

PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY

Northern State Public Meeting | June 5, 2014

A community meeting was hosted by the Port of Skagit, and its partners, Skagit County and the City of Sedro-Woolley on June 5 to generate discussion about the future of Northern State. Over 100 people attended the meeting. Information was presented in an informal format on key topic areas, including property ownership, market conditions, existing buildings, and natural resources. Public input was collected at stations focusing on each of the topics areas and on comment cards. Participants were also asked to share their “big idea” for redevelopment of the property and voted on their preference for general reuse category. Comments and key themes resulting from the community meeting are summarized below.

Adaptive Reuse Voting Exercise

- Education and Research Campus- 53.5
- Specialty Residential- 33
- Expanded Existing Uses- 26
- Hospitality Destination-19
- Light Industrial and Flex Space -11.5
- Commercial Office and Business Park- 4

Community Priorities, Comment Card Exercise

- Historic Preservation- 87% of respondents rated historic preservation as important or very important
- Public Access- 86% of respondents rated public access as important or very important
- Job Creation- 62% of respondents said that job creation was important or very important
- Tax Revenue- 29% said tax revenue said that important or very important
- Pubic Investment- 27% of respondents said minimizing public investment was important or very important



Above: Results from the community voting exercise regarding potential reuse options.

Guiding Principles	Not Important		Neutral		Very Important	Total Votes
	1	2	3	4	5	
Creating Jobs/Employment	4	2	15	20	14	55
Creating Tax Revenue	9	8	18	6	8	49
Keeping Property in Public Ownership	3	3	4	8	34	52
Preservation of Historic Architecture	1	4	2	11	35	53
Minimize Public Investment in Property	11	7	14	7	5	44
Public Access to Facility	3	2	2	6	37	50

Total Count= 55

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Key Themes

- Social services was the most popular theme. 55 comments were submitted referencing social service amenities, medical facilities, clinics, rehabilitation centers, hospice, veteran facilities, resources for the homeless, or transitional housing.
- Job training-18 participants referenced job creation, including vocational training such as expanding existing Job Corp. program
- Nearly all participants listed multiple ideas, and roughly half suggested that more than one use be located on the property. Mixed-use communities were a popular concept.
- Though not reflected in the priority ranking process, many participants commented that private funding or grant dollars would be needed to restore the buildings.
- Public ownership and public access were both overwhelming popular
- Participants seemed split on tourism. Many people were opposed to tourism and wanted to encourage community-oriented uses. Many others supported a conference center or McMenamin's type venue.
- History of the use is important. Many participants used the history of the property as inspiration for the future use and recommended agriculture, social services, and vocational training in their ideas for redevelopment.

Big Ideas for Redevelopment

List of ideas written by attendees follow by number of times mentioned

- Social services, medical facilities, clinics, rehab, or hospital—mental hospital being the most frequent recommendation, excludes veteran-specific facilities (33)
- Educational and research facilities—Universities, research centers, charter schools (19)
- Habitat restoration and environmental protection (15)
- Agriculture—farm to table concept, agricultural education, community gardening, training, farmers markets, culinary arts (15)
- Veterans facility (15)
- Parks, open space, general recreation (13)
- Vocational and job training, i.e. expansion of Job Corp (14)
- Transitional housing or human resources for homeless and low-income communities (8)
- McMenamin's style resort or similar destination resort (8)
- Therapeutic agricultural farm (8)
- Senior services and housing(8)
- Convention center (6)
- Government offices (6)
- Business park or high-tech campus (5)
- Environmental training and outdoor education (4)
- Museum or Interpretive Center (4)
- Hospitality—hotels and restaurants(4)
- Camping or recreation base camp (3)
- Fair Grounds (3)
- Aquatic center (3)
- Residential housing (2)
- Prison (2)
- Ghost tours
- Zoo
- Retail