

REFUGE BEACON

[BEE-KUH N] NOUN.
A LIGHT OR TOWER USED AS A SIGNAL OR GUIDE

Over the last few years, the City of Seattle continues to take numerous measures to be prepared for "The Big One". Through analyzing existing infrastructure and safety precautions that Seattle and it's citizens are already implementing, we recognized a missing piece to the puzzle. Seattle is lacking in it's ability to manage and assist the insurmountable amount of people that will be displaced by the next earthquake. What happens in the streets and public areas connecting medical centers, fire departments and community center and other emergency shelter locations? How do we know if a structure or location is a safe zone? A system of beacons could be the answer. A beacon by definition, is a light or tower to signal or guide. What if each neighborhood located safe zones or areas of refuge, that connect people to facilities of medical attention or other public services that would be required to survive. The Beacon can be an iconic structure that not only provides numerous supplies inside it's structure (think vending machine style) but also a method of wayfinding. The light of the Beacon is an LED that would signal whether the area was safe to stay in and seek refuge at or Red if the zone was too hazardous or destroyed from the quake for people to approach.

If each neighborhood implemented this system of the Beacon, each would have a structure marking an area considered a safe zone for refuge and emergency supplies following an earthquake but also when not in use, it is a piece of the neighborhood character- an identifying piece of the context in which it is located. Immediately following the earthquake, we can look up and see Beacons of green and red light guiding us to safety and keeping us from harm.

