



# Ridgefield Waterfront Update

September 2023



## The Ridgefield Waterfront, 2023

- Cleanup is complete, the property is now safe for the public.
- No more Industrial uses, transitioning to other employment types.
- Some public access in place now, more amenities are planned.



## The Ridgefield Waterfront, 2004

- Heavily polluted
- Cleanup was just beginning
- Still an Industrial employment center
- No public access allowed; property unsafe

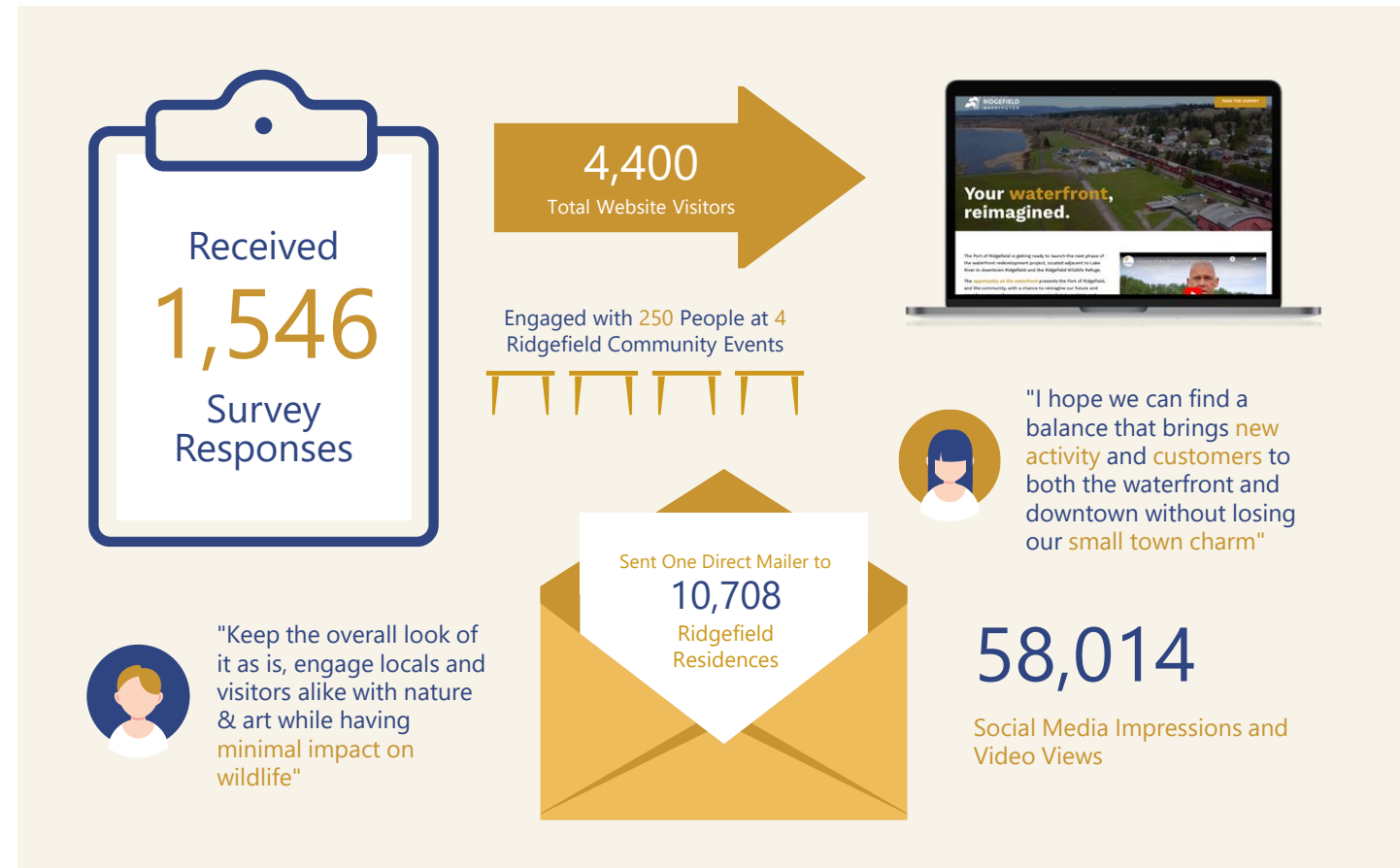


## The Ridgefield Waterfront, early 1970's

- Wood products industry: mills, wood treatment
- Hundreds of great family wage jobs
- No public access allowed; property unsafe

# Community Engagement Methods

- Messaging & Materials
- Digital Engagement
- Community Tabling
- Online Community Survey
- Incentives for Engagement



# Community Engagement Results

## Frequently Requested Amenities



100%  
Access to Lake River  
for boaters and  
swimmers



93%  
Open space and  
community park



93%  
Dining &  
entertainment



92%  
Walking trail

## Community Priorities



100%  
A walkable community  
where people can live,  
work and play



99%  
A more vibrant and  
accessible waterfront in  
Ridgefield



84%  
Shopping and  
entertainment activities

## Community Concerns



30%  
Impacts to the natural  
environment and wildlife



24%  
No concerns



18%  
Increase in traffic in  
downtown Ridgefield



11%  
Loss of open  
space



**In progress:  
Creating a new Waterfront Park**

# Ideas for Waterfront Park Amenities

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sandy beach surface

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day dock

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public restrooms

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ADA kayak launch

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kayak storage

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trail seating

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interpretive signage

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picnic tables

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Osprey nest poles

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outdoor amphitheater

---

outdoor fitness equipment

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swimming area

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beach volleyball with sand

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basketball court

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pickleball court

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wheelchair ramp to water

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Native peoples of the Columbia River exhibit

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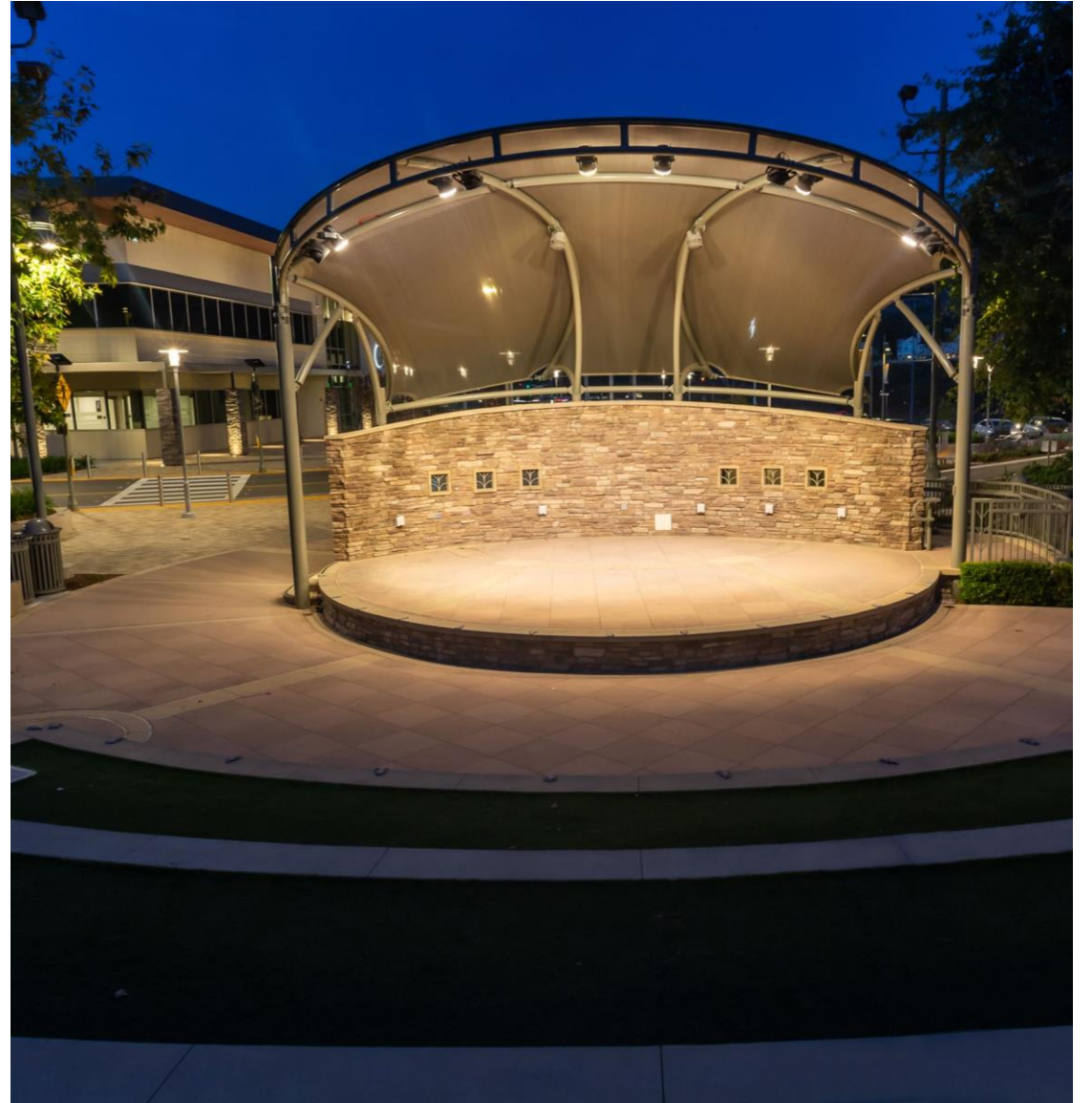
















**What's next:  
Rebuilding the Working  
Waterfront**



RIDGEFIELD WATERFRONT

# Market Analysis & Development Strategy

PREPARED FOR



PORT OF **RIDGEFIELD**  
WASHINGTON

PREPARED BY



**LELAND CONSULTING GROUP**

SEPTEMBER 2023



# Waterfront Vision

Based on the waterfront uses and amenities, community survey, and workshops conducted in 2023 with the Port Commission and staff, LCG prepared the waterfront vision shown below. While the vision is based on years of Port and community input, the Port should feel free to adjust this vision as necessary if it becomes clear that it no longer captures what the Port is trying to achieve at the Waterfront. The vision is also intended to be a tool: The Port should screen proposals for development and investments at the Waterfront against this vision. Only projects that meet the vision should be completed.

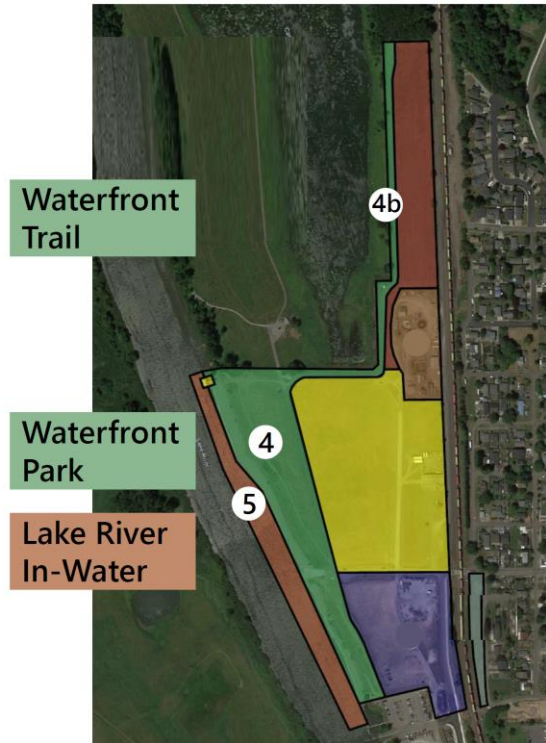
- Provide **“triple bottom line”** benefits (economic, social, and environmental) to the greater Ridgefield community.
- Generate **economic development** and high-quality jobs.
- Provide **enhanced community spaces** including a waterfront park and connections to the Lake River and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge.
- Be an **active mixed-use place**.
- Provide and improve **public access to the public areas** of the waterfront.
- **Retain public ownership** of most or all the waterfront property.
- **Bring the Port headquarters office back** to the Waterfront.
- Be **financially feasible** and beneficial for the Port and the Port’s project partners.
- Break ground as soon as possible but also take a patient point of view towards development – **doing the right thing over the long term** is more important than rushing and falling short of the vision.

## Parks, Open Space & In-Water Recreation

Areas 4, 4b, and 5 are intended for a mix of parks, open space, and in-water recreation.

These areas will deliver on parts of Waterfront Vision including to "provide enhanced community spaces including a waterfront park and connections to the Lake River and the Ridgfield National Wildlife Refuge" and to "provide and improve public access to the public areas of the waterfront."

The waterfront park area (4) is about 9 acres in size; the Lake River in-water area (5) is about 5.75 acres.

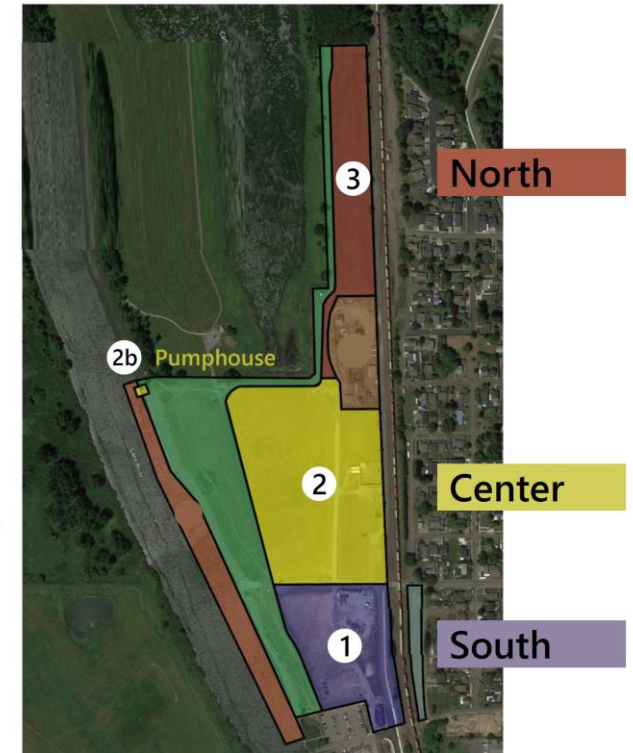


## Mixed Use Development

The north, center, and south areas are best suited for a mixed-use development. The total area of these areas is approximately 27.5 acres.

These areas will deliver on parts of Waterfront Vision including to "be an active mixed-use place; generate economic development and high-quality jobs; and bring the Port headquarters office back to the Waterfront." Development in these locations will also support the financial feasibility of the entire waterfront by generating revenue via land leases and/or other means.

The center and south sites comprise the heart of the future waterfront mixed-use area. Division Street, which separates the center and south areas, is about 525 feet long in this location. The north site is narrower (just under 200 feet wide) and at present is accessed through a narrow right of way connecting it to the center area.

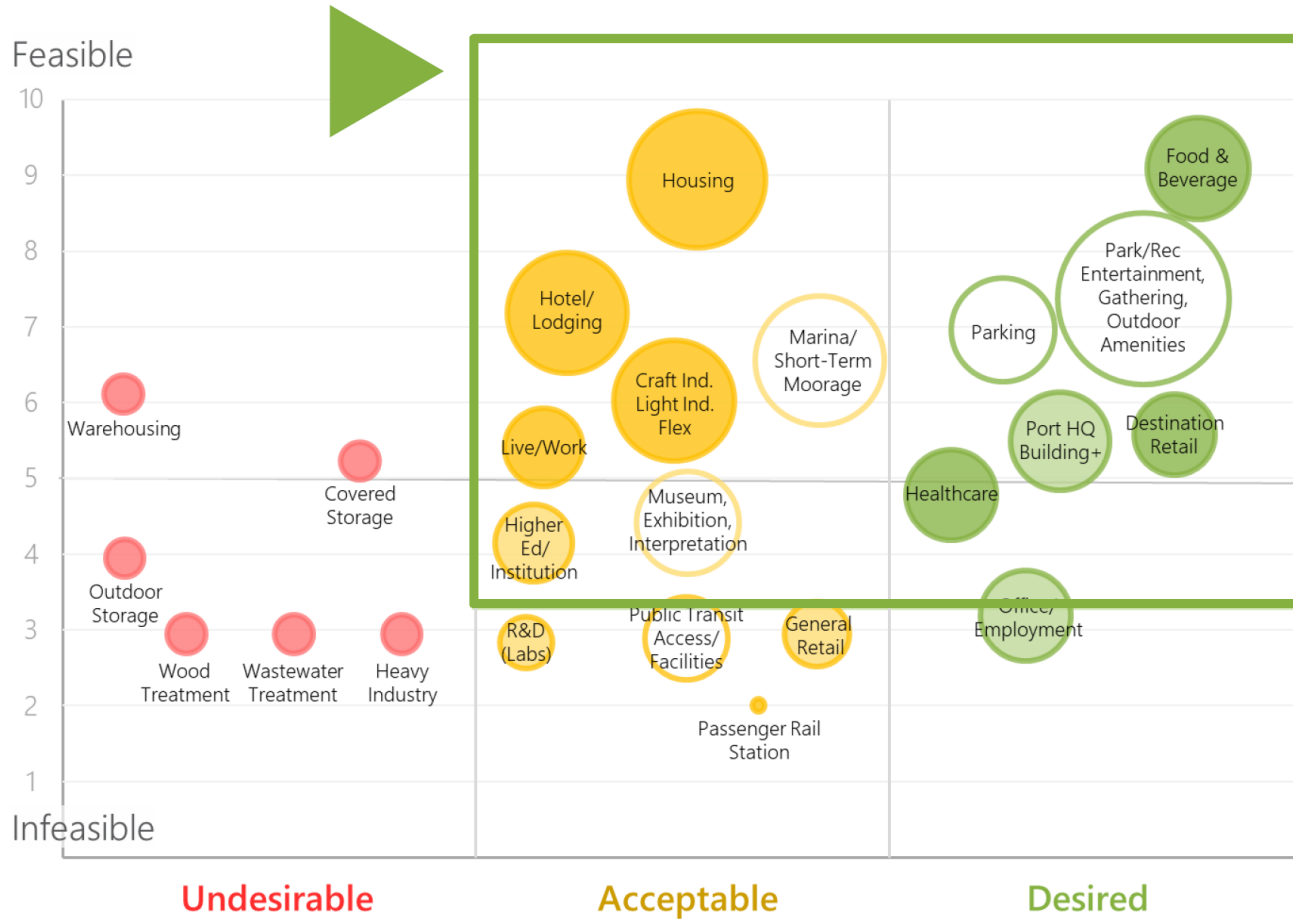


# Land Uses and Amenities: Program

The buildout of the Ridgefield Waterfront should focus on the uses in the upper right part of the figure, which are both desirable or acceptable, and feasible.

The Port should proactively focus on how these uses and amenities can be delivered to the waterfront. These are the uses that the Ridgefield community and Port want, and that are likely to be feasible for the Port, developers, and tenants. The Port will benefit from “tailwinds” when going after these opportunities.

The Port can be passive or reactive regarding the other uses. For example, while third parties could approach the Port wanting to build R&D labs, this is unlikely, and the Port should react to proposals rather than proactively pursue opportunities to build R&D labs.



## Water Sports

In order to create a special place that is distinctive from other waterfronts in Southwest Washington and Oregon, and draws both locals and visitors from a wide area, the Ridgefield Waterfront will need to build on its unique attributes.

Among the Waterfront's distinctive features are its popularity with flatwater kayakers and stand up paddleboarders (SUP). The water in Lake River is generally calm and flat when compared to major waterways like the Columbia. The Lewis River to Vancouver Lake is a designated water trail. There is less motorized boat traffic and abundant natural beauty at the National Wildlife Refuge. These features make the Ridgefield Waterfront an excellent place for kayaking and SUP.

Ridgefield is already attracting many flatwater paddlers. The [Big Parade](#) is one popular annual event, in its 12<sup>th</sup> year. National outdoor company REI runs weekly kayaking trips from the waterfront. According to [those in the industry](#), stand up paddleboarding is one of the [fastest growing sports](#) in the country, because it is easy for people of all ages, relatively affordable, and a great way to get outside.

Therefore, Ridgefield has a significant opportunity. To become well known and recognized throughout the region as the destination for great flatwater kayaking and SUP.

Hood River is one waterfront that has created a strong association with specific watersports, including windsurfing and kitesurfing. This drives regional familiarity with the waterfront, creates demand for festivals and events, and provides something interesting for people to watch—even those who never set foot in the water.



Hood River is known nationally for windsurfing.



Ridgefield can be *the place* for kayaking and SUP.

## Destination Retail

We use "destination retail" to describe a particular type of retail or commercial space: Commercial businesses that people go out of their way to patronize, often during evenings, weekends, leisure and vacation times, and often while enjoying experiences with family and friends.

People will travel further for destination retail. Specific tenants include kayak and bike rental and sales; outdoor gear and clothing; art and local gifts; books; jewelry; and other small stores. These stores naturally should sell the goods and services related to the unique activities that take place in Ridgefield such as kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, and birding. Destination retail is feasible at the Ridgefield Waterfront but can be expected to have a relatively small footprint, perhaps 10,000 to 30,000 square feet at buildout.

Destination retail can be contrasted with "convenience" or "task based" commercial space, where people go to complete a particular task (e.g., purchasing groceries or hardware). Convenience retail must be located in high-traffic locations, along major arterial roads, at the locations that are most convenient to residents or workers. Convenience retail is unlikely at the Ridgefield Waterfront.



Point Ruston, Ruston, WA

As shown above, several retailers provide [bike](#) and ["wheel fun"](#) rentals at the Point Ruston waterfront near Tacoma.

## Waterfront Park: Community Gathering and Events

The public park is a critical component of the master plan: It will provide a unique gathering place for the Ridgefield community, activate the site, and attract visitors who will patronize food and beverage, destination retail, and other uses at the waterfront.

Within the park an outdoor performance center like an amphitheater for concerts, outdoor plays, and other forms of entertainment would be a significant gathering place and traffic generator. The Port of Kalama's amphitheater is shown at right. This venue hosts weekly concerts and outdoor movies between June and August. The surrounding inclined grassy area serves as seating for the venue, and play area when events are not taking place. Most events are programmed by the operators of the adjacent hotel, indicating that both private property owners and public agencies such as the Port can be involved in programming the venue. The amphitheater can also be reserved for community events.

The Port does not plan to include the following at the Waterfront Park or Waterfront:

- Additional boat launching lanes.
- Additional parking dedicated only to boaters.
- Non-park development on any lands west of the waterfront trail.



Westin Amphitheatre, Kalama



Waterfront Park, Hood River

## Food and Beverage

LCG's assessment is that food and beverage providers—restaurants, brewpubs, coffee shops, ice cream parlors, and the like—will be feasible at the waterfront. They are also a desired use.

Food and beverage can be considered a "experiential" or "destination" commercial use because people will go out of their way to travel to restaurants in attractive locations that they want to linger and spend time in.

Several waterfront food and beverage providers in this location should be able to overcome the challenges associated with the site—its distance from I-5 and major transportation thoroughfares. The concept and viability of waterfront dining is very established, both at waterfronts around the Pacific Northwest and worldwide. Examples in Gig Harbor and Hood River are pictured at right. Seafood is a common theme at waterfront restaurants. While food and beverage should be an important part of the Ridgefield waterfront program, these may not comprise a large area on the waterfront in terms of floor area or acreage. Nonetheless, even a few food and beverage providers can help to create an incredible sense of energy and vibrancy throughout a large area.



Gig Harbor



Hood River

## Housing Types

Multiple types of housing are possible at the Waterfront, including multifamily mixed-use apartments and senior housing. While some live-work units should be feasible at the Waterfront, this is a somewhat niche product type, so the number of units offered should probably be limited. Condominiums will be infeasible or very challenging, for several reasons. First, due to construction liability lawsuits and

bankruptcies, developers have avoided building condos after 2007/2008. Second, the Port's preference for ground leases will make it very difficult for developers and condo buyers to secure financing since over the long-term, the owner's and lender's interest in the asset diminishes, as the property's reversion to the Port draws nearer.



Multifamily  
Rental Apartments



Senior



Live-Work



Condominiums  
Owner-occupied



## Craft Industrial

Craft industrial or maker's space is a type of space that includes a number of different activities, often including production, employment, retail/commercial, and food and beverage service.

This is usually a place where goods are both produced and sold. Examples include breweries, distilleries, coffee roasteries, and small-scale manufacturers. Specific projects include Vintner's Village at the Port of Benton, where wine makers share production facilities such as bottling machines, and the locations shown at right.

Such space is a good fit for the Ridgefield waterfront, where both employment and experience are important. LCG believes that one or more craft industrial businesses could be good fits for the Ridgefield Waterfront in general, and potentially for the multitenant building in particular. Good fits could include food and beverage producers, and producers of kayaks or other outdoor gear connected to the activities that take place near the site.



Starbucks  
Roastery,  
Seattle



pFriem Family Brewers, Hood River, OR

## Flex Space

The market for "flex" space is another bright spot for the Waterfront.

Flex space typically usually combines some industrial/production, a front office or commercial space, and industrial-quality building- and tenant-improvements. Examples are shown at right. The Port has expertise building flex space, for example, at Wisdom Ridge.

Flex makes up just 7 percent of all industrial space in northern Clark County. The current vacancy is 0 percent, indicating a tight market with demand outpacing supply. Average annual market rent is \$14 per square foot. There have been no new deliveries over the past year and there is no new space under construction as of early 2023.

Given zero vacancy with nothing in the pipeline, flex space could be a potential market opportunity. Preleases would reduce risk. LCG's view is that, in the near term, flex space is more viable than office space.

While flex space would generate employment at the Waterfront, it is unlikely to generate any placemaking "buzz" or catalyze other desirable uses. Therefore, the best locations for flex space may be in the North area or near the railroad tracks.



Trademark Building, Ridgefield, WA



Union Ridge Commerce Center, Ridgefield, WA

## Lodging

Lodging/Hospitality is a highly desirable land use with respect to generating tourist traffic and creating a destination, particularly if the facility includes a restaurant.

Lodging creates jobs on-site (managers and staff), although the number of workers per square foot of building area is lower than some other types of building, such as healthcare, office, or the type of multitenant building shown above.

There are many different types of hospitality formats with a large variety of room counts, quality levels, room rates and brands or flags. With a location 3 miles from I-5 Millers Landing is not suitable for a traditional hotel whose room demand is generated by a combination of business and drive-by traffic, such as a Marriott or Holiday Inn, which are typically sized at 100 to 150 rooms or more.

LCG believes that a small boutique hotel and retreat center, with perhaps 50 to 75 rooms, can be a component of the Ridgefield Waterfront. Examples include:

- The Society Hotel, Bingen, WA
- McMenamins, Port of Kalama
- Menucha Retreat and Conference Center, Corbett, OR
- Skamania Lodge, Columbia Gorge (comparable in character but not room quantity)



McMenamins Kalama Harbor Lodge, Kalama, WA



Society Hotel, Bingen, WA

# Key Infrastructure

In addition to the land uses that are anticipated, numerous infrastructure improvements must be built at the Waterfront. Some of the key public infrastructure necessary is shown on this page. However, this list is intended to identify some of the known highlights, and many other improvements will be necessary. All locations are approximate and subject to change. These projects may be designed and built by developer(s), the Port, or other parties, yet to be determined.

1. **Wildlife Refuge Trail Extension.** Potential to connect the waterfront to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge trail system and visitor's center to the north.
2. **North-South Access Road.** Required for access to WWTP and North areas, and potentially to Wildlife Refuge. The Port should seek some funding from RNWR. Must be accommodated in developer plans for Center site.
3. **Pedestrian Bridge.** At or near Division Street or Mill Street; conceptual planning is underway as of 2023.
4. **Division Street** sidewalk, streetscape, turnaround, and utility improvements are necessary. There are currently no utility services in the Division St. right of way, these could be extended under sidewalks or elsewhere.
5. **Public Parking.** City-Port parks planning, to begin in 2023, should consider the location and amount of parking.

LCG's baseline assumption is that the Port will not directly fund these infrastructure improvements, with the following exceptions:

1. **Tax Increment Financing**, which is being studied now.
2. **Pursuing Grants and/or Low-Cost Loans.**



# Thank you!

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