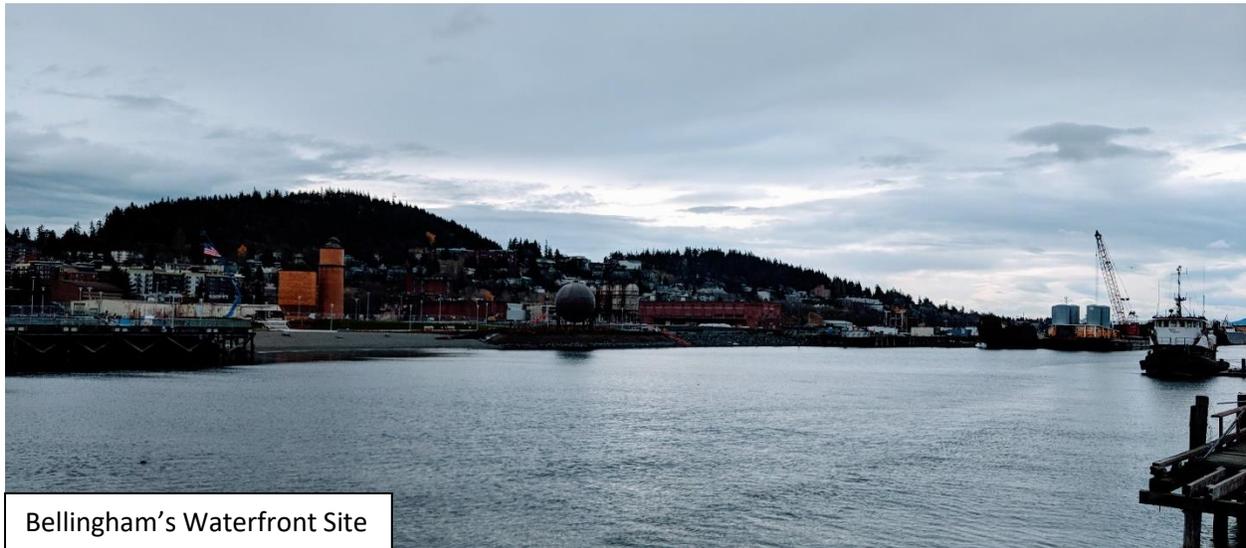


From Rust to Robust: Post-Industrial Redevelopment in American Cities and Bellingham's Waterfront

By Keanan Albrecht



Bellingham's Waterfront Site

Introduction

For my Senior Project, I started out without any idea of what I wanted to do. I knew I didn't want to try and build anything, and there weren't any massive problems I was trying to solve. I decided to lean into my interests and do a project based on the issues that interest me, and especially if they have a specific relation to me. I have always been proud to be from Bellingham, and it is a place I will always care deeply for. It is where I grew up, and I've always thought is an incredible place to live. It is also a town that is rapidly growing and changing, and my parents continue to tell me about how these changes affect them. As a student studying planning, I am wildly interested in the changes that are happening in my childhood town and a place I love.

One of the biggest changes currently happening in Bellingham right now is the redevelopment of its waterfront. There used to be a Georgia Pacific papermill right next to the

central business district. Recently though, it was demolished and Bellingham was left with a 32-acre empty lot right on the waterfront. In the last decade or so, the city has been planning to redevelop the entire space and add in commercial, residential, and recreational space for the city. I have always been interested in this area and the site plans that would come out for the space. Bellingham is a changing city, and this will be a brand-new district for the city, and I am interested in how this project will affect the city.

Another element to this project is that I am an Environmental Studies minor, and I am always interested in the environmental health of our cities and globally. Sustainable development is an important part of restoring and maintaining the environmental health of our cities, which is inexplicably tied to many redevelopment projects. Restoring these old industrial sites brings about many environmental benefits, because it involves cleaning up much of the toxic waste that is produced by these factory sites. In the case of Bellingham, there is tons of pollution on the waterfront that must be remedied to make it a livable redevelopment.

With all these factors to consider, I was able to narrow my project down to looking at post-industrial sites in American cities and the effects they have had. I ended up with a set of questions that will address some of my concerns for Bellingham as well as explore the subject of post-industrial redevelopment sites. My questions were:

- How have post-industrial redevelopment projects across the country affected their cities?
- What lessons from these projects can be applied to the City of Bellingham waterfront redevelopment?

Literature Review

My initial source for my project has been the Bellingham Waterfront Sub-Area Plan, which has provided ample information about the plans for what the city and port of Bellingham plans to do with the waterfront area. Because the project is just in its beginning stages, there hasn't been a lot of development yet, so I am relying on this heavily to extract the plans. The

initial goal is to “create a vision and develop a clear path to transform this vacant brownsfield site into a thriving mixed-use urban neighborhood.”¹ This has given me an outline as to how I can frame the rest of my research and develop deep case studies to look at the patterns of these kinds of projects.

To understand the significance of the waterfront redevelopment project, it’s helpful to have an idea of some of the history of Bellingham. Bellingham originated as a lumber and fishing town in the 1850s. It was ripe with Douglas fir and Cedar trees that were perfect for logging. Being on the water and having the rivers, they were able to build mills for all the wood they cut. Aside from logging, Bellingham also thrived on its fishing industry until salmon stocks were depleted. The major developments happening was the downtown which lasted up through the 1950s. Bellingham built large libraries and a city hall, but all just buildings in the central area. The next major development was the Bellingham Mall in the 1960s in hopes of attracting I-5 to run through Bellingham. By having a major highway run through town, it would help bring in more citizens and business alike. After that, Bellingham developed very gradually as it continued to grow.² All the while, the Georgia Pacific paper mill existed as a cornerstone to the Bellingham Economy. Still a young city, Bellingham hasn’t seen a redevelopment of this scale in about 50 years. A project of this scale will inevitably affect everyone in the city. There is no doubt it will attract more residents, change the way we interact with the downtown center, and possibly push residents out of their homes in surrounding neighborhoods.

To get an insight on the redevelopment site, I found an article from the Seattle Times that helps provide context as to how old the Georgia Pacific mill and how engrained it has been in Bellingham’s history. The waterfront site used to be a paper mill that was part of a “150-year history that began when the first sawmill was built in what is now the heart of downtown Bellingham,”³. This site was an important economic spot for Bellingham and employed hundreds of Bellinghamsters alike. It paid family wages to those that worked there and provided them with free toilet paper as a bonus. While the closing of the plant was not a

¹ (Port of Bellingham, City of Bellingham 2013)

² (Lieb 2006)

³ (Green 2007)

surprise to many, it still had an effect of all of its employees who were out of work. As the paper mill was closing though, employees hoped for it the site to be turned into something that the city can enjoy. This article helps to illustrate some of the more neglected issues that redevelopment sites can have. The workers that helped to make these sites operational are often left without jobs and have a hard time finding something new when they have been working in the same place for most of their lives.⁴ This article is more than 10 years old, but is important to add to the conversation about post-industrial development sites.

An important article used in my project is one about the Bellingham project and how it was planned. It is interesting as it goes into the different politics of Bellingham's planning process as well as the firm that was hired for the project. The article elaborates on what will be the feature points of the waterfront and the acid ball is mentioned as "Steampunk-evoking industrial remnant of the plant preserved as what even the mayor describes with a wink as a 10-percent-for-the-arts thing,"⁵. With a sly comment like that, it brings attention to the fact that the city has less public interest than one might expect, especially in a town that values local art. Another part of this article is the way it mentions other possible uses for the waterfront as well. Much of the public was hoping for one large park on the water, but instead the land is being used for mixed retail and condominium space. This is reflective of the way the economy pushes for certain kinds of development that might not otherwise be ideal for a city. This article also outlines eloquently the emotions that many Bellingham locals like myself share. It says that "The current fear is that the development, despite its passionately planned past, will emerge as simply more of the cookie-cutter commercial creep already seen on adjacent Port of Bellingham properties,"⁶. Fear of over development is a driving issue in Bellingham and frames this article to the rest of the project. Many sites can be developed to an extreme which could disrupt the cultural fabric of a city.

Sources that have helped provide academic background for this project have helped to ground it in a body of research pertaining to post-industrial redevelopment. In an article about

⁴ (Green 2007)

⁵ (Rud 2018)

⁶ (Rud 2018)

post-industrial redevelopment, Loures says that “Regarding the main benefits while for the general public, the creation of open green spaces and the creation of jobs are the most important ones, for experts they are associated with the possibility to reduce urban sprawl, and encourage recreation and connectivity.”⁷ This article adds to a background because it talks about the differences in public vs. private opinion when it comes to developing major projects within urban areas. When going through my case studies, this article can help highlight the positives and negatives that might have happened in different projects. Another article talks about the negative effects of post-industrial redevelopment, in the context of gentrification and displacement and says that “The replacement of the ecologically transgressive corresponds to the exclusion and displacement of the socially transgressive.”⁸ The contrasting articles can help show the different aspects of post-industrial redevelopment as they apply to Bellingham.

While looking into the case of the Bethlehem Steel Stacks case, there were some important articles that cited how the development has changed the area and the people that have come into the area. One article talks about the people that are coming into the area and says that “The newcomers are recasting this former steel and coal-mining area into a new kind of bedroom community, bringing their cosmopolitan tastes with them.”⁹ This article brings into the conversation how the people that come into these new developments may not be local residents and have a greater impact on the existing community. When talking about the development, one could say that it brings corporations to a city. An article mentions some downsides of this development nearby in saying that “The available jobs are service jobs primarily and a lot of the corporate offices are bringing their own employees.”¹⁰ The Bethlehem Steel stacks brings different literature to the table on the effects of post-industrial development in this area.

Investigating the Steel Yard has provided a lot of interesting details as to the way that this site was developed and reveals some unfortunate scenarios in how development can

⁷ **Invalid source specified.**

⁸ (Langhorst 2015)

⁹ (Motoko Rich 2005)

¹⁰ (Zabronsky 2015)

happen in these cases. One interesting note is the decline of industrial jobs, which used to be how many families were supported across America. This article says that “ The Steel Yard, as well as the urban office complex in the sprawling American Locomotive building, are bringing economic activity back to an area that has been a symbol of industrial decline.”¹¹ In another article, it talks about some of the pitfalls of private development that can happen and how the current residents in an area can be affected. In the case of The Steel Yard, it says that “A very small portion of the apartments would be set aside for people making 60 percent of the median family income.”¹² This article brings to the table how private developers could fall short on a promise of affordability in these cases. This will be helpful into looking into if the Bellingham plan will include and follows through with affordable housing.

Moving on to research done about New York’s Highline, this article looks at the amount of gentrification that happened, and how the project grew into more than was intended from it. It is interesting to know that the Highline came from “Robert Hammond and Joshua David, the two neighborhood activists who teamed up to save the industrial relic from demolition,”¹³. When they did pitch the idea, they did mention that it would help to generate \$200 million in real estate taxes, in hopes that it would cover the cost of the park. Though, the park will generate much more than that.¹⁴ This is a key example of how there are unintended consequences to major projects and the Highline is a prime suspect of that. It brings into the conversation of post-industrial redevelopment how there are often great intentions behind projects, and they are meant to save pieces of history. Unfortunately, though, a project can do more than much more than just save a place. A beautiful landscape can turn into a city icon or be a popular tourist destination. In the case of the Highline, where it was also a trail and a matter of being a connection, these trails and pathways are much harder to use by the people who live on them due to their overwhelming popularity. Another important take away from this article is the way it was rezoned and how the city went about giving rights away to the developers. There was a mandate that 1000 units of affordable housing must be built with

¹¹ (Hill 2016)

¹² (Paulino 2008)

¹³ (Jacobs 2017)

¹⁴ (Jacobs 2017)

developments along the Highline and that developers could build even taller if they included affordable housing. Unfortunately, "a separate study by a city councilman's office indicates that only 348 of them are in West Chelsea,"¹⁵ The Highline demonstrates how there are times when the developers will find a loophole around a city plan and still not develop in an equitable way. The developers only had a small percent of their affordable housing built on the Highline.

This next article about the highline is important because it talks about how the creators want to try and make up for the effects the highline had on gentrification in New York by creating a site that can be used as a resource for other places creating rails to trails projects. It says that Hammond and David have "created an online forum that offers advice for those embarking on similar infrastructure reuse projects,"¹⁶ By doing this they are helping tackle problems that many cities face when planning post-industrial redevelopment projects. The reason I bring this article into play is because it is important to know that the people behind these projects have good intentions and it's good to know what factors are being considered when planning. It is rare that cities plan projects from scratch, because there is always something out there to pull inspiration from. The Bellingham waterfront project pulls a lot of inspiration from gasworks park and it will be interesting to see how it serves its community as well. As of now, Gasworks park has been a tourist attraction and common places for video shoots. it's not finished yet, but the Bellingham waterfront could turn out in a similar way.

This next article is from the New York Time's and highlights the effects that the Highline has had on the community along with the soaring property valuations that come along with it. It starts like most articles about it talking about the insane overcrowding. It makes the witty remark asking, "Was this a park or a museum?"¹⁷ This brings back into the conversation this idea of over redevelopment. To what extent is this a preservation project or a city attraction? These are not natural sites, but a repeat story of these overly glamorous sites where citizens get mad if someone accidentally steps on a plant (which happens all the time in parks). There is another narrative in this article about how the Highline is so frequently visited, but only half

¹⁵ (Jacobs 2017)

¹⁶ (Gibson 2017)

¹⁷ (Moss 2012)

those visitors are New Yorkers.¹⁸ This brings up the point that many residents might not think of when a project is happening in their neighborhood. Tourists will want to come visit and take pictures in what feels like your backyard. In Bellingham, people are very proud of their small local feeling, and many are excited for the waterfront redevelopment, but I doubt that they will be happy when there are tourists in the way of their trail run on their way to the water. The Highline is also a huge connector to the city, which the waterfront will also be. Being weary of these issues will be important for the years to come when everyone is there to enjoy the water. The last big point that is expounded on is how the Highline affected property around the area and local long-standing businesses. In 2005, the city up zoned the area where the highline came to be for luxury development. In the article it says that “Between 2003 and 2011, property values near the park increased 103 percent,”.¹⁹ This has also caused problems for residents and small businesses that have existed in the area for multiple generations. With rising property values, many of these people can’t afford to stay in the neighborhood, and the businesses also get pushed out by luxury brands coming in to set up shop.²⁰ As the Bellingham waterfront contuse to be built, there will be high rise apartment buildings with views of the whole bay. These could attract wealthy residents that would want to be frequenting high end brands that move into the commercial spots by the waterfront. This could potentially threaten the businesses that have been in Bellingham’s downtown for years.

This next article highlights the importance of these developments and how important community programming is to help make these parks popular. The article talks about how the Highline was created for the neighborhood but doesn’t do much for the neighborhood. It also talks about how the creators of the Highline are meeting with other rails to trails developers to help ensure that they don’t make the same mistakes they did. There is a large emphasis on equity in their planning. Hammond and Davis have also created Friends of Highline which is a non-profit that organizes community engagement for teens and emphasizes environmental stewardship. To make Friends of Highline more approachable, “Friends of the High Line also

¹⁸ (Moss 2012)

¹⁹ (Moss 2012)

²⁰ (Moss 2012)

started putting on occasional events within the public housing campuses themselves, avoiding the swarms of tourists,”²¹. Most of the residents around West Chelsea before the Highline was built were primarily minorities. When it was built, they didn’t see many people using it that resembled them, because it was a largely white crowd of people attracted to the Highline and they felt displaced in their own neighborhood. A lot of affordable housing was also in West Chelsea, which got pushed out by these new developments.²² Affordable housing is an extensive issue that faces most modern cities. Bellingham has a lot of affordable housing in its downtown area and even the light house mission and food bank a couple blocks away from where the waterfront development will be going in. There is a worry for these places to be displaced with new people moving and the city of Bellingham wanting to move where the low income and homeless population reside.

Methodology

Summary

After establishing my research questions, I had to figure out how to go about this project and gather enough information to answer these questions. To learn about post-industrial redevelopment sites in American cities, I had to have case studies to base my research off. I also had to learn more about the Bellingham waterfront redevelopment in order to learn about potential problems that could arise from the proposed changes. I also wanted to investigate the history of Bellingham in order to understand the significance of this redevelopment project in relation to other large developments that have happened in Bellingham. Community outreach was something I wanted to integrate into my project as well in order to collect opinions of people currently living in Bellingham as well. Lastly, I wanted to distill certain themes from my different case studies and apply them to Bellingham.

The Master Plan

²¹ (Bliss 2017)

²² (Bliss 2017)

In order to truly understand my project, I spent time reading through the Bellingham Waterfront Sub-Area Plan in order to gain a greater knowledge of what was in the plan. I focused primarily on the residential, commercial, and recreational aspects of the plan, because those were topics I was looking into and comparing with other case studies. I also read many articles that made speculations about the waterfront. These articles came from the Bellingham Times as well as the Seattle Times mainly, but there were articles from other sources that talked about the importance of the project.

History

This aspect of my research was challenging for a few reasons, but also fascinating at the same time. I am nor have I ever been a history buff, but it was incredibly interesting to learn about my hometown and how certain things came to be. Another challenge is that there's no clear history page on the different developments of Bellingham. To gain a knowledge base of the different developments from Bellingham, I read a variety of articles that focused on different elements of Bellingham's history. Some of these articles consisted of the way Bellingham moved from settlement to town, the way the population has grown, and how Bellingham went from four towns to one. This step of research was long and arduous but did help inform the significance of the waterfront Redevelopment.

Case Studies

Finding case studies that fit this project was something that took some time, but it was necessary to find sites that I could focus on. I decided to focus on sites in American cities, because while there are many great examples from European cities, it is hard to compare them. Europe has a much longer history of industry and planning, and I wanted all my case studies share elements with the Bellingham site. In order to go about researching all these sites, they all consisted of finding relevant articles that gave background on the histories of each site. After learning about the story of each site, I would read articles that would talk about the effects each of these sites had on their respective cities. This aspect of the research was a bit more difficult, because some sites had more information on them than others. The one exception to

these processes was gasworks park, which is extremely local, and I've been able to experience it as well.

- **Bethlehem Steel Stacks**

This site was intriguing for several reasons. I chose this because it has also been developed on a waterfront. Having the waterfront determines a lot more for the way that a city develops an area and what they choose to include in the plans, as well as the way that residential space is thought about. The Bethlehem site has a large focus on entertainment space and how it is utilized by the different entities that own it. Bellingham's site will have plenty of recreational space, which opens the conversation of how it can be utilized by the city. Because of these factors, the Bethlehem Steel stacks were a great choice as a case study.

- **The Steel Works**

This was one of the more unique sites to research, because it was focused on a human oriented space. The Steel Works is a much smaller site that became a creative space for an artist community of metal workers in the city. There was less planning involvement from the city it occurred in, but it was an example of what could happen when a more organic development happens. It's also an example of a space that was changed in an impoverished area of a city, which is an important part of the Bellingham redevelopment. The Bellingham waterfront is near the lighthouse mission, food bank, and many affordable housing units, which are important public assets to be considered in these projects. This was the main driver for why it was an appropriate case study.

- **The Highline**

The Highline was an important case study because it presented a plethora of information on redevelopments. It is one of the most famous redevelopment projects and an example of hyper gentrification resulting from a redevelopment. Another aspect of this site is that it acts as a means of connection within a city. As a park, it runs throughout the city and can be used as a mode of transportation to get from different parts of New York. Using this idea of connection is important, because Bellingham's waterfront will connect trails running along the north and

south ends of town. With this new node in the city, it's interesting to look at how people were able to use the highline to move through New York, which is a comparison I wanted to draw from. While it is on the extreme end of the effects of redevelopment, it's important to learn from all the same.

- **Gasworks Park**

Gasworks Park is a staple in the Pacific Northwest and serves as an icon in Seattle. It has also been around for a much longer timeline than these other case studies which is helpful in looking at more long-term effects of a redevelopment site. The size of these two sites are also somewhat comparable as well as also being right along the water. It is important to draw from this extended timeline and how Gasworks Park affected change across multiple neighborhoods. Using this idea of how a site affects multiple neighborhoods made Gasworks Park a great site to use as a case study. It is also very familiar and accessible, which helped make research much easier.

Community Outreach

Because I don't live in Bellingham anymore, I wanted to gather opinions of people who currently live in Bellingham. I also wanted a chance to connect with people who are outside of my network of friends and family. I started off by emailing many of the nearby neighborhood organizations, because I thought that this redevelopment might be something that concerns people who live nearby. The next step was posting on some form of network that people in Bellingham were active on. I used the platform Nextdoor, which is a social media platform that's based on what neighborhood you live in. Nextdoor seemed like an acceptable platform, because it engages people over issues in their neighborhoods. The message I used to ask people was:

Hello! My name is Keanan Albrecht and I'm a senior at the University of Washington studying Community, Environment, and Planning. I moved to Bellingham when I was 2 years old and grew up in the Cornwall Park Neighborhood. I went to Parkview Elementary, Whatcom MS, and

Bellingham HS. I have always loved Bellingham, its outdoor opportunities, and amazing variety of local businesses.

I am currently working on my senior project looking at the Bellingham Waterfront Redevelopment. I am researching the effects that post-industrial redevelopment sites have on their cities and specifically the surrounding neighborhoods. I have a few questions where I would love to hear your opinions and concerns.

- *Were you able to provide input to the City of Bellingham for what the new development should have and how it should function?*
- *How do you see this development affecting your neighborhood? (traffic, housing prices, neighborhood culture, public safety, etc.)*
- *Are you more excited or concerned for the development of the waterfront?*

Thanks for your time and I truly appreciate any opinions that you want to share. I have a deep love for Bellingham and want to see my hometown thriving in the years to come

Sincerely,

Keanan Albrecht

This post lead me to be in touch with a former port commissioner of the city of Bellingham, Mike McAuley. Interviewing him helped me gain insight to the process of how the waterfront redevelopment was planned.

Distillation

The last piece of my project was looking for overarching themes from all these case studies. Even though these sites were different in many ways, there were also many commonalities. Through the lessons learned through these case studies, I could determine possible outcomes that could effect the city of Bellingham.

Findings

Bethlehem Steel Stacks

After Reading up on the Bethlehem Steel Stacks, there were some key takeaways from the articles. The Bethlehem Steel Stacks was once a steel mill turned park and entertainment space has become a popular attraction for people visiting Bethlehem, PA. An Important lesson from this site is the entities that control it. Because this was such a large Development that plays host to so much entertainment, has become a corporate presence in the town. One aspect is the amphitheater that can host concerts at the park, which requires some big money to bring in big artists. While this can be incredible events, the Steel Stacks can charge as much as \$100 to see The Chainsmokers, Steve Miller Band, or Weezer. At this point, this becomes much more than simple concerts in the park. When many people think of concerts in a park, they don't imagine having to spend up to \$100 for a ticket. These high prices are controlled by the corporate entities in charge and often exclude many of the citizens that used to enjoy small scale events.

Another lesson from the area is the shift in jobs that were created and the people that moved in. Before the Steel stacks shut down, there were many blue-collar family wage jobs that provided for many families in the area. Once the area became a park and entertainment center, there were no more blue-collar jobs, but instead a shift to very polarized kinds of work. Because of all the corporate control of the area, there were many big wig businesspeople who came to work in the offices around the park. Many of these are high salary jobs run by non-local residents. The other aspect of work in the area is all the service jobs necessary to run the park. These are minimum wage jobs that are run by locals of the Bethlehem area and do not sufficiently provide for their families. Many new communities formed in the Bethlehem area comprised of city dwellers that sought escape outside the city. The formation of these new communities has skewed the demographics of the area and continues to change the area of Bethlehem, PA.

The Highline

In researching the Highline in New York City, there were a few themes to take away from this case study. The Highline is an old railway that was converted into an elevated park

that runs around New York. While this is an incredible feat of engineering and landscape architecture, there were also lessons to be learned from the aftermath that came into this area. The first theme was this idea of over redeveloping it. It is a gorgeous park that attracts visitors from all over, but in a sense it loses elements that make it feel like a park. With so much to see and explore along The Highline, there it has become a popular tourist destination and has received coverage from a variety of media outlets. With so many people visiting the highline, it becomes a difficult place to simply run or bike along for the people who live or use it frequently to get around their neighborhood.

With the incredible crowds that The Highline has attracted, many developers have moved into the area in hopes of making a profit from the beautiful landscape. Highrise apartments and condominiums have popped and allowed for many new residents to move into the area. The average cost of living has skyrocketed in the area, which was originally low income and impoverished area of New York City. Many of the people who originally lived and worked in the area were pushed out to make room for these new people and fancy businesses. In the development process, there were talks of affordable housing, but the result was not great enough for many of these people to stay.

The Steel Works

The Steel Yard in Providence, RI, is another case of a repurposed Steel mill. It is a much smaller scale of a space that changed, but still sweeping effects on the area. When the steel mill in this area closed, the building was taken over and turned into a creative space for metal working and artists. It has become a studio to learn how to work with metal. This became a very people-oriented space and has received an incredible amount of recognition for its uses of space and community development. One aspect of this area is that it started to attract many new residents that came for the art and creative community. Before that, it was a low-income area of many who worked in the industrial spaces. A demographic shift overtook the area and has begun to push out many of the poorer residents in the Area.

On top of the demographic shift, there was a lot of criticism on the way that the space was developed. As soon as these surrounding industrial spaces in the area started to close,

developers came into the area to make use of the space as well. There were large vacant buildings that became office spaces for new companies to invest money into the area. When offices came to the area, there was suddenly a need for living space for these new workers. Because of the history of the area, there were promises of affordable housing units and making it suitable for those older residents that called the area home. Unfortunately, many back-end deals happened and much of the private development lacked said affordable housing units. With these changes, the primary community was pushed out and has been forced to move elsewhere. What began as a creative and useful idea for space turned into an area that pushed out a community of hard-working people.

Gasworks Park

Gasworks Park in Seattle, WA is a Pacific Northwest Icon and has been around the area for years influencing change over the past several decades. The site began as a gas plant on the Northern tip of Lake Union. A plant that used to produce most of the electricity for the Seattle area is now one of the most prominent parks in Seattle. The Wallingford Neighborhood that surrounds Gasworks park has experienced change as the recreation of gasworks has cleaned up the once polluted area. Once the city created the park and started to clean up the pollution that was leaked into the area, the neighborhood became more livable. As this happened, it became a much more sought-after area to live in, drew more families to the area.

With a cleaned-up part of Seattle and beautiful location along Lake Union, Seattle began to attract interest from companies looking to invest big money into the area. Amazon took over South Lake Union and caused many negative effects to the people that lived there. Google set up a mini campus a couple blocks down the road as well as an Adobe office. With investment from these large tech companies, many tech workers and artists moved into the area, which has eventually spread to the Ballard area. These areas have begun sprouting up higher end apartments and new businesses to serve these new residents. The Ballard neighborhood is now home to many popular breweries and restaurants that were not there before. This has changed what was an industrial area. Gasworks Park has become an iconic spot in Seattle, but the effects of it have spread across multiple neighborhoods over the years.

Conclusion

After looking through some case studies, there were several large themes to pick out from these and look at them through the lens of Bellingham. As this project brings about huge changes in the next few years, there are some important things to consider.

The first important theme to consider is how plans change from start to finish. It took about 10m years to finalize plans for the waterfront redevelopment, and they changed vastly from start to finish. I investigated the amount of community outreach they did, which was there, but could always have been better. Through the outreach I did, many people felt either excluded or that their voices weren't heard in the planning process. The city did hold meetings throughout the process, but as those events can go, they were difficult for many to attend which limited the input they had for the planning process. Another voice that could have been considered more was that of Western Washington University who could have more stake in the land on the water. The primary stakeholder was the port of Bellingham, because they held the land that was being developed.

As mentioned before, the waterfront site is near many social services in Bellingham, and as newer residents move into the residential units on the waterfront, there is the risk of those services being lost or displaced. The lighthouse mission and food bank are important to many citizens of Bellingham and could be at risk of displacement from a surge of newcomers. Bellingham does not have a diverse demographic spread, and many of the people who currently live in the low-income housing in the area may not have their voices heard as these plans could continue to develop.

Another big theme of this project is the idea of outside investment. When an area changes and becomes nicer, companies love to move in and use it as a home. Bellingham does not currently have huge companies like Amazon, Google, or Adobe, but with new development, it could come on the radar of a company. Bellingham is always known for being a happy place to live and has been growing quickly in the past few years, but with a big investment, this could accelerate this process. Many residents in Bellingham live there on a very fixed income and

settled there permanently. An influx of high wage workers would spike up the cost of living and threaten the affordability for many of the people who currently call Bellingham home.

The last theme to look at is how the space is used. In the case of the Bethlehem Steel Stacks, the space was used as entertainment and charges astronomical amounts to attend events there. The Bellingham waterfront isn't planned as a huge entertainment space, but it is important to think about how this space caters to everyone in Bellingham, because it is an extension of downtown. Downtown Bellingham has many bars and delicious places to enjoy at all hours of the day. Many of these places are cheap and affordable to the young and older people of Bellingham, so it is important for this new area to remain consistent with that. As the Bellingham waterfront continues to develop and take shape, it will be interesting to see how it affects the rest of the city. I have high hopes for the project and area and I believe that it will can be a centerpiece of the city in the near future.

What I learned

Going into this project, I was focused on making it something academic and accomplishable. This would allow me to have something interesting to talk about in job interviews. I have focused my education on environmental planning, so this projects goal was further my knowledge of environmental with a focus on a very specific case. In retrospect though, I think that I could have picked something more involved. At the core, this was purely a research project that would potentially make me feel closer to my hometown.

I learned through this project, that research is not something that I am incredibly passionate about, but simply necessary for everything academic. Spending my year doing primarily research with ample amounts of overlapping content was long and arduous. A big highlight of my project was getting to communicate with people and getting in touch with current residents of Bellingham. It was helpful to learn about how other people feel about the process that the city of Bellingham took in planning this development.

One aspect of this project I found interesting was how Bellingham chose an international firm to redevelop the site. Bellingham has always prided itself on being a shop

local kind of town, and this decision ruffled a lot of feathers with residents of Bellingham. This was an uncharacteristic decision made by the city, which has been met with plenty of negative feedback. It goes to show the importance that different stakeholders play in this process.

To build on this, I was interested to learn about the wild unreal of stakeholders that must be considered with any of these redevelopment projects. This was an important part of the Bellingham project, and a reoccurring thread to follow in my case studies. It's wild how often money and economic interests are the sole drivers in these. The difference that corporate organizations make in these decisions is astronomical!

Overall, I think that I really did learn a lot through this project. I can't say it will be a lifelong pursuit, but it does help that I love Bellingham. No matter what happens from the results of this Development, I will still be proud to be from Bellingham. I can't wait to go home and hang with my parents for a few days!

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