

Seattle's pioneers moved from Alki beach to build their town on the shore of Elliott Bay because the wooded shore sloped rather steeply into deep water, promising a deep water harbor for the city they dreamed of and began by building Yesler's saw mill on a pier. The rich forests provided abundantly for both sawmill and piling for piers. And the sawmill provided abundant cargo for the sailing vessels. Then the railroad replaced the horse-drawn wagon serving the piers and by 1885 the waterfront became a maze of trestles and piers known as Railroad Avenue. Completion of the Transcontinental railroad triggered an economic slump and anti-Chinese riots. The hard-times continued until 4 prospectors panning for gold on an Alaskan river called the Klondike in 1896 stumbled onto one of the richest goldfields in the world. The Gold Rush was on. A year later the Portland steamed into Schwabacher's Wharf on Pier 5B with a huge cargo of nuggets: described by journalist Erastus Brainerd (who became a Park Commissioner in 1914) as "a Ton of Gold": it electrified the world and turned Seattle into a big, boisterous, prosperous city. Some Seattleites joined the stampede to the "Klon-dike"; others found their gold in outfitting the prospectors or "helping" them celebrate on their return from the goldfields. In 1896 the Japanese ship Mike Maru docked w/ cargo of tea + Seattle became international port.

J.R. Lutz + David Suffia

Susan McDonald

By 1906 Railroad Avenue was badly in need of repairs: it was being patched and pieced together, but the sea continued to torture the piling with sea borers, pieces of driftwood, sawmill leavings and miscellaneous refuse crowding, pounding and moving in. Some rip rap and filling with sawdust and dirt from street improvements was done, along with a great deal of arguing and bickering about solutions. In 1910 voters approved a Municipal Plans Commission but Boque's "Plan of Seattle" was rejected and lost in committees, funding, authorization, etc. In 1929 a new franchise with the railroads moved the tracks to the east side of Railroad Avenue with spurs to each pier. "The Great Depression" provided another stumbling block: even voter approval in 1932 to build a portion of the needed seawall stumbled because the single bid for the work was excessive. Finally in 1934 the City undertook the project: it took 2 years and attracted wide publicity. Railroad Avenue became Alaskan Way.

Efforts to reduce the visual pollution along the waterfront began in 1904 when James J. Hill, builder of The Great Northern RR, and City Engineer R. H. Thomson constructed the 5,142 ft. long railroad tunnel under the city center. Further reduction of the trackage to the east side in 1930's only provided space for the \$8 million Alaskan Way Viaduct in 1953.

The famed Pier 5B was condemned and demolished in 1965 by the Port Commission. A plaque on the seawall marks the site.

Pier 57 was built in 1914 by The Milwaukee Railroad.

The old piers are not able to meet the Handling Requirements of contemporary shipping (containerizing, etc)

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history: WATERFRONT PARK

Construction of the Aquarium in Waterfront Park is the culmination of talks and planning - probably since the Settlers discovered tide pools! The first "marine exhibit" occurred at Luna Park when a huge, dead whale was washed ashore in 1908. This site at Alki Beach was proposed for a State Aquarium in 1913 with State funding proposed. In 1928 citizens urged that an Aquarium be built "in a suitable park". The "canyon of the (first) Ship Canal" adjacent to the Fish and Wildlife Lab was strongly recommended as the ideal site in 1932. The U.W. and State Museum proposed one aboard the clipper ship St. Paul moored in Ballard in 1934; the next year, upon request of the Park Board, the Oceanic Education Service (Tacoma) recommended either Volunteer or Woodland Park as a site. In 1935 the Seattle Aquarium Society placed portable tanks with tropical fish in the Conservatory at Volunteer Park. Carkeek Park was a proposed site, to be a Federal Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) project but was not approved. Ivar Haglund built "The Aquarium" on Pier 3 (Spring St.) in 1938 and urged the construction of one at Alki Beach. Conversion of the long-abandoned Luna Park pools was urged in 1949. 1937 planning for the 1962 World Fair envisioned an Aquarium as a feature, but in 1958 Golden Gardens Beach was designated by the Park Board and a HHFA Loan applied for and architectural plans drawn, but local funding was not obtained. Private enterprise built the "Seattle Marine Aquarium" on Pier 56 in 1962 and the "Undersea Gardens" became a feature at Shilshole Marina from 1964-'68, built by a Victoria, B.C., firm. The Seattle Center was suggested again in 1966; it was programmed into the Forward Thrust Proposal approved by the voters in 1968 - site not specified. A long controversy followed during which Ft. Lawton was a potential site; by 1971 the choices were officially narrowed to two - the Council ruled against Golden Gardens, so the winner was - the Waterfront Park.

fresh fish exhibit

history
AQUARIUM: WATERFRONT PARK

WATERFRONT PARK - History

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The famed Pier 58 was condemned and demolished in 1965 by the Port Commission. A plaque on the seawall marks the site.

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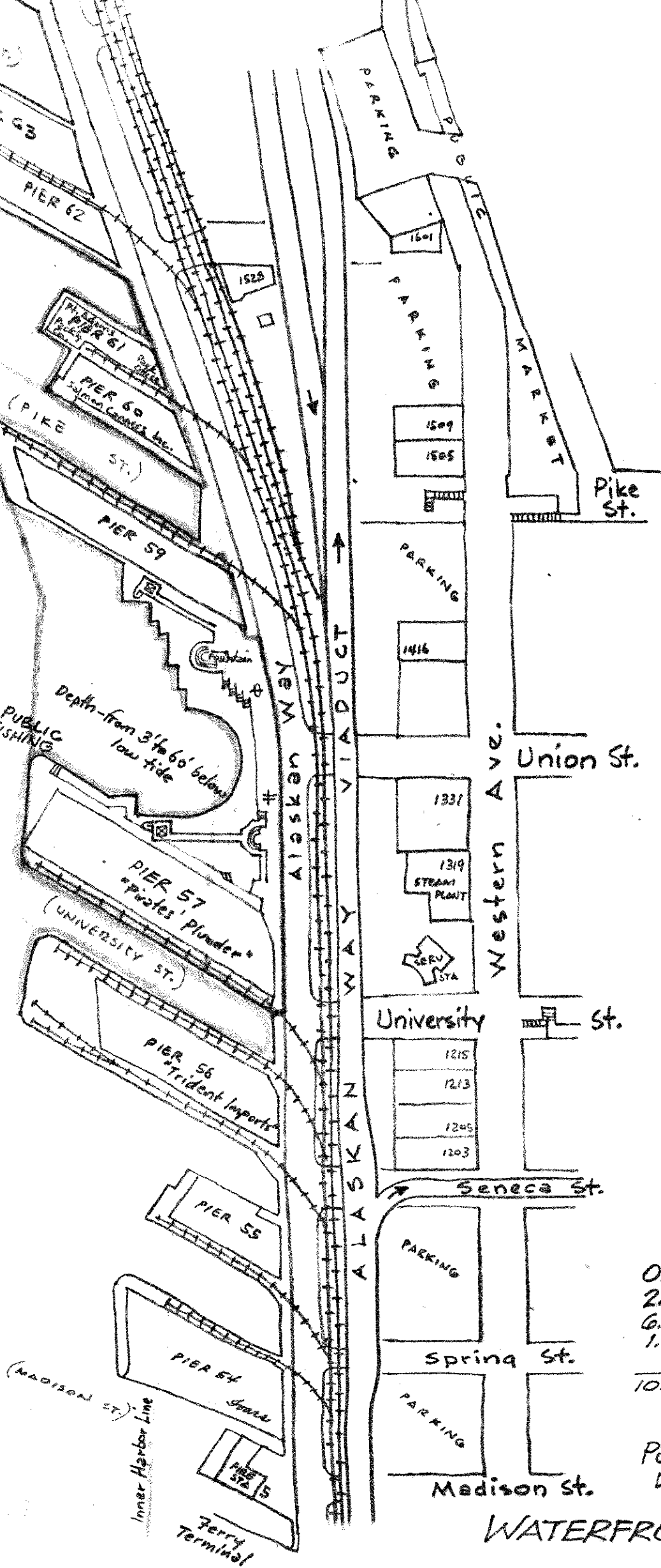
Elliott Bay

Outer Harbor Line

Inner Harbor Line

Depth - from 3' to 60' below low tide

PUBLIC FISHING



Named in 1972 by Council (Resol. 23911)

Fountain (bronze sculpture) designed by late James FitzGerald and completed by his widow, Margaret Tompkins as a memorial to Edward M. and Margaret J. Harrington from Helen H. Schiff, their daughter.

Aquarium proposed for Piers 60 + 61 + Ferry San Mateo

Tidal reach from 8.4 ft. below Alaskan Way down to 16.0 ft. (Highest recorded - 4.2 ft. below Alaskan Way)

☐ = Plaque - landing of *Mike Mats* with cargo of tea/Seattle became international port: 1896 (Nippon Yusen Kaisha - Line)

☐ = Plaque - landing of Portland with "Ton of Gold" from Klondike: 1897

- 0.04 Ac. uplands
- 2.3 Tidel. purch. '71
- 6.8 Harbor leases
- 1.3 Lease to "Pirates Plunder" (monthly)
- 10.4 Acres

PUBLIC FISHING Down to Dark

WATERFRONT PARK