Tacoma Redevelopment: An Urban Waterfront Renaissance

Marv Coleman
Washington State Department of Ecology
Roadmap

• Brief history of Tacoma’s industrial waterfront

• Urban redevelopment process
  – Partnerships
  – Financing
  – Cleanup
  – Sustainability

• The role of state government

• Plans for the future
Location

Map showing the location of Tacoma, Washington, and Thea Foss Waterway.
Rails Meet Sails

- Northern Pacific Railroad comes to Tacoma

Photo from Washington State Rail History, www.wsrhs.org
Industrial Growth
Decline of Tacoma’s Industrial and Commercial Base

- Suburbanization of retail facilities
- Downturns in traditional industries such as lumber, foundries and shipbuilding
- Precedent setting tribal land settlements
- Growth Management Act
- Commencement Bay designation as Superfund Site by EPA
The question for the City of Tacoma is...

What do we do with this?
Spirit and Image

- Contaminated past
- Downturn of downtown
- Willingness to act
- Right policies
- Stay the course
Tacoma Takes Action

- City purchases waterfront property from the land company controlled by the railroad
- City initiates a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.
- In 1994 Tacoma negotiates an innovative Consent Decree with Metro Parks and Ecology.
Bold Action by Local Government is Key

• Recognition of urban waterfront property as an asset

• State single point of contact

• Efficiency and consistency in the cleanup process
Financial Resources

- Grants - Federal, state, local
- Private investment
- In-kind, non-profits, volunteer groups
To Get It Started...Partner!

- Interagency for Outdoor Recreation (IAC)
- Federal transportation funds
- Ecology remedial action grants
  - $30 million at 50% match
- Private sector/Executive Council of Greater Tacoma
Cleanup Process

• Cleanup Action Plan sets a consistent process for all properties.

• Model Toxics Control Act
  - Monitoring standards if contaminants are left in place
  - An established pathway for cleanup that clears the way for subsequent development
Private Investment

$75 million - Underway
$63 million - In 2008
Sustainability

- Institutional Controls

- Public Development Authority
  - Condition of sale: Covenants, conditions, and restrictions
  - Attached to property titles

- Development in accordance with
  - Master Plan Designs
  - Stormwater Best Management Practices

- Habitat restoration
The Role of State Government

- Support local governments
  - Remedial Action Grants

- Leverage redevelopment funding
  - Office of Trade & Economic Development

- Encourage collaboration
  - Fish & Wildlife
  - Tribes
  - Public Utilities
  - Civic groups and the public

- Provide a predictable and consistent cleanup process
Ecology Cleanup
2007 Focus

Upland land value changes
1999 - $10.90 sq. ft.
2001 - $25.00 sq. ft.
2003 - $30.00 sq. ft.
2006 - $38.72 sq. ft.

Parks
2009-2010
Family Campus District

Middle by 2012
Central Waterfront District

North by 2015
Historic Warehouse District
Bridge of Glass