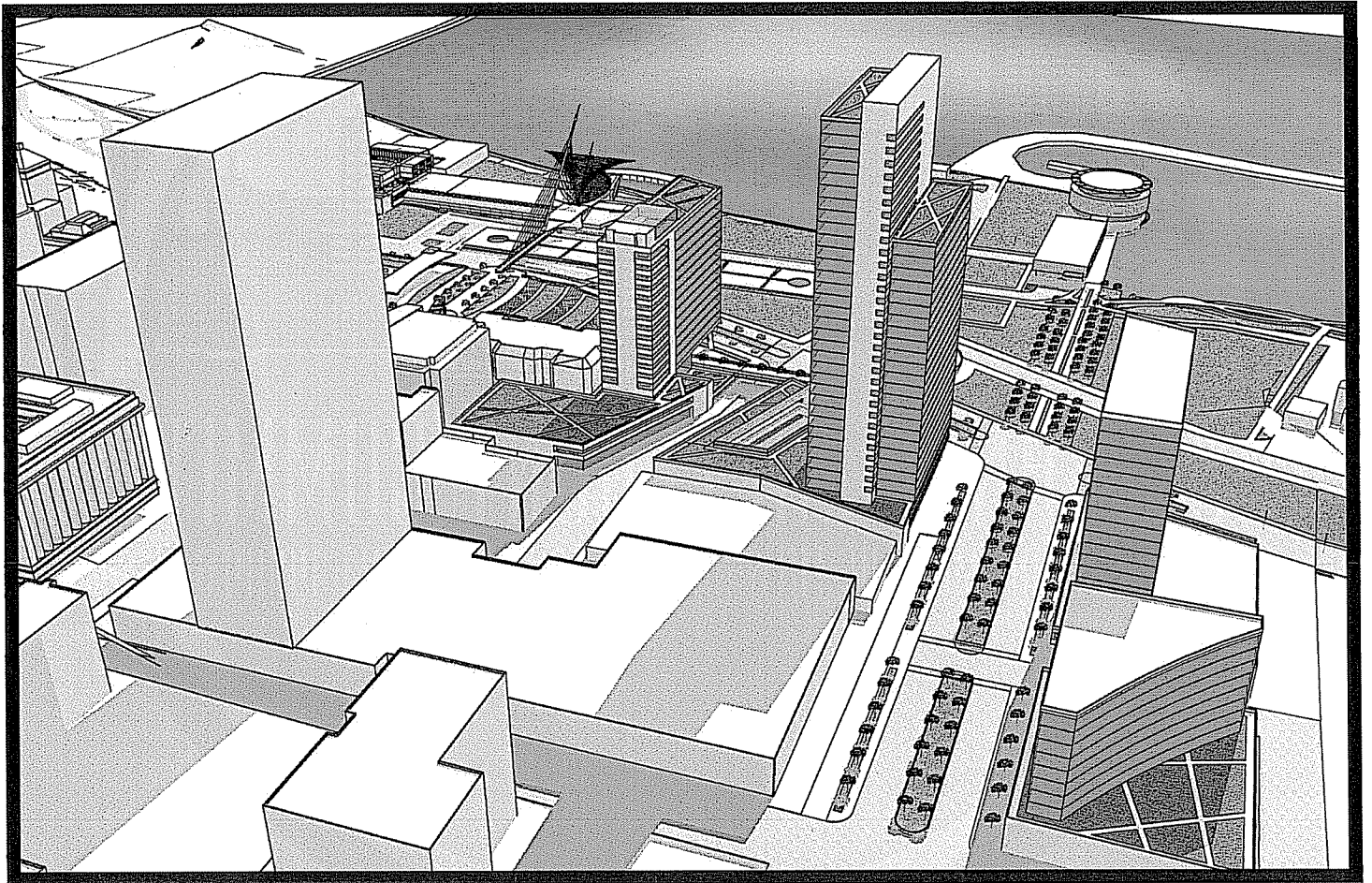
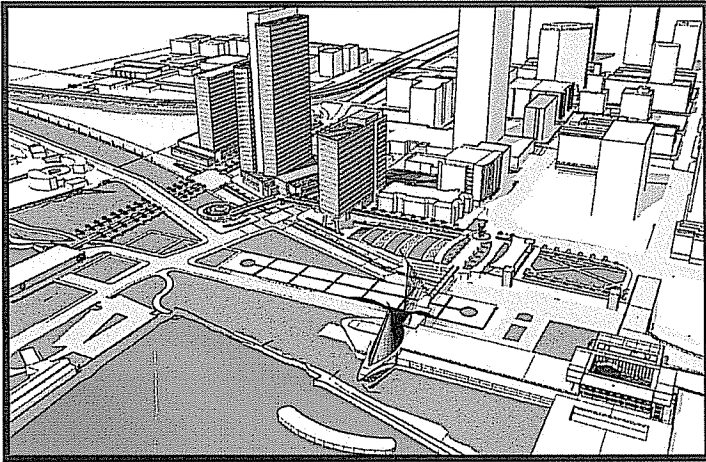




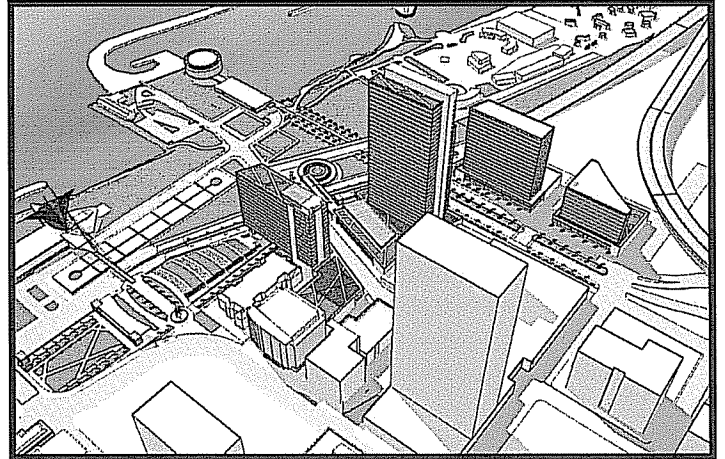
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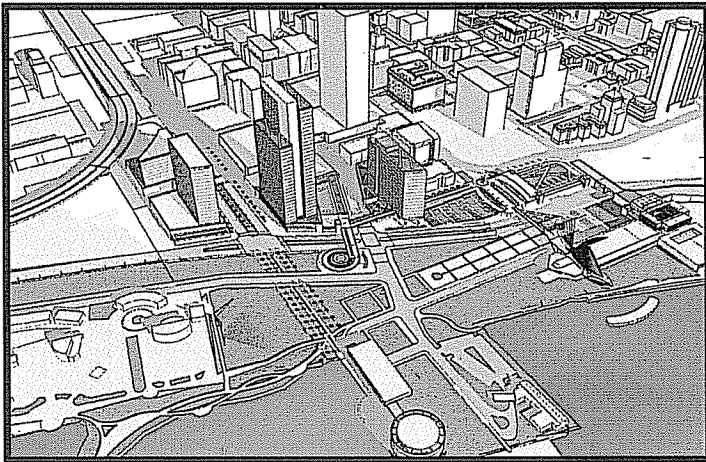
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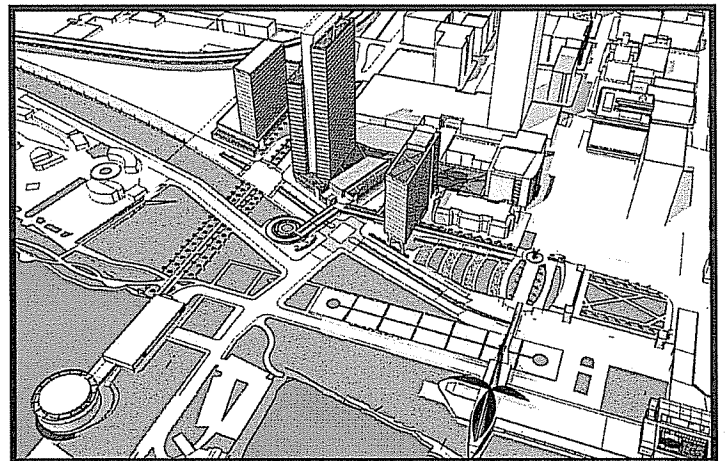
SOUTHWEST VIEW



SOUTHEAST VIEW



NORTHWEST VIEW



SOUTHWEST VIEW

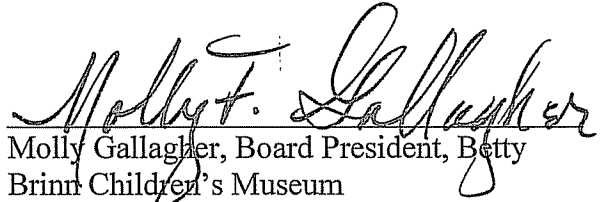


## Preamble

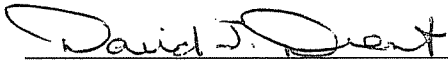
We, the Long-Range Lakefront Planning Committee, do hereby accept and present to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors the following recommendations regarding the site and use of the Downtown Transit Center and O'Donnell Park and Parking Structure for long range planning for the development of the lakefront.



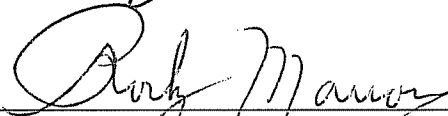
Brian Taffora, Director, Economic Development, Milwaukee County



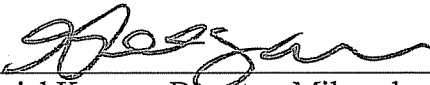
Molly Gallagher, Board President, Betty Brinn Children's Museum



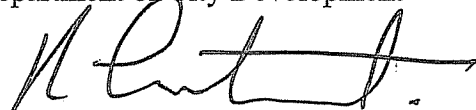
David Drent, Executive Director, War Memorial



Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner, Department of City Development



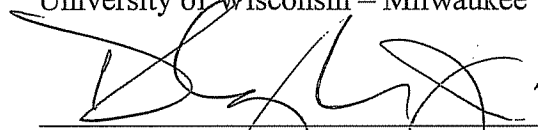
Daniel Keegan, Director, Milwaukee Art Museum



Robert Greenstreet, Professor, Dean, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee



Michael Cudahy, Board Chairman, Discovery World



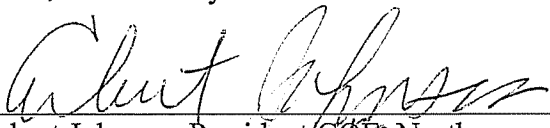
Donald W. Layden, Jr., Quarles & Brady, LLP, Milwaukee World Festival, Inc.



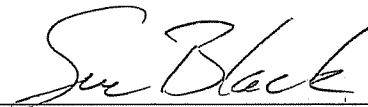
Gerry Broderick, Supervisor, 3<sup>rd</sup> District, Milwaukee County



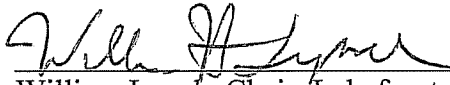
Nik Kovac, Alderman, 3<sup>rd</sup> District, City of Milwaukee



Erbert Johnson, President/COO, North Milwaukee State Bank



Sue Black, Chair Director, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, Milwaukee County



William Lynch, Chair, Lakefront Development Advisory Commission



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## Prologue

**Milwaukee's lakefront is a unique destination** among American cities, given its location at the edge of downtown Milwaukee, its long and beloved history of public parks, greenways, and public access, its proximity to historic neighborhoods and businesses, and its well-established cultural assets. Unlike many other cities located on bodies of water, Milwaukee is both an affordable and an accessible city. **Milwaukee's park-like lakefront immediately adjacent to its Downtown business district is a unique feature unlike many other lakefront cities.** The region's embrace of water as a critically important economic development asset only serves to enhance the lakefront's importance as a destination, a best-environmental-practices example, and an economic development opportunity for each generation of Milwaukee residents to embrace, improve and protect.

The lakefront has a rich history tied to the development of the community, its industry, and in recent times, its rising popularity as a major destination. **In recent years the lakefront has developed a personality that arguably sets it on a path for future enhancement** that, while preserving its open, park-like character, could add significant value to both the region and within the existing fabric of the lakefront. It is this fabric and character that offers both the substrate and opportunity upon which to advance the goals of the Long-Range Lakefront Planning Committee.

**There is power and impact in what has already been established:** a unique mix of natural, recreational, cultural, educational, and entertainment experiences at the lakefront. Any future development should build upon that important foundation rather than exist counter to it. Three important Museums and a Memorial (Discovery World, Betty Brinn Children's Museum, the Milwaukee Art Museum and The War Memorial) adjacent to the world's largest music festival and ethnic festival grounds (Summerfest and Henry Maier Festival Park) and situated at two large parks (among others), Veterans Park, one of the great urban park settings, and Lakeshore State Park, the state's only urban state park, offer unique destination experiences. The lakefront's connection to Downtown, historic neighborhoods to the north, and a robust urban residential and retail community to the south establishes the lakefront as a premier location for the "next new" in Milwaukee. **Acknowledging what it already is should be both the catalyst and the framework for future development.** Our vision of Milwaukee's lakefront demands a comprehensive and deliberative planning process.

## Executive Summary

After meeting for four months, gathering all necessary background information and considering a wide range of options for the development of the lakefront from Van Buren Street east to Lake Michigan and from Veteran's Park south to the Interstate 794 Interchange, specifically including the Downtown Transit Center, O'Donnell Park and other assets such as parkland and lakebed grant properties, the Committee recommends the following:

### **Recommendations:**

1. **The redevelopment of the Downtown Transit Center** site into a multi-story, high-value use more appropriate to its location at the lakefront.
2. **The installation of a bicycle/pedestrian lane to and over the Hoan Bridge**, connecting Downtown to southern Milwaukee for all modes of transportation.
3. **The reconfiguration of the Lincoln Memorial Drive/Michigan Street intersection** to provide an efficient and safe means of pedestrian conveyance, maintaining a balance with motorized transportation, and creating a revitalized front door to the city of Milwaukee.
4. **The reconfiguration of the Lake Interchange** ramps to free up valuable space for development and increase connectivity from Downtown and the Third Ward to the lakefront.
5. **The continuation of O'Donnell Park** in its current function in the short-term, while considering redevelopment options long-term.
6. **Increased accessibility** to and along the lakefront for all modes of transportation and greater connectivity to the City.

This Committee also recommends the development of a lakefront master plan to aid in the implementation of these recommendations and other areas some Committee members felt were important. This document should include a more detailed economic development and financial plan for the lakefront. The reduction of the seasonality of the lakefront should be one of the goals of the implementation of the master plan, creating a lakefront that draws visitors throughout the year.

With redevelopment, new businesses would be attracted to the area, which would draw new patrons to the lakefront. This redevelopment should also include a vision for parks and public spaces to create an attractive, innovative lakefront that improves the connectivity of Downtown and the lakefront. Through these recommendations, Milwaukee's lakefront will become a fantastic, world-renowned front door to the city, county, and state.

*In planning for the future of the lakefront, we have a tremendous opportunity to do something spectacular for the state of Wisconsin, for Milwaukee County and for the city of Milwaukee – but, most importantly, for our citizens and the visitors to this fantastic resource. The 1989 Lakefront Master Plan stated that this area “is considered to be the most heavily used recreational land in Wisconsin”.*

*Let's get this done right and with a sense of urgency and pride.*

*-Sue Black*

## Introduction

In October 2010, the City of Milwaukee drafted the Downtown Area Comprehensive Plan as a vision for the future of Milwaukee. This plan included recommendations for the improvement of the lakefront area east of Van Buren Street. With the introduction of this plan, other community stakeholders, including Milwaukee County, wanted further discussion of the future of the lakefront, specifically the Downtown Transit Center and O'Donnell Park.

This led to the creation of the Long-Range Lakefront Planning Committee ("Committee"), comprised of various lakefront stakeholders, with the mission to create a shared vision for the future of the lakefront, from Van Buren Street east to Lake Michigan, including the Downtown Transit Center, O'Donnell Park and other assets such as parkland and lakebed grant properties (see attached map, Appendix A). The Committee is comprised of government officials from Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee, as well as representatives of the public, including lakefront attractions and business community. This Committee hopes to see the implementation of a long-term vision for the lakefront that will turn Milwaukee's back door into its front door.

The Committee's plan for the lakefront envisions an area with improved connectivity to Downtown and between the north and south lakefronts. Improved pedestrian access and safety would draw people to this area to enjoy new businesses, public spaces, and attractions. This will help weave Downtown to the lakefront and create a more fluid transition between these areas.

The primary sites under consideration by the Committee are the Downtown Transit Center and O'Donnell Park. Both sites are owned by Milwaukee County, with the Transit Center being under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation and Public Works and O'Donnell under the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture. The Downtown Transit Center was built as a turnaround hub for buses at the end of their routes and as a transfer location for transit users. It also houses a rentable banquet area, the Harbor Lights Room, managed by the Zilli Hospitality Group. Their contract with the Parks Department expires in 2012. O'Donnell Park houses the Miller Brewing Company Pavilion, a rentable banquet facility, Coast restaurant, managed by the Zilli Hospitality Group, Betty Brinn Children's Museum, a terrace, and a parking garage with over 1,000 parking spaces. Betty Brinn's contract with the Parks Department expires in 2033, while the Zilli Hospitality Group's contracts for Coast and the Miller Pavilion expire in 2015. Although the parking structure was closed for repairs for one year, it has now reopened.

Previous reports about Milwaukee's lakefront have suggested maximizing public access through measures such as an extended network of pedestrian pathways through lakefront parklands, the establishment of a connection between the RiverWalk and lakefront pathways, and continuous bikeways through lakefront parks and over the Hoan Bridge (City of Milwaukee, 1994). Plans in 1994 and 1999 also called for increased public access to the Henry Maier Festival Grounds, including access for pedestrians and cyclists around the perimeter of the grounds, as well as access to certain parts of the grounds year round except during festivals and special events. These reports also expressed a desire to expand the Third Ward grid east, improving its connectivity to the lakefront area. The sections of previous reports regarding lakefront development are attached to this report in Appendix B.

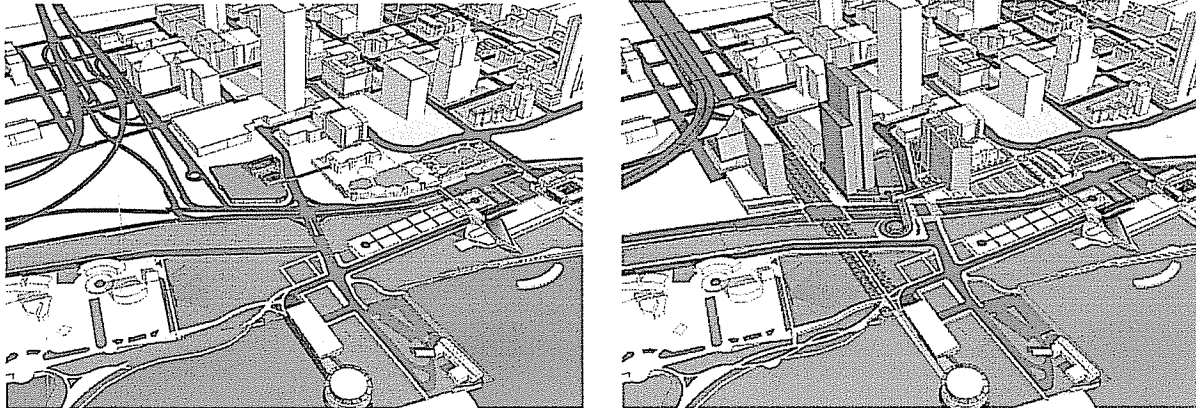
Challenges in the development of this lakefront plan include land use restrictions imposed by the public trust doctrine, lakebed grant restrictions, and zoning requirements. The public trust doctrine states that all navigable waters must be held in trust by the State for public use forever. This limits the activities that can occur near bodies of water that may hinder the public's use and enjoyment of the water. The lakebed grant restrictions limit the uses of filled lakebed land. Some of these areas can only be used for parks and open space, navigation, or public transportation. Determining the exact boundary of the lakebed grant land was a challenge, but these restrictions must be recognized and kept in mind during the development planning process. The zoning ordinances within this area include C9G (mixed activity), C9F(A) (office and service) and PK (park). These ordinances impose restrictions on the kind of activity that can take place in these parcels, but allow some limited and special uses with obtained permits. Please see Appendix C for more detail about these land use restrictions.

Working together with various stakeholders, the Long-Range Lakefront Planning Committee has created a long-range vision for the lakefront that will promote economic growth and development. These recommendations, if realized, will add economic and destination value to this area and promote Milwaukee to residents as well as tourists. These recommendations reduce the seasonality of the lakefront, making the lakefront more attractive to residents and visitors throughout the year, rather than during warmer months. Milwaukee has a unique lakefront that should be enhanced and celebrated, and hopefully these recommendations will make this a reality.

## Chapter 1 – Recommendations

The following three recommendations are believed to be the timeliest issues and therefore should be achieved in the short-term. These outcomes, if accomplished, would set the tone for additional long-term lakefront development.

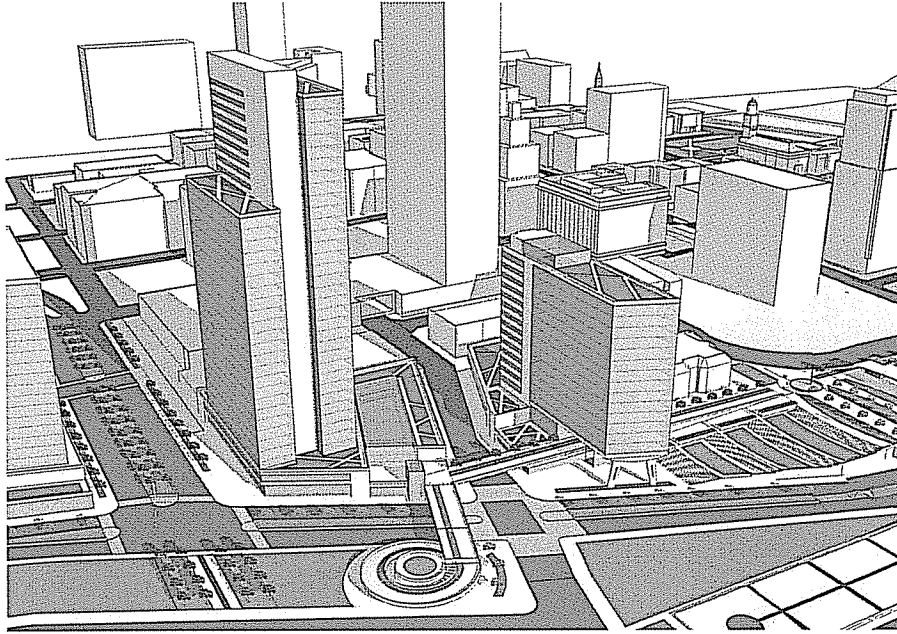
### 1.1 Downtown Transit Center



**The Committee recommends that the Downtown Transit Center site be redeveloped with a high-value, multi-story use housing amenities more appropriate to its lakefront location.**

- This structure could be a key component to the overall vision of weaving Downtown Milwaukee to the lakefront. The new site should add value to the area and complement the existing lakefront development and structures.
- The redeveloped site's characteristics and uses should draw visitors and residents to the lakefront, connecting the lakefront to Downtown and generating economic opportunities and tourism.
- Discussions with business community stakeholders could provide the new site's core tenant or tenants.

**The redevelopment of the Transit Center site should accommodate public access to the lakefront and its amenities.** The design of the structure should include an active street level to engage pedestrians and welcome them to the lakefront. The new site should include characteristics that draw people to the lakefront, such as public green space. Features such as atriums, terracing plazas, or winter gardens would assist in drawing the public to and through this site to the lakefront. This should be a comfortable, accessible site providing easy access to the lakefront.



### **Other Considerations.**

- There should be at least an equivalent amount of green space in the new development as what currently exists outside the Harbor Lights Room. The development for this site should include a landscape plan, providing access to parks and green spaces that are connected with the surrounding area and the lakefront. This site has potential for extraordinary lakefront views, but the plan needs to provide for a better reason for people to pass through the public space to enjoy it. This could be a point at which a pedestrian friendly means for crossing from Downtown to the lakefront could be installed.
- The space should also showcase best management practices for environmental impact, especially storm water management, demonstrating Milwaukee's environmental stewardship.
- The short-term design for the space should accommodate the overall comprehensive plan for the area, including long-term plans for Clybourn Street.
- A development plan that adds destination value consistent with the amenities and other features already established at the lakefront would draw visitors and citizens to the lakefront. Adding value to the already-established Museum District would be a key to a successful program.
- The developable footprint of this site could double if joined with the adjacent U.S. Bank property directly to the west.
- The costs and benefits of relocating Transit Services to another site and the federal hurdles that still need to be overcome need consideration. The developer of this site should include these costs in their proposal, and a new or unpaid burden to taxpayers should not result. The Intermodal Station might be a site option for the relocation of transit services.

### **Next Steps.**

The Transit Center's construction was partially funded through a federal grant, and a process will need to be undertaken by the County Board with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This

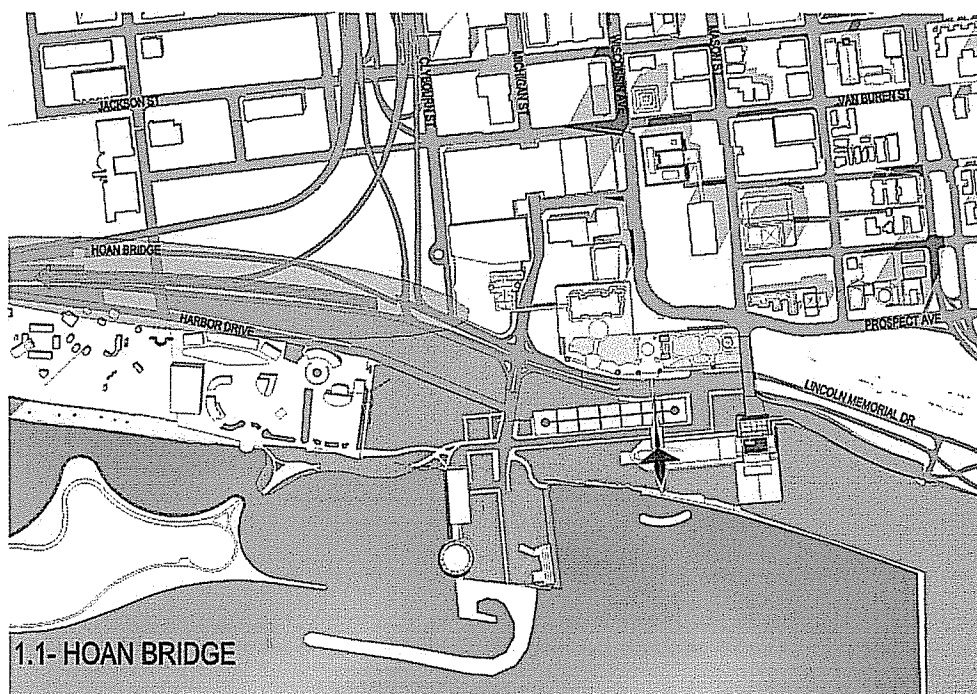
process includes an introduction of information about the Transit Center, such as the interest to lease or sell the facility, why the property is being declared surplus, and plans for an alternative site for transit. The FTA will then determine the process the Board must follow to achieve redevelopment of this site.

It was determined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that the Transit Center is not located on lakebed, and therefore is not subject to public trust doctrine.

The site should be actively marketed to attract developers. A tenant or tenants need to be found for this site in order to make redevelopment a reality. Various stakeholders from the Milwaukee business community have met and should continue meeting to discuss this subject.

The County Board should be presented with an RFP for approval as soon as the necessary planning is completed demonstrating the Downtown Transit Center site as the point of transition between Downtown and the lakefront.

## 1.2 Hoan Bridge



**The Committee members recommend the installation of a bicycle/pedestrian lane to and over the Hoan Bridge.**

- The Hoan Bridge serves as an important connector between Downtown Milwaukee and southeastern Milwaukee neighborhoods and suburbs, as well as the rest of southeastern Wisconsin.
- The installment of a bicycle/pedestrian lane would create an economic driver, as well as a notable and recognizable landmark for Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the Great Lakes area.

- With the installment of this lane, the Bridge could become a tourist destination. This would draw residents and visitors to the lakefront, benefiting all stakeholders in the area.

**A bicycle/pedestrian lane over the Hoan Bridge would increase connectivity for all modes of transportation and have a positive impact on the area.** Providing a safe route for non-motorized traffic from Bayview and southern Milwaukee County to Downtown would be a great benefit to current residents and an attraction for tourists. Heavily used bike and pedestrian pathways, such as the County's Oak Leaf Trail and the Hank Aaron State Trail, already exist on either end of the Hoan Bridge. Connecting them would only enhance this usage.

**The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has committed to performing a feasibility study regarding a bicycle/pedestrian lane over the Hoan Bridge, to be completed in September or October of 2011.** Funding, design, and logistical variables would have to be considered if bicycle/pedestrian access were allowed to and over the Hoan Bridge. The Committee feels that it is logical to include a bicycle/pedestrian lane in the current re-decking project on the Hoan Bridge or as part of the larger refurbishing project, slated to begin the second half of 2013. Letters have been written to Wisconsin DOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb, as well as Governor Scott Walker, communicating the Committee's support and requesting that consideration be given to the installation of a bicycle/pedestrian lane. Other aesthetic elements could be incorporated into current projects, such as decorative night lighting or an updated paint color. The DOT and economics will dictate how the bicycle/pedestrian path could be installed, but the Committee recommends that bicyclists and pedestrians have a means of getting to and over the Hoan Bridge.



**Other Considerations.**

- There should be greater connectivity for all forms of transportation, including watercraft. The path over the Hoan Bridge should be accessible to patrons of the various ports and docks in this area of the lakefront, including the Lake Express Ferry and the occasional



cruise ships that dock near Discovery World. These patrons should have an easily accessible route to Downtown and the northern lakefront from their port locations.

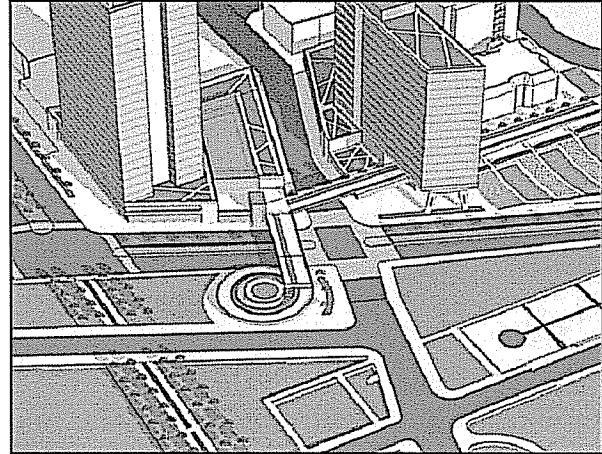
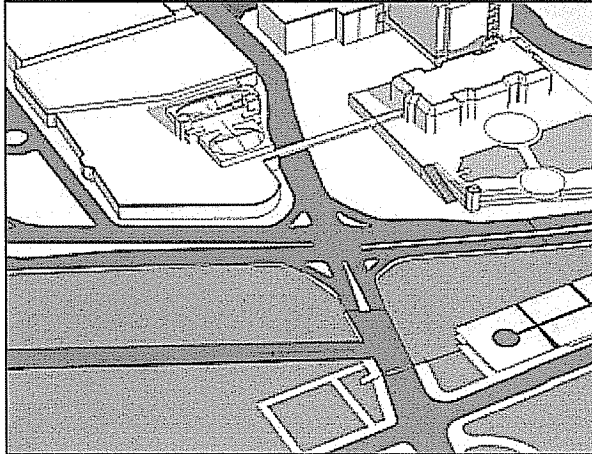
- The Hoan Bridge could be transformed into more of a parkway, rather than a freeway. This would calm traffic and create a “park like” experience while maintaining connectivity to southern Milwaukee County. This could be done by extending Lake Parkway (a two lane, 40 mph road) and beginning an expressway west of the lakefront area, or changing the north end of the Hoan Bridge into a boulevard or parkway with landscaping.

### **Next Steps.**

The DOT and other Wisconsin government officials should continue to be encouraged to consider the installation of a bicycle/pedestrian lane. The DOT is on a tight time schedule, with a large refurbishing project beginning in the second half of 2013. The DOT should clarify the intensity and scope of their bicycle/pedestrian feasibility study.

Committee members and other interested parties are urged to attend any public meetings about the Hoan Bridge. City and County road planners must also be included to ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety and quality of experience. Other stakeholders such as cycling groups and tourism organizations should be involved.

## **1.3 Lincoln Memorial Drive/Michigan Street**



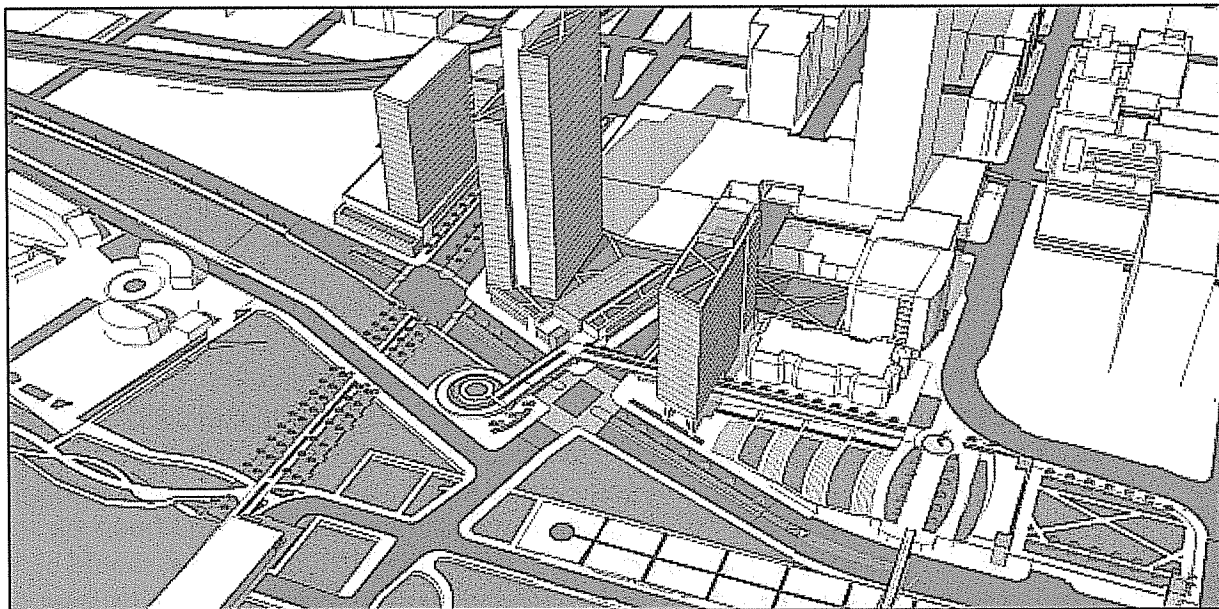
**The Committee recommends the reconfiguration of the Lincoln Memorial Drive/Michigan Street intersection in order to provide a safe, accessible pedestrian environment and increased connectivity, while maintaining a balance with motorized vehicles.**

- This is the entry to the lakefront for pedestrians, and the reconfigured intersection should convey a sense of occasion, welcoming citizens and visitors to the lakefront. They should feel as though they have arrived somewhere significant, rather than just another intersection. A broad boulevard with decorative medians and active ground floors on surrounding buildings would assist in creating this feeling. This intersection should be designed to enhance the area’s natural beauty and maintain cohesiveness with existing attractions and gardens.

- The restructured intersection would create an inviting, visitor-friendly atmosphere, while encouraging and creating opportunities for new development in the area and serving existing needs.
- The Committee recommends the determination of jurisdiction over this intersection, and the body with jurisdiction should undergo a process selecting the best option for reconfiguration.

**The reconfigured intersection could be structured in a variety of ways, with efficient pedestrian conveyance and access to the lakefront as priorities.** This intersection provides access to the lakefront from Downtown via Michigan Street, and along the lakefront via Lincoln Memorial Drive. This is the link to the lakefront attractions such as Betty Brinn Children’s Museum, Milwaukee Art Museum, Discovery World, the War Memorial and Henry Maier Festival Grounds. This intersection is currently dominated by motorized traffic, with right turn bypass lanes making pedestrian crossings difficult and potentially dangerous, especially during special events. A new intersection would need to possess the means of moving pedestrians in an efficient manner, especially during high volume lakefront events. The reconfiguration should be cohesive with other existing features such as the Milwaukee Art Museum and future features such as the Transit Center and O’Donnell Park sites, as well as maintain vistas of the lakefront.

**The new intersection should ensure the complete connection of the area for cyclists and pedestrians from the Hoan Bridge to trails along and west of the lakefront, including the Hank Aaron State Trail and the Milwaukee County Oak Leaf Trail.** The intersection should promote pedestrian connections to the various attractions and enhance the connectivity between Downtown and the lakefront. The aesthetics of the intersection should enhance the naturally beautiful park-like feel of the area, and should create a sense of arrival to Milwaukee for residents and visitors. A pedestrian-friendly street level environment that encourages walkability to other amenities such as the Third Ward and Downtown should motivate the plan for this intersection.



### **Other Considerations.**

- Possible configurations for this intersection include an at-grade foursquare configuration eliminating right-turn bypass lanes, an underground route for motorized traffic with green space above, a pedestrian bridge over the intersection, or a roundabout. While the suggestion of an underground tunnel for non-motorized was raised, this was tabled by the Committee as an unattractive option for pedestrian conveyance at this intersection.
- Improving Harbor Drive would also enhance this area's attractiveness and connectivity between the museums on the lakefront as well as the Henry Maier Festival Grounds.
- The area now called the "soccer field" presents a unique opportunity to expand on a "Museum/Entertainment Center" with the Betty Brinn Children's Museum and Milwaukee Public Museum. This area has a lot of potential and should be included in the lakefront master plan for further study. Key lakefront stakeholders should be involved, as access to their respective organizations will be affected.
- The intersection should provide easy access to those visiting the area by boat. Pedestrian connections to a water-taxi option along the lakefront and river would be enhanced by an easily accessible and crossable intersection at the lakefront.
- The plan for this intersection should be consistent with the long-term plans for Clybourn Street and the Lincoln Memorial Drive/Clybourn Street intersection. Some Committee members feel that any final decision on the future of this intersection should be delayed until options for the adjacent and connecting points are better understood. There were also questions of whether Michigan Street should even connect to the lakefront. Focusing on this premise is limiting the options of possibly using other streets as access points. The Michigan Street intersection would have more importance in the short term, with the Lincoln Memorial Drive/Clybourn Street intersection becoming the major intersection in the long term (if the Lake Interchange ramps are reconfigured).
- A possible design competition could take place to enhance the options for achieving these recommendations.

### **Next Steps.**

Decisions on the Downtown Transit Center and Hoan Bridge should occur first before decisions are made for this intersection. The Transit Center RFP should have language about its development including public space and traffic configuration.

Existing proposals should be reviewed and restrictions and deal breakers among key constituents and stakeholders should be better understood. Traffic studies should be reviewed to explore which configuration would be best to maintain balance between pedestrian crossing ease and safety with potential traffic issues. Design plans for this intersection should be created, showing sidewalk and median improvements, as well as a reduction in the "clutter" of signage and chain and snow fencing.

**The following three recommendations are considered by the Committee to be more long-term. The Committee may reconvene in the future to discuss the following areas in further depth once there is movement in the short-term areas discussed above. The County Board is encouraged to adopt this vision and work together with other administrative bodies to bring it to reality in the future.**

## 1.4 Lake Interchange



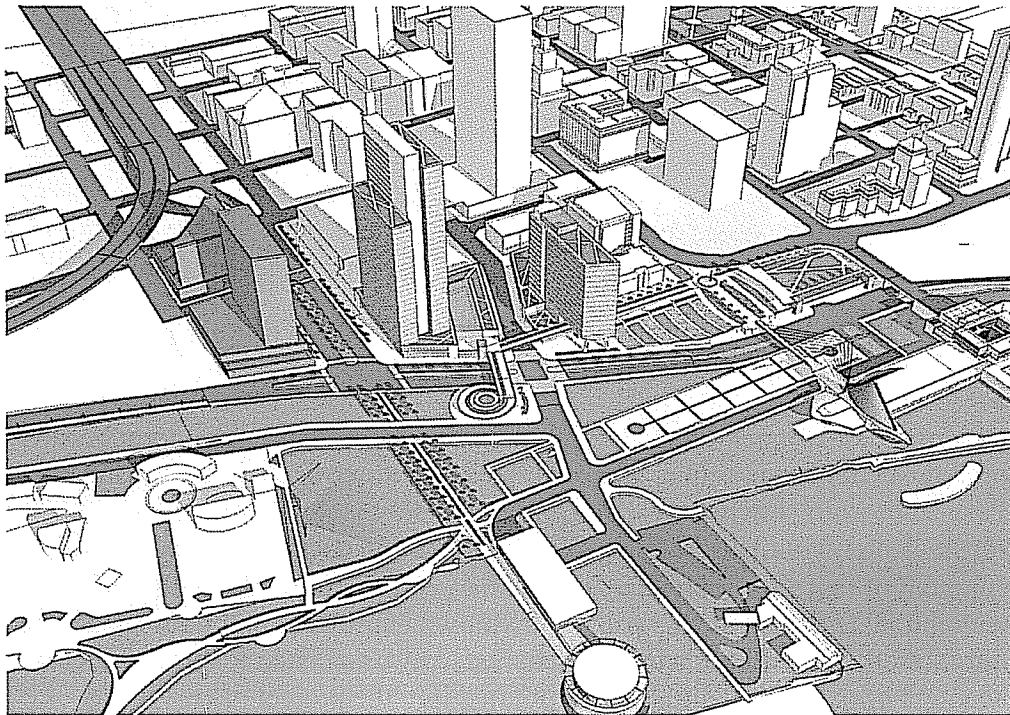
**The Committee recommends the reconfiguration of the Lake Interchange ramps in order to free up space for development, as well as improve the connectivity between Downtown and the Third Ward to the lakefront.**

- The off ramps of the Interchange end abruptly, leading drivers to speed through the area rather than slowing down at the Milwaukee attraction that is the lakefront. These ramps were designed at a time when the freeway was to extend north along what is now Lincoln Memorial Drive. With that plan abandoned, the Committee believes that it is time to consider the reconfiguration of these ramps.
- Currently, the space beneath the ramps is surface parking. These are underutilized, except during festivals and other lakefront events, and should be put to better use.
- The freed up land could be used for new building development and the development of increased public green space, enhancing the accessibility and attractiveness of the area. This space could be transformed from land under a freeway and freeway access points into an area with improved safety and reduced barriers while maintaining the ability to move traffic, especially during high volume events.
- A design solution should be implemented that addresses both the need for freeway access and an opening up of street-friendly flow for better connections to the Third Ward.

**Short-term improvements to the Lake Interchange ramps could include design elements, such as material colors, lighting, and landscaping, while more long-term improvements are kept in mind for the future.** These aesthetic enhancements would improve the appearance of the structure, especially given the structure's location and visibility. These improvements could

take place during the DOT construction project that is to begin in the second half of 2013, with longer-term improvements kept in mind when the time comes to reconstruct this Interchange. In the short-term, the surface parking lots under the Interchange could also be redesigned as demonstration sites for sound storm water and freshwater management practices consistent with Milwaukee's focus as a freshwater business and education destination, including pervious pavements and rain gardens. Multi-level parking structures could also be built, allowing for more open space and better multi-modal access as well as developable space.

**With the reconfiguration of the Lake Interchange ramps, Clybourn Street could become a major connector from Downtown to the Lakefront.** The City's Department of City Development (DCD), working off of a sketch provided by the DOT, shows the creation of a broad boulevard along Clybourn Street, with the east bound on and off ramps brought to grade at the intersections of Jackson and Van Buren Streets. There would be opportunities for development along this boulevard. The boulevard would look like an updated version of Wisconsin Avenue near the Marquette campus and would be the kind of grand statement the lakefront is currently lacking.



#### **Other Considerations.**

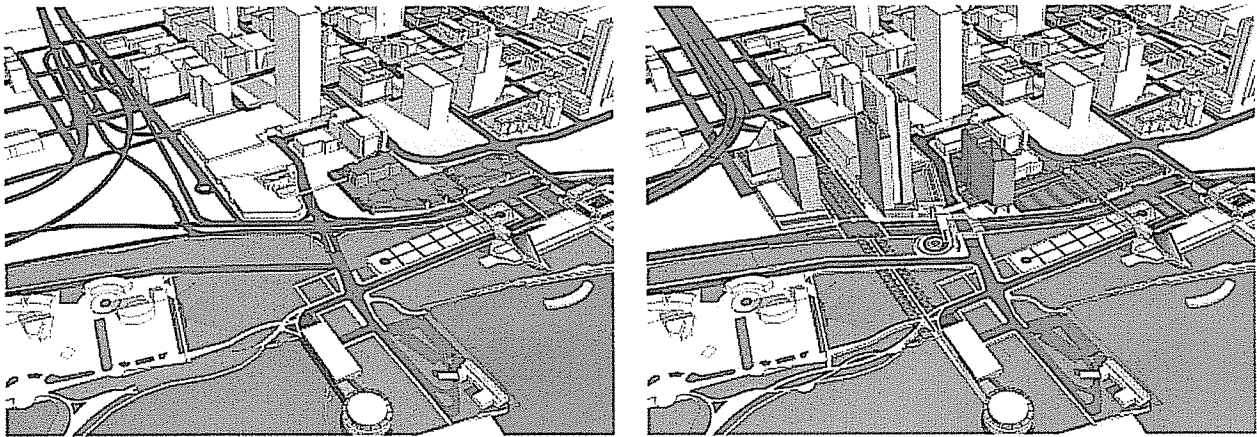
- The intersection of Lincoln Memorial Drive and Clybourn Street could become the major connector between Downtown and the Third Ward to the lakefront in the long run, with the Lincoln Memorial Drive/Michigan Street intersection as the major intersection in the short-term.
- Some Committee members pointed out that there would be a limit to the market's ability to absorb the new developable footprint. This is important to keep in mind when envisioning the future of this area. Financial viability and prioritization must be considered.

- The reconfiguration of these ramps needs to be thought of in connection with the other changes taking place at the lakefront. All of the pieces of development should flow together to create a wonderful, unique destination.

### **Next Steps.**

The Committee recognizes that this recommendation is long-term, but encourages the acceleration of the DOT timeline in order to develop these parcels in a shorter amount of time. Committee members and other interested parties should also affirm their position with the DOT, to ensure that this vision will be considered when the time comes to change these ramps.

## **1.5 O'Donnell Park**

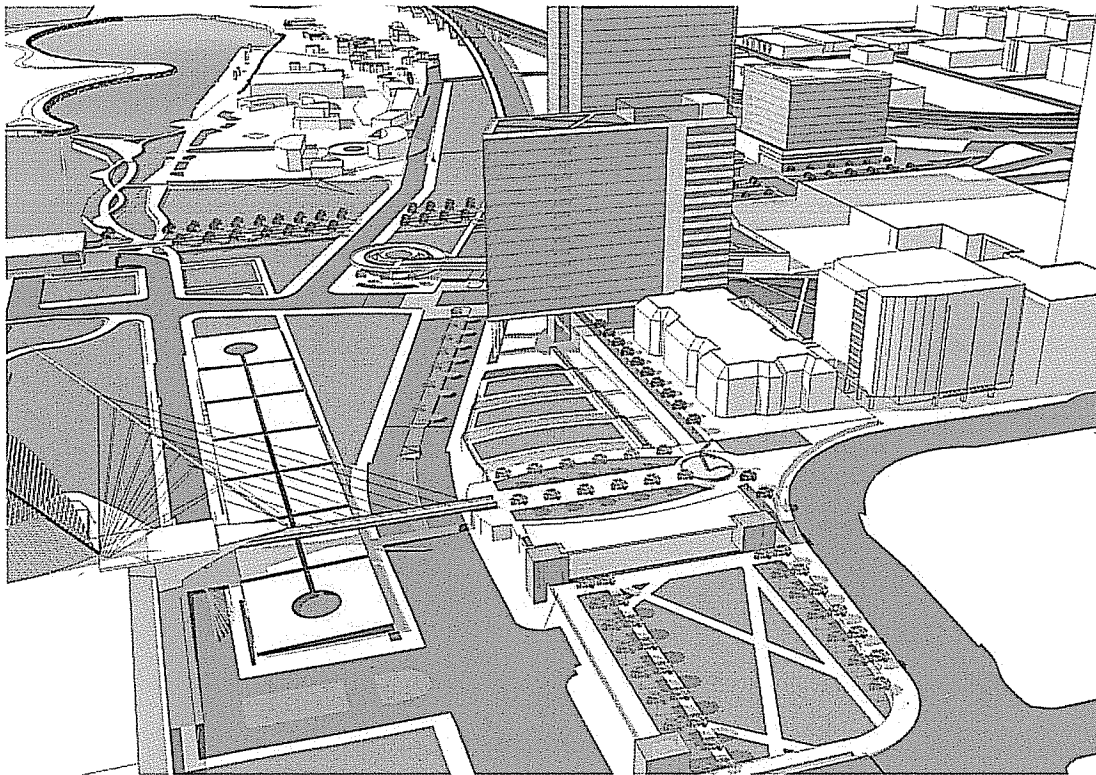


**The Committee recommends that O'Donnell Park retain in its current function in the short-term with openness for redevelopment if desired in connection with the Transit Center.**

- Redevelopment of the O'Donnell Park site should be considered more long-term because there are more logistical obstacles here than with the Downtown Transit Center site. O'Donnell Park has parking (an asset for Downtown employees and patrons) and tenants, while the Transit Center would be ready for redevelopment in a shorter period of time.
- Any redevelopment of this site would have to take into consideration the replacement of parking to accommodate the needs of various Downtown employees and patrons, as well as the relocation of O'Donnell Park's current tenants. Any associated lost revenues and cost of replacement of parking should be incorporated into the project plan.
- Redevelopment also needs to be in compliance with lakebed grant policies, as a small portion of the parking structure is located on lakebed. Future changes would also have to comply with the terms of a Waterfront Parks Aids grant program, which help fund the construction of the terrace and pedestrian bridge.

**Future development of O'Donnell Park should correspond with the redeveloped Transit Center site; although these sites may be redeveloped at different times, the finished product of these sites should be cohesive and complementary.** When determining the future of the Transit Center site, the future development of O'Donnell should be kept in mind to ensure cohesiveness. Redevelopment of O'Donnell Park should maintain lake and museum vistas from

Wisconsin Avenue and provide an innovative, attractive means of connecting the different grades from Downtown to the lakefront. The unique park-like feel of the Milwaukee lakefront should be taken advantage of in any redevelopment plan. This feature makes Milwaukee's lakefront unique from other urban lakefronts such as Cleveland or Chicago. The area should be inviting and appropriate for a variety of uses and users, as well as provide access and connectivity between the lake and Downtown. The redevelopment of this site should assist in eliminating the seasonality of the lakefront, and draw visitors and citizens to this area throughout the year.



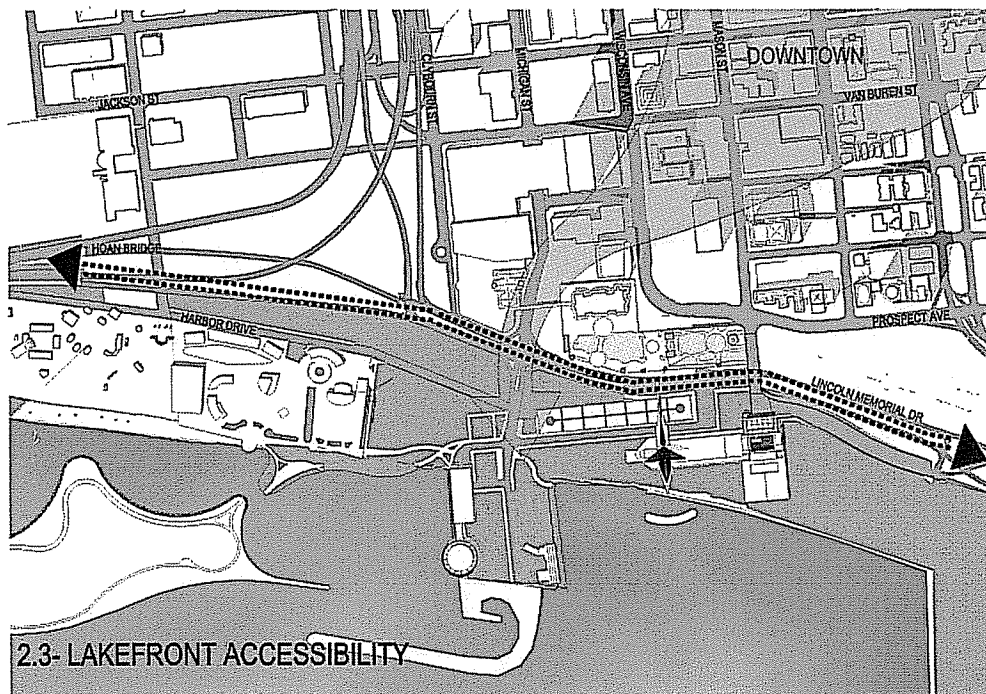
### **Other Considerations.**

- Maintenance and security of the parking structure for patrons may still be potential issues and a feasibility study should be developed to explore possible outsourcing of the function at a net profit to the County.
- Whether there is demand for all 1,140 parking spots in the parking structure should be examined. For example, if the topmost level of parking was available for removal, modifications to the existing structure could take place, such as creating a more attractive, green space with a gradual grade change from Downtown to the lakefront.
- The redeveloped area should have at least as much parkland as what currently exists, and could be part of a comprehensive parks and public spaces plan for the area. Outdoor education space could be utilized by the museums and other organizations in the area.
- The concept of a Museum District at the lakefront could also be enhanced through the development plan regarding this investment. If O'Donnell Park were redeveloped, Betty Brinn Children's Museum would have to be relocated. This lakefront stakeholder would like to have clarity and assurances that their presence is important at the lakefront.

### Next Steps.

A long-term plan should be created for the future development of the O'Donnell Park site, including the issues of parking replacement and relocation of current tenants. If redeveloped, lakebed grant regulations would need to be followed, as a small portion of the southeast corner of the parking garage is located on lakebed. The terms of the Wisconsin DNR Waterfront Park Aids program grant would also need consideration.

## 1.6 Lakefront Transportation/Accessibility



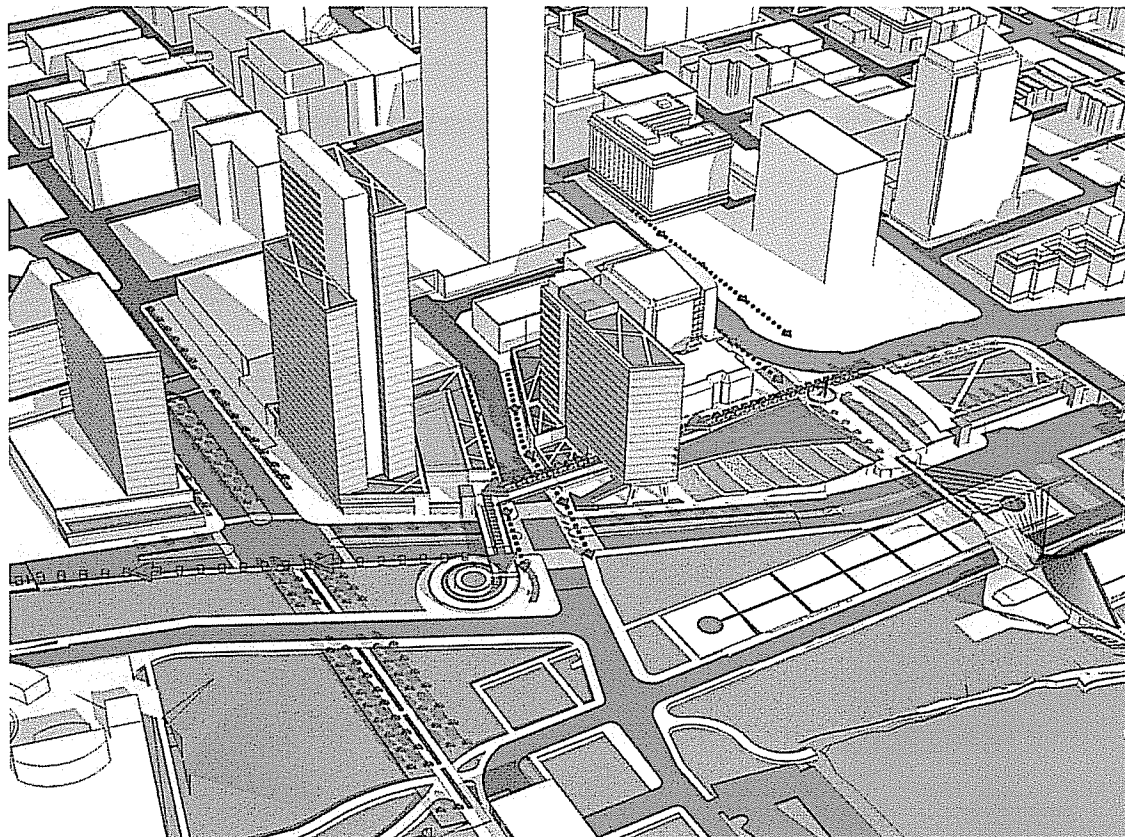
**The Committee believes that the lakefront development plan should enhance connectivity and accessibility for all modes of transportation, and there should be an even balance between motorized and non-motorized traffic.**

- There are few access points to the lakefront from Downtown and, unless there is a pedestrian bridge, it is difficult to cross Lincoln Memorial Drive. A development plan should include greater bike and pedestrian access and linkages, and a sense of connectivity should be enhanced. The connections must be complete, welcoming and attractive, and should not dead end or have unsafe or unattractive gaps in them.
- Transportation to and along the lakefront should be consistent with the concept of a parkway, which is what Lincoln Memorial Drive is intended to be. The scale of roadways should be appropriate to present and future uses.

**There are multiple barriers blocking access from Downtown to the lakefront.** Some of these barriers include the Mason Street Bridge and the Lincoln Memorial Drive/Mason Street intersection. The wall of concrete underneath Mason Street on Lincoln Memorial Drive



aesthetically restricts access to the lakefront, and few pedestrians know that there is a path to the lakefront on the Mason Street Bridge near the War Memorial. The intersection of Mason Street and Lincoln Memorial Drive is complicated for cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles and should be reconfigured to increase walkability and accessibility to the lakefront.

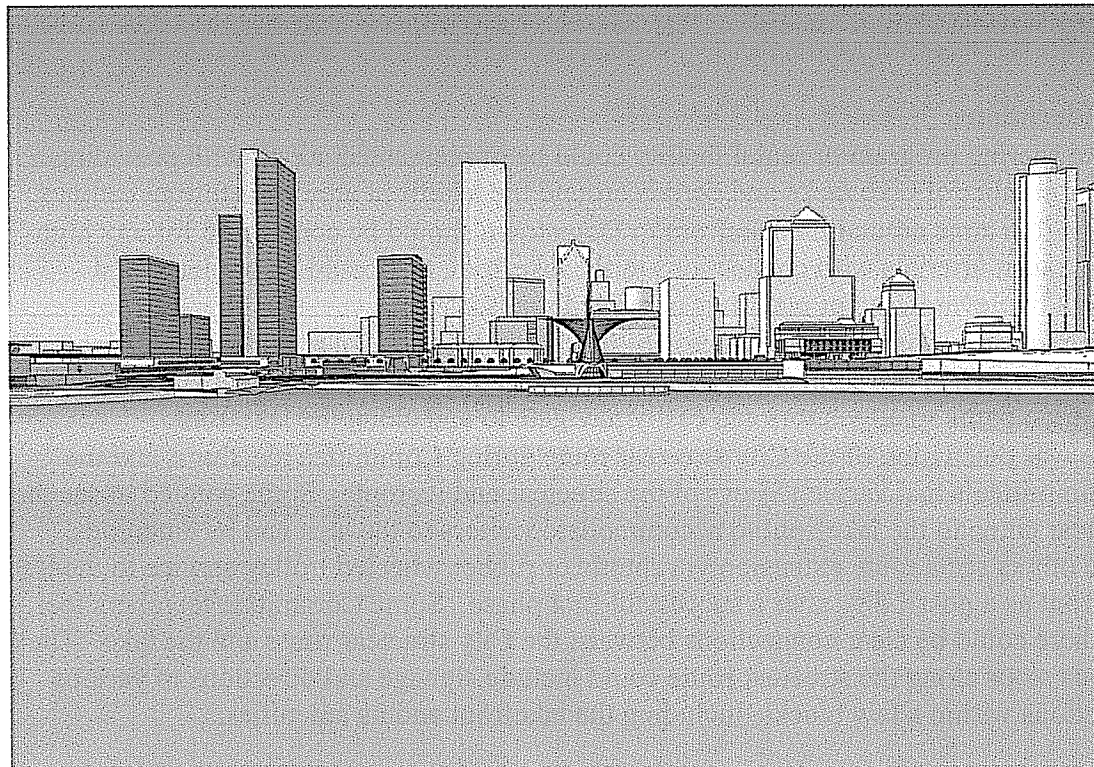
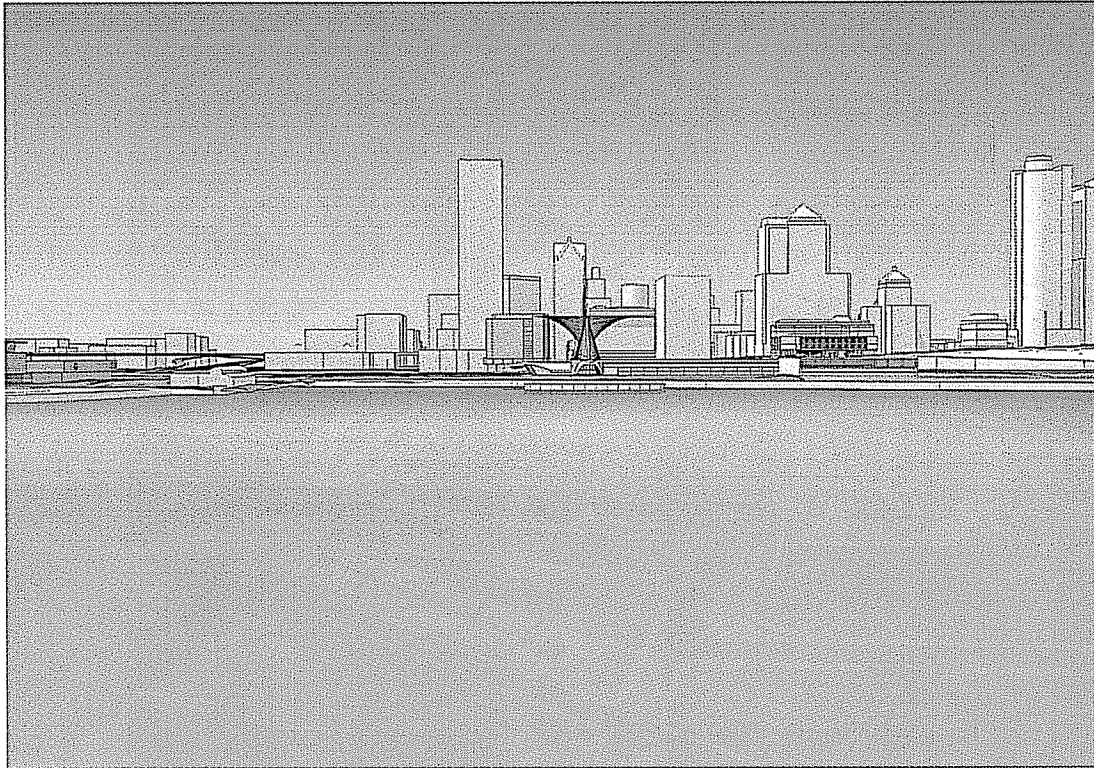


### **Other Considerations.**

- A bike sharing program or rental facility could be implemented, along with providing a greater number of bike racks and corrals around the lakefront area and cultural campus.
- A transition zone around the lakefront to Downtown should be considered for any high-speed transit arterials with connections to the lakefront, and could be implemented through boulevards, street plantings or curved roads.
- Greater emphasis on watercraft accessibility should be included along the lakefront. There should be more connectivity from watercraft docks and ports to bicycle or pedestrian paths so all visitors can easily navigate to and along the lakefront.
- There was discussion of the City streetcar route during Committee meetings, and the subcommittee's had varying views of the streetcar and its route. Some wanted to see the streetcar come to the lakefront to accommodate visitors to the area and its amenities, while others see a route extension via shuttle or rubber wheeled trolley service to the lakefront as a possibility after a successful first phase. Some Committee members feel that there could be clear connections between the City streetcar route and the lake. The various stops along the streetcar route could include signage and directions to various attractions within a few blocks, including the lakefront and its amenities.

**Next Steps.**

Coordinate planning for the study area with other transportation improvements in the area, including the plan for bicycle and pedestrian pathways.



## Chapter 2 – Subcommittees

The Long-Range Lakefront Planning Committee was divided into four subcommittees based on stakeholder interest in the development process. These subcommittees were Parks and Public Spaces, Business Community, Development, and Attractions/Neighbors. Throughout the Committee's process, these subcommittees met to accomplish goals dedicated to their vision of the lakefront. A balance was achieved to meet the needs of open public spaces, development, and current and future tenants of the lakefront. Minutes from the subcommittee meetings and their individual position statements on the above recommendations are attached in Appendix D.

### 2.1 Parks and Public Spaces

The Parks and Public Spaces subcommittee was created to ensure that the final lakefront vision includes green, open spaces. The idea that parks and public spaces should be integrated in the overall development plan was introduced early and from a landscape architect's point of view. Rather than designing buildings, they design areas, including the relationship between buildings and open public spaces. One of the desired outcomes of this subcommittee was to create imaginative, innovative public spaces that improve the overall attractiveness and desirability of the development plan for the area. This subcommittee also ensured that the public trust doctrine and lakebed grant restrictions were followed. This subcommittee was comprised of representatives from the Lakefront Development Advisory Commission, The Park People, Preserve Our Parks, the Harbor Commission, County Parks Advisory Commission, the Bike Federation, members of the public, and Milwaukee County and City representatives.

Some of the issues confronted by the Parks and Public Spaces subcommittee include:

- Observance of the lakebed grants and public trust doctrine as it applies to O'Donnell Park and Downtown Transit Center sites, as well as other lakefront lands.
- Recognition and compliance with land use restrictions, e.g. deed restrictions, zoning, and grant programs.
- Observance of municipality boundaries.
- The County's options and obligations in regard to the State Department of Natural Resources grant on O'Donnell terrace and related improvements, which were funded through the Waterfront Aids Program in 1987.
- The preservation and improvement of current parks and public spaces.
- Determination of which land has been "dedicated" as parkland and which is government owned or administered by the County Parks or the City without the official designation of a park. Examples of this include O'Donnell Park and a nearby property commonly known as "Urban Park."

The desired outcomes from this subcommittee include:

- The Committee's overall development plan incorporates parkland and public spaces that are imaginative, innovative, and will improve the desirability and attractiveness of the overall plan for the area.
- The plan preserves and improves upon parkland and other public space now existing in the area, while conforming to public trust, land grants, parkland dedication, funding, etc.

- The Committee adheres to public trust doctrine, lakebed grant regulations, and other land use restrictions.
- A balance is achieved between public trust, preservation of parks, and development interests.

## **2.2 Business Community**

This subcommittee was created to recognize the needs and desires of the lakefront business community. Some of these stakeholders include U.S. Bank and Northwestern Mutual Life, among others. Meetings with U.S. Bank and other businesses revealed a keen interest to maintain parking at O'Donnell Park in the short term, as it serves their employees' and other local tenants' needs. If the O'Donnell Park site was to be rededicated with other uses, parking would have to become available somewhere else to accommodate downtown employees. U.S. Bank also stated that Michigan Street, as a natural gateway to the lakefront, should not require measure grading or rework. That particular scope of work would be coordinated through their capital plan, which calls for further development of their campus, on property west of the Transit Center on Michigan Street.

Some of the issues identified by the Business Community subcommittee include:

- Determining stakeholder issues during development planning.
- Gathering input from existing lakefront businesses.
- Determining parking needs and availability in the short- and long-term.
- Development of a new enterprise/collateral piece to attract new businesses to the lakefront.

During the development process, this subcommittee met with current lakefront businesses, potential lakefront tenants, and the local business associations, such as the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC), the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC), the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), and the Milwaukee Rotary. These meetings extended the Committee's outreach to various stakeholders and gathered interest in the development of this area.

The desired outcomes of this Committee include:

- Business community input incorporation in recommendations.
- New businesses draw patrons to lakefront.
- New patrons draw new businesses to lakefront.

## **2.3 Development**

This subcommittee was charged with envisioning the redevelopment of the lakefront, while considering stakeholder viewpoints, and helping to make the Committee's visions a reality. This subcommittee focused on the potential transformation of the Downtown Transit Center and O'Donnell Park sites, as well as the Lake Interchange and Hoan Bridge. Members of this subcommittee included representatives from Milwaukee County, the City of Milwaukee, and a representative from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning, among others.

Some of the issues confronted by this subcommittee include:

- The Downtown Transit Center and O'Donnell Park sites:
  - Examination of options and obligations for Downtown Transit Center payback, debt service and federal/state grants.
  - Providing for parking should O'Donnell Park be redeveloped.
  - Communication with current tenants and their possible relocation.
  - Options and obligations of the State Department of Natural Resources grant on O'Donnell Park terrace and related improvements, which were funded through the Waterfront Aids Program.
- Request that the State Department of Transportation consider the footprint of the Lake Interchange, and exploration of reconfiguring the on and off ramps, which would free up development space from current use as surface parking lots.
- Introduction of a bike/pedestrian lane on the Hoan Bridge, making the bridge an economic driver for the lakefront and a tourist destination.
- The reorganization of the Lincoln Memorial Drive/Michigan Street/Harbor Drive intersection, creating a more pedestrian friendly environment, while maintaining vehicular flow.
- Creation of easier access between the north and south lakefronts.

The desired outcomes for the Development subcommittee include:

- Establishment of stakeholder interest for development.
- Development of a long term economic/financial plan for the area.
- Consideration for redevelopment of the Transit Center site.
- Consideration for redevelopment of the O'Donnell Park site.
- Increased safety and attractiveness in the area.
- Increased connectivity and accessibility between Downtown and the lakefront.

## **2.4 Attractions/Neighbors**

The Attractions/Neighbors subcommittee was designed to include input from current and future cultural and entertainment stakeholders in the lakefront area. Members of this subcommittee included representatives from the Milwaukee Art Museum, Discovery World, the War Memorial, Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., Betty Brinn Children's Museum, and Zilli Hospitality Group. The development of the lakefront could draw new and more patrons to their attractions. With redevelopment, the stakeholders need clarity and assurances about their future location at the lakefront.

Issues of concern to this subcommittee include:

- Future assets for culture and entertainment at lakefront area.
- Enhancements for existing sites.
- Parking needs and availability.
- Opportunities for co-development with other cultural institutions.
- Ensuring destination compatibility and tourism opportunities

In order to resolve these issues and achieve the desired outcomes for the Attractions/Neighbors subcommittee, the members worked to establish connections and communication with existing lakefront cultural and entertainment stakeholders. The subcommittee believes that no matter what kind of development occurs at the lakefront, improvements need to be made to the current situation, including aesthetic improvements such as removing chain-link and snow fencing in front of Discovery World and the Art Museum.

In coordination with the other subcommittees, the Attractions/Neighbors would like to arrive at the following outcomes:

- The development complements existing lakefront attractions and neighbors.
- The development plan creates a lakefront that attracts patrons to the lakefront, and increases the likelihood to co-visit various attractions.

## Chapter 3 – Other Stakeholders

### 3.1 State Involvement

#### **Wisconsin Department of Transportation.**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) was invited to join the Committee's discussion for development in the lakefront area after discussion turned to the Hoan Bridge and Lake Interchange.

The DOT took part in many of the Committee's discussions, and presented their plans for projects on the Hoan Bridge, I-794, and the Lake Interchange. The Hoan Bridge is undergoing deck repairs at a cost of about \$7.5 – \$8 million before undergoing a larger repair project. The larger project includes removing and replacing the deck, painting, and reinforcing the steel structure. In regard to a bike/pedestrian lane over the bridge, the DOT stated that the feasibility of such an option would need to be studied and input from other stakeholders and the Federal Highway Administration needs to be considered before moving in that direction. The DOT committed to completing a feasibility study of a bicycle/pedestrian lane over the Hoan Bridge to be completed by September or October 2011.

Any changes to the Lake Interchange ramps would be long-term. There is a current maintenance project on the ramps, which includes a concrete overlay and concrete surface repairs. A larger project is expected to begin in the second half of 2013, continuing into 2014 and 2015, at an approximate cost between \$275 and \$300 million. The DOT distributed a sketch of a possible reconfiguration of the ramps to the Committee, along with their expected time frame. This configuration was done before the Marquette Interchange reconstruction process. This sketch shows a smaller footprint for the ramps and frees up valuable space south of Clybourn Street, as well as smaller development sites along St. Paul Avenue. This configuration was used as a basis for envisioning future development scenarios.

#### **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.**

The public trust doctrine is an important part of Wisconsin natural resources law. It states that the State must hold all navigable waters in trust for public use forever. "Navigable" is defined as the ability to traverse a body of water that has defined beds and banks, and can float any boat, skiff, or canoe of the shallowest draft on a reoccurring basis. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is charged with the mission of preserving these bodies of water for public use, including recreation, tourism, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, among others.

There are some use restrictions in the Committee's study area along Lake Michigan that must be recognized and followed in the development plan. An important use restriction is the presence of the lakebed grant. Much of the present shoreline of Lake Michigan is filled lakebed. The DNR granted this land to the Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee with various restrictions on the land's future use. These restrictions range from only using the lakefront for navigation, to parks and open space, to public transportation. The Committee worked with the DNR to determine the exact boundaries of the lakebed grant in order to discern what effect if any the restriction might have on lakefront development. Legal descriptions and surveys assisted both

the Milwaukee County Parks Planning and Development Division and the DNR in determining the location of lakebed grant land.

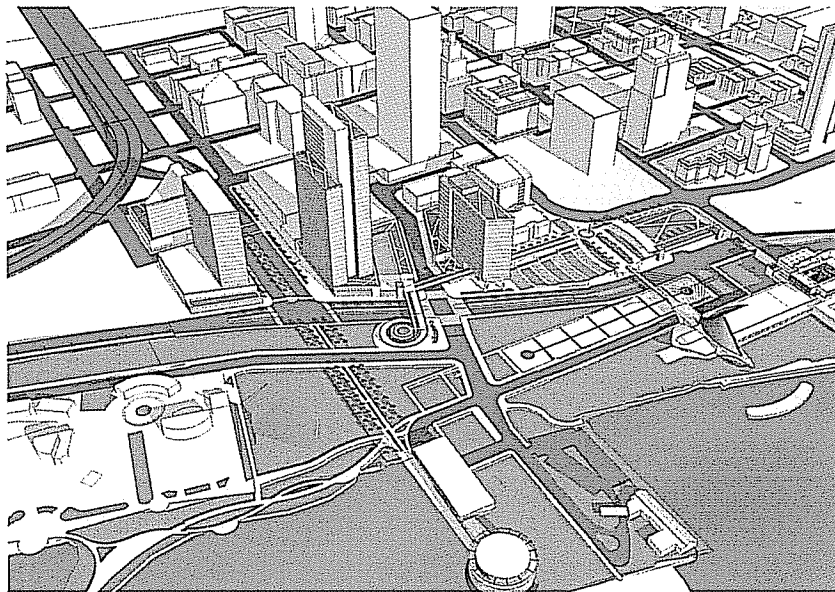
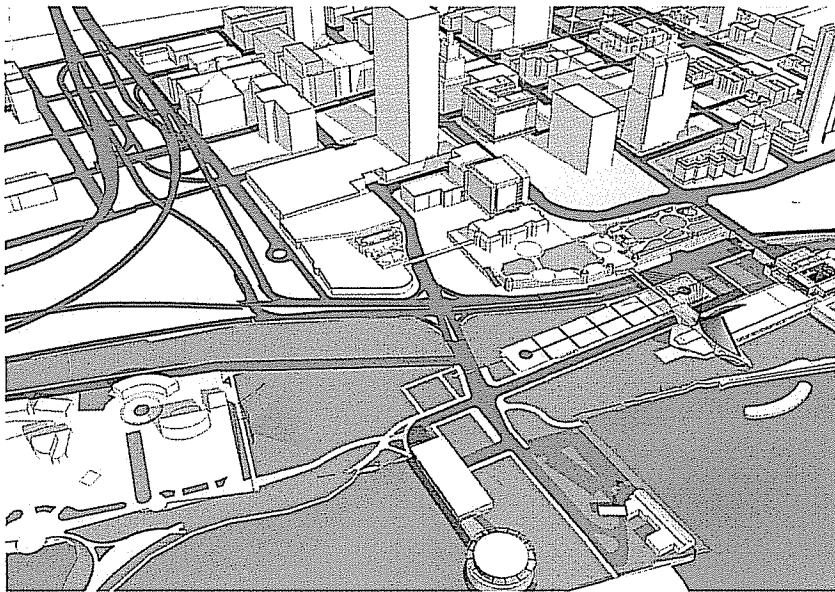
In August 2011, the DNR communicated to the Committee their determination of the lakebed grant boundary. They determined that the Downtown Transit Center is not on lakebed and is therefore not subject to public trust doctrine. A small portion of O'Donnell Park, located only in the parking structure on the southeast side, is located in the lakebed area. The DNR will use the Milwaukee County Plat of Survey to determine exactly what portion is in lakebed. If the County decides to remove the parking structure at some time in the future, the DNR would then need a more detailed plat survey. The upland areas attached to the parking structure are not in lakebed.

The Wisconsin Waterways Commission of the DNR funded the O'Donnell Park terrace and pedestrian bridge with a \$2,350,000 grant through the Waterfront Park Aids program. The DNR program staff in Madison is reviewing this grant to see if there are grant conditions or conversion issues that would impact the future of O'Donnell Park. This information should be available in the near future.



## Conclusion

Together we can transform Milwaukee's lakefront into the state's front door, a worldwide destination for tourism, business and investment. At the heart of the recommendations is the recognition that a long-term plan for the lakefront must balance many interests – economic, cultural and environmental – that, together, position this unique asset for an exciting future and provide opportunities for community engagement. Executing the short-range recommendations will set the stage for future discussions in creating a more vibrant, engaging, and sustainable lakefront. Then, at a future date, the Long-Range Lakefront Planning Committee will reconvene at the call of the Chair to continue this legacy by acting on opportunities as they present themselves at the appropriate time.



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