



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SEPT. 11, 2015

Contacts:

Kris Sherman, 253-404-3800; 253-226-6718 or kris.sherman@pdza.org

Whitney DalBalcon, 253-404-3637 or whitney.dalbalcon@pdza.org

DETAILS OF NEW AQUARIUM TO BE DISCUSSED AT PUBLIC MEETINGS SEPT. 28 and 30

Bond funds approved by voters in 2014 will pay for replacement of aging North Pacific Aquarium; new facility is expected to open at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in the summer of 2018

TACOMA, Wash. – Two public meetings are set this month to discuss details of the new aquarium scheduled to open at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in the summer of 2018.

The approximately 34,000-square-foot structure is in the design and development stage and will be built as a replacement for the aging and deteriorating North Pacific Aquarium, which opened in 1963. It will be paid for with funds approved by voters in 2014 as part of a \$198 million Metro Parks Tacoma bond measure.

Construction is expected to begin next summer. The new aquarium will contain several galleries dedicated to marine animals found in Puget Sound and in the near and far reaches of the Pacific Ocean.

Members of the public can learn details about the site, planning and design for the new aquarium during public meetings set for 5 p.m. Sept. 28 and 6:30 p.m. Sept. 30.

Here are the specifics for those meetings:

- **5-6 p.m. Monday, Sept. 28 at Metro Parks Tacoma headquarters, 4702 S. 19th St., Tacoma.** Zoo officials and representatives from EHDD, the architectural firm designing the aquarium, will make a presentation to the Board of Park Commissioners during a public review and study session. This meeting will include an open house for public viewing of drawings and other information at 5 p.m. and a board study session at 5:30 p.m. Members of the public who wish to share their views on the project may do so during the public comment period of the regular board meeting, which begins at 6 p.m.
- **6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 30 at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, North Pacific Aquarium, 5400 N. Pearl St., Tacoma.** Zoo officials and representatives of EHDD will provide an additional opportunity for members of the public to learn about the new aquarium and ask questions about the construction process and timeline.

Both meetings will feature information about where the new aquarium will be located on zoo grounds, its size, and exciting details about the various galleries of marine animals that will be included in it.

“We are pleased to present members of the public an opportunity to learn specifics about the new aquarium and offer their comments about the process,” said Metro Parks Tacoma Board of Commissioners President Tim Reid. “This is an important piece of our communication with the community and our voters, who approved funds for this project through a bond issue.”

The new aquarium will be about 12,000 square feet larger than the half-century-old North Pacific Aquarium.

“We see it as a moderately sized replacement, but it will feature technological advancements and enhanced visitor experiences that will make it “feel” even larger and more impressive to our guests,” said Gary Geddes, Director of Zoological and Environmental Education for Metro Parks Tacoma.

Members of the zoo’s aquarium, education and operations department staffs are working closely with the architects. They want to ensure the building provides space and life-support systems critical to the care of marine animals, as well as the tools needed to tell visitors the story of the oceans that surround us, Geddes said.

In keeping with the zoo’s commitment to the environment, sharp attention is being paid throughout the design and construction process to sustainability and conservation of resources wherever possible.

The new aquarium project is part of Metro Parks’ Destination Point Defiance, a long-term planning initiative for Point Defiance Park. More information about Destination Point Defiance may be found at www.metroparkstacoma.org/DestinationPointDefiance.

San Francisco-based EHDD is a world-class architectural and engineering firm that designed the renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium and has worked on other aquarium projects around the globe. The company’s clients have included the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, Calif., and the recently renovated Toledo Aquarium in Ohio.

Turner Construction Co. of Seattle is working alongside the architects during the pre-construction portion of the project.

###

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest’s only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world’s resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).