



Q. I've heard the Marine Science Center is working on expansion plans. What's up?

A. For some time the Marine Science Center has been exploring options for renovating and expanding our facilities, in order to address a growing urgency for its mission, *inspiring conservation of the Salish Sea*. This vision was articulated in our Strategic Plan approved by the Board in 2014. Since then we've steadily been putting pieces in place to actualize this vision.

Q. Why is this necessary and why now?

A. In 2016 Washington State Parks commissioned an assessment on the condition of the pier where the Marine Science Center aquarium is located. That report concluded that while the pier is structurally sound at present, it cannot meet future needs; in short it 'has lived its useful life and needs to be repaired or replaced'. In a separate but related concern, the boat launch facilities and the pier at Fort Worden need to be modified to allow for littoral drift - for sand to migrate naturally along the beach. Currently sand builds up in the boat launch ramp and vehicles regularly get stuck in the sand. State Parks wisely decided to address these two projects in one comprehensive plan. Funding for the planning of both projects was approved by the Washington State Legislature for this current biennium. State Parks has hired a team of consultants to lead a Pre-Design planning process for these facilities. The planning will address the scale and siting of each of the functions in one cohesive plan. The process will include input from stakeholders and the public. The Marine Science Center's needs and its timeline for expansion dovetail with the State Park's concerns around the pier and boat launch. Therefore, they will be folded into the planning process to maximize the value of the state's investment. This Pre-Design process is underway and is scheduled to wrap up in August 2019.

Q. What kinds of changes are you seeking for PTMSC?

A. At this early stage of planning, the Marine Science Center has committed to the following five overarching goals for the project:

1) *Building Green for a Healthy Blue Future*

While adhering to best practices of green-building design, we'll be developing facilities that improve the resilience of adjacent near-shore and marine ecosystems, and which are not only designed for sea level rise but provide an exemplar for similar projects.

2) *Design to Welcome Visitors*

Create an inviting exterior with clear wayfinding, captivating visitors from their first impression and enhancing their visit experience. This requires a thoughtful approach throughout, starting as guests enter through the Fort Worden gates, carrying through their entire visit, all the way to an enticing invitation to return.

3) *Expand Capacity to Meet Growing Demand*

Demand for PTMSC programs has exceeded the capacity of our current facility, particularly in the high season of summer. Lifelong education programs such as summer camps, school programs, and special events are all regularly constrained by space limitations. Collections, too, have outgrown our building. A recently-added gray whale skeleton should be on display for all to enjoy, and the orca skeleton's tail needs to be attached for best effect... impossible in our current

space. While expansion is urgently needed, we are committed to scaling the facility appropriately for a realistic capital campaign goal and for operational financial sustainability.

4) *Strengthen Cohesion of the PTMSC Workplace Culture*

Staff offices are currently dispersed among three different buildings, creating challenges to organization-wide communication cultural integration. Current average square footage per staff member is only 88 square feet; in one 10'x10' office on the pier, 5 staff share work spaces.

5) *Plan for long term flexibility*

To plan a building for a 50-year life span, the design must allow for adaptability in exhibit design and layout, educational practices, technology and staffing.

PTMSC looks forward to working collaboratively with State Parks and the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (PDA) in developing a plan that strives for these high level goals in the most timely and cost effective approach possible.

Q. In the new facility, what do you envision within the exhibits?

A. Our mission guides everything we do, including this facilities initiative. Public awareness of issues affecting the Salish Sea has never been more important. PTMSC has long served as a local center for education and action in support of environmental sustainability. Public engagement in creating solutions to environmental challenges is truly essential. Toward both ends, PTMSC will create a cohesive and compelling story through our exhibits and programs, consistent with our mission to *inspire conservation of the Salish Sea*.

Museum/Aquarium planning is a multi-step process. With mission and vision at the core, we are developing a long term program and business plan. The next level of detail is interpretive planning which defines the stories and messages, to lay the groundwork for exhibits, education programs, and new initiatives. With ample room for creativity, there are a few "given" elements: aquarium exhibits; the orca skeleton; and the gray whale skeleton acquired in 2016 will each certainly be features of the expanded facility exhibitions and programs.

Q. How will you fund the planning that is essential to pulling together a strong plan?

A. Additional funding and resources dedicated to this planning work are being factored into budgets and funding plans for 2019 and beyond. Key to an exceptional plan and the eventual exceptional facility will be input of staff along with additional expertise of consultants. This year we've allocated portions of current staff time toward these efforts and have secured necessary resources to bring additional expertise into the planning and fund-raising processes.

Q. How big is the Marine Science Center now, and how much do you plan to expand?

A. Currently our combined facilities total 6,552 square feet, 2,861 of which are exhibits. The Marine Science Center annually serves about 18,000 visitors in this exhibit space. Exhibit space represents 44% of the total square footage. Our ratio of visitors per square foot - a measure of popularity for science museums - is 46% above the national average. Classroom space represents about 20% of the total and our citizen science lab spaces total 9%. The remainder is offices and storage. The scope of our expansion will emerge out of the current planning process. Financially sustainable operations maximizing impact to our mission will be a primary guide to scaling the facility just right.

Q. Will the MSC be able to stay open during renovation?

A. A top priority for the State Park’s consulting team is to minimize impact to PTMSC operations including our ever-popular summer camp program. Given the scale and the multi-year timeline there is no way to completely avoid impacting our operations and activities on the beach. We are committed to engaging in the planning process to minimize inconvenience to all park visitors.

Q. Who is financing all of this? Are grants available?

A. Various aspects of this overall project will be funded by different sources. For example the boat launch is likely to be primarily funded through Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grants. The pier work is likely to be funded by a combination of State Parks Capital Projects and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), the same funding source as for our recent aquarium upgrade. The Port Townsend Marine Science Center will mount a capital campaign for renovation and expansion to our specific facilities. The campaign will include private and public grants but we anticipate that — consistent with the vast majority of comparable fundraising projects— individual support will contribute a significant share. We are unequivocally committed to right sizing our plans for the community and long term financial sustainability.

Q. How is the Marine Science Center working with State Parks and the PDA in this initiative?

A. Located in a Washington State Park that is managed by a Public Development Authority, we are tenants. As such, all our planning must be in coordination with and approved by these two entities. State Parks and PDA leadership continue to be appreciative and supportive of PTMSC’s collaborative input into the planning process. Moreover, State Parks, the Fort Worden PDA and the Marine Science Center see community input, in particular volunteers’ and stakeholders’ insights as vital to the success of these projects.

Q. Have you considered alternative locations?

A. The emerging mission of Fort Worden as a lifelong learning center coupled with the conservation mission of State Parks makes this location an exceptionally good fit for the Port Townsend Marine Science Center. We have the opportunity to continue to help actively lead the creation of the Fort Worden as a lifelong learning center. As the primary partner focused on science education we serve a pivotal role in the vision for the Fort Worden Campus with interdisciplinary programs for children and adult visitors. Moreover in exchange for our capital investment in the Park we’ll be granted a free long-term lease on an exquisitely beautiful and fitting setting for *inspiring conservation of the Salish Sea*.