



Charlotte Community Association

"A Community That Cares"

Charlotte Community Vision Plan for the Port of Rochester and Surrounding Areas

REVISED 11/26/2019

Acknowledgements

The ideas presented in this document are the result of countless hours of dedicated work by many volunteers from within and outside of the Charlotte community. The passion shown by so many for the improvement of our shared community is evident and a source of great pride. Support for this work was made possible by donations and other resources from the Charlotte Community Association, Inc. (CCA). Early work to execute a community planning day (charrette) was guided by the Community Design Center Rochester. Post-charrette guidance on municipal issues, design and planning was provided by the Port of Rochester Marina, the Monroe County Parks Department, City Council NW Representative Molly Clifford, and the Urban and Regional Planning class (Spring 2018) in the Architecture program at Rochester Institute of Technology. Several community groups were represented on the planning team and in fundraising efforts: Charlotte Community Association; Charlotte Community Development Corporation; Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse Society; CHARLOTTE Strong; Charlotte Youth Athletic Association; Harbor Merchants Association; Ontario Beach Park Program Committee; and Port of Charlotte Merchants Association. We give great thanks to all who participated at every level in this community vision enterprise.

The Vision Planning Team (Charlotte Community Development Committee)

Sue Roethel, co-chair	Barbara Lake
Lindy Litwak, co-chair	Mary Pat McKeown
Nana Andoh	Lisa Polito Nicolay
Lorie Barnum	Sharon O'Brien
Tom Brewer	Pam O'Neill
Len Brozak, Jr.	Pat O'Neill
Glenn Gardner	Mike Osadiciw
Carl Giardino	Bob Owens
Jonathan Hardin	Jose Peo
Diana Heliotis	Suzanne Phillips
Carolyn Hinchman	Leah Przybylski
Joe Hinchman	Craig Ristuccia
Jolana Hollister	Mitch Rowe
Jessica Hua	Hank Rubin
Kaytlyn Johnson	Larry Staub
Virginia Kobylarz	Maureen Staves
Lynn Kowalczyk	Marianne Warfle

The Process

Phase 1: Charrette (Community Planning Day)

After six months of planning by a Steering Committee working with the Community Design Center Rochester, a community charrette was held on November 4, 2017 at the Port Terminal Building. There were 70+ community participants, 25 volunteer design facilitators, plus the 16-member Steering Committee, representing Charlotte and the Greater Rochester community at large. The large group was divided into 12 small study groups, each to study an assigned focus area (see list below) within the geographical area north of Pattonwood Drive.

Charrette Study Area: Lake Avenue corridor from Pattonwood Drive north to Lake Ontario and from the Genesee River west to Ruggles Street. Within this study area, there were six specific focus areas designated as priorities:

1. Transportation
2. Year-Round Use/Underutilized Spaces
3. Port/Marina Area
4. Ontario Beach Park
5. North River Street
6. Lake Avenue Corridor

Charrette Report: Results from the charrette were published in February 2018 and can be found here: <http://www.charlottecca.org/community-development/charrette-process/>.

Phase 2: Vision Plan

A new Community Development Committee (CDC) with 37 volunteers was formed to continue the work begun at the charrette. Without adequate funding to continue working with the professionals from the Design Center, and with a September deadline to articulate the community's vision for inclusion in the City's Comprehensive Plan 2034 (due for completion this fall), the CCA board decided to push forward using immediately available resources. It charged the new committee with the task of incorporating the best ideas generated at the charrette into a new Community Vision Plan for the Port of Rochester and surrounding areas.

The CDC has met twice per month since March 2018 to analyze the results published in the charrette report, identify common themes and ideas, and formulate a plan to execute them over the next 25+ years. The CDC worked in partnership with graduate students from the Urban and Regional Planning class (Spring 2018) in Rochester Institute of Technology's Architecture program, as well as with the Monroe County Parks Department and the Port of Rochester Marina.

A *preliminary* version of this document was presented by the CDC to the community at the CCA meeting on September 10, 2018. With feedback received and incorporated, this document is now presented as the *revised* Charlotte Community Vision Plan for the Port of Rochester and Surrounding Areas.

The Vision Plan

Introduction

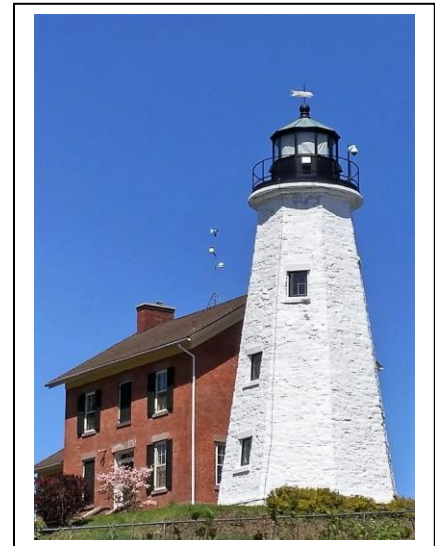
The purpose of this document is to convey the vision of residents and stakeholders regarding future development of the Port of Rochester and surrounding areas. This vision has been taking shape for over 50 years—since 1965. The Charlotte Community Association has made it a priority to reach consensus at last among residents and stakeholders, in partnership with the City of Rochester and Monroe County, on a long-term shared vision plan.

The history of the neighborhood is well-documented in the *Charrette Report* mentioned above, as are the goals and objectives of the charrette. As a reference, it provides the context and foundation for the Vision Plan. The CDC not only analyzed the results of the charrette, but it also studied important initiatives relating to development of the study area that helped to inform the decision-making process. These included: Roc the Riverway Vision Plan; Harbor Management Plan; Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP); early stages of Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Rochester; Regional Transit Service Reimagine RTS Program; Port of Rochester Marina development plans; City of Rochester Zoning Codes.

A present-day analysis of the charrette study area reveals a great number of strengths, assets and opportunities on which to build, as well as some significant challenges and high-impact obstacles to address in order to progress toward development goals.

Strengths/Community Assets

- Uniqueness as waterfront community with confluence of Genesee River and Lake Ontario
- International port of entry into the U.S.
- Rich maritime history
- Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse (working lighthouse registered as a national landmark)
- Port Terminal Building, Link/Greenhouse Building, N. River St.
- Port of Rochester Marina & public boat launch, N. River St.
- Public lands surrounding Marina (Parcels 1, 2 and 3)
- Ontario Beach Park, antique Denzel carousel, Charlotte pier
- Roger Robach Community Center, Beach Ave.
- Public athletic fields and concessions building, Ruggles St.
- Railroad terminal building (City-owned), N. River St.
- 75 Stutson St. (new performing arts and community center)
- US Coast Guard Auxilliary, N. River St.
- Many active community organizations



Challenges/Difficulties

- Create greater connection to downtown Rochester
- Limited accessibility
- Unsafe traffic flow on Lake Avenue
- Seasonal reputation
- No cohesive business plan
- Private property in prime real estate locations that are underutilized, outdated or an eyesore
- Monroe County Parks Department Maintenance Building (currently unsuitable; needs relocation or remodeling)
- Robach Community Center in need of renovation and improvements



Opportunities

- Add or expand residential and commercial enterprises
- Create a year-round destination atmosphere
- Generate revenue
- Improve traffic flow and safety
- Expand transportation options on land and water
- Introduce sustainable buildings and other structures
- Repurpose prime real estate
- Develop new or improved public buildings for year-round use

- Introduce new businesses for year-round sustainability
- Mobilize community groups and businesses to work together toward common goals
- Seek partnerships with other organizations
- Re-brand neighborhood image to capitalize on uniqueness

High-Impact Obstacles

- Traffic speeds and safety on Lake Avenue
- Parking
- CSX railroad tracks (safety issues; unused resource; abandoned property?)
- Multiple Zoning Codes; Marina District Zoning Code currently allows 12-16-story buildings at the Port
- The lighthouse view shed is highly valued by the community and impacts to the view shed should be minimized
- Conflicting responsibilities between municipalities: City-owned public property that Monroe County maintains
- Emergency access and evacuation



Key Components/Common Themes

Through analysis of the charrette study area and all of the charrette ideas, common themes emerged and provided an image of what the neighborhood might look and feel like in the future. This image will drive re-branding Charlotte/Port of Rochester and surrounding areas to capitalize on the uniqueness of the Lake/River waterfront. This includes, among other things, having a working registered landmark lighthouse, and being an international port of entry into the U.S. Here are the common themes for re-branding:

- Year-round destination for all ages; family friendly
- Nature- and water-centric; confluence of lake and river waterfront
- Hub for recreation, relaxation and education
- Activities include biking, hiking, running, walking, swimming, bathing, picnicking, playing games, riding the carousel, boating, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, skating, star gazing, festivals, arts, shopping, celebrating, eating
- International port village on Great Lakes (international port of entry into the U.S.)
- Maritime history
- Working lighthouse that is a registered national landmark
- “Main Street” atmosphere with shops, homes and safe passage of vehicles, bikes and pedestrians
- Variety of transportation options for both land and water
- Pockets of parking
- Open vistas and public access
- Public park, beach
- Environmentally sensitive
- Public art, music, theater
- Urban village vibe
- Educational experiences
- Limited building heights
- Community partnerships

Priorities by Focus Area

Focus Area #1: Transportation

- Slow traffic down at Pattonwood and make it pedestrian and bike friendly north to Beach; reduce to two-lane vehicle traffic with added bike lanes and pedestrian walkways and shelters;
- Crosswalks: modify median plantings to improve visibility, add speed bump with flashing yellow crossing signs at end of Lake Ave. and Robach Ctr./Estes St.; crosswalk at Stutson St. and possibly other locations along Lake Ave.
- Parking: relocate parking away from major people zones and create pockets of parking in hidden, underused spaces; add a parking garage

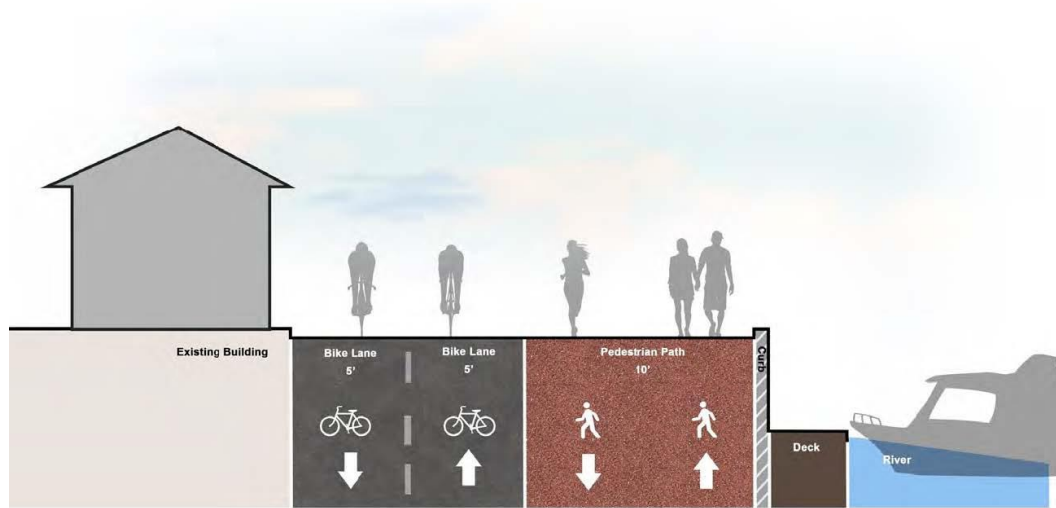
- Multi-modal transportation options for land and water: trolley, shuttle buses, bike rentals, kayaks, water taxis, tour boats, tour buses (with centralized drop location), golf cart rentals, pedestrian ferry service
- Repurpose CSX tracks for light trolley system
- RTS – park and ride from areas outside of Charlotte (City/Greece/Irondequoit) to Marina/Charlotte (utilize Kodak parking lot with shuttle)
- Re-route traffic flow for summer – bus loop from end of Lake Ave. to west on Beach Ave. to south on Estes to east on Hinchey to south on Lake to east on Portside to south on N. River St. to west on Latta to Lake (restrict Lake from Stutson north to 2 lanes w/ bike lane; traffic flow loop/circle at entrance to Ontario Beach Park)
- Digital kiosks (ability to update remotely) in at least 3 locations: 1) corner of Stutson/Lake parking lot; 2) corner of Lake/Hinchey; 3) Port area by Marina
- Charging stations for electric vehicles
- Require parking accommodations for privately owned and publicly accessed spaces
- Enhanced RTS service: additional stops/changes to existing stops



Water taxi



Slower traffic flow on Lake Ave._lane reduction at Pattonwood Dr. going north



Traffic flow along riverfront



Gateways to transition traffic flow to reduced vehicle lanes



Pedestrian crossings w/ raised pavement, flashing solar lights, signage at Lake Ave. intersections & Ontario Beach Park entrances



Light trolley system on main street

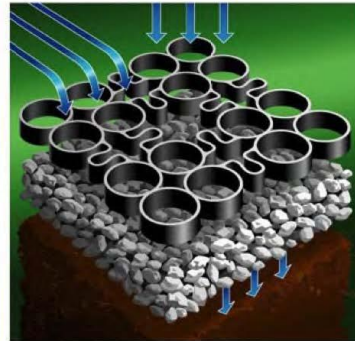
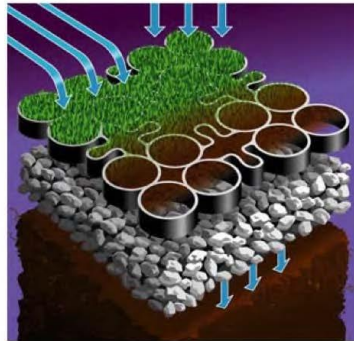


Light rail trolley system using existing CSX tracks

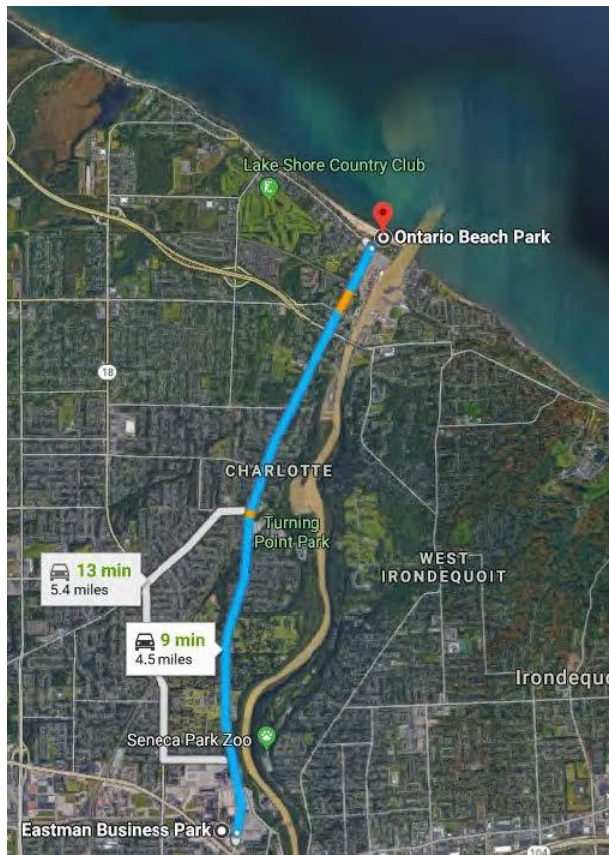


Multi-level parking garage on Lake Ave. on west side north of CSX tracks

There is also green garage style parking that can add some character while adding verticality.



Permeable (green) parking lot option



Lake Ave. shuttle bus from Eastman Business Park



Digital kiosks in key locations for wayfinding (rather than a static Welcome Center building)

Focus Area #2: Year-Round Activities/Underutilized Spaces

NOTE: Many of these ideas have been incorporated in the other focus area priorities.

Now – 5 yrs

- Ice skating rink
- Festive holiday lighting and light shows
- Dog park
- Safe access between Genesee River Trail/River St./Lighthouse
- Warming Sheds
- Outdoor games near restaurant
- Protected year-round farmer's market
- Disc golf/bocci ball/horseshoe pits
- Kayak and paddleboat rentals
- Aquarium/maritime museum/environmental lab/educational
- Splash park on the beach
- Historical geocaches
- Summer stock/highlight murals at Leadership Academy
- Develop old-fashioned Game Day / Oktoberfest
- Increase support for WinterFest
- Marquis/digital signage
- Fish-cleaning and weighing station in Port/Marina area
- Local artist competition – Robach Center
- Themed art contests that identify with waterfront; display entries for public viewing
- Use bowl at west end of beach for children's theater/puppet shows
- Bus stop at gateway arch at Lake/Stutson
- Place historical markers
- Evaluate and amend zoning
- Improve lighting
- Lots of greenspace

Within 10 years

- Sports complex
- Use railroad tracks to move people – trolley, etc.
- Three-season skate park
- Encourage bed and breakfast
- Connect trails on both sides of river
- Micro-brewery/coffee shops
- Boutique hotel with water park

Within 20 years

- Performing arts center – canopy building below park maintenance building



Indoor green spaces_INC Architecture & Design

Focus Area #3: Port/Marina/Harbor

- New terraced, mixed-use building with condos and commercial spaces, preserved view sheds and canopy parking (on Parcel 1, sloping eastward from Lake Ave. on west side of marina)
- New terraced, mixed-use building on Parcel 2 with condos and retail spaces on upper levels and County Parks maintenance equipment on lower level
- New building housing an aquarium, maritime museum with Lake Ontario history, and Great Lakes educational/research science center
- New attraction: Waterfront ferris wheel for sightseeing (not amusement park ride)
- Maintain current public boat launch
- Enhanced amenities for boaters and fishermen (i.e. boat fueling and waste dumping station; fish weighing and cleaning station)
- New pedestrian-only ferry service to Lake Ontario ports
- Harbortown dock (floating dock) and table area for small boats and canoes
- Rental station for chairs, bikes, kayaks, canoes, carts, umbrellas
- More Great Lakes cruise promotions (to our Port)
- Boatel/Botel – docked cruise ship to accommodate overnight guests
- Cycle paths and bike-friendly signage
- Water taxi
- Improved lighting – accent trees, not bright lights
- Small-business incubator in Links Building
- Mid-sized pedestrian-only ferry service to Lake Ontario & St. Lawrence Seaway ports



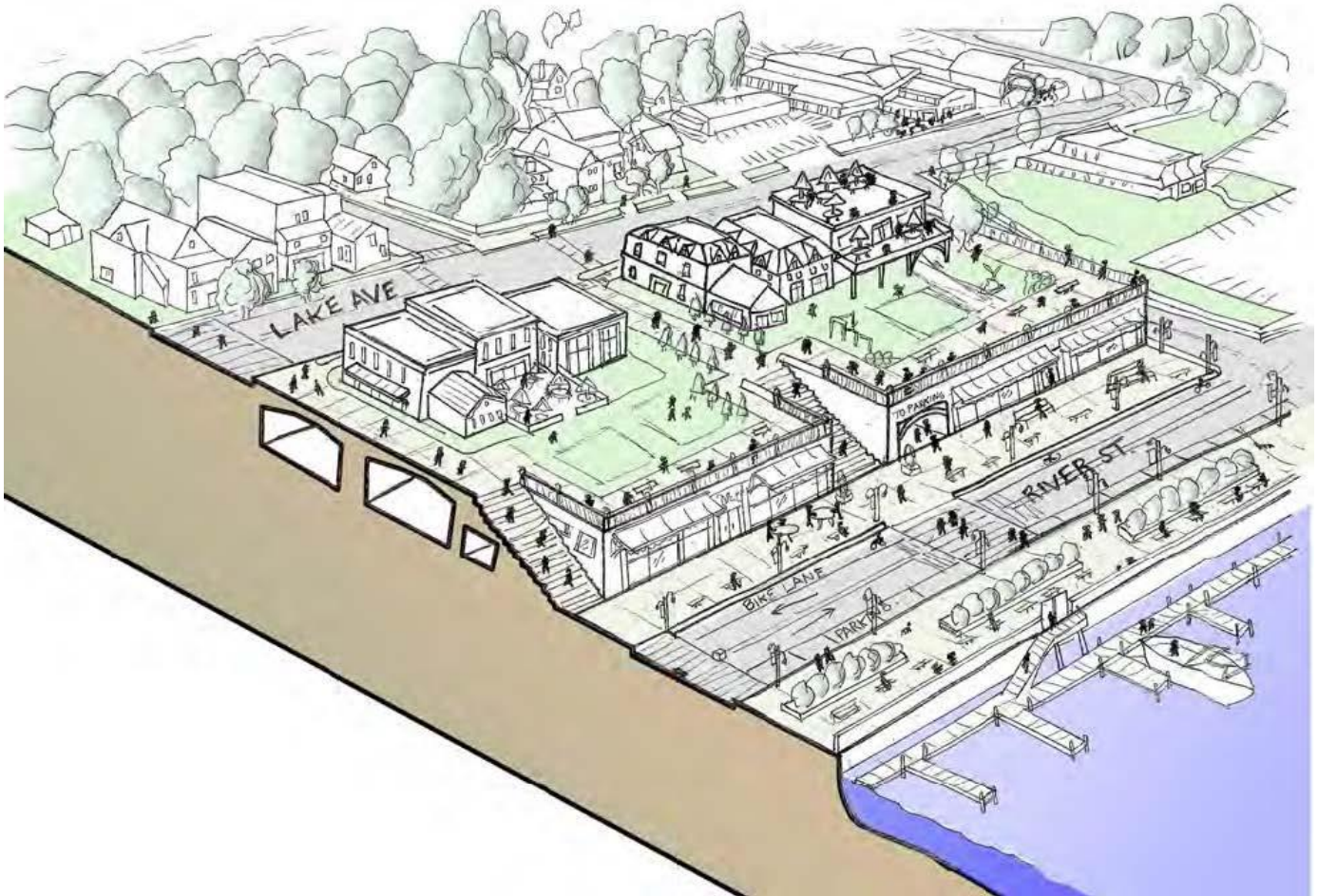
Port parking lot_existing view facing northeast



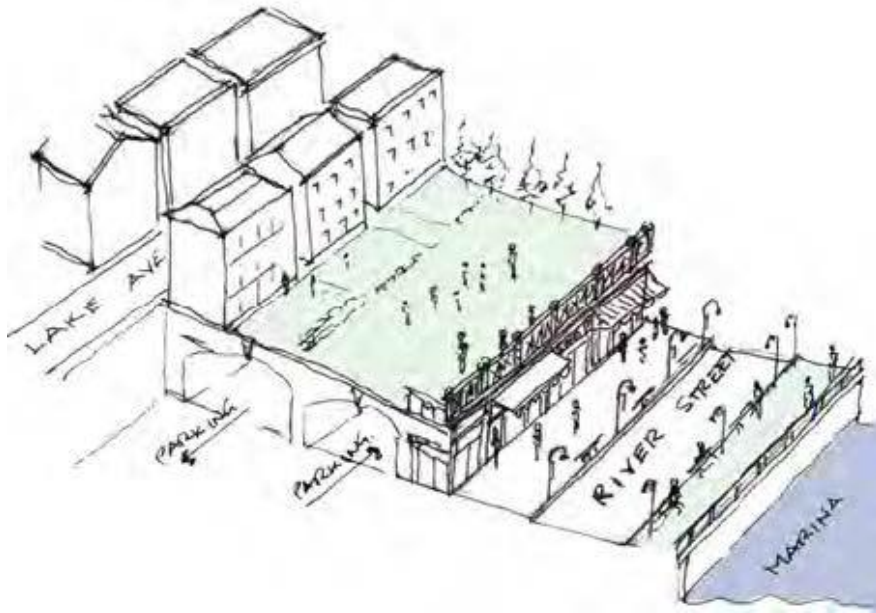
Link Bldg./Greenhouse_existing view



Port Terminal Building & Marina_existing view facing south



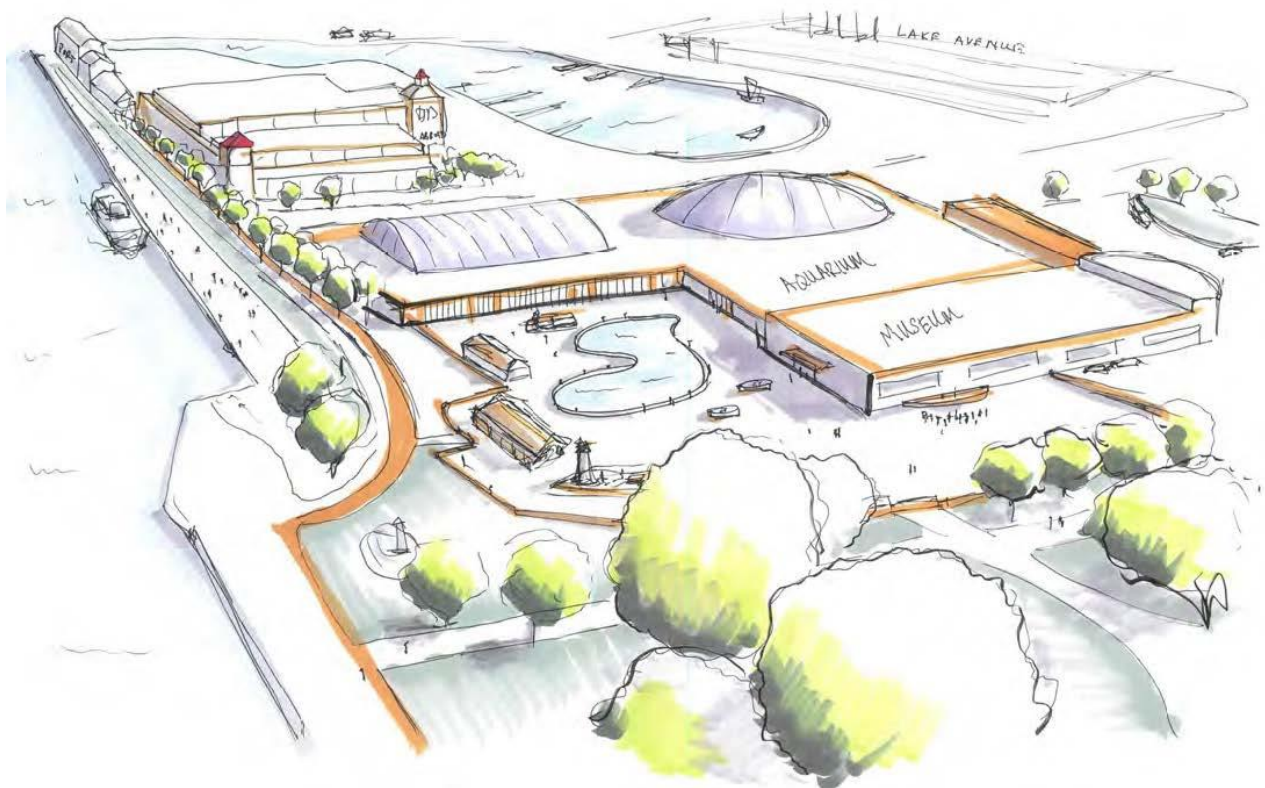
Terraced mixed-use w/ canopy parking_Lake Ave./Portside Dr./River St./Corrigan



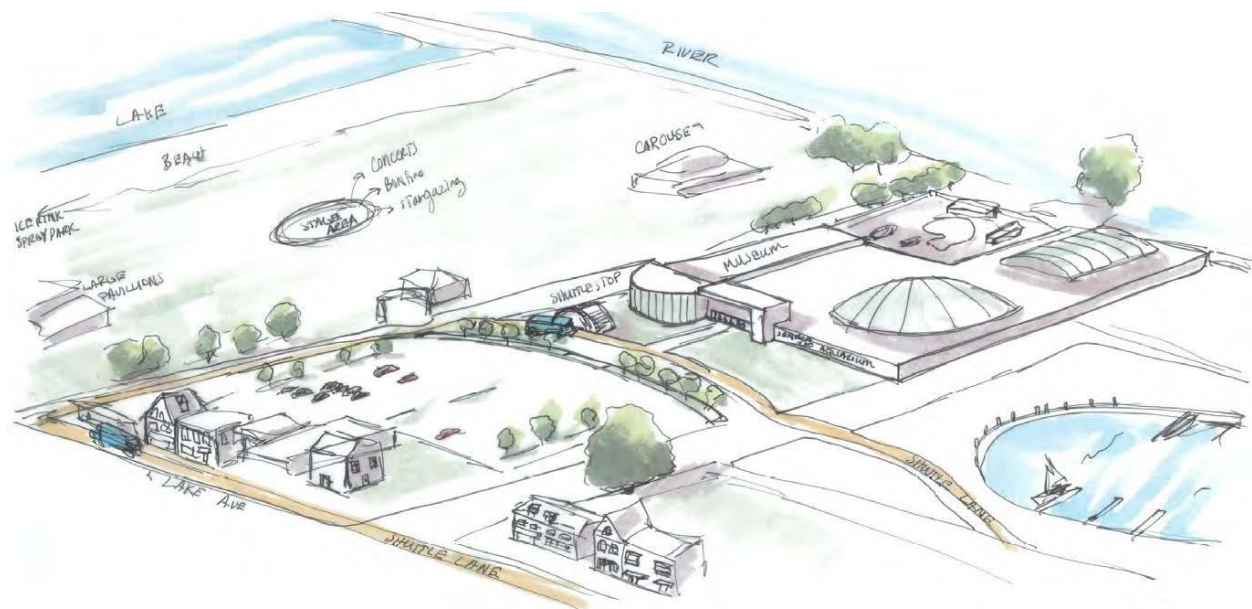
Terraced mixed-use w/ canopy parking_Lake Ave./Portside Dr./River St./Corrigan



North River St. – Parcel 1 & 2



Aquarium, Maritime Museum & Education/Research Center – view from north facing south



Aquarium, Maritime Museum & Education/Research Center – view from southwest facing northeast



Monterey Bay Aquarium



Monterey Bay Maritime & History Museum



Decking and walkways overlooking river

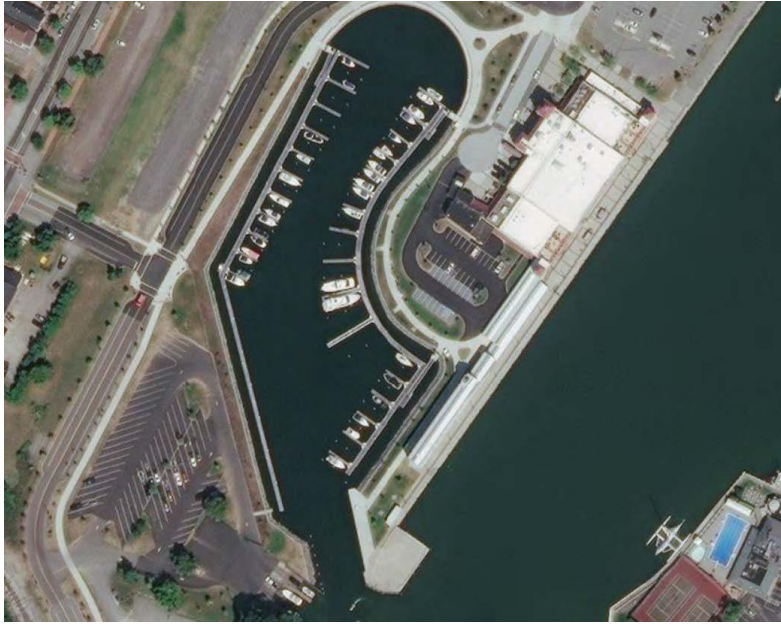


Waterfront condos/multi-use building



Waterfront town homes





Port of Rochester Marina and public boat launch



Boat fueling station



Fish cleaning station



Fish cleaning station



Mid-sized pedestrian-only ferry for lake travel



Boatel for overnight guests



Waterfront ferris wheel overlooking harbor (for sightseeing)

Focus Area #4: Ontario Beach Park

- New attraction: Skating rink – east side of Robach Community Center; ice skating in winter and roller skating in summer; w/ vendor concessions open all year; summer use could also be landscaped gardens for wedding photos and/or meditation walk
- New attraction: “North Star” observatory for stargazing – west side of Robach Center (but keep pickle ball courts)
- Winterized pavilions with fireplaces, kitchens and bathrooms (rental fees generate revenue)
- Winterized bathrooms throughout park
- New attraction: Spray park near beach
- New attraction: Waterfront ferris wheel for sightseeing (not amusement park ride)
- Health/fitness/nature theme throughout park – mile markers, exercise stations w/ equipment
- Signage with branding for wayfinding, to identify trees, etc.
- Transportation system throughout park – golf cart trolleys, etc.
- Expand main gazebo space for bigger and more frequent events; add programming to attract a variety of audiences and age groups
- Better drainage to prevent ponding
- More picnic tables and updated grills
- Open concession stands
- Gazebo lighting
- Upgrade playground equipment to ADA specs (w/ wheelchair swing)
- Handicapped access walkway through sand from boardwalk to lake edge
- Curling court in winter; maintain existing bocce courts in summer
- Improve water quality at NE corner near pier
- Maintain passive recreation environment
- Open vista of lake from Lake Avenue
- Replace asphalt paths with prettier, environmentally sensitive materials
- Add park entry appeal and wayfinding signage throughout park
- Widen boardwalk 3-4 ft. to light poles and add more benches
- Solar lighting; make it adjustable for night sky viewing along beach
- Winterize carousel building for year-round use
- Community bonfires on the beach during major annual events (i.e. Polar Plunge, River Romance)
- Arts and crafts vendor events and/or international marketplace at Robach Center
- Add art sculptures



Community bon fires (on the beach)



“North Star” observatory for stargazing



Spray park near beach



Waterfront ferris wheel for sightseeing



Englarged gazebo architecture



Enclosed, winterized pavilions



Themed playground equipment



Enclosed winter pavilion and warming hut



Waterfront ice skating

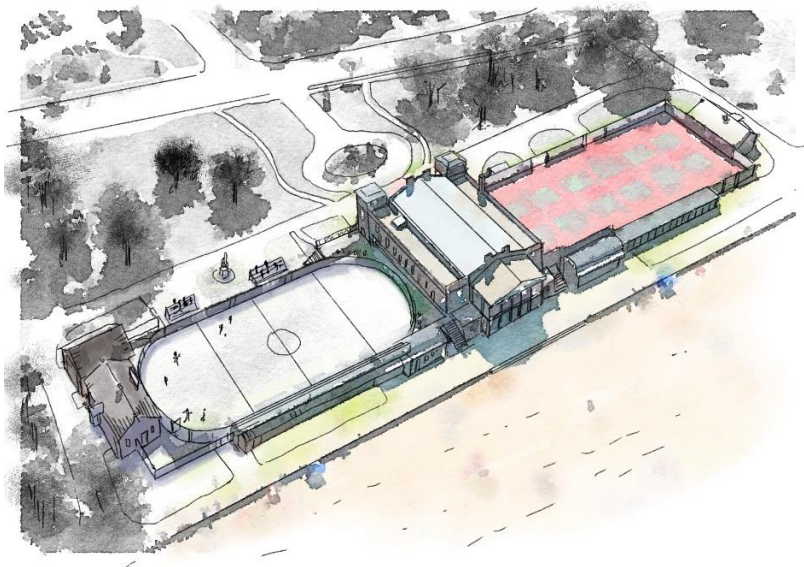


Robach Community Center year-round use

Wintertime ice skating & summertime roller skating or gardens & marketplace_east side enclosure

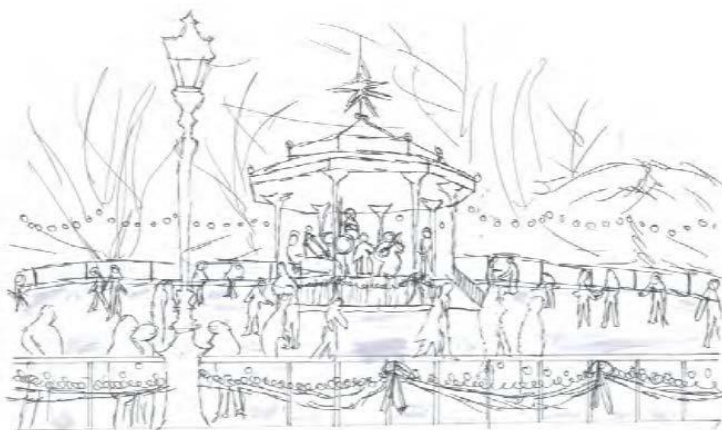
“North Star” observatory for stargazing & summertime pickleball courts_west side enclosure

Year-round open concession stands w/ food truck options

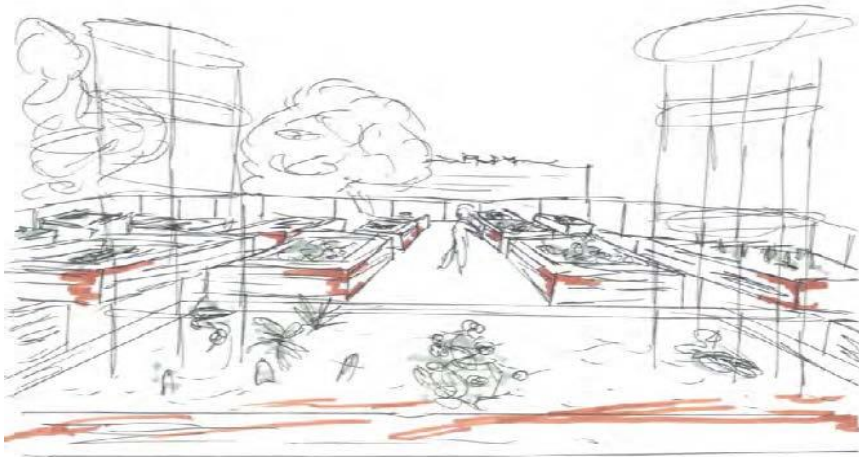
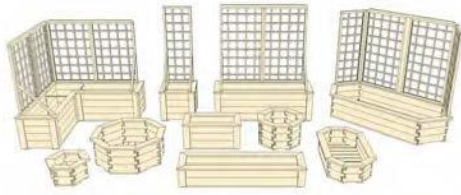




Create a winter wonderland throughout Ontario Beach Park!



Winter ice skating



Summer gardens with planter boxes



Waterfront ferris wheel for sightseeing (not amusement ride)

Focus Area #5: North River Street

- Repurpose CSX tracks as light rail/trolley system to/from Kodak Park and Russell Station
- “Rails to Trails” pathway of CSX track bed to Braddock Bay
- Pedestrian bridge over CSX tracks; safe pedestrian access to Lighthouse
- Repurpose old RR station (City-owned) as major transportation hub - trolley and shuttle bus drop-off; rental station for boats, kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, golf carts, bikes; digital wayfinding kiosk and coffee/snack shop
- Mixed-use building with townhomes/condos; boutique hotel with subsurface parking (former Tapecon property)
- Genesee Riverway Trail – full connection of pedestrian/bike path
- New street from River St. to Lake Ave. north of Stutson St. and South of Latta Rd.
- Pockets of parking behind Hose 22



North River Street – existing view from river



Repurpose old RR station building into Transportation terminus for trolley and shuttle bus; rentals for boats, kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, golf carts and bikes; plus coffee/snack shop



Water sports rentals



Pedestrian bridge over CSX tracks to access lighthouse terrace from River St.



Pedestrian bridge



Riverfront street scene

Focus Area #6: Lake Avenue Corridor

- Reduce to two vehicle lanes at Pattonwood to slow traffic down; add bike lanes and wider pedestrian walkways and covered shelters
- Gateway(s) for transition to “Main Street” atmosphere
- Banners and festive night lighting all down the corridor
- Conduct a study on closing off end of Lake Ave. at Corrigan St. to Beach Ave. and Estes St. and re-route vehicle traffic so it’s pedestrian-only
- Landscaping/planting zones
- Interpretive signage
- Awnings on buildings/not back-lit
- Building facades that are attractive, clean and inviting
- Taller buildings on west side; low buildings on east side
- Boutique hotel on west side with rooftop views
- Indoor water park on west side
- Mixed-use structures
- Install electronic welcome/wayfinding kiosks (instead of a Welcome Center building)
- Brand the corridor/create theme
- Tree-lined decorative sidewalks/seating
- Bicycle racks and planters
- Public art along thoroughfare
- Ensure “site lines” and “Main Street” feel
- Open vista of Lake Ontario from Lake Ave. over CSX bridge
- Sports Complex on west side



One example of how gateway(s) transition space from one atmosphere to another



Another example of how a gateway can transition from one space to another



Lake Ave. corridor traffic flow and esthetic



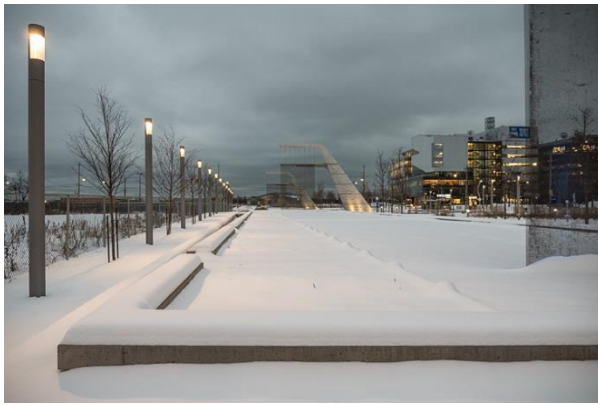
L-shaped hotel complex on west side of Lake Ave.



Example of Boutique Hotel with rooftop views



Waterfront Arbor w/ Bench



Lighting option



Waterfront sports and entertainment complex



Easy festive mood lighting

Priority Planning for Development - Public vs. Private Domain

Initial feedback gathered from the preliminary presentation to the community on September 10, 2018 suggests that the priorities should be focused on ideas involving land in the public versus private domain. The rationale is that government agencies can assist in developing ideas that involve municipally owned properties, whereas private development is farther out of reach.

Ideas can be phased in as resources and funding are available. Many ideas can be incorporated quickly into the neighborhood landscape; others will take many years of planning.

Public Domain Priorities

1. Lake Avenue corridor: Gateway/Main Street atmosphere; transportation changes and festive lighting (Note: Need a study done on closing off the end of Lake Ave. at Corrigan St. and Beach Ave. to Estes St. and re-routing vehicle traffic away from that area.)
2. Revise Marina District Zoning Code to lower building heights
3. Mixed-use terraced canopy building on Parcel 1 (Lake Ave./Portside Dr./Corrigan St.)
4. Repurpose CSX tracks as light rail/trolley system and/or new access road in/out of Charlotte.
5. New attraction: Waterfront ferris wheel at Ontario Beach Park (private operator)
6. New attractions: Ice skating rink (winter) and roller skating (summer) on east side of Robach Community Center.
7. New attraction: Observatory for stargazing in Robach Community Center.
8. Winterized pavilions with bathrooms and fireplaces at Ontario Beach Park (Note: Beachfront and Sandpiper pavilions each hold 200 people).
9. Spray park and playground at Ontario Beach Park
10. Full connection of the Genesee Riverway Trail
11. Pedestrian Bridge over CSX tracks on N. River St.
12. Repurpose RR terminal building on N. River St. as major transportation hub; terminus for shuttle service, rentals of kayaks, canoes, trikes, segways, etc.
13. Cruise ship accommodations at Port of Rochester building
14. Electronic kiosks

15. Mixed-use building on Parcel 2 (southeast corner Lake Ave./Portside Dr.) with park maintenance equipment on lower level; townhouses and commercial spaces on upper levels
16. Maintain current public boat launch; add fuel and fish-cleaning and weighing stations
17. New aquarium/maritime museum/education center at the Port
18. New pedestrian ferry service to Lake Ontario ports
19. Enhanced RTS service: add stops/change existing stops

Private Domain Priorities

1. Boutique hotel/condos on east and west sides of Lake Ave.
2. Indoor water park on west side of Lake Ave.
3. Parking garage on west side of Lake Ave.; pockets of parking throughout neighborhood
4. Mixed-use residential and commercial building on N. River St. at Latta Rd. with sub-surface parking
5. Water taxi and boat tours
6. Luxury boatel
7. Cruise ships
8. Microbrewery
9. Vendors for new attractions
10. Vendors for land and water transportation options

Next Steps

1. Submit revised Vision Plan to City Planners for inclusion in Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan and next RFP for Port of Rochester development of Parcel 1
2. Publish final Vision Plan through press release
3. Form AdHoc committees to investigate feasibility of priority ideas

Contact Information

For questions, comments or more information, please contact:

Charlotte Community Association

P.O. Box 12768 Charlotte Station

Rochester, NY 14612

Phone: 585-865-6101

Email: infocharlottecca@gmail.com



Charlotte Community Association

"A Community That Cares"