Waukegan's Waterfront Active Implementation Plan

A Community Vision

Community Planning Session

November 3, 2015

Community Planning Session

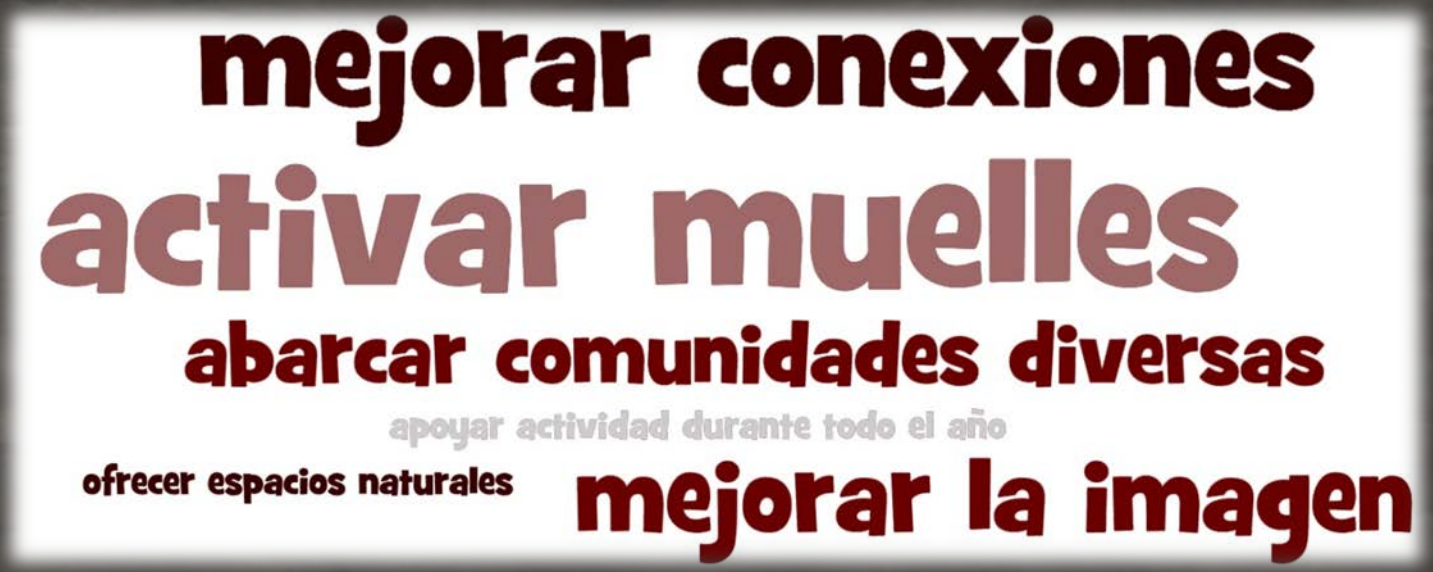
- *Overview of the 2003 Plan / Purpose of the Project*
- *Public Input Summary*
  - *Initial Stakeholder Input*
  - *Red Dot/Green Dot Visioning Exercise*
- *Action Plan Recommendations*
  - *Immediate*
  - *Urgent Term*
  - *Long Term*
- *Funding Strategies*
- *Next Steps*

Overview of the 2003 Plan

Goals of the Implementation Plan

- Uphold the Vision of Original Master Plan
- Engage the Community
- Improve the Waterfront's Image
- Create Year-Round Activity
- Enhance Quality of Life

enhance connections
activate waterfront
embrace diverse community
support year-round activity
provide natural spaces
improve image


mejorar conexiones
activar muelles
abarcar comunidades diversas
apoyar actividad durante todo el año
ofrecer espacios naturales
mejorar la imagen

Public Input Summary

Visual Preference Survey Results

Most Positive Responses:

- Natural Spaces
- Better Connections Between the Beach and Pier
- Food Trucks
- Active, Family-Friendly Public Spaces
- Recreation
- Restaurants, Retail, and Event Space

Most Popular Images

>20 green/<3 red

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Very Popular Images

Very Popular Images

10-20 green/<3 red

Very Popular Images

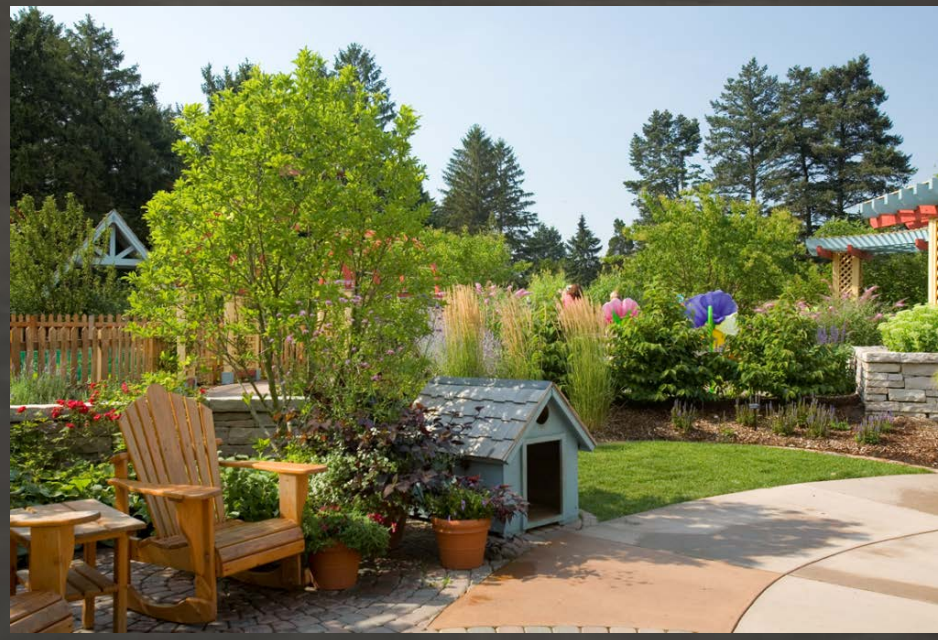
10-20 green/<3 red

Very Popular Images

Moderately Popular Images

Moderately Popular Images

<10 green/<3 red



Moderately Popular Images

<10 green/<3 red

Moderately Popular Images

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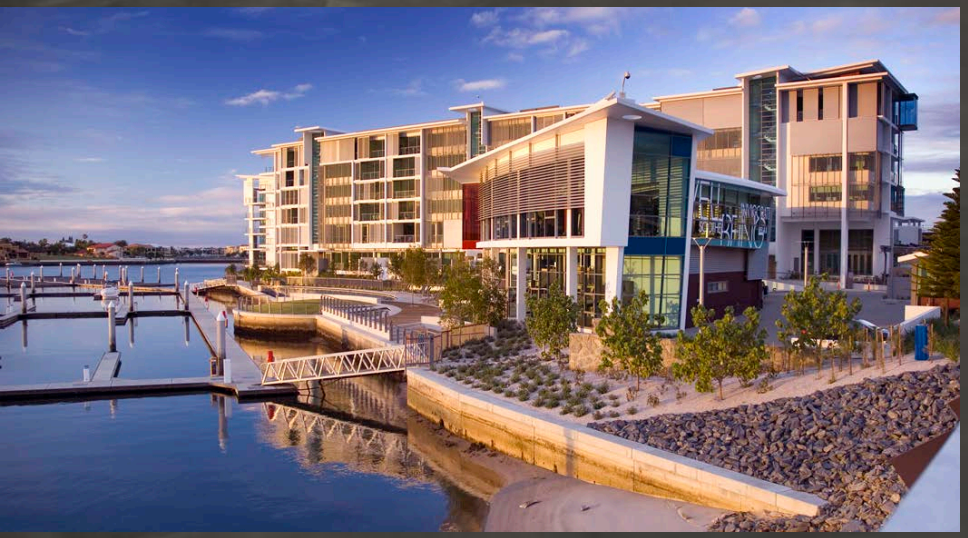

Mixed-Review Images

10/6

12/7

Unpopular Images

0 green/>1 red

0/5

Comment Card Results

Highest Priorities:

- Improved Connections Between Downtown and the Lakefront
- Retail, Restaurant, and Entertainment at the Lakefront
- Playgrounds, Picnic Areas, Dog Parks, Splash Pads, and Other Recreation Amenities.

Action Plan Categories:

- Physical Improvements
- Operational Elements
- Programmatic Elements
- Entitlements / Development
- Partnerships
- Marketing/Image

Themes

- Transform Our Weaknesses Into Our Strengths
- Focus on Things Only Waukegan Can Offer
- Encourage, Engage, and Partner

Timeframe:

- Immediate (Open Next Spring/Summer)
- Urgent (Within the Next Five Years)
- Long Term (Within Five to Ten Years)

Physical Improvements

Physical Improvements - Immediate:

- Beach Area Enhancements
  - Food Truck Promenade
  - Expand/Enhance Parking
  - Boardwalk Connections
  - Picnic Areas
  - New Volleyball Nets
- Tender Connection Between Piers
- Wayfinding - “Yellow Brick Road” Markers

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Physical Improvements - Immediate:

- Bike and Pedestrian Trails
  - Increase Public Access to Marina Promenade
- Northern Development Site
  - Remove BRP Structures

Physical Improvements - Urgent:

- Beach Area Enhancements
  - Site Furnishings – Benches, Trash, Lighting
  - Splash Pad Play Fountain
  - Restrooms
  - Expand/Enhance Parking
  - Teen Activities – Skate Park
  - Winter Activities

Celebration Town Center - Celebration, Florida

Physical Improvements - Urgent:

- Kayak Launch Facilities
  - Accessible Facilities
  - Blueway Trail Markers
- Sea Horse Drive Improvements
- Waukegan Marina Improvements
- Construct Floating Bridge Between Piers
- Enhance Natural Areas
- Observation Areas for Birders

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Physical Improvements - Urgent:

- Signage / Wayfinding
  - Lakefront Markers
  - Maps and interpretive/historic information
  - Identify lakefront districts
- Bike and Pedestrian Trails
  - WCL EJE Rails to Trails Connections
  - Improve Pedestrian Connection from Downtown to Lakefront

Fitness Parks

Physical Improvements - Long Term:

- Reorganize Transportation Infrastructure
  - Remove Amstutz Expressway south of Mathon
  - Shift Amstutz Traffic to Sheridan to Reenergize Downtown Waukegan
  - Relocate Commuter Coach yard
  - Expand facilities related to Metra
- Regional Attraction: Aquarium, Ecological Museum, Bird Observation

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TASTE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
SALE!
GYROS
FALAFEL
HUMMUS
SALADS
PIZZA
BOOKS

Operations

Operational - Immediate:

- Prepare Overall Management Plan
- Improve Beach Maintenance
- Consider Partnership to Transfer Beach Operations to Waukegan Park District
- Compare Parking Costs to Region
- Implement Strategies for Increasing Regional Visitation
  - Bring Back Lifeguards

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Program Improvements

Program - Immediate:

- Actively Program the Lakefront to Attract People
  - "Discover Your Beach" Days
  - Discover Boating Program
  - Expand Bandshell Programming
  - "Ship Watch" Events When Lakers Arrive
- Host More Festivals on the Lakefront
  - Festival del Mole y Pozole
  - Sci-fi Events, Ray Bradbury Related Events

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Program:

- Support More Interactive Boating Opportunities
  - On the Beach Kayak and Paddleboard Rentals
  - On the Beach Storage of Low-Cost Small Craft (Sea Kayaks and Sailboats)
  - Water Taxis
  - Boat Rentals (Power and Sail)
  - Dinner Cruise Boats
  - Explore Great Lakes Cruise Vessels

Program:

- Expand Shuttles From Beach to Downtown
- Expand Winter Programming
  - Ice Festivals
  - Ice Carving Competitions
  - Outdoor Holiday Markets
  - Portable Ice Skating Rinks

Winter Activities

Entitlement / Development

Entitlement / Development:

- Recognize and remain true to the spirit and intent of the 2003 Master Plan, but allow more flexibility in terms of absolute specifics related to density, block sizes, building heights, etc.
- Maintain a mixed-use lakefront with elements of residential, restaurant/retail, recreational and working waterfront (commercial shipping) activities

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Entitlement / Development:

- Consider development of a Form Based Code which guarantee zoning approval so long as the project complies with the Form Based Code
- Recognize broader potential development types with greater job creation potential such as assisted living and memory care
- Remain open to working waterfront opportunities with a need to be on the lakefront that are clean and compatible with surrounding land uses

Entitlement / Development:

- Actively Seek Out Development Partnerships
- Engage Director of Development
- Identify Available incentives
  - TIF / Infrastructure Investment
  - Tax Incentives
  - Land Partnership
  - State/Federal Economic Development Grants
  - Brownfield Incentives

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Entitlement / Development:

- Consider a one time "catalyst project incentive" of special benefits to the first developer of a key project to get the ball rolling on the waterfront
- Reward developers for additional investment in the creation of adjacent public amenities and/or additional sustainable design initiatives

Partnerships

Partnerships:

- Waukegan Park District
  - Transfer Operation of the Beach
  - Explore Ways to Share Staff and Resources
- Waukegan Port District
  - Coordinate Special Events and Programming
  - Create More Continuous Public Waterfront
  - Explore Ways to Share Staff and Resources
- Department of Natural Resources
  - Develop Management Plan

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Partnerships:

- Lake County Forest Preserve
  - Transfer and Partner in Continued Restoration of Lands North of Waukegan Harbor
  - Transfer and Partner in Continued Restoration of Lands South of Waukegan Harbor
- Public Private Partnerships
  - City Sponsored EB-5 Funding for Infrastructure
  - City Sponsored EB-5 Funding for Catalyst Project

Marketing / Image

Marketing / Image:

- Transform your Weaknesses into your Strengths
  - Celebrate the Incredible Clean-up Completed over the Last Three Decades
  - Continue / Expand Partnerships to Enhance the Restoration Efforts
  - Support Efforts to Convert Coal Plant to Clean Energy Alternative

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Marketing / Image:

- Create a marketing team to actively tell the story of the transformation of Waukegan's Lakefront
- Create a coordinated branding strategy to reinforce Waukegan's role as Lake County's waterfront
  - Billboards
  - Articles
  - Blogs

Marketing / Image:

- Believe that change is possible, and that Waukegan will one day be known for its pristine restored dune ecology, clean waters, vibrant lakefront neighborhoods, and easily walkable connections to a diverse and thriving downtown that draws residents and visitors alike.

Waukegan's Waterfront – *A Community Vision*

What Makes a Great Waterfront Community?

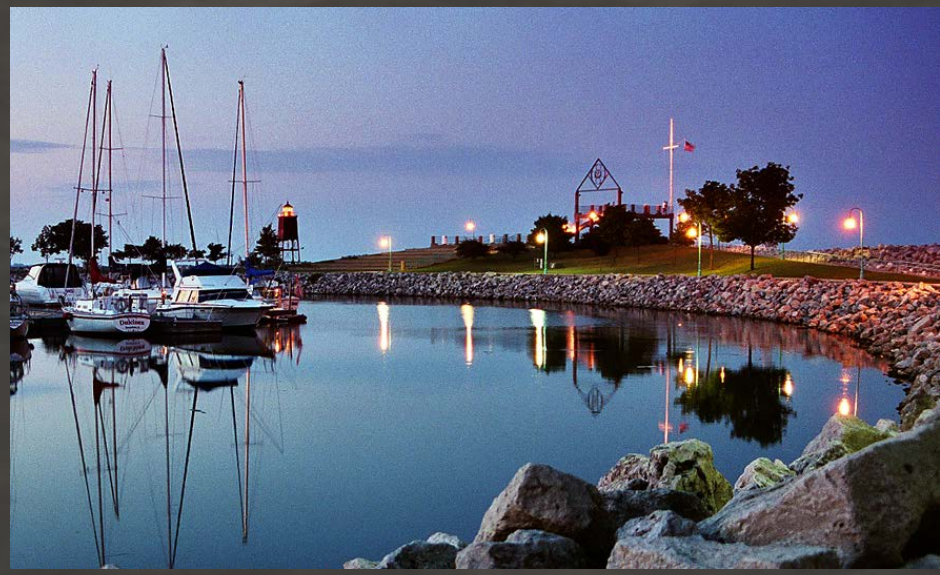
Sense of Place, History, and Tradition

Mix of Uses

Parks and Open Space

Sound Economy

Environmental, Economic, and Social Sustainability



Priority Strategic Actions – Image/Marketing

- Identify Director of Marketing
- Develop "Pure Waukegan" Campaign

Priority Strategic Actions – Partnerships

- Immediately Engage with Lake County Forest Preserve and Waukegan Park District

Priority Strategic Actions - Development

- Develop Form Based Code for North Beach
- Engage Real Estate Marketing Professional
- Establish "Catalyst Incentives" and Minimum Criteria
- Issue Development Request For Proposal

Funding Strategies

- Tax Increment Financing
- Land Partnerships
- Agency Partnerships
- Public Private Partnerships
- State and Federal Grants
- Brownfield Grants
- EB-5

Next Steps:

- November 16
  - Draft Plan Presented to City Council
  - Draft Plan Available for Review
  - Comments Due November 30
- December 7
  - Final Plan Presented to City Council

The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas,
but escaping the old ones.
-John Maynard Keynes

Comments? Questions?

Please email
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