

## JA's New Civic Engagement: Futurewise & Seattle Waterfront Committee

With his appointment to the Board of Directors last month, Ray Johnston will soon bring his expertise and interest in sustainable communities to Futurewise. Futurewise is a statewide public interest group whose mission is "to promote healthy communities and cities while protecting farmlands, forests and shorelines for today and future generations."

The organization's priorities include community and resource protection, transit-oriented communities and local solutions to global warming. Futurewise, celebrating its 20th year this month, was recently named "Organization of the Year" by the King County Municipal League.

Mary Johnston, Design Commission Chair, is helping to plan for a renewed Seattle Waterfront. The Central Waterfront Partnerships Committee, a 37 member group made up of architects, urban designers and representatives from the City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle, waterfront and downtown businesses and various citizens groups, will be responsible for recommending models for the design, management and uses for the new public space on the waterfront that will be created when the Alaska Way Viaduct is removed. The committee will meet monthly until September of this year when it will deliver its recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council.



Seattle Waterfront, Photograph by Ray Johnston

## JA Researches Living Walls: Integrating Plants in Building Design

Living walls are essentially gardens oriented vertically and are a great way to incorporate the aesthetic and environmental benefits of plants on a tight site, or just as a unique design element. There are four primary types of living walls, discussed from highest to lowest installed cost:

**Freely-planted plants in a non-gridded growing medium:** this system allows the most flexibility and artistic possibilities of any of the vertical garden varieties. Plants are planted in felt-soil medium on a PVC backing, held off of the building by a steel structural system. This type of system has been used in Europe and can create a beautiful living work of art. An integrated drip irrigation system insures plants receive proper moisture and nutrients, but a lot of regular pruning is required to maintain the design. A local example of this system can be found at the Goodwill in Tacoma.

**Gridded system:** this system carries plants in pre-manufactured, modular 1'x1' gridded squares. While fast, easy, and less expensive to install, the gridded structure is visible in the final installation, so this is a more rigid and controlled aesthetic. A lot of regular pruning and maintenance checks are required to ensure plants do not dry out or become unruly. A local example of this system is the Starbucks at 4th Ave S and Diagonal Ave S in SoDo.

**Vine boxes:** consists of three-dimensional modular mesh 3' x 5' boxes that house vines. Since the vines are contained in a small space, they can grow to be quite dense and provide good visual screening over several years of establishment. These boxes are often held several feet off of the wall behind to allow maintenance personnel to access them from behind and therefore generally require a larger steel structure. Because the vines are planted at the base of each box (like a traditional planter box), they are provided with more soil in a "normal" horizontal orientation, so they dry out less quickly and require much less maintenance than the systems with vertically-oriented soil. There are no local examples of this type of system.

**Vines on cables or metal mesh:** This is the least dense and least expensive of the systems, where creeping vines are planted along the base of a building façade and trained to grow vertically up metal cables or other metal mesh backing. This system takes many years to establish density and will not provide a dense visual barrier. A local example of this system is on JA's own Capitol Hill Library.



Example 1: Freely-Planted System



Example 2: Gridded System



Example 3: Vine Box System



Example 4: Vines on Cables or Mesh

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**March 10** Open Satellite & Henry Art Gallery Present: Brad Cloepfil Lecture (founder of Allied Works Architecture). 7pm-8:30pm. \$10. henryart.org

**March 11** AIA Seattle + WASLA Happy Hour Tour. 5:30pm-7pm. Free. www.aiaSeattle.org

**March 25** Seattle Architecture Foundation, SGF Architects and SDOT Present: King Street Station: Yesterday/Today/Tomorrow. Tour examining the future of King St. Station. \$20. 7pm. seattlearchitecture.org

**April 4** Seattle Art Museum Downtown presents: Family Fun - Big and Bright. Kids create their own sculpture at SAM. 10am-12pm. seattleartmuseum.org

**April 5** Fremont First Friday Art Walk at JA. Door No. 3 and Johnston Architects present: Art of the Methow, Part II. Featuring work by Laura Gunnip and Robin Doggett. 6pm. FREE. fremontfirstfriday.com

**April 11** Seattle Art Museum Downtown: Alexander Calder Exhibition closes. Be sure to see it before it's gone! Public Tours through March. seattleartmuseum.org

**April 23** UW College of Built Environment Presents: Architecture Headlines Exhibit. Opening reception, 5pm-8pm. Gould Hall. Free. caup.washington.edu

**April 24** Seattle Architecture Foundation Presents: Eye Spy Seattle - a family tour in Downtown Seattle. \$15/\$10. 10am-12pm. seattlearchitecture.org

## Back on the Boards: The Trails at Newcastle



Rendering of Proposed Newcastle Development, Newcastle, WA

After a few years on hold, JA's Trails at Newcastle project is moving forward with a goal of starting construction in 2010. JA's innovative Low Impact Development approach will result in the protection and restoration of prime wetland and habitat on site. The project itself is based on a co-housing model and conceived by Project Partners, Ben Kaufmann, Bert Bradley, Steven Hauck and Joanna D'Asaro. The goal is to create a sense of co-housing community on the site, distinct from conventional development models. Houses are clustered, with many removed from the hustle and bustle of the drive lane, parking and the more active parts of the site. Embracing the importance of ecological stewardship, and smart growth, the project is designed to achieve a built green five star rating. The community is ready to accept new interested members. More information at [www.trailsatnewcastle.com](http://www.trailsatnewcastle.com).