

**Input to the City of Prince Rupert's consultation  
on  
"Waterfront East Land Use"**

Prince Rupert Port Authority



September 19, 2012

*The Prince Rupert Port Authority (PRPA) is an independent, self-governing and self-financing organization with a mission to develop and grow the Port of Prince Rupert in an aggressive, economical, safe and environmentally sound manner.*

*PRPA is responsible for facilitating and expanding the movement of cargo and passengers, in addition to the overall planning, development, marketing and management of the commercial port facilities.*

PRPA has multiple interests in the long-term development of the central and east waterfront of the Prince Rupert harbour. PRPA strongly supports this long-term planning initiative for the central and east waterfront, and encourages the City of Prince Rupert's continued leadership of this process.

PRPA's primary interest is seeing the waterfront east of Kwinitsa developed as the community's destination for recreational public waterfront access. It should be noted that PRPA also has secondary interests in the area, including tourism development, the Port's general marine operations requirements, cruise operations at Northlands Terminal, PRPA's existing office/retail interests at Atlin Terminal, and its future plans for public and commercial development in the central waterfront. However, improved public access to this area of the waterfront is viewed as a generally complimentary goal to those secondary interests.

PRPA is a steward of federal property designated for industrial-marine (i.e.'Port-related') development, which is located primarily to the west of the Kwinitsa station/lightering dock at the foot of Bill Murray drive. The land to the west of this point is also dominated by CN Rail right-of-way, has been acknowledged in both Port and municipal land use planning processes as being land best suited for Port-related development, and has a history of being used for this purpose. Public access in this area also has inherent safety-related issues. In short, it is a land base intrinsically tied to economic development and employment generation for the community.

There appears to be a significant public appetite for an area that can be permanently designated for safe, convenient, recreational access to the waterfront. The waterfront west of Kwinitsa, and its associated land uses, are poorly suited for this for the reasons outlined previously. PRPA proposes that significant progress can be made by refocusing energy on developing new waterfront access in non-conflict areas.

The waterfront east of Kwinitsa has several advantages in this regard:

- Recognition of the existing Cow Bay business area as a gathering place that fits the desired profile for public access.
- Existing infrastructure and assets that have the potential to form a contiguous and uniform 'pathway' of access (including the lightering dock, Kwinitsa station/Rotary Club park, millennium trail, Metlakatla ferry terminal, Atlin Terminal, Cow Bay retail area, George Hills Way walking path (w/ Lions Club nodes), Rushbrook marina, and Rushbrook trail)
- Close proximity and convenient access to downtown from multiple entry/exit points
- Close proximity to the majority population base in Prince Rupert that resides to the west of McBride Street.

## Recommendations:

1. The central and east waterfront area located east of the PRPA lightering dock through to (at least) Seal Cove, including Cow Bay, (hereinafter referred to as “Waterfront East”) should be viewed as a contiguous area for planning purposes.
2. Waterfront East’s current predominant zoning of C5 enables a wide mix of uses, including “service commercial” and “marine commercial” that is integral to the look and feel of both Cow Bay and George Hills Way, and should not be substantially changed.
3. The Cow Bay development guidelines remain relevant and do not require significant change. The guidelines have proven relatively successful in shaping the redevelopment of existing buildings. However, the way in which the guidelines could be adapted to accommodate new developments should be further elaborated. Similarly, it should be emphasized that these guidelines should be viewed as ‘just guidelines’, and not prescriptive rules. Practical variations on theme, especially as applied to new developments, should continue to be accommodated to encourage growth. . Additional PRPA comments relating to the Cow Bay Development Area Design Guidelines will be forwarded under separate cover.
4. Pedestrian access should be considered on an equal priority to vehicular access throughout Waterfront East, and in some areas should be considered the top priority. This would be a key principle to support the integration of nature trail development with city streets and more advanced pathways to form contiguous pedestrian access to the waterfront.
5. The development of a Third Avenue bypass would facilitate the most direct exit of larger industrial vehicles, trailered boats, and other more cumbersome traffic from the area. Moreover, it would generally reduce the volume of flow-through traffic in Cow Bay, and would support the principle of pedestrian access.
6. Parking in the area should follow the “communal” model espoused by the Cow Bay Development guidelines, rather than requiring individual proponents or projects to incorporate parking requirements. This would facilitate parking being developed in the least desirable or least developable areas of Waterfront East, and allow project objectives to be maximized in their development sites. Where possible additional on street parking is also encouraged to augment the current parking inventory. Additional PRPA comments relating to the Cow Bay Development Area Design Guidelines will be forwarded under separate cover.
7. In general, Waterfront East planning should incorporate both short and long-term actions that aim to provide a contiguous area that provides certainty of long-term public access to waterfront, and the associated provision of an infrastructure corridor that supports that access.
  - In the short-term, focus should be on cost-efficient actions that can maximize linear continuity (e.g. common signage and visual elements, directional landscaping/

- fencing/pathway materials, etc.), emphasize entry/exit points to “Waterfront East” encourage small public gathering nodes along the waterfront, and identify view points and corridors.
- In the long-term, the City should consider planning mechanisms that can improve waterside access on private waterfront properties as uses change and new development plans are implemented. This may include purchase of land, but will mostly take the shape of a public easement. For lack of a better example, the multi-decade development of the seawall in Vancouver is a good example. New developments have been required to incorporate seawall integration as they have been developed. (It should be noted this is not a call for pressure to be applied on existing businesses, or a derogatory comment on any existing businesses. Rather, when economics facilitate opportunities, a plan should be in place to take advantage of it.)
  - The result of these actions should be a prioritized list of projects that can be used to guide public and private investments into the Waterfront East plan.
8. Rushbrook Trail should be considered as being the primary long-term infrastructure project, and foundational to the Waterfront East plan. Its rehabilitation and enhancement would provide a signature element to the Waterfront East. Consideration of multiple access points would be instrumental in connecting the population base east of McBride to Waterfront East. In the short-term, the detailed costing of its repair and enhancement should be the priority to guide its longer-term development.
9. Following on the Rushbrook Trail rehabilitation, the Kaien Island Trail Study outlines a practical approach to developing a waterfront trail system, specifically the trails outlined in “Option A – East Side”. This would enable a route that connects the Seal Cove area onto Port Edward through future development of the ‘Fern’, ‘Grassy’, and ‘Port Edward’ trail segments.
10. Easily accessed beachfront, with the exception of the area directly adjacent to the west of the lightering dock, appears to be rare along the inner harbour. However, if there are any additional points, they should be identified and infrastructure planned to support public enjoyment of them, such as stairs, picnic tables, seating, etc.).
11. The provision of a contiguous area that provides certainty of long-term access to waterfront, and the associated provision of an infrastructure corridor that supports that access, will allow organizations to advance both commercial and social projects that leverage it. The City should incorporate a principle of requiring lead proponents separate from the City to develop these projects for City ‘ratification’. For example, if a kayaking support facility were to be proposed, a kayaking club should lead the proposal, financing/fundraising, design and ongoing maintenance of the facility.