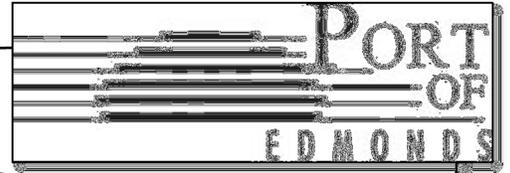


## Media Release – City of Edmonds Port of Edmonds



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To: Media

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### **PORT OF EDMONDS APPROVES FUNDING FOR WATERFRONT CONNECTOR PROJECT**

*Port Commissioners Approve \$1.5 Million Contribution*

**(Edmonds, WA)** - At its Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, following a presentation and request by Edmonds Mayor Dave Earling, the Edmonds Port Commission voted unanimously to contribute up to \$1.5 million in construction funding to the Edmonds Street Waterfront Connector project, proposed by the City of Edmonds. With details yet to be finalized, the Commissioners stipulated the funds will be provided to the City when the project proceeds into the construction phase.

Referring to the very real safety concerns the Port and its tenants face now, and the increased safety threat in the future, Port Commissioner Jim Orvis stated: “The Port has been concerned about the waterfront safety problem for years. It took a determined effort by all stakeholders to find a solution. Mayor Earling assembled a task force of those stakeholders, including City, Port, Washington State Ferries, BNSF Railway, regional transit organizations, and Edmonds residents. They found an excellent answer that meets the need at reasonable cost and minimum environmental impacts.”

Port Commissioners agreed that protecting the Port's facilities, tenants and the thousands of visitors to the waterfront is of paramount concern. The Port has been a consistent partner over the past 3+ years on this project, having contributed \$100,000 in direct funding for both the initial Alternatives Analysis and the follow-on process of developing alternative design concepts. In addition, Port Commissioner Orvis has co-chaired the Mayor's Task Forces in both instances.

The Edmonds Street Waterfront Connector is a \$27.5 million, single-lane structure designed to link Edmonds Street at Sunset Avenue to the Brackett's Landing North parking lot. It will serve as an emergency-response corridor, pedestrian and bicycle access, and potential vehicle off-load route for ferries stranded by stalled trains blocking the Main and Dayton Street crossings.

The Waterfront Connector is a response to the mounting public safety hazard that the increasing volume of trains passing the Main and Dayton Street crossings pose to the Waterfront District and its businesses, residences, visitors, and the Port of Edmonds. Most current data show that over 40 trains daily block these crossings for up to 90 minutes. As train volumes grow over the next decade, and with the eventual addition of a second track, these two crossings will be closed upwards of 4 hours per day, rendering the Waterfront District virtually stranded when emergencies occur. Fire and emergency medical response could be substantially delayed, posing an unacceptable risk, especially in light of the Port's multimillion-dollar investments in facilities along the entire Waterfront.

After extensive analysis, public engagement, and recommendations from City Council, a reduced-cost, streamlined design concept was presented at the Council's October 23<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting, receiving their approval.

"To say I'm pleased with the Port Commission's decision is an understatement," remarked Mayor Earling. "The safety of our Waterfront businesses, residences, visitors, and the Port itself are of the utmost concern to me and the City Council. The Port's decision to contribute substantial funding goes a long way towards building a solid local base to help us secure the necessary federal matching dollars to make this project a reality. My thanks go out to the Commissioners."

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