing to share it with visitors and tourists

**5. What do you not want to see in the downtown/waterfront? (Be specific)**

- Litter, dog feces, drug dealing, winos sleeping, illegal behavior
- A strip-mall, big stores
- Industrial, fast food, chain stores
- Anything other than locally owned businesses
- No franchises or major chains
- NO big box stores – Wal-Mart, etc
- Uses that detract from the vision that is developed for the site area
- 20/20 hindsight, poor design and lack of integration with regard to connecting the downtown/waterfront
- No modern looking structures. Don't isolate Old Town from waterfront
- No big box stores
- No franchises or chains
- Traffic-central on Pioneer – trucks a huge issue
- Chain store – big box
- Architecture that does not fit with the downtown
- Industrial buildings – should be separate from restaurants and community businesses
- Large industrial buildings
- Disgraceful residential development- Cedar Ridge and Parade of Homes are examples of developers left to their own devices
- No Wal-Mart
- No out-of-scale or disordinate development
- Less parking
- Development that doesn't fit the area
- Boat trailer parking on Main or Pioneer
- Lots of cars
- Buildings over 3 stories
- High density development
- Blight, run down shops, empty lots, mobile homes, pink flamingos, palm trees
- Chain stores – don't need Cold Stone Ice Cream
- Box stores, chains
- Break in flavor, style of town
- Light industrial; unless it's environmentally friendly
- Skyscraper ideology in architecture; box stores

- Chain stores, locally owned
- Leaving Lake River as is with major algae blooms in the summer – damages skin when touched
- Concerned about Port becoming group of private developments essentially off limits to those that don't live or work there
- Don't want to see Port/downtown entirely filled with condos, upscale shops and offices that serve only a limited portion of Ridgefield citizens
- Large chain store-type franchises
- Ridgefield has too proud a heritage to blow it on something they are not
- Mixed use – rumor has it the Port has decided to go only with retail – this would be a mistake

**The following comments were answering question #5 but we believe, based on the discussion at the workshop and the comments themselves, they are actually what people would like to see:**

- Need sustainable homes that are energy efficient – we must build in a way that supports community, not destroys it
- Specialized areas on waterfront
- Plans to eat, visit, explore, entertain
- Quality walking experience with everything connected – refuge to town to waterfront
- Expansive restaurants that cater to waterfront seating
- Boardwalks with candy shops, high-end clothing
- Hotel, restaurants
- More police presence “walking: and more community programs
- Continuity in design
- More small shops, paths to follow for miles (gravel) places to learn and mingle with nature.
- Same as #4
- Public venues (for farmer's markets, concerts, plays, etc.)
- A safe hiking and bike lane as part of the overpass
- Total riverfront access
- Business complex to compliment old town Ridgefield
- Good public moorage
- Neighborhoods need to be cleaned up
- Port development should reflect existing character of city
- Name other than Millers Landing – process should go to the public for input

**6. What are the boundaries of the downtown/waterfront? Where is it? (Use the map below)**

Maps received were scanned into the project file – we found that there was a real split as to whether downtown went as far north as the recently annexed Port property or ended in the vicinity of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Circles. This is a decision for the City of Ridgefield and we need to build into the draft action plan.

**Other Comments**

- Would like to see historical art exhibits – honor, celebrate native and pioneer ancestors
- I'm new in town. Take it with a grain of salt.

- Would love to see a waterfront development that complements existing downtown, draws new people in. Some quality residential would make sense as well. Seems like an incredible resource and something that could really enrich our incredible town!
- St. Helens has done a good job of bringing people into their downtown via the waterfront – offering good transient moorage with restrooms, shower facilities; makes St. Helens a popular destination for boaters on the Columbia River. Ridgefield needs good transient docks, destination events (waterfront concert series, etc) to draw people from outside the area.
- Hope Port, City, downtown businesses, citizens and junction realize the importance of integration and long-term benefits that working together can have.
- A good leader can follow.
- We have access to the Columbia! The waterfront should be the bomb!
- Don't try to be the Vancouver waterfront. It's great but Ridgefield is in short supply and in ten years it will be in even shorter supply. Keep it simple and close to nature to increase value.
- What about the flood zone? I remember the '96 flood and am concerned about those retail spaces on the bottom floors.
- Would like to see art work on the bridge on Pioneer and Main relating to nature and culture (birds, fish, native art).
- The integration meeting was great – thank you.
- Small towns have ruined their look with wrong planning. Sherwood, OR – old town now looks terrible due to lack of codes and planning. Their library was built with a modern look in the downtown area. Two large buildings were allowed that look more like what you'd see in a newer city. Lots of blue lamp posts and huge concrete obelisk with signage on street corners – block driver's views and do not look good. (obelisks are ~ 3x3 base, stand 6' high)
- Nice if there were large boat that could be rented (with pilot) for family excursions and parties.
- Some store owners are not friendly, do not welcome people. A smile and friendly face would help.
- We need parking –parking –parking.
- Flow of traffic and parking a huge issue in downtown.
- Miller's Landing does not do a thing for identifying Ridgefield. Sounds like a namesake, although I know about the mill connection, should reconsider the name.
- Downtown: is the meeting place – to socialize, interface with community. Hold events to bring residents and visitors together. Shop locally to support our businesses
- Waterfront: Fish & Wildlife establishing a center/office. WSU science-based facilities, water related activities/businesses and opportunity for jobs.
- Downtown: heart and soul of the community with mid-1900s feel and charm – the center of Ridgefield life.
- Waterfront: can become economic driver for vital growth to help downtown by drawing business to our area. The name of the game is Jobs, Jobs, Jobs.
- Downtown: City/Port could provide incentives for established businesses to clean up, fix up and remodel. Reduce permit rates and costs so they can grow. Incentives for new businesses to locate in downtown. The appeal will be with small business owners.
- Waterfront: use architectural elements similar to downtown for continuity. Use wildlife elements in lampposts, sidewalks, planters, and art from waterfront on the bridge into downtown.

- Plan for retail space and living space on the waterfront. People will take pride and care for the area.
- The downtown and waterfront should feel as one with connecting designs that unify.
- A destination with unique shops, space for businesses, living space above shops and condos on the waterfront
- A lovely restaurant overlooking the water/Carty Lake.
- Emphasize refuge and waterway activities
- Invite boaters to stop and sample what Ridgefield has to offer
- Ridgefield needs to a place where people and live and work
- Go to Troutdale, OR – Gateway to the old scenic highway thru the gorge. They have mixed old and new – the design works great.
- Like to see the bridge and pathway designs include visual references to the river and wildlife refuge; maybe metal salmon on the bridge, etc.
- Open up additional parking for additional people, it's a great summer launch area – out of the wind. Need overnight parking for boats to tie up.
- The refuge office should be moved to the Port.
- Keep it simple/keep it small.
- Keep intense development at junction & Discovery Corridor.
- Refuge/historic downtown character should be focus.
- Crew programs; collegiate; smell of waste water treatment plant
- Keep and promote historic style – establish a historic neighborhood/business.
- We can't be all to everybody so for our destination: Start with best audience: should be people looking for relaxed experience; walking, enjoy outdoors recreation, (birds, photography, fishing) and learning opportunities.
- Families, couples, young people – tweens, teens, 20s
- Need a motel!
- B&B: Birds & Bluegrass, Bed & Breakfast, Brut & Brews
- The refuge attracts only a small portion of society. The city needs to provide other destination points in order to draw a bigger crowd.
- There is potential to be a gateway to the refuge, but flow of visitors largely does not enter downtown. The task will be to move visitors through downtown to the refuge. Transportation will need to change if this occurs.
- Become stakeholders for dredging of Vancouver Lake.
- Widen Main Street for foot/bike to Carty Unit.
- Integrated trails for active transport around and between town and waterfront.
- Foot connection is as important as car connection to form integration.
- Lodging
- Parking
- Official historical town.
- Like the train depot idea.
- Like the “no big box” idea.
- Like the focus of pedestrian access.
- Should McCuddy area be separate from rest of waterfront?
- Donut shop needed.
- #6: should outline the boundaries so people could realize the scope of the proposed development as well as the downtown area affected by waterfront business and traffic increase.
- Give people option to shop downtown rather than just drive though it toward waterfront/refuge.

- Looking forward to the finished project. Kudos to City and Port for working together on this.
- WSDOT would request participation on any work designated for SR 501 itself. Within city limits, WSDOT is responsible for maintenance and operations from curb to curb only (including ADA ramps on our paving projects). We would work with the city on on-street parking, pedestrian and bicycle issues. Access control (driveway and intersection spacing) is vested with the city, but they are required to follow state laws on access management. Median curbing would be a WSDOT and city agreed upon item.
- Refuge should be more accessible.
- Substandard “river”