

WATERFRONT STRATEGIC PLAN



A Strategic Plan for the Future Development of the Grand River Waterfront

Waterfront Strategic Plan

Downtown Grand Haven, Michigan

Adopted by the Grand Haven City Council - January 2005

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Grand Haven Waterfront: Grand Haven Waterfront Study Area from Chinook Pier to Army Corps of Engineers Facility; September 2003.

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This report was prepared with valuable input during public meetings held on October 15-17, 2004 and from property owners, other citizens, City officials, City Council members and from the Project Steering Committee. This information has been carefully considered and incorporated into this document, however, the consulting team is solely responsible for the content of this report.

WATERFRONT PLANNING CONTEXT

The Grand River Waterfront is the “Jewel of the Community” today due to a series of efforts championed by the Loutit Foundation and concerned citizens in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, the waterfront was transformed from a dilapidated industrial setting into a combination of parkland, selective building preservations and new construction.

Today, the waterfront is a wonderful setting for public events, water-based recreation, the Musical Fountain and strolling. It is also an important though inconsistent location for commercial businesses. This entire waterfront area is positioned next to solid residential neighborhoods and the bulk of the central business district, a truly special and synergistic arrangement.

The City of Grand Haven, in partnership with community interest groups, has embarked upon a comprehensive planning initiative focused on Downtown Grand Haven and, in this effort, the Grand Haven Waterfront. The studies and analysis performed over the past two years have brought the community to an informed position to plan the City’s future. This long range plan for the waterfront expands upon the *Vision*¹ to help guide development and decision-making related to the waterfront.

Specifically this plan embraces and builds upon the key ideas expressed in the *Vision* concerning the waterfront:

“Enhance the ‘Jewel of the Community’ through improved public access and usability, protection of key views and vistas, additional residential, lodging, and commercial re-development project opportunities”.

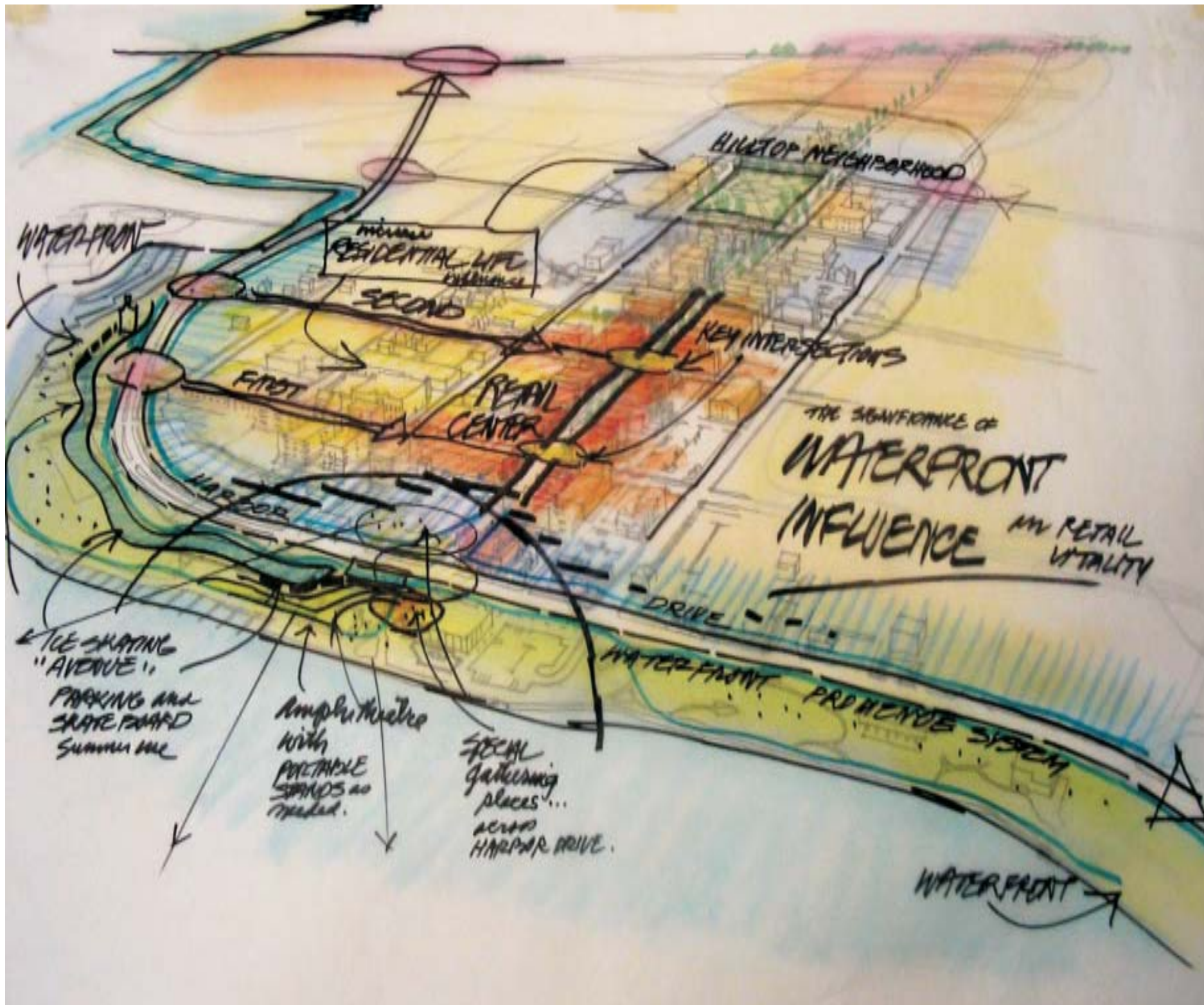
On June 21, 2004, City Council authorized the Waterfront Strategic Plan study, specifically directing the planning team to further examine the Goals and Policies identified in the Vision Plan as they relate to the Waterfront. Since this authorization, City staff and the consulting team have prepared for Waterfront community meetings and a design workshop held on October 19-21, 2004 at the Community Center. These efforts culminated in a public presentation of preliminary results on October 21. This report is a compilation of the meetings, workshops, presentations, plus additional team work conducted since October 19-21.

This plan looks ahead to the next wave of potential actions to further enhance the Grand River Waterfront and strengthen the civic fabric and economic underpinnings of the community.

1. *Downtown Vision Plan*, 2004;

Evaluation Guidelines, 2003;

Parking and Traffic Study, 2004.



Cover illustration from the *Vision for Downtown Grand Haven* emphasizing the importance and influence of the Grand River Waterfront on Downtown Grand Haven. Strengthening the physical and programmatic connections between the Waterfront and Washington Street, Harbor Drive, and adjacent neighborhoods are key goals of the Waterfront Strategic Plan.

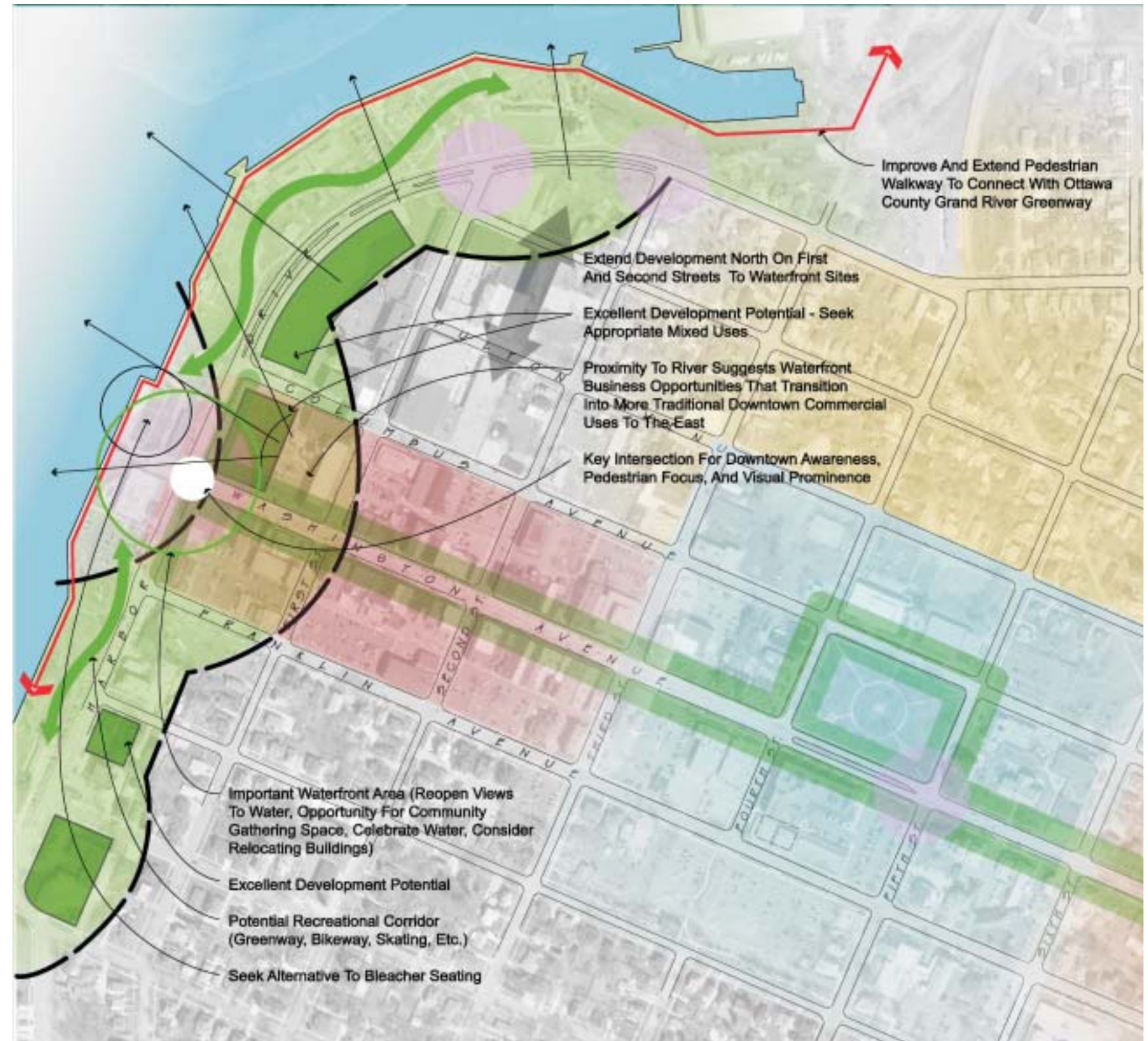
REPORT PURPOSE

The Waterfront Strategic Plan is designed to orchestrate future physical improvements to public lands along the Grand River and to recommend policy enhancements that will inspire significant private investment consistent with the Vision for Downtown Grand Haven. This Waterfront Plan sets forth a development framework to preserve and enhance public waterfront land and to encourage complementary commercial development that showcases Grand Haven's greatest community asset.

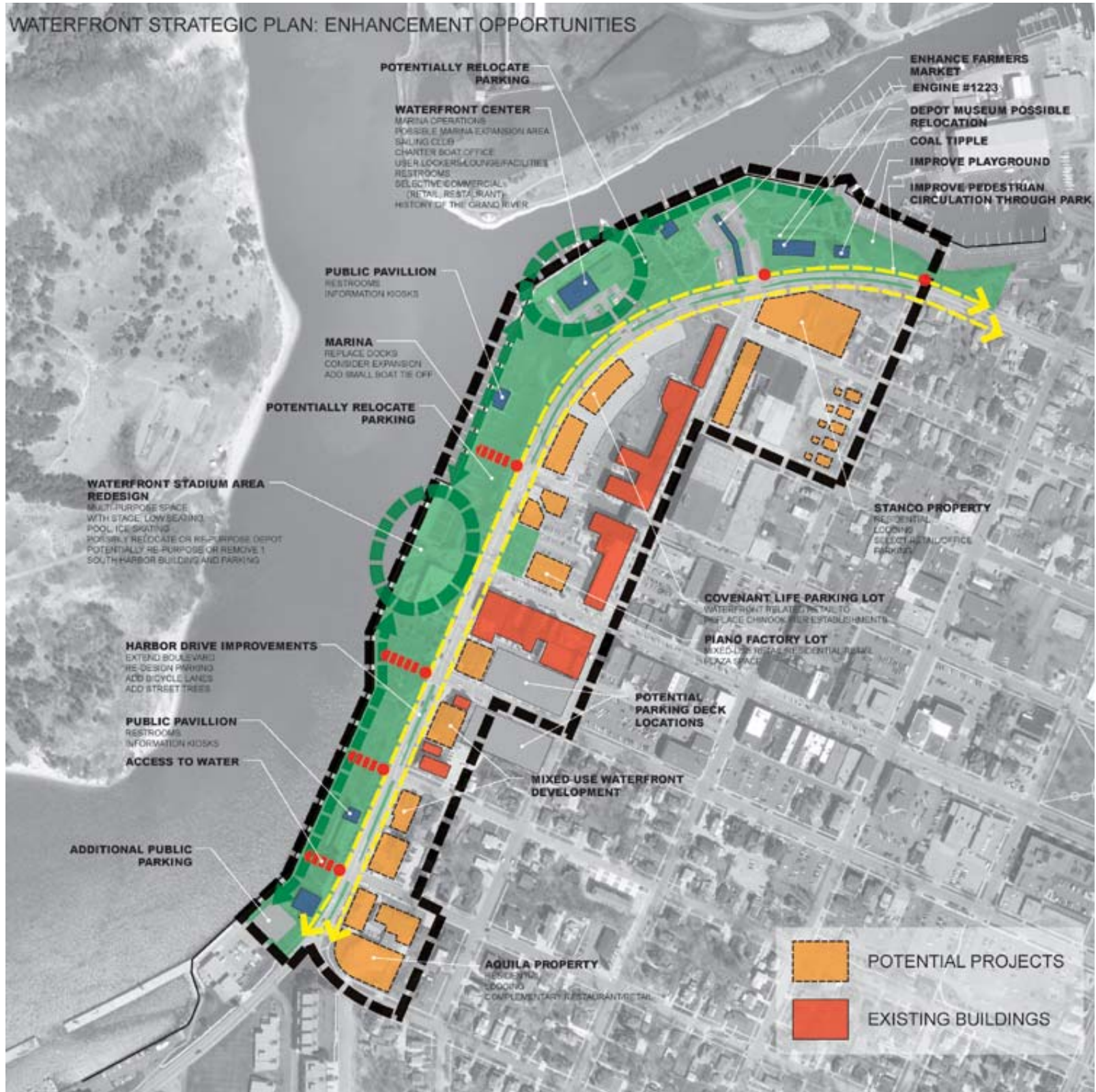
The "Strategic Plan" is a framework for future specific waterfront plans and actions. It is designed to point the community in the right future direction. This Plan is intended to be incorporated and adopted as part of the City's Master Plan and to serve as the policy foundation for the review of future development proposals with the Waterfront area.

The Waterfront Strategic Plan is designed to:

1. **Inform the general public of the long-term Strategic Plan for Downtown Grand Haven's Grand River Waterfront.** The amount of potential development and change that is already underway and can be expected in the waterfront zone demands that a coherent plan be used to inform the public and to direct and monitor these future changes.
2. **Guide elected and appointed City officials in evaluating proposed public and private projects along the Waterfront in Downtown Grand Haven.** These officials will use this document, along with the Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, CBDDA Plan, the Vision report, and the Evaluation Guidelines, to determine project merits, compatibility, and appropriateness.
3. **Inform and guide Waterfront property owners** (and lessees of public land) as well as prospective property owners and potential developers in what is needed and desired, and likely to be approved for the Waterfront by the Grand Haven Planning Commission and City Council.
4. **Measure progress and effectiveness in the re-development of Grand Haven's Waterfront.** While the document is meant to be broad and general in overall character, there are many specific potential projects which can be used to measure effectiveness, tax base improvements, and a basis for future citizen surveys.



Waterfront drawing from **Vision for Downtown Grand Haven** which identified key private development opportunities and the most important public improvements for revitalizing the Waterfront zone. This is the foundation or starting point for this Waterfront Strategic Plan.



WATERFRONT VISION AND SUMMARY

The Waterfront will be refined as the Jewel of the Community and become a showcase for public celebrations, events, and civic pride through the enhancement of public facilities and the careful integration of commercial initiatives. Through collaborative planning and development, the Grand Haven community will improve the waterfront into a coherently connected network of beautiful civic spaces, culturally rich experiences and inviting elements that strengthen the community's relationship to the Grand River Waterfront.

This Vision is the result of a community-wide effort to establish a broadly-held consensus for the preferred future of the Grand River Waterfront. These public planning activities also produced a series of statements related to the Vision (listed below) as well as broad goals and more specific development principles shown on the following page.

- The east side of Harbor Drive will be considered the “front porch” of the community and new building designs will gracefully embody the transition from private neighborhoods to the public “front yard” overlooking the Grand River.
- Throughout the central waterfront area, the community will foster the perpetual improvement of the established ribbon of green and open space that adorns the water’s edge.
- For generations to come, the waterfront will be an inviting respite, a place for celebration and a constant fixture for citizens of all ages to view and appreciate the impressive panorama of Michigan’s grandest river.
- Over time, this public open space will increasingly reflect our local civic spirit and symbolize our commitment to environmental and community stewardship.

This is a long range vision and plan and will not and can not happen overnight. Some of these potential changes and projects may never happen. But if the Waterfront Vision inspires action and the Strategic Plan is pursued in earnest over time, it will create a much more dynamic waterfront landscape embraced by a vibrant small town urban edge. In essence, both sides of Harbor Drive will be strengthened and mutually reinforced by these actions.

The Waterfront Strategic Plan shown to the left identifies the key public and private enhancement opportunities that could be pursued to fulfill the Vision outlined above.

Waterfront Strategic Plan showing major long term enhancement opportunities including key potential public facilities: improved pedestrian movement along the Grand River and along Harbor Drive, re-designed Stadium area, new Waterfront Center, new Transportation Museum, additional public art and access to the waterfront, new/relocated public parking. New private projects are mostly located east of Harbor Drive and include new retail, restaurant, lodging, and selective office facilities.

The following Principles and Goals will guide the Waterfront Strategic Plan. They express community ambitions for the Waterfront area and will act as filters to evaluate potential projects. Any such proposed projects should satisfy one or several of the following principles and goals, and should never inhibit the community's ability to achieve the Waterfront Vision shown on the previous page.

Revitalize the Entire Waterfront Area

It is important that the Waterfront Strategic Plan describe a comprehensive approach that includes improvements to both physical and programmatic aspects of the entire Grand River Waterfront area within the Downtown from the Chinook Pier area to the Corps of Engineers facilities.

Enhance Public, Green and Open Space

The public land between Harbor Drive and the Grand River should continue to be predominantly public, green and open in character and function as the community's front yard. The area should be protected as a landscaped park while accommodating active public uses, vistas, and water views, and embracing environmental and ecological qualities.

This broad goal also involves the addition of landscape and floral elements as well as creating new opportunities for works of art for temporary and permanent display. Each such addition must be carefully evaluated and all such elements (both existing and future) should be re-evaluated from time to time to confirm their ongoing appropriateness.

Promote Recreation and Health

The Waterfront is an ideal community space for promoting active and passive recreational activities and a healthier lifestyle for local citizens and visiting guests.

Expand Year-round Capacity and Appeal

While the Waterfront is very active during the summer months, it is desirable to extend this active period into the "shoulder seasons" and to have it used more actively on a year-round basis for certain events and seasonal activities such as biking, walking and ice skating.

Strengthen the Economic Mix

The Vision Plan and this Waterfront Plan strongly encourage the addition of residential units, possibly overnight lodging units, and pedestrian-oriented retail and restaurant facilities to the Waterfront area, principally along the eastside of Harbor Drive. Retail and restaurants should be selectively invited to enhance the waterfront experience on the West side of Harbor Drive.

Develop Appropriate Building Character and Scale

It is very important that new development "fit" the character and scale of surrounding current uses (as further articulated in the earlier Evaluation Guidelines). New and/or rehabilitated buildings need to be designed with sensitivity to adjacent building setbacks, materials, heights, overall footprint size, and visual impact on the surrounding cityscape.

Protect and Strengthen Connections to the Water

Visual and physical pathways and vistas to the waterfront from Harbor Drive and from adjacent streets and sidewalks need to be protected and enhanced. This could involve the addition of sidewalks, stairs, and art objects to facilitate and focus these connections. It may also involve very careful and selective trimming, thinning, and occasional removal of inappropriate and overgrown plant material in this zone.

Strengthen the Appeal to People of all Ages

The waterfront is already a wonderful place for many community users and visitors. Proposed changes should broaden and strengthen the appeal to even more users through improved accessibility, facilities, and programming. Families with children, grandparents with grandchildren, couples holding hands, and adults, youth, and kids of all ages should find more to do and enjoy along the waterfront.

Protect Dewey Hill

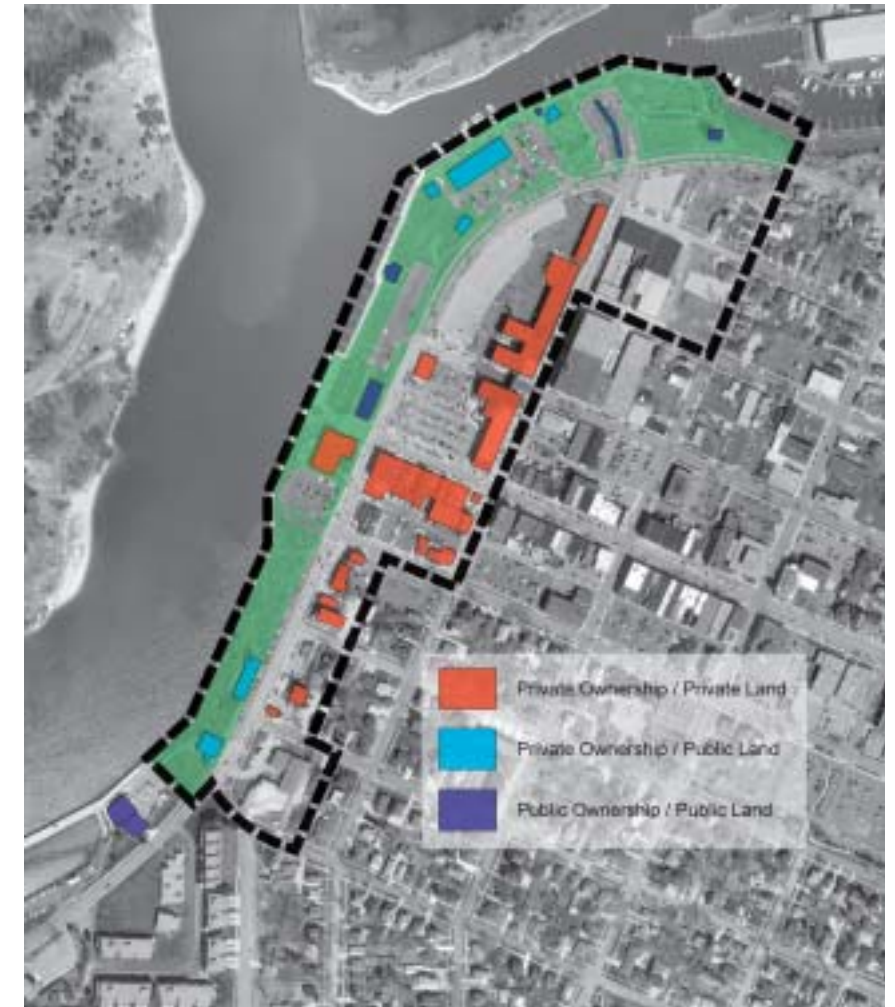
The community reveres Dewey Hill as a wonderful cross-channel natural element and backdrop for the Musical Fountain. Efforts should be made to protect Dewey Hill and the adjacent dune area.

Express the History, Heritage, and Ecology

The human and natural history of Grand Haven and the Grand River are very important components of the character and appeal of visiting Downtown and the Waterfront. Opportunities should be fostered and created to thoughtfully express these dimensions of the community.

Develop Appropriate Public Infrastructure and Facilities.

A critical component of the Waterfront Strategic Plan is the careful and timely construction of infrastructure improvements and other public facilities by the City and other organizations such as the BLP. These improvements include wastewater supply lines, electric service, as well as correctly-sized and appointed streets, sidewalks and public parking lots. These improvements "set the table" for all other public and private projects in this area.



Existing building use and ownership pattern within the Waterfront Strategic Plan Area.

U N L I M I T E D P O T E N T I A L

Grand Haven's Grand River Waterfront can:

1. Be re-designed as an even more attractive gathering space for people of all ages to enjoy community celebrations and marine events, music and worship services, the Musical Fountain and fireworks.
2. Be invigorated with more health-based community recreation.
3. Activate a renewed sense of history and heritage of the City, the River, and all those who have inhabited these shores.
4. Connect with adjacent neighborhoods to provide convenient access, views, and vistas to the water that will invite neighbors to enjoy the City's wonderful gem.
5. Be a more robust year-round destination for local citizens and visitors alike by taking advantage of both summer and shoulder seasons.

Nearby, along Harbor Drive, could be new public and private investments and projects, including:

1. New residential units and perhaps a new hotel, bed-and-breakfast lodging, and conference center.
2. Additional retail, restaurant, and selective office space along Washington Avenue and re-designed Harbor Drive.
3. Selective seasonal food vendors and the kiosks to complement year-round businesses.
4. Washington will be more effectively connected to the Waterfront through intersection improvements and a transformed Stadium area with new seating and entertainment staging, possible summer water features and winter ice skating.
5. A new transportation museum could be centered around the Depot, Train Engine #1223, and the Coal Tipple – all located together and anchoring the northern end of the waterfront zone.
6. A new Waterfront Center (in the vicinity and in some facilities of the existing Chinook Pier complex) could contain new offices for Marina operations, charter fishing, the Sailing Club, and other existing and new waterfront-based organizations and activities. The children's play areas could also be improved.



Near Term (1-3 Years) Waterfront Strategic Plan framework for building use and ownership pattern.

This sketch shows the potential movement of the Depot to the northern end of Harbor Drive. Also, new private projects are shown (from south to north) at: the Aquila site, Harborview Inn, Zephyr (Poncho's), the Piano Factory and the Stanco properties.



Long Term (4-10 years) Waterfront Strategic Plan framework for building use and ownership pattern.

This sketch shows the creation of the new Waterfront Center, the conversion of the Terraces to a public pavilion and the potential removal of One South Harbor as part of the re-designed Stadium area. New private sector projects include the potential re-development of the Dairy Treat site, Wessels, the Piano Factory/Wirick's and Covenant Life Church parking lot.

WATERFRONT STRATEGY - THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERESTS

The successful implementation of the Waterfront Plan will involve the complementary and coordinated actions of both public and private parties over an extended period of time. In some cases, the public sector must lead, while at other times and for other projects, the private sector is uniquely qualified and able to act decisively. The Public sector must embrace and protect public values and resources, while also leading the way for improvements that benefit a clear majority of citizens and their varied interests. The Private sector, particularly developers, must respond to market needs and their own investment objectives to transform open or underutilized properties into attractive sellable facilities.

Along the Waterfront, this dynamic relationship is particularly sensitive and charged because of the importance of the waterfront to the entire community. Due to its present character and significant future development prospects, a high level of public scrutiny is both necessary and appropriate. For private investors, the waterfront is also precious and generally significantly more costly to purchase and develop. It is crucial that wise, long term decisions are made in order to satisfy investor, purchaser, and re-purchasers' objectives.

Appropriate potential uses could include:

- Retail
- Restaurant
- Hotel, motel, conference center
- Bed & Breakfast
- Residential (except on the ground floor fronting Harbor Drive)
- Office (except on the ground floor fronting Harbor Drive)

Public Leadership

There are several key policies and numerous potential projects within the Waterfront area that will require public leadership and action.

Policies:

1. Zoning/Rezoning

Currently, the waterfront area includes four different zoning designations: Waterfront/WF, PD, B-2, and B-1. It is strongly recommended that the entire Waterfront Study area, as shown on the adjacent figures, be re-zoned to WF or WF-2.

2. Design Guidelines

Along with rezoning, it is recommended that Design Guidelines be created that are uniquely crafted to serve, reinforce, and protect the special quality and character of the Waterfront area. These guidelines ought to consider many factors, including the Vision and Principles and Goals of this Plan (pages 3, 4) and other inputs received by the Planning Commission and City Council.

The following Design Guidelines were drafted during this study and are recommended as a starting point for re-writing the Waterfront Zone Ordinance .

Building Guidelines:

1. Encourage building placement to provide sufficient room for pedestrian movement and plantings.
2. Define an appropriate height limit that both respects the views of the waterfront and comfortably frames waterfront views.
3. Encourage waterfront balconies, porches, and verandas to front on Harbor Drive.
4. Parking facilities should be located to the rear of buildings or underground.
5. Development should relate well to the street with appropriate scale and architectural character.
6. Primary entrances and building access should be located on Harbor Drive with active ground floor uses.
7. Where permitted, taller buildings (over two stories) should step back from the lot lines a minimum of 10' and a maximum of 20'.
8. Limit the allowable maximum footprint of buildings to avoid large monolithic developments.
9. Permitted first floor uses are Retail, Hotel Lobby space and Restaurant. Prohibited uses should include parking, residential, or guest rooms of hotels fronting Harbor Drive. Permit cafes as an accessory use.
10. Provide architectural detailing and massing (needs careful study to be effective) that is in keeping with the historic character of Downtown Grand Haven, and that is pedestrian friendly in nature.
11. Provide awnings/canopies along Harbor Drive frontage.
12. Ensure that no less than 70% of the first floor Harbor Drive facades shall be glass.

Street/Harbor Drive Guidelines:

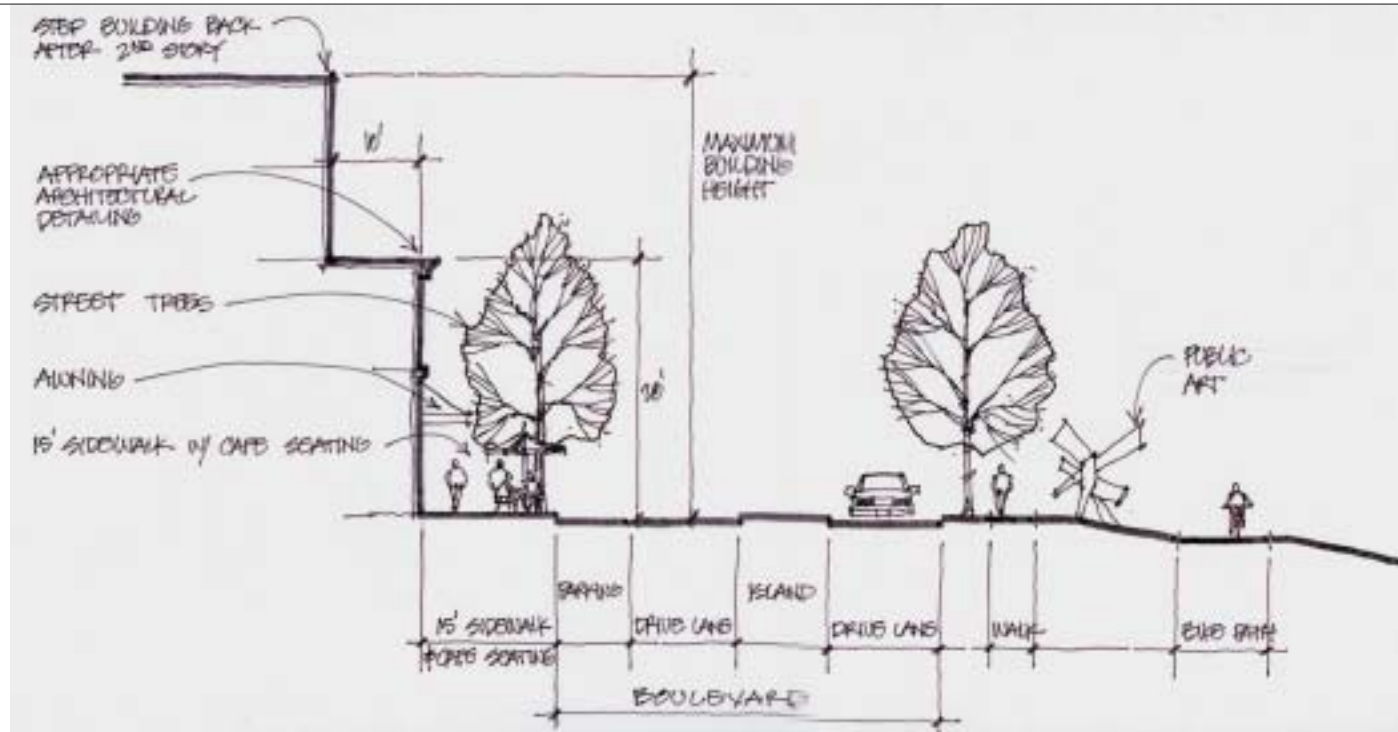
1. A 15' minimum width sidewalk along the east side of Harbor Drive.
2. Plant street trees in grates 25-30' on center (o.c.) on the east side of Harbor Drive.
3. Provide pedestrian scale, public street lamps along both sides of Harbor Drive.
4. Place all utility and power lines underground along Harbor Drive
5. Encourage use of snowmelt where appropriate.
6. New traffic signals should be considered that are less obstructive to views.
7. Harbor Drive should become a landscaped boulevard with one traffic lane each direction. Only the east side of Harbor Drive should have on-street parking.
8. Consider better/safer pedestrian crossings at each intersection of Harbor Drive.
9. Provide alternative routes and modes of transportation to and through the waterfront park area, including more direct access from the street level to the boardwalk.



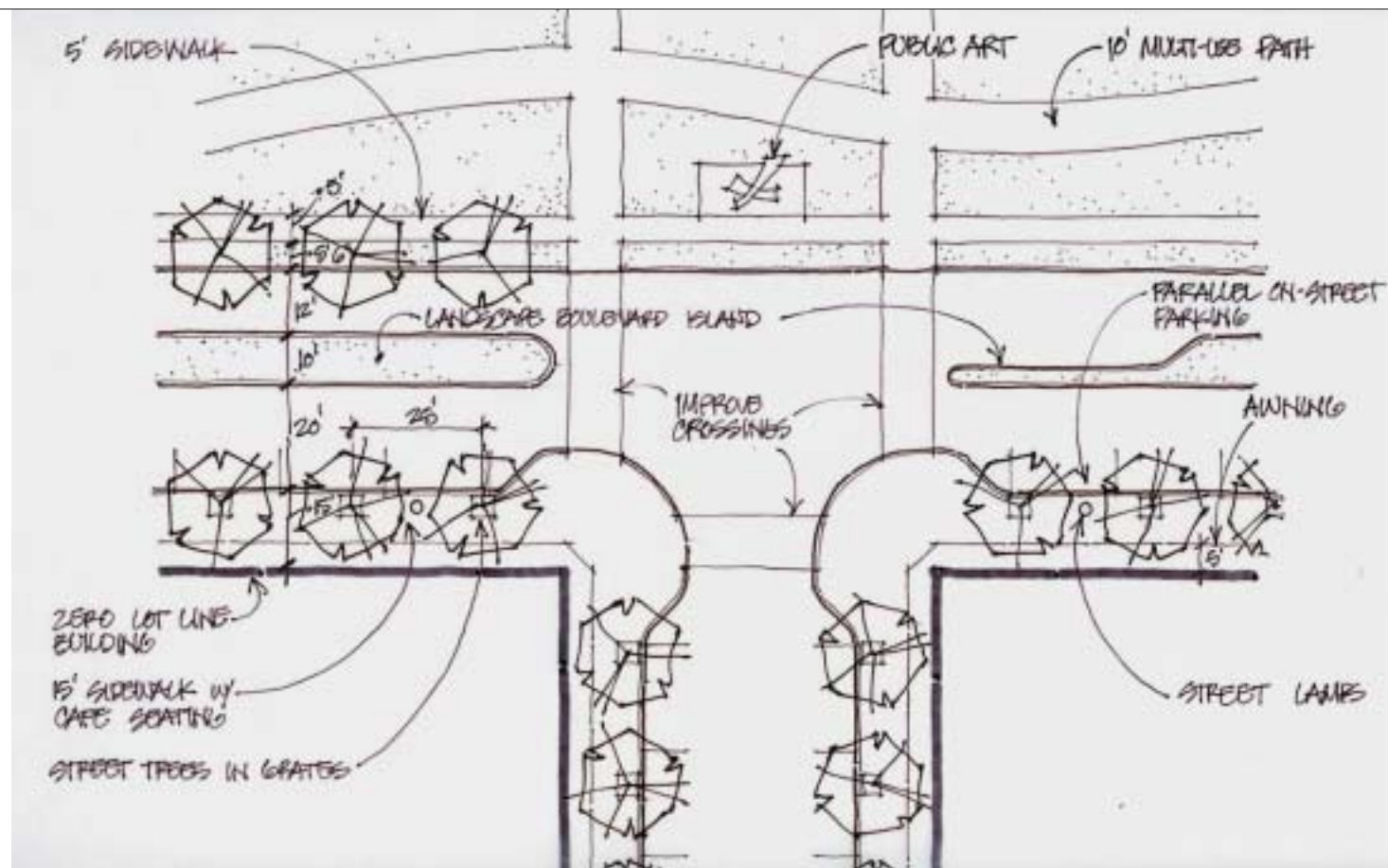
Existing zoning



Proposed zoning



Typical Harbor Drive section, showing building envelope, sidewalk café, landscaping, street treatments and park improvements (see Building Guidelines, Page 6)



Typical Harbor Drive intersection with neighborhood streets showing boulevard section, improved sidewalks, crossings and landscaping.

Park and Open Space Guidelines:

1. Limit evergreen and shrub plantings in the waterfront park to preserve views.
2. Consider public art throughout the park, specifically at the end of each streets terminus at Harbor Drive.

3. Encouraging and Enabling the Private Sector

There are and will continue to be policies that must be created and/or modified to best serve waterfront needs and opportunities. The following were identified during the planning process:

A. Outdoor and Sidewalk Cafes. This is an important issue for the waterfront zone as pedestrian-friendly facilities and activities are encouraged and completed. Cafes are a particularly appealing and civilizing aspect of a vibrant downtown. Grand Haven generally, and the waterfront area in particular, contains numerous opportunities to develop and enhance these dining experiences. The City already permits cafes and is revising this ordinance. It is recommended that additional cafes be encouraged and that the use of alcohol be allowed on a selective basis within the Downtown and the Waterfront.

B. Waterfront and Downtown Vendors. Vendors of all kinds – including food, souvenirs, and other goods and services – add flair and serve local and visitor needs. Allowing such vendors – using portable, sidewalk-scaled hand carts and displays - along the Waterfront and in Downtown is recommended but must be examined carefully by City officials. Over time, especially if the Riverview Terrace and Chinook Pier facilities are reduced in size or removed altogether, it will probably be important to allow such vendors to fill the seasonal market niche that these ventures currently serve. A careful licensing process – to ensure the quality, health, and safety of vendor products and services – needs to accompany this policy. A standardized approach to enabling private vendors on public property could stabilize a historically volatile local seasonal service market. Furthermore, using third-party property management firms may improve the City’s ability to effectively manage private activity on public lands.

C. Creative Developer Dialogue. Downtown Grand Haven generally, and the Waterfront area in particular, is on the verge of significant development activity. In fact, several projects are already underway and many other projects are in various stages of planning and pre-development. It is very important that this development “community” be aware of the community Vision for Downtown as well as all current and relevant public planning goals and objectives. This naturally involves the Master Land Use Plan and Zoning Plans, but also the Vision and Evaluation Guidelines for Downtown as well as the current Waterfront Strategic Plan. Besides these documents, it is also very important that City staff engage in a creative dialogue with potential developers in order to encourage appropriate uses and facilities and to anticipate issues for both the public and the developers themselves. This dialogue has been underway for some time and it needs to be encouraged and supported by senior City Staff, Planning Commission, and City Council.

The following waterfront project opportunities will require significant public sector leadership and resources to achieve.

Waterfront Stadium

Redesigning the Waterfront Stadium to open up access and views to the water is a central goal of this Plan. This will involve the removal of the existing bleacher seating and landscaping treatments, and possibly, the relocation of the Depot (see below) and removal or re-purposing of the One South Harbor building. This area could then accommodate a central fountain and stage/performance area including new structured seating (with lower bleachers constructed below street grade) and informal seating on grassed berms surrounding the fountain and stage/performance area. This redesign would accommodate regular programming such as Worship on the Waterfront and Musical Fountain viewing. Other ideas for the Stadium re-design include the ability to install a temporary stage and/or dance floor, ice skating, and additional temporary seating for occasional, larger events. (See sketches on Pages 12 and 13.)

Depot

This Plan endorses the concept of a Transportation Museum located at the northern end of Harbor Drive. With Engine #1223 and the coal tipple already located there, it is the ideal location for a transportation museum and should include the Depot. The feasibility of moving the Depot is a first step in this process. If relocation is not possible, the Depot should remain in its present location and be re-habilitated to enhance visual and programmatic connections to Washington and for public or commercial uses which are more compatible with the Waterfront generally and the Stadium area specifically.

Waterfront Center

It is recommended, when and if the occasion arises, to convert the larger, westernmost building within the Chinook Pier complex in a new Waterfront Center. The Waterfront Center would accommodate the Marina offices and operations center as well as user restrooms, locker rooms, and lounge; the Sailing Club offices, charter boat offices/operations, and other Marina-related organizations that can be effectively housed in the building. It is recommended that the existing Marina office be retained and converted into a larger pavilion/public restroom facility. The other remaining Chinook Pier buildings should be very carefully studied for public re-use possibilities, but if no other highly-desirable uses can be determined, these facilities should be removed.

Marina

The Marina adds great vitality and programming opportunities to the Waterfront. There is a current need to replace existing municipal docks to meet State requirements and more upscale market demands. Another concept which deserves serious attention is the creation of a “marina lagoon” to be excavated inland from the present channel toward Harbor Drive. Such a new marina facility could occupy the Chinook Pier buildings and parking lot location.

There are also additional opportunities for expanding the marina onto other City properties west of the present marina, and also across the channel to

Harbor Island locations. Each of these potential expansions requires very careful evaluation for technical feasibility and affordability.

Harbor Drive Improvements

1. Extend boulevard section. This project would extend the boulevard portion of Harbor Drive from Franklin Street to Howard Street in order to improve pedestrian crossing safety and rationalize and improve traffic flow, parking, landscaping, and views to the River (see prior page for details).
2. Streetscape improvements. Such improvements include new wider sidewalks, street furniture, flower planters, trash receptacles, traffic signals, and the like, very similar to those improvements proposed for Washington Street in the Vision Plan.
3. Place overhead wires underground. All overhead utility wires along Harbor Drive should be placed underground as soon as possible to improve aesthetics, views, and utility performance (due to less interruptions from downed lines and other damage due to wind, ice, and other above-ground conditions).

Landscape Changes

Many of the trees that have been planted along the waterfront are inappropriate species and many of these have grown to such a size as to interrupt views. Careful removal of some trees is recommended. A detailed analysis of all plantings is necessary and a detailed landscape plan should be prepared to provide guidance on landscaping/planting changes to the area.

Parking

Adequate, well-located parking is an important component of Downtown vitality and the Waterfront specifically. The Waterfront Plan calls for removing many public parking spaces from the waterfront zone and creating new spaces along the east side of Harbor Drive.

1. More Capacity

- a. New potential public parking spaces could be located along Harbor Drive itself, in the Covenant Life Church parking lot, or on the Stanco properties. It is recommended that the City talk with owners of these properties to determine their potential acquisition and/or control through lease.
- b. Parking Deck. It is possible that a parking deck would be needed to accommodate future parking and a good location has been identified behind the Grand Theater or east of the Tip-A-Few restaurant. A four-story deck in either location could accommodate approximately 300 vehicles
- c. Reconfigure existing lots. As suggested in the *Parking Study*, some additional parking spaces could be gained by reconfiguring existing lots.



Stadium Area and One South Harbor Building



Railroad Depot on Harbor Drive at Washington



Municipal marina



Possible long-term Waterfront area development scenario

2. More/higher Utilization

Certain parking spaces in Downtown (near the Library, Community Center, and the County building) are largely inactive during busy weekend activities on the waterfront. To take advantage of this under-utilization, it is recommended that these lots be promoted to Downtown users and event organizers.

3. Alternatives to Driving and Parking

Alternatives to driving should also be encouraged to add user capacity for Waterfront/Downtown events and activities, including the use of the trolley and shuttle services, bicycles (via bike lanes and more bike racks), convenient kiss-and-ride dropoff and pickup locations. In one specific case, to increase bicyclist, pedestrian, and motorists safety and convenience, it is recommended that portions of Harbor Drive be reserved for bicycles moving along Harbor Drive between the Farmers Market and the State Park.

Public Art and Memorials

The Waterfront offers excellent opportunities for new public artworks and memorials of distinguished community persons or events. These expressive, interpretive, and historical artifacts should complement existing art and memorials and help teach important ecological lessons about the Grand River and tell stories about the many communities that have inhabited its shores.

Ice Skating and Ice Sculptures

The potential for ice skating in or near the re-designed Stadium has already been mentioned (see previous page). In addition, ice sculptures can occur in a variety of locations provided they are equipped with a minimal water source; spontaneous ice sculptures can be created by dripping water from an elevated source onto a minimal open scaffold. These shapes can be lighted for dramatic effects. Ice sculptures can also be shaped from blocks of ice by skilled artists. Both types of ice sculptures fit well within the Waterfront zone and should be encouraged by the City and arts organizations.

Musical Fountain

The Musical Fountain is a very unique and beloved community asset. Playing the Fountain more often, including during daylight hours, would add to the liveliness and appeal of the Waterfront. Perhaps shorter, noontime or manatee programs could be conducted on a trial basis to test the idea of daytime performances.

Small Boat Launch facility

It is recommended that a launch facility be developed near the third street bridge to allow small non-motorized boats, such as canoes and kayaks, safe and convenient access to the Grand River.

Improved Children's Play Areas

This priority could include several projects in a variety of locations – including the existing playground area near Chinook Pier – but could also expand in various locations along the waterfront. Further study is needed to determine and design the ideal children's play areas and components. Besides play equipment, these improvements could include educational signage, playful sculptures, and gardens designed specifically for children.

Enhance the Farmers Market

Several ideas have surfaced about the Farmers Market including the concept to relocate it closer to Washington Avenue. It is recommended that the Farmers Market be carefully evaluated by City Staff to determine the best ways to enhance its appeal to Market users, the farmers/salespersons, and the general public.

Information/Interpretation Kiosks

Maintain and enhance the content and relevance of existing directories provided by the Central Business Downtown Development Authority. Add kiosks as necessary and/or add "higher technology" capability to existing directory and new kiosks to take advantage of new computer information technology and the City's wireless network.



Musical Fountain



Waterfront Park statue



Waterfront Directory.

PRIVATE SECTOR PROJECTS

The robust re-development and re-vitalization of the Grand River Waterfront requires the active, long term participation by many private parties. This includes property developers, downtown property and business owners, nearby neighborhood residents, and non-profit organizations. Each party is necessary to the system to voice support as well as concerns. They must be willing to engage development interests, City officials, and staff in an ongoing creative dialogue about Waterfront property transformations.

Planned uses. As stated in the Vision Plan for Downtown Grand Haven and in the Design Guidelines, the Waterfront Plan recommends and supports the following uses within the waterfront zone:

- Residential (except on the ground floor)
- Retail
- Restaurant
- Hotel/motel/conference center, bed and breakfast
- Office (except on the ground floor).

Ultimately, specific projects will mark real change and progress in the Waterfront Plan implementation. Several significant private project opportunities are currently underway or under consideration.

Projects Underway:

Harbor View Inn: New, overnight lodging project containing 10 units in suite/apartment style in 4-story building.

12 Washington: New, mixed use project with ground floor retail, upper floor office, and 6 condominiums in a 4-story building.

Potential development concepts and/or sites under consideration:

Poncho's/Zephyr: Conceptual plan includes ground floor pub and offices plus 16 condominiums in a new 4-story building with below-grade resident parking.

Grand Theater: Conceptual plan includes ground floor restaurant (on Washington) and approximately 15-20 condominiums in a new 4-story building with below-grade resident parking.

Piano Factory Parking Lot: This site development is envisioned to strengthen the connection between Washington and Harbor Drive. The conceptual sketch (page 13) shows a new 2-3 story building with ground floor retail or restaurant uses and upper floor offices and/or residential units. (A similar arrangement could be used for one or more additional buildings in the northern and western portions of this lot which is partially-owned by the City but encumbered by an easement controlled by the owners of the Piano Factory building.) To build project(s) in this location will require a thoughtful dialogue between the Piano Factory owners, the City, and other business interests and neighbors.

Stanco Metal Property: This large property which fronts on Harbor Drive and borders 1st and 2nd Streets could accommodate a wide range of uses including residential, senior housing, lodging, and possibly selective service or office uses supportive to the principal use of the property. The site will also accommodate significant parking.

Covenant Life Parking Lot: This lot is presently used predominantly during summer months, but could be developed for retail or restaurant uses, particularly if the Chinook Pier commercial facilities are discontinued. Importantly, this parcel has deeded height restrictions which limit future development opportunities. It is recommended that the City begin an acquisition process with CLC for this property in order to give the City a variety of parking and re-development options in the future.

Aquila Gas Property: This large parcel is a very strategic transitional property between residential neighborhoods, Harbor Drive, and the Waterfront. Thus, the property can accommodate a range of potential uses including residential or lodging opportunities as well as complementary restaurant or retail uses along Harbor Drive. Careful attention must be given to project heights, views, parking needs, and landscaping.

Other Developable Properties

There are several other properties within the Waterfront zone that might also be re-developed in the near future. In general, it is recommended that the above planned uses be proposed in these other potential re-development parcels as well.



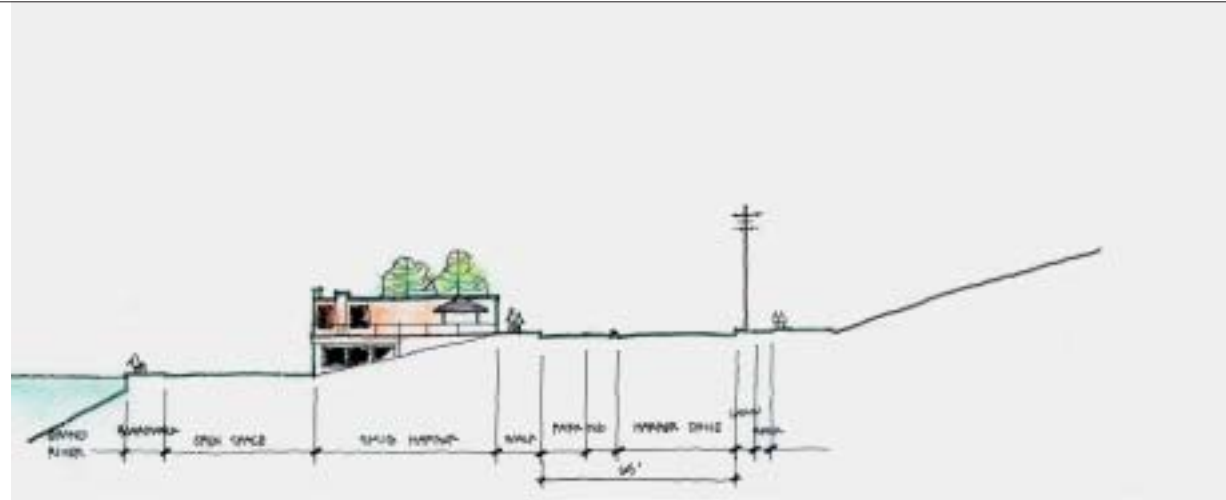
Harbor House



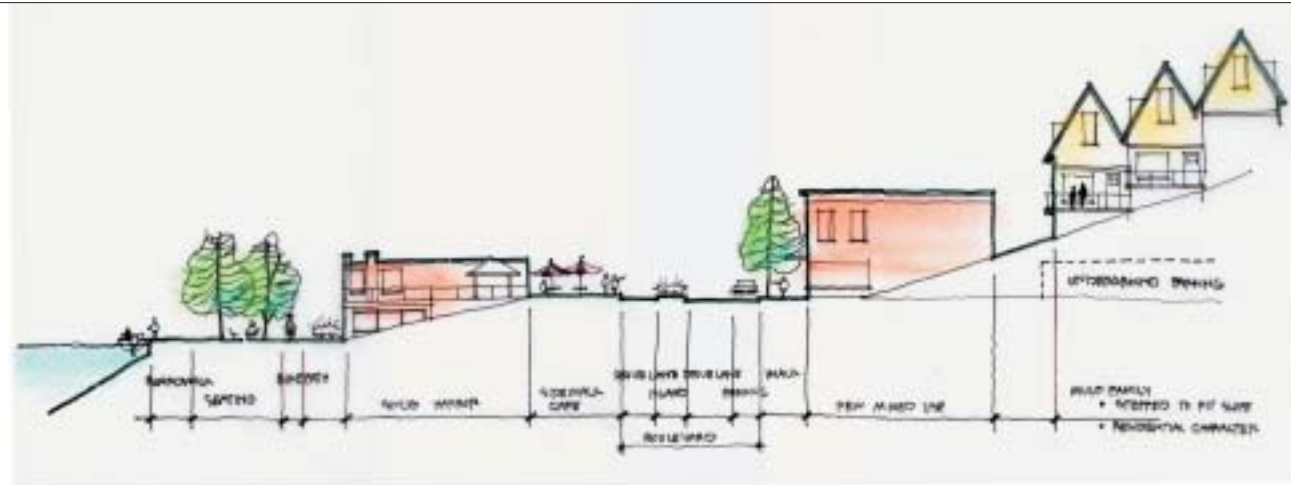
Chinook Pier



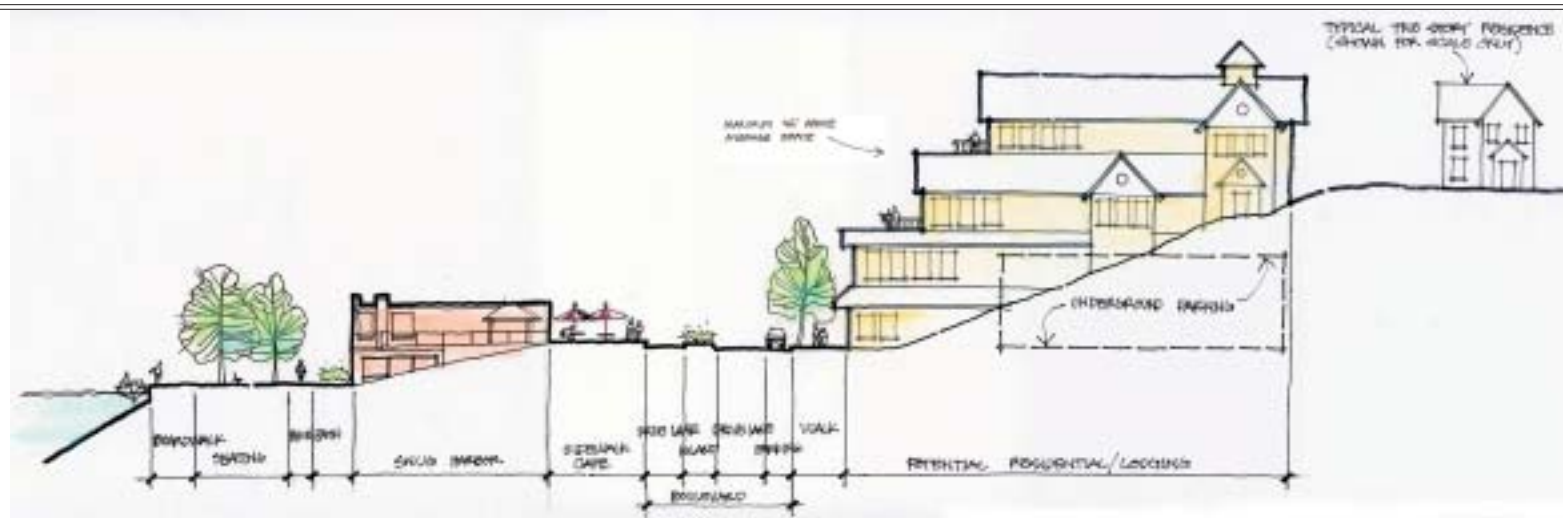
Piano Factory public parking lot



Existing Condition: section showing Snug Harbor restaurant and present Harbor Drive configuration with vacant Aquila site.



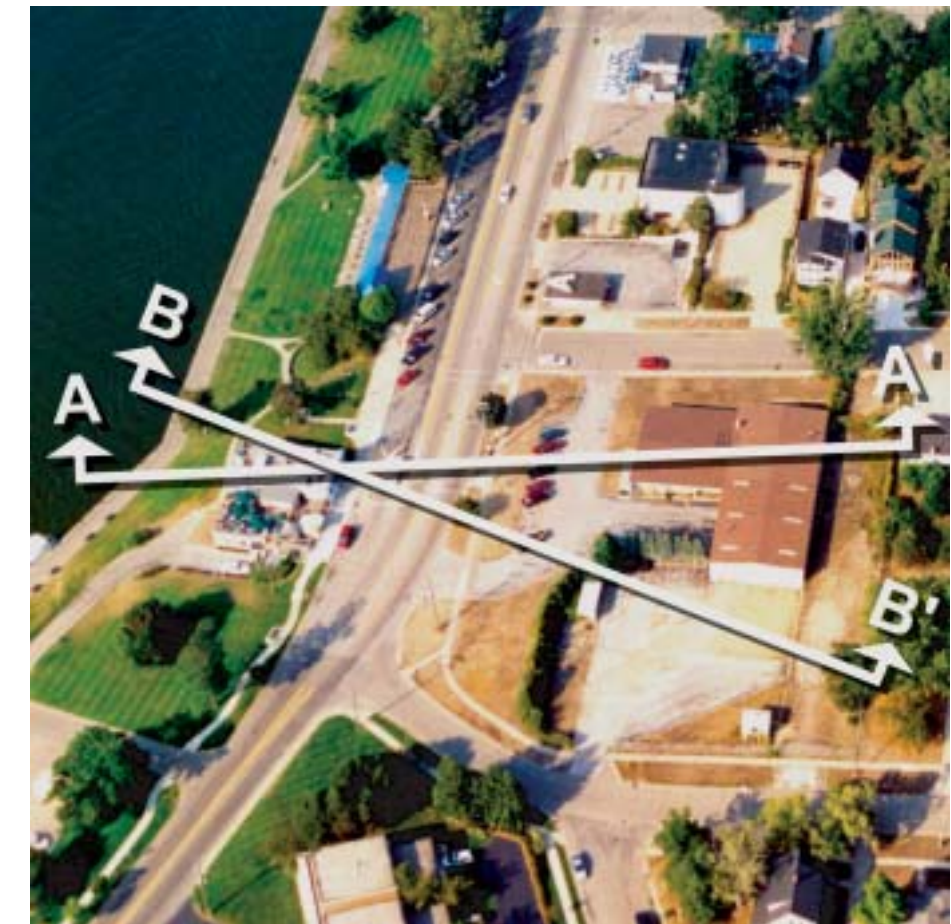
Lafayette Street Concept: Section A-A¹ at right showing Snug Harbor restaurant, re-designed Harbor Drive and new buildings on Aquila site along Lafayette Street.



Howard Street Concept: Section B-B¹ at right showing Snug Harbor restaurant, redesigned Harbor Drive and new building(s) on Aquila site along Howard Street.



Snug Harbor Restaurant



Aerial view of Aquila site and Harbor Drive, September 2003. Section lines indicate location of potential buildings in adjacent sketches.

PUBLIC / PRIVATE COOPERATION

In order to implement the Waterfront Strategic Plan, strong, persistent and long term cooperation will be needed between the public and private sectors. One without the other will result in unfulfilled plans and unbuilt or empty facilities. It is critical that public/private partnerships and collaborative approaches be employed in creating projects and effective programming.

Projects

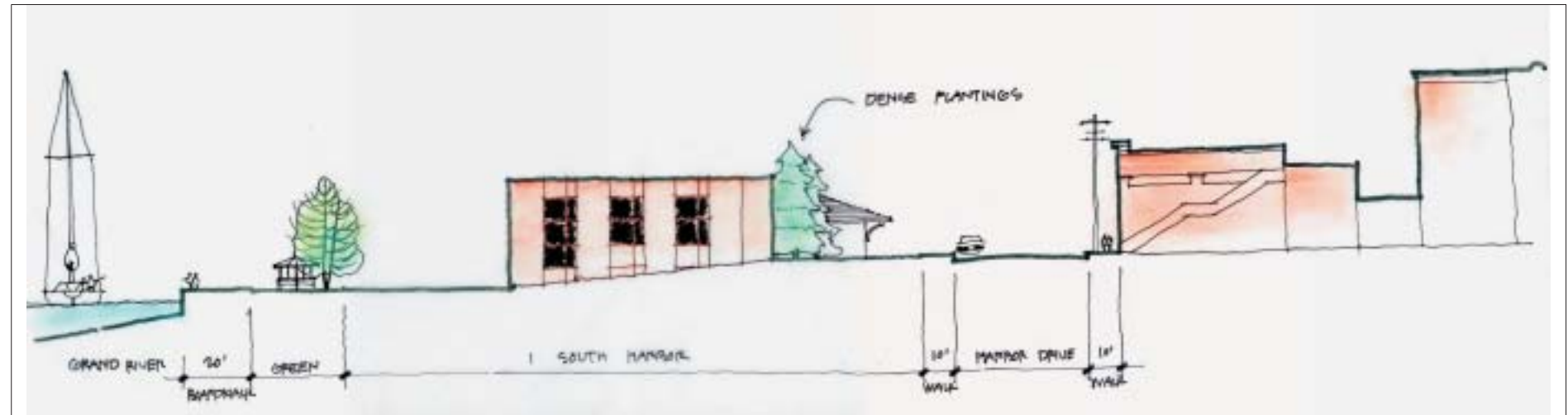
For specific bricks-and-mortar projects, it will be important to:

1. Develop good detailed plans which respond to the Waterfront Strategic Plan, as well as the *Vision Plan* and other official documents, compatible uses, and consider the long value of the investment to purchasers and the community.
2. Consider the visual, traffic, and parking impacts of each and every project on immediate neighbors and nearby neighborhoods of Downtown;
3. Encourage high quality designs and materials as well as low-impact construction techniques.
4. Foster neighbor-friendly activities and/or commercial operations upon completion.

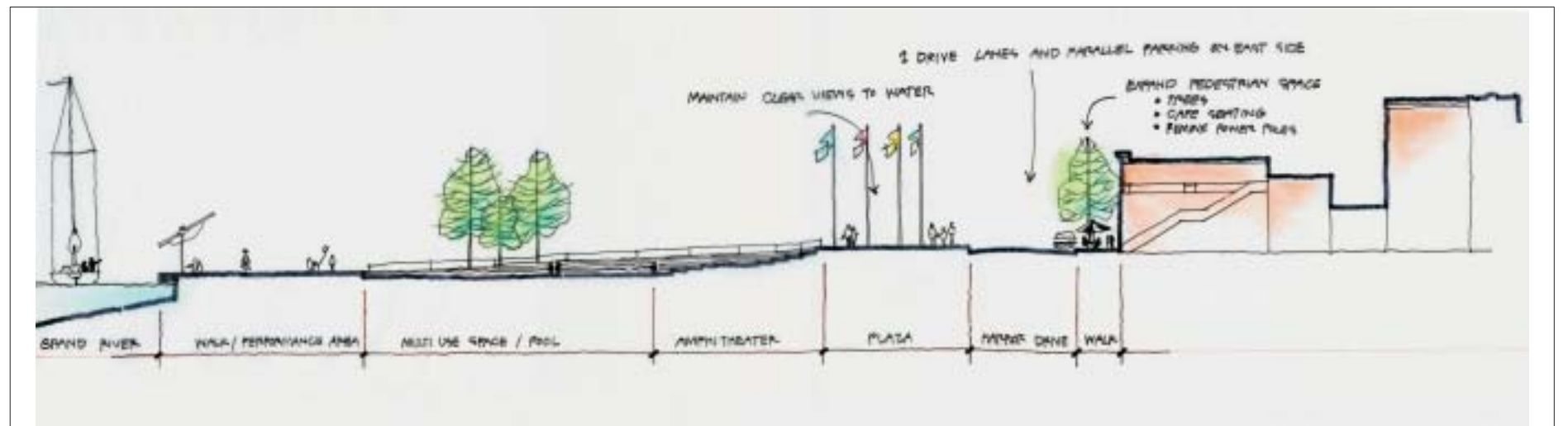
Utilization and Programming

Public/private partnerships will also be critically important to maximize the utilization and effective programming of Waterfront spaces and facilities that are recommended in this Plan. These include the Coast Guard Festival as well as dozens of other large and smaller events and celebrations that occur along the Grand River and Lake Michigan Waterfronts. With the proposed changes in this plan, the Grand River Waterfront is expected to attract even greater use – both planned and unplanned – by residents and visitors to Grand Haven.

Key players in these efforts include the City, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Coast Guard Festival, and many other organizations and individuals.



Stadium Concept: section showing existing condition at Stadium with One South Harbor Building, Depot and Kirby Grille.



Stadium Concept: section showing potential re-designed Stadium with new bleachers, Harbor Drive changes, improved landscaping and pedestrian areas.



Waterfront Vision: potential aerial image showing re-designed Stadium, additional buildings along Washington and Harbor Drive, parking deck and improved pedestrian streetscape.



Grand Haven Grand River Waterfront: Aerial photograph of a portion of the Waterfront Study Area, September 2003.

THE FUTURE RESULTS :

The Downtown Vision Plan for Grand Haven report refers to the **Common Good**... *that quality of a place that supports everyone's well being and the collective livelihood of the community.* It is hoped that this Waterfront Strategic Plan, along with the previous downtown planning reports, will be utilized to take Grand Haven's wonderful waterfront to the next level of public amenity and private enjoyment... and in so doing, enlarge the common good of this entire community. In the future, this expansion of the common good will be noticed in the following ways:

1. **Public leadership** will focus on green and open space protection and public infrastructure improvements. The public sector will foster and set the quality, tone, and direction for complementary private investments. The public process will be marked by transparency, clarity of purpose, and measured leadership on the most important civic projects. Public projects will help prime the pump for others to follow and share in re-development opportunities and responsibilities.
2. **Private sector** property owners and businesses must engage in continuous creative thinking about improvements to their property's profitability and business opportunities. This includes collaborations with neighbors on joint projects related to the overall Vision and Waterfront Plan. The private sector will provide input and support to joint public/private projects as these challenges will require political and financial support to achieve short-term, medium-term, and long-term advantages. Private citizens will provide meaningful feedback to City officials as to ways that Downtown businesses and public officials can seek and achieve win-win solutions.

Results will include the following:

1. The physical appearance of the Waterfront will be enhanced through beautification and re-vitalization projects involving the streets, sidewalks, landscaping, existing and new buildings, and through the introduction of new art and heritage opportunities.
2. New and rejuvenated retail shops and restaurants will reach new levels of vibrancy and profitability.
3. The Washington Street business district and the Waterfront will be more coherently connected physically and programmatically with new public spaces created for formal and informal events, activities, and gatherings.
4. New residential units of various designs and new lodging and/or conferencing facilities will emerge to serve resident and visitor needs.
5. Significant capital investment will be attracted to the Waterfront district because of its increased public attractiveness as well as the inherent long-term quality and value imbedded in the Vision, this Waterfront Strategic Plan, and shared expectations for future Downtown development.
6. Public/Private partnerships will be established and/or expanded to meet the expected leadership and financing needs for future projects. These collaborations will require integrity, trust, and confidence and faith in the future... the very aspects of the common good that all of these planning efforts have endeavored to expand.