Summary of the adopted Waterfront Development Plan

Ashtoland, Wisconsin

Lake Superior's Hometown

SmithGroup JJR

Waterfront Development Plan

Summary Report
Revised March 2002
Plan Description and Goals

Introduction

The Ashland Waterfront Development Plan Update is a management plan for the development and maintenance of the Ashland waterfront. The plan is to update the Waterfront Development Plan Update 1997, build on previous recommendations, and provide a set of updated development scenarios for the Ashland waterfront area based on new data available and progress over the past years.

The plan identifies two primary goals:

1. To expand and accelerate the economic potential of the Ashland waterfront into a major tourist destination on the North shore of Lake Superior, in line with the recommendations outlined in the 1997 plan.
2. To elevate the standard of community resources for the citizens of Ashland by providing recreational and cultural facilities, better access to Lake Superior, and enhanced employment and social services.

Target Development Areas

The primary target areas for possible development projects or in-service development areas are identified on the map. These areas include:

- Reiss Coal Dock
- Former Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Ashland Dock
- Highland Avenue
- First Street
- Site of Sweden Dock
- Site of Mathison Dock
- Site of Screw Dock
- Site of Crawford Dock
- Site of Babcock Dock
- Site of Takashiroo Dock
- Site of J.S. Black Dock
- Site of East Street
- Site of Main Street
- Site of Second Street
- Site of Third Street
- Site of Fourth Street
- Site of Fifth Street
- Site of Sixth Street
- Site of Seventh Street
- Site of Eighth Street
- Site of Ninth Street
- Site of Tenth Street
- Site of Eleventh Street
- Site of Twelfth Street
- Site of Thirteenth Street
- Site of Fourteenth Street
- Site of Fifteenth Street
- Site of Sixteenth Street
- Site of Seventeenth Street
- Site of Eighteenth Street
- Site of Nineteenth Street
- Site of Twentieth Street
- Site of Twenty-first Street
- Site of Twenty-second Street
- Site of Twenty-third Street
- Site of Twenty-fourth Street
- Site of Twenty-fifth Street
- Site of Twenty-sixth Street
- Site of Twenty-seventh Street
- Site of Twenty-eighth Street
- Site of Twenty-ninth Street
- Site of Thirtieth Street
- Site of Thirty-first Street
- Site of Thirty-second Street
- Site of Thirty-third Street
- Site of Thirty-fourth Street
- Site of Thirty-fifth Street
- Site of Thirty-sixth Street
- Site of Thirty-seventh Street
- Site of Thirty-eighth Street
- Site of Thirty-ninth Street
- Site of Forty-first Street
- Site of Forty-second Street

Project Process

To elaborate the creation of a community development plan, the proposed Ashland Waterfront Development Plan Update 1997 continued to develop a detailed plan for the waterfront area. The plan involved the following stages:

1. Community consultation and public involvement. Several meetings, workshops, and community forums were held to gather input from the community and stakeholders.
2. Development of a comprehensive development plan. This included identification of potential development areas, determination of appropriate uses, and development of strategies for each area.
3. Implementation of the development plan. This involved obtaining necessary permissions, developing regulatory frameworks, and planning for infrastructure improvements.

City History

The City of Ashland was incorporated in 1900, and it was the headquarters of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. The city grew rapidly in the late 19th century, and the Ashland Dock was a major port for shipping goods and materials. With the decline of rail shipping in the 20th century, the Ashland Dock became less important, but it continues to be a significant part of the city's history and economy.
Plan History

This update to the Ashland Waterfront Plan traces its history back to a planning process initiated by the City in 1993. The Waterfront Plan was formally adopted by the City Council in March of 1994. At that time, little was known about the extent or nature of the contaminants at the former wastewater treatment plant site. Once information became available from preliminary testing at the site, a Revised Waterfront Plan was published in August of 1995. From that document a poster plan was created to summarize the plan recommendations.
Introduction

The Ashland Waterfront Development Plan Update is a long-range vision for the redevelopment of the Ashland waterfront. The object is to update the Waterfront Development Plan of 1994. It is intended to both evaluate the current validity of the Plan's recommendations and provide a set of updated development recommendations for four specific target areas based upon new data available and progress since the previous plan.

This plan rests upon two primary goals:
1.) To build upon the successes of previous plans in order to illustrate the potential for the Ashland waterfront to become a major tourist destination on the South shore of Lake Superior in synergy with the regional tourism industry.

2.) To elevate the standard of community resources for the citizens of Ashland by providing recreational and cultural facilities, better access to Lake Superior and a broader employment and tax base.

Background Studies and Analyses

Several previous studies were utilized during the formation of this plan. These included:

- Waterfront Plan, City of Ashland (1994) Discovery Group Ltd.
- Comprehensive Environmental Investigation Report, (1997) SEH INC.
- Baseline Human Health Risk Assessment, (1998) SEH INC.
- WDNR and Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Fact Sheets related to the Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront site. (2000-2001)
What is the Waterfront Development Plan trying to accomplish?

• Develop areas of public access to Lake Superior

• Create the potential for Ashland’s waterfront to be a major tourist destination

• Provide recreational and cultural facilities for the Ashland & the regional community

• Enhance natural areas and restore environmentally sensitive areas (coastal wetlands, steep slopes of Bay City Creek)

• Encourage economic development which will expand employment opportunities & the tax base
Target Development Areas

The primary focus of this plan was to refine development objectives for four target development areas identified by the City as the most desirable areas for redevelopment. These areas include:

- Reiss Coal Dock
- Former Wastewater Treatment Plant and Adjacent Land
- Historic Soo Line Ore Dock
- Clarkson Dock

**A** Reiss Coal Dock
- Great Lakes Cruise Ship Terminal
- Community Festival Grounds

**B** Former Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Expanded Marina
- Lakefront Park
- Reuse of Existing Treatment Plant Buildings to House Marina Support Facilities, Community Visitor Center
- Demonstration Stormwater Treatment Basin and Great Lakes Education and Meeting Center

**C** Historic Soo Line Ore Dock
- Great Lakes Shipping and Mining Interpretive Center

**D** Clarkson Dock
- RV Camping Area
- Bay City Creek Natural Area
A  Reiss Coal Dock
  - Great Lakes Cruise Ship Terminal
  - Community Festival Grounds

B  Former Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - Expanded Marina
  - Lakefront Park
  - Reuse of Existing Treatment Plant Buildings
to House Marina Support Facilities, Community
Visitor Center
  - Demonstration Stormwater Treatment Basin and
  - Great Lakes Education and Meeting Center

C  Historic Soo Line Ore Dock
  - Great Lakes Shipping and Mining
  - Interpretive Center

D  Clarkson Dock
  - RV Camping Area
  - Bay City Creek Natural Area
Reiss Coal Dock
Reiss Coal Dock

Introduction
Currently owned and operated by the Reiss Coal Company as a storage and transfer facility for coal. The dock extends 1200 feet into Lake Superior and includes coal piles and two permanent buildings on the site. The buildings and coal piles are currently active and do serve their functions of coal storage and transfer, predominantly in the service of the Excel Energy Bay Front Plant immediately to the west. However, they are a detraction from the visual quality of the waterfront; and they produce coal dust pollution that affects a large surrounding area.

Design Principles
- Create a year-round community amenity from what is currently a detraction from the visual beauty of the Lake Superior shoreline.
- Take advantage of the deep-water channel by serving Great Lakes cruise ships.
- Create a new location to host events such as Bay Days and Book Across the Bay.

Redevelopment Concept
Proposed redevelopment of this site includes a ship terminal for Great Lakes cruise ships, community festival grounds in a park-like setting with multi-programmable zones for tents or gatherings and a perimeter baywalk.

Links to Downtown and the Central Business District
This site would continue to be linked to Lakeshore Drive via 6th Avenue West. Improvements to this roadway including trees, site furniture and upgraded crossings are recommended up to Main Street to provide a distinct linkage to City Hall and the Downtown Business District.
A. Reiss Coal Dock
- Great Lakes Cruise Ship Terminal
- Community Festival Grounds

B. Former Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Expanded Marina
- Lakefront Park
- Reuse of Existing Treatment Plant Buildings to House Marina Support Facilities, Community Visitor Center
- Demonstration Stormwater Treatment Basin and Great Lakes Education and Meeting Center

C. Historic Soo Line Ore Dock
- Great Lakes Shipping and Mining Interpretive Center

D. Clarkson Dock
- RV Camping Area
- Bay City Creek Natural Area
Clarkson Dock

Introduction

This unutilized waterfront property once served as a storage and transfer facility similar to the Reiss Coal Dock. The dock, currently owned by Koch industries, extends 1200 feet into Lake Superior. The dock has been vacant for 50-60 years and has been allowed to deteriorate to its current condition. The site appears suitable for redevelopment, however ownership and potential contamination issues would first need to be addressed.

Design Principles

- Keep the Bay City Creek estuary area as a quiet natural preserve.
- Maximize public access to the bayfront.
- Maintain a revenue generating community attraction.

Redevelopment Concept

Proposed redevelopment of this site includes the relocation of the RV camping area from Kreeher Park near the Ore Dock to this site. Included in this site are 40 RV camping pads with utilities, a park loop road, picnic and gathering pavilions, a children’s playground, RV utility service area and a link to the Bay City Creek estuary (also known as “Gilligan’s Island”) natural area with an open air pavilion.
A. Reiss Coal Dock
   - Great Lakes Cruise Ship Terminal
   - Community Festival Grounds

B. Former Wastewater Treatment Plant
   - Expanded Marina
   - Lakefront Park
   - Reuse of Existing Treatment Plant Buildings to House Marina Support Facilities, Community Visitor Center
   - Demonstration Stormwater Treatment Basin and Great Lakes Education and Meeting Center

C. Historic Soo Line Ore Dock
   - Great Lakes Shipping and Mining Interpretive Center

D. Clarkson Dock
   - RV Camping Area
   - Bay City Creek Natural Area

ASHLAND CITY CENTER
RESIDENTIAL CORE
Historic Soo Line Ore Dock Target Area

Introduction

The Historic Soo Line Ore Dock, currently owned by Canadian National Railroad, is a monolithic concrete and steel structure that extends 1800 feet into Lake Superior and stands over 80 feet high. This structure is a central identifying element along the Ashland waterfront and can be seen from virtually any point on the shoreline. The ore dock was formerly used to transfer iron ore and other products from rail cars to freight ships and is connected to a massive wooden rail trestle. The ore dock ceased operations in 1965. The ore dock has been categorized as eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and thus, the structure would be subject to designated redevelopment guidelines.

Design Principles

- Create a tourist destination with a regional draw that celebrates Ashland’s industrial past and Lake Superior’s national role.
- Relocate the current RV Camping Area to open up this unique City-owned park area to all Ashland residents and support the Ore Dock museum concept.
- Focus on future use of the Ore Dock as a visual interpretive facility once it is found to be structurally stable and an appropriate maintenance program is developed.

Redevelopment Concept

Proposed redevelopment of this site includes a relocation of the existing RV (recreational vehicle) camping area and the creation of a Great Lakes Shipping and Mining Interpretive Center. The concept of this center is to introduce a structural element which can celebrate the historical significance of shipping and mining to Ashland and the Nation and to allow visitors to experience the grand scale and appreciate the workings of the ore dock without the need to be in contact with the structure itself.
A. Reiss Coal Dock
- Great Lakes Cruise Ship Terminal
- Community Festival Grounds

B. Former Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Expanded Marina
- Lakefront Park
- Reuse of Existing Treatment Plant Buildings to House Marina Support Facilities, Community Visitor Center
- Demonstration Stormwater Treatment Basin and Great Lakes Education and Meeting Center

C. Historic Soo Line Ore Dock
- Great Lakes Shipping and Mining Interpretive Center

D. Clarkson Dock
- RV Camping Area
- Bay City Creek Natural Area
Former Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Expanded Marina
- Lakefront Park
- Reuse of Existing Treatment Plant Buildings to House Marina Support Facilities, Community Visitor Center
- Demonstration Stormwater Treatment Basin and Great Lakes Education and Meeting Center
Former Wastewater Treatment Plant Target Area

Introduction
The former wastewater treatment plant, out of operation since 1992, sits on the bayfront just east of the Ashland municipal marina. The target area includes the plant buildings, and is bordered to the west by Ellis Avenue, to the east by Prentice Avenue and to the south by the bluff. The bay area north of the plant is included in this area as well. The buildings of the former plant are structurally sound and could support a wide variety of uses. Adaptive reuse of this site and these buildings will be contingent upon cleanup of contaminants that exist on the site. These efforts are discussed on page 6.

Design Principles
- Expand water and land-based marina facilities for the boating public in Ashland and to build upon the existing successful municipal marina.
- Reuse existing wastewater treatment plant buildings to create a multi-use community activity and education center.
- Work in tandem with the WDNR during mitigation efforts to maximize the benefits of cleanup efforts for the benefit of the community use of the bayfront.

Redevelopment Concept
Proposed redevelopment of this site includes an expanded marina with a "Harbor Island" breakwater system, public park lands, two sailing beaches (non-swimming), an adaptive reuse of the existing wastewater treatment plant buildings, expanded parking areas and a lakefront parkway.

Links to Downtown and the Central Business District
Ellis and Prentice Avenues currently serve as the access routes to this area. Future development should strengthen these linkages to the Downtown Business District through upgraded paving, street crossings, sidewalks, and the addition of street trees, lighting, signage and site furniture. The planned upgrades to STH 2 during the years 2006-2008 present an opportunity to integrate amenities and safer pedestrian facilities into these linkages.
Chequamegon Bay
Normal Lake
Elevation = 602' MSL

Impervious Breakwater

Sediment Remediation Area

Existing Harbor
(Features Not Shown)

Harbor Expansion Study
Ashland, Wisconsin

Legend
- Impervious Breakwater
- Proposed Bulkhead Line
- Shoreline
- Road Centerline

Source:
City of Ashland - Dept. of Public Works

Projection:
Ashland County Coordinate System, East

Map By:
RJM

This map is preliminary and not for design purposes. It is subject to errors and should not be used for site planning or construction. The information presented is based on data and information provided by Ashland, WI. The City of Ashland and its employees are not responsible for the accuracy of the data presented. The map is intended for informational purposes only. No warranty is given as to its accuracy or completeness. The map is not designed for legal purposes. No liability is assumed for any use of this map. The City of Ashland does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. The map should be used for general reference only.
Chequamegon Bay
Normal Lake
Elevation = 602' MSL

Legend
- Rubble Breakwater
- Original Shoreline
- Proposed Bulkhead Line
- Shoreline
- Parcel
- Dredged Channel

Notes:
* Impervious Breakwater converted to Harbor Breakwater after remediation dredging complete.

Harbor Expansion Study
Ashland, Wisconsin

Proposed Conditions

Figure 4

04/09/10
Additional work / details to occur on the Waterfront Development Plan in near future

- Waterfront Plan last updated in March 2002.

- In October 2008 City Council authorized an amendment to the Waterfront Plan to allow for the demolition of the former Wastewater Treatment Plant.

- Implementation of the Waterfront Plan will continue in the years ahead.
What is the Waterfront Development Plan trying to accomplish?

• Develop areas of public access to Lake Superior

• Create the potential for Ashland’s waterfront to be a major tourist destination

• Provide recreational and cultural facilities for the Ashland & the regional community

• Enhance natural areas and restore environmentally sensitive areas (coastal wetlands, steep slopes of Bay City Creek)

• Encourage economic development which will expand employment opportunities & the tax base
Thank you for your time.

Questions?