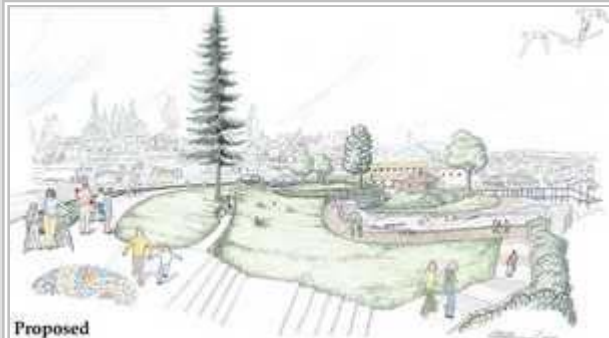




## City begins cleanup, restoration of Eddon Boatyard Project approved four years ago but delayed by funding, permitting process

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Proposed

### Photo illustration courtesy of Anchor Environmental, LLC

When the Eddon Boat Park Project is completed by 2011, a dirt mound and an empty building will be replaced by a grassy park and a public learning space.

It has been four years since Gig Harbor residents first agreed to use their tax dollars to restore a historic landmark, and as of this month, the City of Gig Harbor is finally taking steps to follow through.

The first step occurred at a Gig Harbor City Council meeting earlier this month, when council members approved a \$1 million contract to begin environmental cleanup on the Eddon Boatyard, also known as the Eddon Boat Sediment Remediation Project.

The second step — awarding a contract to a company that will restore the building's structure — should be completed soon.

Beginning the Eddon Boat project has been a long process for the city, marked by permitting and funding holdups.

In 2004, Gig Harbor citizens approved a \$3.5 million land acquisition bond to allow the city to purchase the land where the Eddon Boatyard is located. Built in 1945, the boatyard includes the boat building itself, two marine railways, the boatyard dock and a small brick house.

The Eddon Boat Park Project involves restoring the structure of the buildings, shop spaces and dock for public access while creating a nearby park for local use.

But restoring the dock and building the park has been delayed by the complications of an environmental cleanup. Currently — due to years of boat constructing followed by years of non-use — there are contaminated marine sediments and dilapidated marine and shoreline structures surrounding the dock and boatyard. The city agreed to voluntarily clean up those areas to make them safer for public use.

The cleanup, however, involves cooperation and permits from the Department of Ecology and Army Corps of Engineers — which has led to a long, bureaucratic slowdown.

“In order for the cleanup to be complete, it’s not a matter of having a contractor go in there and do it,” City Administrator Rob Karlinsey explained. “We have to work with the State Department of Ecology to maintain it. I do know that the ecology staff are careful and conservative.”

Meeting environmental standards also means increased costs, from hiring consultants and environmental engineers, to planning and designing the cleanup. Those steps must be taken before the city can acquire the permits needed to begin what Karlinsey estimates will be a \$2 million project.

“The good citizens of the city voted to purchase this property four years ago, and four years later, we’re finally getting the permits,” Karlinsey said.

Because the city finally acquired the permits late last year, it finally had the go-ahead to award the Sediment Remediation Project contract. The winning firm, American Civil Constructors, will begin working in July. It will take one to three months before the job is completed and reviewed by the Department of Ecology.

After the cleanup, the city will begin creating the Eddon Boat Park — which involves hydro-seeding to grow grass — and destroying the current dock to build a new one. The park should be complete by next summer; the dock will not be constructed until 2011.

While the cleanup is underway, restoration will start on the Eddon Boat building.

The restoration has been on hold for several years because of funding concerns. The city was waiting on a grant from the state’s Heritage Capital Projects to pay for reconstruction, which was finally approved in 2006. Once the funding came through, the city began the search for a qualified contractor.

That search ended three weeks ago. The city is still “developing the scope” of the contract, said City of Gig Harbor Historic Preservation Coordinator Lita Dawn Stanton, but it hopes to begin that project by June 1.

That date is also when the Gig Harbor BoatShop, a non-profit company that works to preserve, interpret and perpetuate Gig Harbor's historic working waterfront, will move into the boat building and begin planning the shipwright programs and classes that the park will eventually hold.

The city is charging the BoatShop only \$1 per year for 20 years to rent the building.

"The community benefit is the compensation we get from it," Karlinsey said.

Although two aspects of the Eddon Boatyard Park Project are closer to realization, there are a few others that have not been handled. One is a small brick building on the property, known as the Hoppen House. Although the building needs to be restored — and the city has received money for accessible bathrooms in the house that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) — the ultimate use of the house is undefined.

"There's a big question mark there," Karlinsey said.

The house will likely be restored by 2011, when the dock and all other aspects of the projects are complete.

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