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Navy Pier has been an icon and popular destination throughout much of Chicago’s history. It offers a diverse and eclectic Chicago experience and is positioned in one of the most unique settings in the world. The Pier brings together city, lakefront, and water in an extraordinary context seen nowhere else.

Navy Pier has been integral to the development of Chicago’s identity and culture as one of the city’s most memorable places. Surprisingly large at more than six city blocks long, it offers a wide range of programs and events. It is a destination for a diverse audience including families, children, young adults and visitors from around the world. Whether experienced from the lake as a part of the skyline, or viewed from above, Navy Pier is important to Chicago and its position as a world-class city on the shore of Lake Michigan. It is a true Chicago icon.

As it approaches its centennial, the future possibilities for the Pier are immense. It is now time to revisit its legacy and reimagine its potential through a contemporary lens. Navy Pier has enjoyed both popular and commercial success. It already has much of what is necessary to become a world-class public place, but for the Pier to achieve this status – to become not just good but great – it must embrace and implement a new vision.

This transformation not only will enhance the experience of visitors to the city, but also ensure that Navy Pier becomes an even more integral aspect of living in the Chicago area. *The Centennial Vision* A Framework for Reimagining Navy Pier will inform and guide redevelopment activity in a way that is consistent with the Pier’s purpose and ensure success in carrying out its mission.

*The Centennial Vision* is first and foremost aspirational and is intended to provide guidance and goals for future decisions and development. The vision does not commit to specific and succinct design solutions but looks to a strategic and flexible framework that meets the needs of an evolutionary program. Navy Pier is seeking public comment on this draft of *The Centennial Vision* and thereafter will make any necessary revisions. Design work will commence after finalizing this vision and framework plan.
Vision and Themes

The Centennial Vision is a framework for reimagining Navy Pier as it approaches its centennial year in 2016. Navy Pier is Illinois’ most popular and distinctive attraction, attracting nearly 9 million visitors in 2010. The vision and purpose is not only to expand our audience but enrich the experience of our diverse constituency ranging from midwestern families to global citizens. The Centennial Vision will build on this foundation of success to create a truly great public place, world-class attraction, and memorable experience for visitors.

Like other great Chicago endeavors - Millennium Park is a recent example - The Centennial Vision aims high. It will fulfill the public mission of Navy Pier as “The People’s Pier,” in a fashion befitting a world-class city with a vibrant architectural, cultural, environmental, and recreational landscape. It operates on the assumption that the descriptions “popular” and “high-quality” are not mutually exclusive.

Navy Pier is not a theme park. However it does have a theme. It is a real place centrally located in a very real city - one that can be accurately described as a great American city with its combination of world-class character and authenticity.

The Centennial Vision includes new and renovated features designed to expand Navy Pier’s audience. Programmatically, that means more evening and year-round entertainment, more compelling landscape and design features, and a more engaging relationship between visitors and the water.

Navy Pier recognizes the importance of sustainability in a project such as this. Since its inception and the renovation in 1995, green agendas for cities and the built environment have become an important part of the planning and implementation process. The Pier will begin to assess the opportunities to introduce sustainable programs as it prepares for the next 100 years.
**Program Elements**

**Pierscape:** Navy Pier offers one of the most dramatically diverse vistas in North America. Its unique location allows visitors to connect with land, air and water – and a vibrant city center. Navy Pier, Inc., the not-for-profit entity that assumed control of the Pier on July 1, 2011, will conduct an international search for the most imaginative, yet feasible, ideas for redesigning the Pier's outdoor spaces so that this remarkable asset will reach its full potential. Navy Pier will extend an open invitation to design teams comprised of the world’s leading landscape architects, architects, urban designers, artist, engineers, and communication designers to reimagine the Pier’s public realm, which includes Gateway Park, Crystal Garden, Pier Park, the South Dock and East End Park – along with smaller public spaces along the length of the Pier. Recreating the Pierscape will include changes to the landscape and streetscape, the introduction of public art and water features, and relighting the Pier’s exterior. Reimagining the Pierscape presents the opportunity to address a green agenda by ensuring that the new urban elements respond to the environment.

**Chicago Children’s Museum:** Navy Pier’s modern roots lie in its strength as a family destination, reflected in the selection of Chicago Children’s Museum as the first partner and family anchor for the redeveloped Pier in the mid-1990s. As the Pier and the Museum have explored their respective missions in recent months, they have come to recognize that each institution strengthens the other. They are working together on a plan to locate an expanded Chicago Children’s Museum in the Family Pavilion. If finalized, this new permanent home for the Museum would occupy nearly 100,000 square feet and continue to serve as a key family attraction at the Pier.

**Chicago Shakespeare Theater:** Chicago Shakespeare Theater is an integral piece of the city’s internationally recognized performing arts scene and its relocation to Navy Pier in 1999 created a cultural anchor for Pier activities. Increased programming by this vibrant company is a logical evolution for the Pier’s future, and serves to expand evening and year-round entertainment options. The Pier’s vision is met by Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s desire to further develop its artistic opportunities and increase its audience with the expansion of its campus through the addition of a 950-seat house to complement its existing 500-seat courtyard-style theater and 200-seat black box facility. The two institutions have identified a central Pier location for the new theater, which would replace the Skyline Stage. They are currently working on terms of a potential agreement.
Additional Elements

**Family Pavilion:** The Family Pavilion is the entry hall of Navy Pier, its front door, and a connection point to the rest of the Pier. It is anchored with family activities and uses and is served by restaurants, retail shops, and kiosks. Merchandising and design will focus on the family and leisure market and draw on Chicago authenticity. The retail and food tenants in this area take their cues from the anchors and are essential for generating revenue to support the ongoing operation of Navy Pier.

**Festival Hall:** This venue has been an important destination for festivals, pageants and special events. Consumer focused programming will remain an important part of the ongoing Pier vision, with events like SOFA, Winter WonderFest, and the Chicago Flower and Garden Show continuing to draw year-round visitors. The plan also will look to create better connections between the interior of the building and the South Dock.

**Events and Entertainment:** An important objective of the plan is broadening the Pier’s appeal, particularly among adults in the evening and during the off-season. Navy Pier will focus on creating new entertainment options toward the east end of the Pier that draw on Chicago’s musical and performing arts traditions.

**Boutique Hotel:** The east end of Navy Pier is a unique setting, unlike any other in Chicago. *The Centennial Vision* capitalizes on this asset by locating a small hotel at the Pier’s east end -- a boutique hotel adjacent to and including the historic Terminal Building. This hotel can also take advantage of its South Dock frontage for restaurant use and has the ability to incorporate a dramatic rooftop terrace for dining and special events and offers some of the best views of the Chicago skyline. Navy Pier will further explore the feasibility of this with interested developers.
Capital Cost

The projected cost for the public elements of the redeveloped Navy Pier is approximately $155 million. This cost is preliminary and will change as the design and scope of improvements are developer further. This figure does not include the private investment that would come from partner cultural institutions, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Chicago Children’s Museum, or from commercial partners such as hotel developers, entertainment companies, and restaurants. It is anticipated that Navy Pier, Inc. will provide some investment for these facilities from a pool of MPEA seed funding projected at approximately $50 million.

The Pier also will pursue other potential revenue sources for elements such as Gateway Park, the Crystal Garden, Pier Park, East End Park, as well as overall Pier lighting and landscaping elements. These potential revenue sources, beyond investment by not-for-profit and commercial partners, may include naming rights, fundraising by Navy Pier, Inc., and surplus cash flow from Navy Pier operations.
Background and History

The value placed on public access to the lake and the ensuing lakefront park system is among Daniel Burnham’s most enduring legacies. Burnham’s vision proposed that the lakefront remain accessible to the public through a series of parks, lagoons, islands, promenades, and recreational nodes, and this legacy is central to the character of Chicago. Burnham said, “The lakefront by right belongs to the people.” Within this context, the Pier has evolved over the past century.

Navy Pier was the only pier built of the original five called for in Burnham’s 1909 plan for Chicago. It opened in 1916 and was originally named Municipal Pier No. 2. It originally had two primary purposes: to serve as a dock for both freight and passenger traffic, and to provide indoor and outdoor space for public recreation. The Pier initially was promoted as a place to enjoy nature. The air, breezes, and sunshine were perceived to be “conducive to health and happiness.” The Pier was home to expositions and pageants, provided entertainment, and hosted a variety of other events. In 1927, Municipal Pier No. 2 was renamed Navy Pier in honor of naval veterans who served in the First World War. During World War II, Navy Pier became a training facility for the Navy. At the conclusion of the war, until 1965, the Pier was home to the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The 1959 opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway prompted a resurgence of commercial shipping activity at the Pier, but eventually, the shipping business would leave for more modern facilities at Lake Calumet. Following relocation of UIC and the departure of commercial shipping, Navy Pier fell into a state of neglect. The 1976 renovation of the historic East End buildings provided the Pier a brief resurgence and made it home to summer events like Chicago Fest. Gradually, however, it lapsed back into disrepair and underutilization.

In 1989, the city of Chicago engaged the Urban Land Institute to evaluate appropriate uses and programming for Navy Pier. Shortly thereafter, the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority was created and charged with managing and operating both Navy Pier and McCormick Place. The MPEA then embarked on the redevelopment of the Pier, incorporating some of the ULI’s recommendations. In 1995, the redesigned Navy Pier was introduced to the public as the mixed-use retail, dining, entertainment, and cultural venue that it is today. Since then, it has enjoyed enormous commercial success and continues to celebrate record numbers of visitors drawn by its unique vistas and diverse attractions.
In 2010, the Illinois General Assembly enacted landmark MPEA legislation reforming the operations of McCormick Place and recommending a new governance structure to ensure that Navy Pier receives the attention required to establish it as a world-class destination. MPEA again contacted the ULI to assist with developing a new vision for Navy Pier. Its recommendations included reconfirming the Pier’s purpose and mission, establishing a governance structure most appropriately suited to carry out that mission, and developing a plan to guide the actions of Navy Pier over the next decade. The MPEA has reaffirmed the purpose and mission for Navy Pier and control of the Pier has been transferred to a newly formed non-profit corporation governed by a new board of directors comprised of civic-minded citizens. The Centennial Vision provides a framework that will guide Navy Pier as it moves toward its hundredth year in 2016 and into its second century as a Chicago icon.
Purpose

Navy Pier was created a place of recreation for the people of Chicago. It has served that purpose for much of its history and it will continue to do so. Daniel Burnham said, “The Lakefront by right belongs to the people. Not a foot of its shores should be appropriated to the exclusion of the people.” Navy Pier is the people’s Pier.

Mission

Navy Pier’s mission is to be a year-round, world-class public place that celebrates and showcases the vitality of Chicago and provides for the enjoyment of Chicago area residents and visitors. Navy Pier will forever be an eclectic mix of public, cultural, educational, recreational, retail, dining, entertainment and other compatible uses attracting a broad range of visitors and managed within a business framework that provides for the long-term financial sustainability of the Pier.
Objectives

The Centennial Vision sets forth a vision both inspirational and grounded in the reality and understanding of what does and does not work at Navy Pier. The following objectives guided the consideration of ideas about Navy Pier and will serve as important guidelines throughout its redevelopment.

Build upon the strength of the successful components of Navy Pier

Navy Pier's commercial success during the past 15 years is the result of a number of factors, but especially the diverse attractions that are available. Many of these uses remain vital to the Pier's continued success, and reinvestment and redesign are an important component of The Centennial Vision. Supporting the growth and expansion of Chicago Children's Museum and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, the existing cultural anchors at the Pier, is part of this plan. It also includes redesigning, curating and making more contemporary the Pier's dining, maritime, and amusement attractions as well as increasing the number and impact of public shows and events in Festival Hall and the Grand Ballroom.

Expand the audience and seasonal appeal

Navy Pier successfully serves the family market, particularly during the summer months. While capacity exists to increase visitation during the daytime in the summer, the most significant opportunities for growth are during the non-summer months and evenings, particularly among an adult audience. Broadening the seasonal appeal of the Pier is an important move to increase repeat visitation from Chicago area residents.

Improve the quality of the public realm

A significant aspect of making Navy Pier a world-class destination includes redesigning and improving its key public spaces for the enjoyment of the wide variety of visitors to the Pier. Much of this work includes improving the landscape and streetscape of the Pier. As programming evolves and expands, updating the quality and character of the architecture becomes increasingly important. The Navy Pier that exists today is the result of a business strategy that emphasized quantity and diversity of uses over architectural enhancements. The current focus and strategy seeks to turn that relationship around. While new uses will certainly be added and existing uses expanded, the objective is to do so with a clear focus and attention on the quality of what is built.
Create more activity further east on the Pier

As the Pier’s success has grown, commercial activity has moved eastward. There are opportunities to increase programs and attractions further east, which will more effectively use the available real estate.

Flexible implementation

The Centennial Vision should be general enough to allow flexibility to accommodate new business opportunities while also providing clear direction regarding the Pier’s redevelopment. Because the plan is designed to evolve over time, it is important that there be more than one approach to fulfilling the objectives and that it can be phased as capital becomes available.

Promote environmental sustainability

Navy Pier will join the growing global movement to incorporate green practices into its daily operations. The Centennial Vision will consider sustainable initiatives as part of its implementation of vision. The Pier could have a major positive environmental impact because of its scale and its position on the Great Lakes. Navy Pier has an opportunity to promote a green agenda through not only its redesign, but though its programming as well.

Ensure financial sustainability

Navy Pier is a public place with a public purpose. It generates revenue through commercial attractions and other businesses that offset the cost of operation. The long-term financial sustainability of Navy Pier depends upon its ability to balance operating costs, the cost of public programming, and the cost of ongoing capital repairs and other improvements with operating revenue.
The vision for Navy Pier is one designed to accomplish the Pier’s mission to become a world-class public place. This vision embraces the value that Chicago places on quality art, architecture, and urbanism, and allows that commitment to quality to guide planning and decision making. The vision is about a change in approach, attitude, and aesthetic and is intended to address the overall character of the Pier rather than its specific parts. Millennium Park has clearly demonstrated the value of quality design in a public place and the worldwide recognition that comes with it. A similar perspective and attitude will guide Navy Pier as it makes changes to its attractions and public spaces.

The world is refocusing on the urban as many cities reclaim and revitalize their urban centers. There is a strong global trend to access and rethink aspects and elements of cities that previously were overlooked. Resources like water, land, and air are now considered urban amenities. Navy Pier truly is that place where, as Burnham said when speaking about Chicago’s Lakefront, affords “one great unobstructed view, stretching away to the horizon, where water and clouds seem to meet.”
A world-class place is one with aspects that are authentic and unique to it and it alone, and that embodies the phrase, “There is nothing else like it in the world!” It is imperative to consciously nurture these qualities over time. “World-class” requires more than a legacy and history passed on over generations. It is also necessary to develop careful programming strategies and responses to changing times while simultaneously maintaining the original essence of a place. Navy Pier has already established itself as a Chicago icon because of its unique location, commercial success and visual prominence on the Chicago skyline. In much the same way as the Eiffel Tower has been transformed with light, the Pier will be reimagined in a more contemporary way.

Navy Pier’s unique location places it at the intersection of land, water, and air and makes it a central element within the city. This location has historically made it possible to enjoy many activities while on the Pier: nature and the lake, fireworks, air and water shows, and gazing at some of Lake Michigan’s most impressive ships. In addition, these elements are an important part of Chicago’s history and culture. Embracing the Pier’s connection with the elements will help highlight an understanding of its unique context, and reformulate its identity as Chicago’s own.
Air

The visual connections between Navy Pier and the city are enhanced by the skyline and horizon. It is a perfect blend of the vertical “built” and the horizontal “natural.” The quality of the sky, the brilliance of the city lights, the reflection of the lake, and the changes in season reinforce this phenomenon. Air and atmosphere are elements that the Pier could easily harness with a profound impact. Through slight modifications and enhancements to the architecture, combined with creative programs and events, the transformation could be truly iconic. There are many superb global examples of fire, light, art, wind, and environmental spectacles that capture the potential of experience. It is easy to imagine kinetic sculptures, interactive light elements, inflatable art, and visually striking lights as vital elements of the Pier. Elements like light can also operate as a unifying characteristic throughout the Pier. These elements can be symbolic and systemic representations that connect and integrate the Pier with its surroundings, the environment, and the city. There are many opportunities to realign program and place with the powerful views toward the city and lake. More than any other Chicago attraction, the Pier’s location captures outstanding and breathtaking views.
Navy Pier is the true union of the city to its great lake. It is the one place that reaches out to this major body of water and connects it to the people. Navy Pier has always been connected to maritime programs as well as with cultural events and major functions. However, the aspect of water has not yet achieved its full potential for the Pier. People can experience water through nautical programs, boats, or interactive elements like water features. Once again, the Pier can look abroad for inspiration -- from art spectacles on the water to floating and temporary activities that directly connect people to the water.

The Pier is perfectly positioned to introduce water as a consistent and interactive feature. Examples can vary from large participatory fountains in Gateway Park to small pools at the East End. Integrating water into the Pier would not only seamlessly enhance the aesthetic quality of the natural and physical environment, but it also has the potential to improve the visitor's experience and offer cool zones during hot summer days. These water programs can be features in the winter months and build upon the existing events that are already planned around ice and snow.

**Water**

*New York City Waterfalls at Brooklyn Bridge, by Olafur Eliasson. Summer 2008, New York City.*
The Pier is the one major Chicago landmark that consistently affords the public the opportunity to stand where land and water meet. However, outside of Chicago, there are numerous examples and precedents that suggest strategies to connect people more closely to the water and address the water’s edge.

Because of its immense scale, it is helpful to think of Navy Pier as a park. Its footprint is twice that of Millennium Park. This scale suggests that the Pier should have a landscape strategy appropriate for park design that includes all aspects of the landscape and streetscape, including hard surface, plant material, water, light, art, and the relationships between these elements.

Navy Pier’s unique physical qualities must be considered in preparation for such an endeavor. The Pier is not quite ground, not quite street, and not entirely dock. Outdoor and public programs throughout the world are being reinterpreted in ways that use contemporary art as a generator for new ideas and forms. Again, innovation elsewhere can provide the inspiration for new ideas about surfaces, plantings, and integrated landscapes on Navy Pier.

Authenticity

Because Navy Pier showcases Chicago and provides for the enjoyment of its residents and visitors The Centennial Vision should remain mindful of those attributes uniquely representative of Chicago. This approach is not merely intended to be a “best of Chicago,” but rather, a curated collection to capture the unique and authentic nature of Chicago. Chicago has so much to offer as its own, and that should be showcased within this historical attraction.

Great Lakes

Navy Pier's location highlights the unique context for the city: at the southern edge of Lake Michigan that occupies the point of convergence between water and land, nature and city. Located strategically near the geographic center of the country and also on the Great Lakes, Chicago developed as a center for commerce and transportation. In addition, the Great Lakes possess about one quarter of the world’s fresh water. Because of this, Chicagoans are stewards of the lakes and have a duty to pass this responsibility down to future generations.
Art and Architecture

The city’s historical development at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th is evident in much of its urban character and architecture. Chicago’s built environment emerged during critical historical moments in the development of modern architecture and city planning. The city has likewise served as a gallery for truly significant world-class public art, proudly displaying sculptures by Picasso and Calder and the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan and Mies van der Rohe.
Diversity

Chicago is a city of neighborhoods, as well as home to many immigrants and first generation Americans. Its cultural diversity is remarkable and should be a central focus of anything celebrating the city’s character. This diversity is deeply rooted in Chicago’s history, and continues to inspire the broad range of art and culture that have emerged within the city. No single culture, art, performance, or style can entirely embody that which is Chicago. The city’s complex and unique character is only captured when its overall diversity is considered as a whole.
One of the easiest places to recognize Chicago’s diversity is through its vast culinary offerings. Chicago’s culinary legacy and tradition has been the introduction of hot dogs, Italian beef sandwiches, and deep-dish pizza; but it also boasts great ethnic foods such as tacos and gyros. Chef-driven upscale cuisine has emerged as part of the city’s more contemporary culinary landscape. Chefs and restaurant culture have become increasingly prominent in contemporary culture and Chicago is recognized internationally as one of its centers.
Performance

Chicago’s diversity is also apparent in its many performing arts and music scenes. From the more classical offerings of Chicago Shakespeare Theater and the Joffrey Ballet, to the sketch comedy and improv of Second City and ImprovOlympic, the performing arts in Chicago engage and entertain multiple audiences. The city has also historically been home to many emerging popular music styles – blues, rock, house and experimental jazz. This prominence in popular music complements its longstanding recognition as the home to established stalwarts like the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Many of these performers are known worldwide for their talents and connection to their Chicago home.
Critique

In its 2010 report, ULI noted that the Pier could be improved by initially addressing a few issues. These priorities included improving and updating facilities and landscape, securing a children’s anchor, and providing more entertainment options. ULI also noted that the circulation at the Pier is jumbled and disconnected without clear or intuitive paths between programs, events, and activities. It described the Pier’s collection of programs as a hodgepodge of disparate elements. ULI also noted that the interior frequently lacks openness and hinders any clear north-south connections. And finally, ULI said the Pier does not capitalize on its opportunities to connect with the surrounding water and context.

Character

Although less than one third of Navy Pier’s visitors are tourists from outside the metro area, a common criticism among area residents is that Navy Pier exists only for tourists. This perception exists in large part because many of the Pier’s attractions are presented with a design vocabulary reminiscent of festival marketplaces and carnivals. This perception is further reinforced by programming and entertainment that takes its cues from theme parks.

Clarity

Visitors to the Pier currently perceive it as confusing and disorganized. Programs are not always in logically clustered groupings and navigation is not always intuitive or clear. This lack of clarity has the potential to disrupt a visitor’s itinerary, and this condition is exacerbated by the lack of a direct relationship between the Pier’s interior spaces, and the exterior South Dock and the water. In addition, the general clutter and visual noise intensifies the confusion and disruption.

Cadence

Because of its length, the cadence of the Pier is extremely important. Cadence is more than just circulation. It also takes into account program clusters and character, as well as less densely programmed spaces. Because popular activities do not occur consistently along the entire length of the Pier, the density and rhythm of activity is important. The irregular arrangement of circulation and attractions increases visitor confusion.
The Centennial Vision for Navy Pier sets forth a redevelopment program and identifies opportunities for change. Change at Navy Pier must adhere to the set of principles to remain consistent with its mission.

Navy Pier is a Real Place

Navy Pier is a real place that is uniquely Chicago. It is not an amusement park or a festival marketplace, although that design aesthetic is currently part of its visual vocabulary. The eclectic quantity of Navy Pier is precisely what makes it so popular to so many, but those uses must be presented as a natural extension of the urban fabric of Chicago. A critical component to the reimagining of Navy Pier is a design approach that recognizes this. Millennium Park has clearly demonstrated the power and transformative nature of high quality design. Although Navy Pier is a decidedly different place, a similar approach is valid and desirable.

Improve the Quality of the Public Realm

A central part of The Centennial Vision includes improving the quality of the public realm by enhancing the streetscape and landscape throughout the Pier. Although some buildings on Navy Pier may undergo renovation or expansion, much of the architecture will remain intact for the foreseeable future. It is in changing the public spaces on the Pier where a significant impact can be made to the overall character and perception of the Pier. With the addition of public art and a more contemporary approach to its design, Navy Pier will begin to enjoy recognition as a world-class public place.
It is important to focus on a number of critical aspects of the design and organization of the Pier. This includes the creation of areas of activity with a distinct and clear character and reconfiguration of circulation to improve its clarity. These changes will improve the pedestrian experience across the Pier and provide a more coherent visitor experience. Incorporating concepts of sustainability and connections to the lake will also be powerful tools to transform the experience at the Pier. Because improvements to Navy Pier will take place in phases, it is important that each change takes into account these design considerations.

**Emphasize Quality over Quantity**

Capital investment at Navy Pier will emphasize quality over quantity. Today, Navy Pier is widely popular and financially viable in large part because it has the critical mass to sustain itself. As new uses are added and existing ones expanded, those changes must be implemented in a way that results in world-class design, imaginative programming, and critically acclaimed popular attractions.
The Centennial Vision Framework

Programmatic areas

The framework contained within *The Centennial Vision* is organized around distinct building zones and the outdoor public spaces on Navy Pier. As redevelopment takes place at Navy Pier, it will be important to differentiate the fundamental character and purpose of each of the zones. While not dogmatic in nature, the framework will serve to direct uses to areas where they most logically fit. Because *The Centennial Vision* is conceptual in nature, its details will evolve throughout the design process.
Envisioning outdoor urban space at Navy Pier will require a new public design strategy that will transform the Pierscape into a cohesive and harmonious environment across the entirety of the Pier. The Pierscape includes landscape elements such as planters, vertical surfaces, pocket parks, groves and diverse garden zones. The Pierscape incorporates the streetscape: along with water features, urban elements such as seating, kiosks, and identity and environmental graphics. Public art, both permanent and temporary will be part of programs and events. Night activities are just as robust as daytime so contemporary lighting concepts will be considered for the interior and exterior of the buildings and enhance the program features of the Pier. All Pierscape elements should have a high regard for sustainability imbedded into the design approach. As the Pier marches into its next 100 years, it is important that there is a positive impact on the Pier's environmental performance. Ultimately, the Pierscape design concept will be an effective and powerful way to organize and alter the fundamental character of the Pier.
Gateway Park

Gateway Park is Navy Pier’s front yard and can also be a venue for programmed events and promotional activities. Reinvestment in Gateway Park and reconfiguration of traffic patterns can enhance the pedestrian experience, minimize traffic congestion and conflicts with pedestrians, reduce the amount of roadway, and create more flexible park space. Changes will also improve the connection between the Headhouse and Gateway Park. In providing this stronger connection to the city, changes to the existing roads must take into account traffic impacts in surrounding neighborhoods.
The Crystal Garden will become a true indoor park space with substantial landscaping, providing a more tranquil transition between the activities in the Family Pavilion and Pier Park. It will provide a setting for suitable entertainment and children’s programming in cooperation with what is hoped to be an expanded Chicago Children’s Museum. The redesigned park should draw inspiration from its unique lakefront location and speak directly to issues of sustainability.

As with other interior spaces on the Pier, it is important to create clear views through the interior and build on the visual connections to the exterior. Specific program elements and design considerations to be addressed in the redesign of the Crystal Garden include a clear connection between the first floor and the second floor exterior spaces, incorporation of a year-round café, potential addition of a carousel and small landscaped spaces for entertainment and programming.
Pier Park

Assuming agreement with Chicago Shakespeare Theater on the location of its expanded theater complex, Pier Park will be anchored by the Theater and the Crystal Garden. In addition to being home to the Pier’s traditional amusements and the Ferris wheel, the park will be redesigned so that its character is more whimsical and artistic. There is even the opportunity to redesign the attractions to give them a more contemporary artistic character. Programmatically, Pier Park will operate in concert with Chicago Shakespeare Theater and the Crystal Garden and take advantage of some of the most spectacular views of the city of Chicago. New elements will include interactive water features, public art and spaces for informal performances. Traditional amusement attractions are important revenue generators. The existing Ferris wheel will be modernized and enhanced with contemporary identity and lighting. Access to Pier Park from the South Dock will be provided at the east and west ends of the park with the elimination of the grand staircase to facilitate the renovation of the South Arcade. Commercial features such as food and beverage will be planned to be slightly more upscale and synergistic with the programs of Pier Park that are more cultural in nature.

The east end of Navy Pier is one of the most spectacular urban settings in Chicago and establishes a special relationship between the city and its location on the Great Lakes. It is where people experience precisely what Daniel Burnham meant when he spoke of that “great unobstructed view, stretching away to the horizon, where water and clouds seem to meet.” East End Park must be a world-class park and a quiet refuge that reflects the elements - air, water, and land - that comprise the essence of the Pier. East End Park has the potential to become a great public place both day and night and summer and winter; a place where people experience the changing beauty of Lake Michigan and fully understand its context in relation to Chicago. Some specific elements to be considered in the design of the park include ample landscaped areas, significant public art, interactive water features, and entertainment areas.

**East End Park**

The Highline by James Corner Field Operations and Diller, Scofidio and Renfro. New York City.

Rendered vision of Navy Pier’s East End Park, Image Fiction.
South Dock

The South Dock will continue to serve as the main pedestrian promenade for the Pier. However, it is also one of the Pier’s most important organizing elements, as it is the primary means to traverse the length of the Pier and the only place to access the boats docked at Navy Pier. The boats and other maritime programs will be organized to reduce congestion, bring clarity, and make the pedestrian flow more enjoyable. Support functions such as ticketing and information kiosks will be updated and over time, additional programs that enhance the lake experience will be introduced. While the South Dock will continue to accommodate seasonal food vendors, a new emphasis will be placed on the presentation of both permanent and rotating displays of public art, along with landscaping elements to soften the character of the space and to reflect the unique physical aspects of the Pier itself. Rather than simply being a way to circulate along the Pier, the South Dock should be a destination in itself that helps draw people eastward and increase revenue from seasonal vendors. Alongside the South Dock, the ground level spaces adjacent to Festival Hall already incorporate public art in the Smith Museum of Stained Glass. Strategies that will help guide redesign of the South Dock include “thinning it out,” minimizing visual clutter, permanent and temporary presentations of public art, and opportunities for informal entertainment. Also, designers will create uniform and contemporary design standards for signage, kiosks, and other dock structures.
Family and Leisure

Family Pavilion

The Family Pavilion is the entry hall to Navy Pier and is anchored by Chicago Children’s Museum. This area will showcase all that is Chicago, and this focus will also be evident in the merchandising and design strategies of the tenants. Retail and food tenants in the Family Pavilion support the cultural, educational, and public programs on the Pier and are essential to generate revenue.

Strategies to improve the Family Pavilion go beyond increasing rental revenue and making necessary functional improvements to the common areas. They include broader design strategies to further Navy Pier’s mission, such as creating a more contemporary character for both retail and food and beverage areas. In addition to refreshing the space to give it more of a market feel, this approach also includes carefully choosing vendors to ensure their offerings are consistent with the Chicago focus that gives this area its unique identity. Finally, like other areas of the Pier, it is important to more clearly define the paths of major circulation. This is especially important for the Family Pavilion, as it is the point of entry for many visitors.
Part of Navy Pier’s current popularity lies in its strength as a family destination and a key part of The Centennial Vision is the presence of a family anchor in the Family Pavilion. Chicago Children’s Museum and Navy Pier have collaborated on a new vision for the Family Pavilion as a possible home for an expanded world-class Chicago Children’s Museum, allowing the Museum to continue to serve as a family anchor. In addition to opportunities within the museum, collaboration between the Museum, Navy Pier, and other entities at the Pier will result in synergistic programming for children and families throughout the Pier.
South Arcade

The South Arcade is the retail area to the south of the Family Pavilion that continues below Pier Park, along the western half of Navy Pier. As an arcade, it acts as a transitional space that connects the interior programming with that on the South Dock. The arcade, like other uses on the Pier, offers multi-seasonal activity.

Two main points guide the renovation of the South Arcade, in addition to better financial performance and upgrading its character. The first strategy includes providing clearer, more direct circulation through the South Arcade, as well as a strong visual and physical connection with the exterior, to both the South Dock and the water. Like that of the Family Pavilion, the merchandising strategy will be casual in character, and focus on products by Chicago merchants that are unique, diverse, and changing.
An expanded campus for Chicago Shakespeare Theater will feature the addition of an exciting new performance venue designed as an iconic architectural element for the center of the Pier. The theater and its surroundings will focus on performance and other more culturally-oriented entertainment. This area should not only facilitate strong pedestrian connections between the South Dock and Pier Park, but it should be flexible enough to allow for impromptu and seasonal performances.

Finally, the overall character of the area surrounding Chicago Shakespeare Theater is to be more adult oriented than that of the Family Pavilion. In addition to the fact that much of the programming will be year-round and frequently in the evenings, the dining and retail options will be upscale in character and more culturally focused with the dining options drawing upon the Chicago culinary tradition.
Performing arts in Chicago have a rich tradition and are known throughout the world. As one of the most famous of Chicago’s performing arts organizations, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, in an expanded campus, can function as a key cultural anchor at the Pier’s midpoint. Moreover, this position provides a platform for expansion of a cultural zone at the center of Navy Pier.

The theater company has identified an opportunity to further develop its artistic opportunities and increase its service to audiences of all ages through the addition of a 950-seat house to complement its existing 500-seat courtyard style theater and 200-seat black box facility. The Pier is working with Chicago Shakespeare Theater to occupy a central location that will replace the existing Skyline Stage. This iconic new building would anchor the eastern edge of a redesigned park. The addition of this world-class performing arts venue on Navy Pier is an important part of accomplishing key objectives of The Centennial Vision, such as more adult-oriented evening and year-round activities, more upscale dining opportunities, and a platform from which to increase revenue.
The events and entertainment portion of Navy Pier is characterized by the interaction between seasonal events, weekend entertainment, permanent entertainment venues, restaurants, the Grand Ballroom activities and other related programming. This area provides a great opportunity to drive repeat visits to the Pier by providing variety through its focus on events and entertainment and creates a solid destination at the east end of Navy Pier.
Since it opened in 1916, Navy Pier has been a focal point for festivals, pageants, and special events. This type of programming has been the focus of Festival Hall and will continue to play an important role in its future. This venue is an important attraction, with shows like SOFA, Winter WonderFest, and the Chicago Flower and Garden Show drawing visitors to the eastern half of Navy Pier in the fall, winter, and early spring. Design and business considerations for Festival Hall and adjoining spaces include better connections between the interior of the building and the South Dock and a multi-floor restaurant at the midpoint of Festival Hall that can be implemented independently. Also, it will work with alternative uses that can coexist with a strong venue for public shows and other programmed activities.
An important objective of The Centennial Vision is to increase the Pier’s appeal in the evening and off-season, particularly among adults. The spaces adjacent to Festival Hall fronting on the South Dock provide an opportunity to develop uses that target this audience. Such development also provides additional opportunities to take advantage of Chicago’s rich and diverse music scene. This program can also be enhanced by the flexible use of space within Festival Hall.

The specific character of this programming will be developed over time and it is anticipated that private investment will be a key component in the development of permanent attractions in this portion of Navy Pier. It is important that new venues are flexible enough to host different musical and entertainment options, and have the ability to attract patrons year-round. In addition, this type of programming makes the eastern part of the Pier a destination for the entire metropolitan area.
The Centennial Vision contemplates the development of a boutique hotel that will be unlike any other place to stay in the city. The east end of Navy Pier affords some of the most dramatic views of the skyline and presents an unparalleled opportunity for a small hotel adjacent to and including the historic Terminal Building on the Pier. The location, between the Grand Ballroom and Festival Hall, will appeal to a diverse group of visitors.

This hotel can also capitalize on its unique and compelling South Dock frontage for waterfront restaurants, and has the potential to incorporate a rooftop terrace. Because of its location, the hotel has the opportunity to generate business by coordinating its activities with the other event-oriented programming at the eastern end of the Pier. The development of this hotel will be heavily dependent upon private capital and its timing will be dictated by conditions in the overall economy and the local hospitality market. The hotel helps achieve several goals, including visitors on a year-round 24-hour a day basis, financial support for Pier operations, and greater activity on the eastern portion of the Pier.
Deferred Maintenance and Family Pavilion Remodeling $22 million

Enhancing the Public Space $85 million

Gateway Park, Crystal Garden, Pier Park

Attraction renovations, South Dock streetscape and landscaping

East End Park

Lighting

Other Renovation Projects $18 million

South Arcade

Festival Hall Ground Level

Contingency and Escalation $30 million

Total $155 million

This cost is preliminary and will change as the design and scope of improvements is developed.

The $155 million capital program outlined above does not include private investment by partner cultural institutions, Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Chicago Children’s Museum, or commercial partners such as hotels, entertainment companies, and restaurants. It is anticipated that Navy Pier will provide some investment for these facilities from a pool of MPEA seed funding projected at approximately $50 million.

The Pier also will pursue other potential revenue sources for elements such as Gateway Park, the Crystal Garden, Pier Park, East End Park, and Pier lighting. These potential revenue sources, beyond investment by not-for-profit and commercial partners, may include naming rights, fundraising by Navy Pier, Inc., and surplus cash flow from Navy Pier operations.
The Centennial Vision is conceptual in nature but purposely does provide clear direction about opportunities that will be explored in greater detail. Navy Pier will carefully review the public input that it receives and make appropriate modifications to the vision.

Navy Pier, Inc. will begin to take specific action on a number of components of the plan, and has already begun working with its key cultural anchors, Chicago Children’s Museum and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, to facilitate the expansion of each. That work will continue.

The public design of Navy Pier is a powerful and essential part of accomplishing the Pier’s Mission. To that end, Navy Pier will extend an open invitation to design teams from around the globe to submit qualifications for the design of the outdoor spaces at Navy Pier. Navy Pier will ultimately short list teams to submit designs and thereafter engage one of the design teams to work with Navy Pier on bringing the selected design to fruition.

In advance of that design effort, more detailed study and review will be conducted on the road network in Gateway Park. An approach will be selected and detailed design and engineering work will begin thereafter.

In addition to beginning the deferred maintenance work this fall, the redesign of the Family Pavilion public spaces and food court will begin at that time as well. Further exploration and evaluation of the feasibility of particular entertainment concepts and hotel development opportunities will take place with potential development partners over the coming year and The Centennial Vision will be refined accordingly.
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