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Navy Pier Unveils Design for Redevelopment Plan Transforming “People’s Pier” Into Spectacular World-Class Destination

Leading international urban design team re-imagines more contemporary and engaging Pier to elevate visitor experience, draw new audiences

CHICAGO – Navy Pier Inc. today unveiled details of the design for redevelopment of a bolder, greener, more contemporary Pier that will transform the Midwest’s most popular attraction into a spectacular world-class destination.

As it approaches its 100th anniversary in 2016, Navy Pier is set to embark on a journey that culminates in its reimagining as an iconic attraction that will “re-connect Chicago to the Lake, to culture and to spectacle.” Work on the Pier’s *Centennial Vision* redevelopment is scheduled to begin this fall.

Redevelopment of the Pier is part of a major public-private infrastructure program to boost Chicago’s tourism and convention and trade show business, stimulate economic growth and job creation and enhance the quality of life for residents of the region. The program, *Elevate Chicago* was announced Thursday by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA).

The redevelopment builds on the strengths of the Pier—its singular location along the edge of Lake Michigan and downtown Chicago, its size and scale and its programmatic richness. It seeks to enhance the experience for current visitors while drawing new audiences with evening and year-round entertainment and attractions. Other core objectives are to improve the quality of the Pier’s public realm, better connect with the city and local neighborhoods, create more activity further east on the Pier, promote environmental sustainability and ensure financial sustainability.

“We are taking what is good and reshaping it into something great,” said Marilyn Gardner, president and CEO of Navy Pier Inc. “Navy Pier is a jewel, but one we must protect by reimagining it from time to time to ensure it remains a vital public space and commercial success for years to come. We have a unique opportunity to create one of the world’s signature attractions, one like Millennium Park where sophisticated design and popular appeal are intertwined.”

She said the redevelopment captures the original spirit and intent of what Daniel Burnham envisioned as “the People’s Pier” in his 1909 “Master Plan of Chicago.” What originally was called Municipal Pier No. 2 opened in 1916, combining the business of shipping with the pleasure of public entertainment.

Phase I of the redevelopment, budgeted by Navy Pier Inc. (NPI) at \$115 million with additional funding from private sources, is scheduled for completion by the 2015 summer season. A second phase would follow, subject to availability of private, commercial, corporate and philanthropic funding. Phase I funding also will be supplemented with private investment by the Chicago Children’s Museum and others.

It’s estimated that first phase of redevelopment will inject \$108 million annually into the local economy and create 1,060 permanent jobs (full-time equivalents). Construction spending is expected to generate 1,659 temporary jobs.

The redesign of the Pier’s public spaces, or *Pierscape*, is the product of collaboration between the Navy Pier Inc. board and staff, a design team led by James Corner Field Operations (JCFO), a New York-based landscape architecture and urban design firm, and the City of Chicago. The Chicago office of the global architecture firm Gensler has worked on redesigning interior spaces, and served as executive architect, coordinating both exterior and interior design. Gensler played a key role, too, in creation of the *Centennial Vision*.

The JCFO team, including specialists in diverse design fields ranging from marine engineering to lighting to fountain design, was selected in March 2012 after an international design competition in which 52 design teams submitted qualifications. JCFO, among many other noted achievements, designed New York’s celebrated High Line – a public park built on an historic elevated freight line above the streets of Manhattan’s West Side.

“The design of Navy Pier’s public spaces presents a wonderful and unique opportunity to reconnect Chicago to the Lake, to culture and to spectacle,” Corner said. “The Centennial Vision sets the stage for reimagining the Pier in a way that enriches the experiences of its diverse constituency and transforms it into a newly sustainable, authentic and iconic celebration of Chicago – a truly great public space.”

Corner’s premise is that transforming the Pier’s public realm requires “a strong landscape that is clear and rigorous in organization, simple and bold in its design ideas, and rich and evocative in its detailing.” He achieves this goal by emphasizing South Dock as a new “green spine” for the Pier. Straightening and lengthening this primary pedestrian promenade allows for a new physical connection between the lake and city.

A series of programmatically diverse, thematic rooms are anchored by this spine and provide a strategic organizational framework for the Pier. Seasonal and colorful plantings, engaging water features, contemporary architecture, and social site furniture animate the Pier and provide a new distinctive and engaging character in these areas:

- **The City / Arrival Room at Gateway Park** gives visitors their first impression of the Pier and establishes a strong pedestrian connection to the city. The redesign will feature a landscaped, 17-acre lakefront park with 75-foot diameter fountain, a large-form interactive water and light feature. The fountain's jets will flutter organically in sequences suggesting rolling waves, undulating flocks of birds or schooling fish. The fountain will provide a play area for children in the summer and an ice skating rink in the winter. A new landscaped promenade will lead visitors from the Gateway Park onto South Dock. Reconfigured roads will reduce the amount of vehicular traffic within the area.
- **The Family Room at Crystal Garden** will become an otherworldly space defined by hanging gardens that create an extraordinary environment for a new children's play area and the Pier's historic carousel.
- **The Fun Room at Pier Park**, adjacent to Crystal Garden, recasts the Pier's historic amusements as newly contemporary and seamlessly integrated into a sculptural landscape with lush plantings, an undulating wooden surface, gently sloping lawn and new overlooks. A new "Wave Wall" and grand stair connect South Dock and Pier Park, and create a new social space in the heart of the Pier. Aligned with a refurbished Ferris wheel, the stair will transform Pier Park into a dramatic destination with spectacular views of the Chicago skyline.
- **The Garden Room at South Dock, Pocket Parks and Festival Hall** will feature a variety of ornamental grasses, colorful perennials and native plantings, shade trees, and outdoor seating. Adjacent restaurants and bars, new kiosks for food and boat ticketing will define new areas that provide social and relaxed spaces for soaking up the South Dock experience.
- **The Lake Room at the East End Park** rewards those who walk the length of the Pier with a dramatic destination point. The overlook and a lake cloud create a theatrical setting with views of the horizon set within a context of seasonal plantings, water, light, mist and wind.

In addition to the creation of a new Pierscape, the redevelopment will include major interior renovations. What is now known as the **South Arcade**, the interior space adjacent to South Dock, will be transformed into a Chicago-themed specialty food and restaurant marketplace drawing from the city's rich culinary traditions. The **Family Pavilion** will be refreshed and opened up, extending the marketplace feel of the redesigned South Arcade but with a greater focus on retail. There, too, the focus will be on showcasing all things Chicago. The upper level of the Pavilion will be home to the expanded **Chicago Children's Museum**, expected to open in 2016.

The Pier will seek commercial investment for a new entertainment district on the **East End** featuring restaurants and entertainment venues drawing adult, year-round visitors.

Navy Pier Inc. Chairperson Sarah Garvey said the greener, bolder, more contemporary Pier not only will delight current visitors but also attract many more in years to come.

"Our visitor surveys show that the most popular activity is simply 'strolling the Pier,' and that will be an even more engaging, soul-stirring experience with the *Pierscape* conjured up by the Corner team," said Garvey. "When you couple that with the redesign and reconfiguration of our interior spaces adding restaurants, entertainment and retail, the Pier truly will be transformed into a world-class urban attraction befitting a global city."

Throughout, the redesign puts a premium on environmentally sustainable practices in its use and management of water and energy, building materials and waste reduction. The project anticipates the achievement of SITES™ certification—a new rating system akin to LEED that aspires to transform land development and management practices for landscapes with or without buildings.

"The Navy Pier redevelopment project represents an exciting opportunity for the city of Chicago," said Alderman Brendan Reilly, 42nd Ward. "The Pier will benefit from major enhancements including long overdue aesthetic improvements, expanded open green space and more hospitality amenities that will help transform Navy Pier into a year-round destination. Most importantly, this plan will deliver a beautiful, greatly expanded Chicago Children's Museum – a new world-class facility that will help ensure the Pier remains the state's number-one tourism destination for many decades to come."

The first phase of the program starting includes Gateway Park fountain, plaza and promenade, South Dock, South Arcade, Family Pavilion renovation, Chicago Children's Museum expansion and the addition of dining and entertainment in the East End entertainment district. Detailed design and completion of Gateway Park, Crystal Garden, Pier Park and East End Park will come in later phases as funding becomes available.

For redesign images please visit the **Press Room** at www.navy Pier.com.