RENEWING A WATERFRONT PARK: SUSTAINING A RECREATIONAL PLACE FOR LOCAL MEMORY

BACKGROUND

This site is located in Buffalo, New York, and covers 13.32 acres. The project organizers have focused on enhancing culture, recreation, and ecology to create a mixed-use urban entertainment destination for citizens, that promotes economic development, in reclaiming the area as an important historical resource.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

a. How to improve the quality of an existing waterfront landscape that addresses key issues in waterfront development?
b. How to make fuller use of existing functions in the new waterfront areas?

SITE OVERVIEW

The history of human habitation near the water can be traced back to the origin of human beings. And it fully confirms that human beings cannot live without water and its accumulated rich experience and knowledge.

Waterfront areas became vital places for trade and transportation. With the transformation of global trade, economic restructuring, and the decline of heavy industries, many urban waterfront areas experienced a period of depression and decline.

With urban economic redevelopment and efforts to improve the environment, waterfront areas have become an important part of the city again, creating new important functions, beautiful new environments, and concentrated public activities.

BACKGROUND BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

LAND USE

A previous proposed development program includes: 460,000 sq. ft. retail development; 275 residential units; 495,000 sq. ft. office space; 480 hotel rooms; 2,700 parking spaces, and 20,000 sq. ft. cultural space.

The portion just in the project site area development includes: 150,000 sq. ft. retail; 133,000 sq. ft. office, 65 residential units; 100 hotel rooms; 63 parking spaces; and 20,000 sq. ft. cultural space.

Total just within the project site boundary of this proposal is app. 580,000 sq. ft. (13.32 acres). The principle land uses in the proposed site area are associated with public open space, transportation, the Buffalo River, and historical/cultural sites.

These uses comprise the entire 580,000 sq. ft. of the site with park and promenade uses comprising app. 50% of the site, public streets 25%, waste sites 10%, the canal 10%, and cultural facilities 5%.
The site benefits from an efficient roadway network that supports regional and international access to Canada via the Peace Bridge, to the NYS Thruway via Interstate 190, NYS Department of Transportation Route 5, and NTFA’s Metro Rail system; and proximity to a host of both local and regional historic, natural, and cultural attractions, including Niagara Falls. Parking in the Canalside area is located within parking garages, with a few small surface lots and a number of on-street parking options also available. It can also be accessed via watercraft with nearly 1,000 linear feet of docking space.

**SWOT ANALYSIS**

**Strength:**
1. Very good transportation accessibility
2. Significant concentrations of visitors
3. Unique historical / cultural sites
4. Significant historical canal
5. Proximity to downtown
6. Significant open space for development
7. Significant existing surrounding commercial uses: ex. sports centers, hotel, retail, parking and office

**Weakness:**
1. Diminished opportunity to interact with water
2. Significant waste site
3. Limited open space programming
4. Underutilized canal
5. Raised freeway bisecting site.

**Opportunity:**
1. Under freeway development
2. Expand local cultural activities
3. Expand water related uses
4. Increase hotel, residential, retail, office space to increase economic potential of the area and complement
5. Expand entertainment uses.
6. Improve park amenities

**Threats:**
1. The existing garbage area contains toxic substances
2. There will be a lot of visitors here, it doesn’t have enough capacity.

**CRITICAL ISSUES**

1. Lack of a vibrant open space
2. There is not enough people to gather here, usually this site is rather deserted.
3. There are fewer foreign tourists usually.
4. Lack of attractive place.
# Site Demand – Visitor Investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizens</th>
<th>32 years old Engineer</th>
<th>63 years old Retire</th>
<th>23 years old Student</th>
<th>26 years old Designer</th>
<th>20 years old Student</th>
<th>35 years old Entrepreneur</th>
<th>22 years old Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What transportation do?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Car" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Train" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Bus" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Bike" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Motorcycle" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Car" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Motorcycle" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of activities do you usually carry out at weekends?</td>
<td>Take exercise</td>
<td>Take a walk</td>
<td>Travelling with friends</td>
<td>Go to museum</td>
<td>Ride on a bicycle</td>
<td>Traveling</td>
<td>Playing songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What suggestions?</td>
<td>Add swimming pool</td>
<td>Want more boulevard</td>
<td>Want a shopping place</td>
<td>Add some literary works</td>
<td>Want some interesting sports activities</td>
<td>Places for eating and living</td>
<td>Hold more concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is your home?</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>Syracuse</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How far do you prefer to go for vacation?</td>
<td>28 miles</td>
<td>238 miles</td>
<td>691 miles</td>
<td>745 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Site Existing Programming

- Kayak & Stand-up Paddleboard
- Water Bike
- Explore a grain elevator
- Take a river cruise
- Ride a bicycle
- Pedal on a Cycle Boat
- Food
- Attend a concert
- Admire Public Art
- Take a Walking Tour
- Go Shopping
- Step back in time
- Soak in a sunset
- Attend a Festival
- Admire a light show
- Play by the Lake

## Proposed programming additions

- Mixed-use building (hotels, retails, indoor theatre, offices, gym, bar, education institution, lodging)
- Outdoor theatre
- Bicycle lane
- Ice skating rink
- Promenades
- Rest place
- Cultural attractions

## Transformation Approaches

- Completely Reconstruct
- Moderate Improve
- Restore & Conserve
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DESIGN COMPONENT - OUTDOOR THEATRE AND RECREATION AREA

SECTION DETAIL - OUTDOOR THEATRE AND RECREATION AREA B - B'