

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE ASIA
城市土地學會(亞洲)

**WATERFRONT REVITALISATION –
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**
從全球觀點探討水岸再生

INTRODUCTION

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit research and education organization dedicated to providing responsible leadership in the use of land. Founded in 1936, the institute now has more than 25,000 members in 65 countries, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service. Through the direction and support of its members, the Institute provides responsible leadership in the use of land.

ULI neither lobbies nor acts as an advocate for any single industry or cause. ULI examines land use issues, impartially reports findings, and convenes forums to find solutions to complex land use problems, collaborating with industry and stakeholder groups worldwide.



These articles were edited by Alison Cooke, a member of the Asian Council of ULI and a VP of First American Title Insurance Company; whereas all photographs were supplied by Geoffrey Booth, Managing Director, Asia & Latin American of ULI. The articles draw on material from ULI's seminal book on this topic, "Remaking the Urban Waterfront" by Gayle Berens et al. Copies of the book may be purchased online at www.uli.org, click on "bookstore".

For further information on the ULI in North Asia, please contact Pamela Ku at (852) 2231 9118 or coordinator@noasia.uli.org.

簡介

城市土地學會 (Urban Land Institute) 是非牟利研究及教育機構，致力於在土地使用方面作負責的領導者。學會成立於一九三六年，目前在六十五個國家擁有超過二萬五千名會員，全面涵蓋公、私營機構在土地使用和房地產發展的各個層面。學會在會員的帶領及支援下，在土地使用方面作負責的領導者。

城市土地學會並非壓力團體，也不是任何個別行業或議題的倡導者。學會致力研究土地使用問題，公正地匯報結果，並舉行論壇，與全球業界及相關利益團體合作，為複雜的土地使用問題尋找解決方案。

本文由郭愛麗編輯，郭女士為城市土地學會(亞洲)理事會成員及第一美國業權保險公司的副總裁。而插圖則由城市土地學會（亞洲及拉丁美洲）執行董事 Geoffrey Booth 提供。本篇之素材取自 Gayle Berens 等著作的 "Remaking the Urban Waterfront" 一書，此書可於網上訂購 – 登入 www.uli.org 後，請選取 "bookstore"。

如欲獲取更多有關城市土地學會（北亞洲）的資料，請致電 (852) 2231 9118 或發電郵 coordinator@noasia.uli.org 與古凡小姐聯絡。

Article One

The HK Harbour Debate in a Global Perspective

Much debate has been dedicated to Hong Kong's Harbour, its place within the community and the future role it should play both as a facilitator of commerce and an attraction to residents and tourists alike. Consensus is yet to be reached on how the public and private sector can work together to allow all viewpoints to be explored, a plan to be agreed upon and projects implemented using the strengths of various parties to achieve optimal outcomes.



Hong Kong Harbour

In this series of three articles, we will look at how similar issues have been addressed by other World Cities and draw learnings from their experiences. This first article will look at Hong Kong's issues in a global perspective, the second article will explore the mechanisms by which the public and private sector can work together to revitalize urban waterfronts and the third article will wrap up with a series of 10 principles for waterfront development.

As the majority of the world's great cities have waterfronts, similar debate has resonated in various places. The resurgence of waterfronts began more than 40 years ago, when waterfront areas became centers of intense redevelopment activity. In Boston and San Francisco, pioneers in the field transformed wharves into thriving commercial and recreational areas.

Historically, waterfronts have not been carefully or coherently planned. Founded to provide security, accessibility and a starting place from which to explore and settle, as economic activity increased, safe harbors evolved into fully functioning seaports which, in turn, stimulated growth in the surrounding region. Over time, these seaports became more sophisticated, adding docking, cargo-handling and storage facilities. Waterfronts eventually became the focal points of all activity in their regions and became central to the social and intellectual life of cities. Thus, each urban waterfront will have its own idiosyncratic history. Those who are interested in exploring development opportunities in a particular waterfront area must make a point of understanding that history, as it will influence the incentives for, and constraints on, future development.

The Urban Waterfront Today

Today, cities across the world are striving to achieve many of the same objectives for their waterfronts. Cities seek a waterfront that is a place of public enjoyment. They want a waterfront where there is ample visual and physical public access to both the water and the land. Cities also want a waterfront that serves more than one purpose: they want it to be a place to work and to live, as well as a place to play. In other words, they want a place that contributes to the quality of life in all of its aspects: economic, social, and cultural.

Factors contributing to the Resurgence of Waterfront development

Available Land

The movement of cargo-handling facilities and factories away from the waterfront has meant that the land, often centrally located, was available and ripe for development. Depressed prices for waterfront property also served as a stimulus for entrepreneurs looking for an opportunity, and for local government officials seeking to revitalize urban areas.

Cleaner Water and Land

The deindustrialization of the waterfront, coupled with increased environmental regulation in the 1970s and 1980s, led to a significant improvement in water quality, which in turn helped make waterfronts more attractive to developers and consumers. The reclamation of brownfields, many of which were transformed into parks or attractive residential or commercial developments, also increased the aesthetic appeal of waterfront areas.

The Historic Preservation Movement

The 1960s and 1970s marked the beginning of the historic preservation movement, which recognized the aesthetic qualities of previously ignored older buildings. Preservationists were among the first to recognize the beauty of abandoned waterfront areas, places with picturesque views of the water and a plethora of historically significant (or at least interesting-looking) buildings and waterside structures.

Citizen Activism and Leadership

Activism reflects a commitment to the city and to improving its quality of life. Input from citizen committees and citizen leaders has given many urban waterfront developments their legitimacy and spurred the essential cooperation and financial involvement of local governments.

Urban Revitalization

The rebirth of cities in the 1980s and 1990s, after decades of neglect and decay, is one of the great stories of our time and a central factor in the redevelopment of urban waterfronts. Waterfront development frequently followed or accompanied the building of new residential areas (like Battery Park, in New York City and Darling Harbour in Sydney) adjacent to waterfronts. Residential developments also provided a ready consumer base for retailers, restaurants, and upscale bars that opened in revitalized waterfronts.

The Return of Certain Water Uses

Downtown urban waterfronts may no longer be centers for commercial shipping, but the return of ferries and other kinds of water transportation has played an important role in waterfront redevelopment by attracting users and providing transportation to waterfront attractions not easily reached by other means.

CASE STUDY: INTEGRATING DIVERSE WATERFRONT USES- THE PORTLAND, MAINE, EXPERIENCE

Balancing the range of critical interests in the waterfront, the public interest, the interests of those who live, work, play or own property there, the economic interests of the surrounding community and region, is an art. The master-planning process for the Eastern Waterfront Project, in Portland, Maine, is an example of this art in practice.

Protecting its working waterfront is important to Portland, a city with a strong identity as a fishing community. One of the biggest lessons of Portland's experience may be that success is defined not by whether individual zoning or development proposals are approved or denied, but by whether, after a period of years, a community can create an overall vision of which uses shall be allowed where.



Portland understood that there can be competition not only between water-dependent and non-water-dependent activities, but also among water-dependent uses, and that working waterfront uses, in particular, can easily be displaced in both competitions. They therefore reserved an extensive zone exclusively for working waterfront uses, the Waterfront Port Development Zone (WPDZ), as well as a more flexible zone, at the heart of the city's waterfront and abutting the historic downtown, the Waterfront Central Zone (WCZ). The WCZ sets the boundary between

waterfront zoning and the upland areas covered by a variety of business districts.

Within the WCZ, uses are assigned priority: top priority is given to water-dependent uses, and second priority to marine and marine-related support uses. Other specified uses are allowed to the extent that they do not interfere with, and are compatible with, the high-priority uses. Permitted uses include seafood loading and processing, shipbuilding and repair, marine product distribution, and cargo handling, among others. Uses such as hotels, residences, and convention facilities are prohibited. Other non-water-dependent uses, such as restaurants and offices, are allowed under various conditions intended to ensure a harmonious relationship with the desired water-dependent uses.

Zoning in the core WCZ and WPDZ districts prohibits any uses that would have an adverse impact on future marine development opportunities, reflecting the value that the community places on preserving the option of using the waterfront for port activity in the future. Interestingly, Portland has found that the working waterfront has a synergistic value in attracting other waterfront uses. Future plans include increased public access to the waterfront, increased park development and a waterfront promenade trail.

The entire master-planning process was characterized by vigorous public debate with numerous scheduled opportunities for public comment, committee meetings, hearings and internet exchanges throughout the process. Various interest groups included local residents, property owners and hiking enthusiasts.

Article Two

Implementing Urban Waterfront Development

Waterfront revitalization projects are long-term affairs. Typically featuring a range of different uses, declining industries, years of underinvestment in infrastructure, environmental pollution issues and lack of sorely-needed public access, such complex revitalization and repositioning projects face an inevitably difficult startup process, and a long-term implementation phase. Good implementation practice requires waterfront redevelopment agencies to manage three areas: politics, finance and urban design.

Politics

Starting an urban waterfront development project takes money, (available) land, political power, and a compelling vision of the future. Patience is also required: the startup period alone may last a decade, and the redevelopment of any significant portion of a waterfront may take another 10-15 years. Partnership with the private sector is also required given broad concerns about the fiscal and political capacity of governments to carry out complex, long-term development projects.

The principal objectives during the startup phase are to establish an implementation agency and obtain regulatory approval for a workable plan. To achieve these goals, the government will have to go into the consensus-building business. Critical to this effort is the creation of a broad-based development coalition that includes the major public sector groups involved, private-sector umbrella organizations, and citizens' groups. It is equally important for the government to recognize that as personalities, economic and property market cycles change over time it is essential for a waterfront agency to obtain, early in the startup process, the powers and independence that will be needed for long-term implementation. It is rare for the required powers to be added later in an agency's mandate.

There are several possible methods to separate a long-term, revenue-producing redevelopment project from politics:

■ *Waterfront Development Councils*

A waterfront development committee or council is often the simplest organization to set up and may be useful for debating initial plans. However, councils like London's Docklands Joint Committee and Toronto's Waterfront Regeneration Trust had little success in redeveloping complicated urban waterfronts where multiple stakeholders jealously guarded ownership and control of their waterfront. A council may be able to coordinate some planning or infrastructure projects, but urban redevelopment is difficult without land ownership and access to a portion of the resulting revenues.

■ *Special private, for-profit development corporations*

Special private development corporations are generally appropriate if the waterfront project is small, or if the municipality has little development expertise. The authority often develops a plan and then issues a request for proposals for a private corporation to develop it in one or two phases.

■ *Public/private development ventures*

Such ventures tend to succeed for larger waterfront projects with multiple sites where the local development industry has little capacity and the public sector has little experience in redevelopment by using a master developer (for example, Olympia & York, at London's Canary Wharf). However, the developer may proceed at a different pace to the Government's wishes.

The structures of public/private partnerships vary as widely as the projects, from arrangements in which the public sector is confined to donating land and infrastructure to real estate joint ventures.

■ *Quasi-public development corporations*

A quasi-public development corporation is a proven vehicle for the implementation of waterfront redevelopment projects. Because such an agency will need active, broad-based support to sustain its coalition over the years, it is important for the sponsoring government to ensure at the outset that the development corporation has sufficient political insulation via a broad-based non-partisan board. The authority will need a broadly inclusive vision of the objectives for waterfront planning, especially during the startup period. This vision can be generated by a large planning committee that reports to a powerful and well-connected board.

Because consensus within the various stakeholders will be strongest at the beginning, the startup period is the sponsoring government's best chance to secure the authority's independence, freedom of action, and financing structure. The critical objectives are (1) ownership / control of the land, (2) a powerful and independent board of directors, (3) a streamlined development approval process, (4) access to startup capital, and (5) freedom from restrictive government personnel and budget policies.

The most effective agencies started with an active board and a small staff led by an entrepreneurial chief executive. They sometimes raided key staff from the local government, a tactic that effectively co-opted some early opposition from technical agencies like transportation and planning departments. It helps if the agency's managers have both entrepreneurial and consensus-building skills. Strong knowledge of local values and processes are an asset.

✂ *Financial Strategy* ✂

It often takes a long time to find the startup capital for waterfront redevelopment. Large, early expenditures are required for land assembly, site clearance, environmental remediation and new infrastructure. These costs make most projects unattractive to the private sector, since it may be years before land is ready for redevelopment.

In New York, the Battery Park City Authority issued long-term bonds to finance its infrastructure program, matching long-term capital requirements with long-term financing. This approach allows an agency to reduce its cash demands on its sponsoring government and build high-quality infrastructure. In places such as Boston, New York, London, and Toronto, private investment started late, built slowly, and cycled with the local property market. Major deals were not made until the waterfront agencies had demonstrated their credibility through site improvements, small developments, and other changes to the image of the waterfront. The projects also had to wait for a positive point in the real estate market cycle or risk going bankrupt, as Canary Wharf did (see feature box).



Slow progress by London's Docklands joint Committee caused the Thatcher government to designate these lands as an enterprise zone, attracting Olympia & York's proposals for the Canary Wharf office node.

CANARY WHARF'S BANKRUPTCY AND RECOVERY

Canary Wharf, which had over 14 million square feet (1.3 million square meters) completed or in construction in 2004, is now the central business district of the London Docklands and the third office node of Greater London. As a result of the 1992 bankruptcy of Olympia & York, the world's largest office developer, the project was politically controversial and widely regarded as a planning disaster. Canary Wharf initially failed as a result of six factors: a recession in the London property market, competition from the city of London, poor transportation links, few British tenants, complicated finances, and developer overconfidence.

By 1995, improved performance in many of these factors had allowed the project to emerge from bankruptcy and to become an important element in London's office market. Its previous developer, Paul Reichmann, assembled a syndicate of investors to buy the project back, then took the company public in 1999, after leasing the vacant space. Canary Wharf Limited then leased all the remaining building sites and got them into construction by 2002, completing one of the most remarkable real estate turnarounds in modern history.

✧ Urban Design and Planning for Implementation ✧

Urban design for waterfront redevelopment should facilitate implementation over several decades. A successful long-term implementation plan has the following characteristics: small development increments; tight phasing; simple infrastructure (that can be phased); the adaptive use of existing infrastructure and buildings; and continuous public access to the water's edge. This was clearly demonstrated by the Battery Park City development plan (see text box).

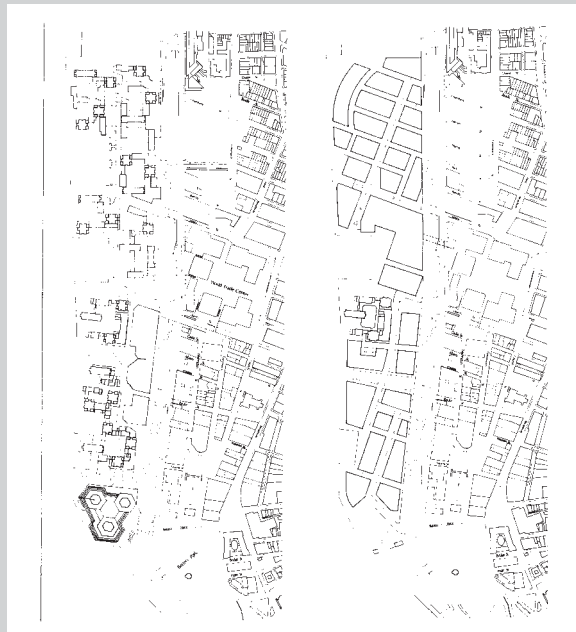
BATTERY PARK CITY: URBAN DESIGN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Poor planning and urban design can delay a waterfront redevelopment project. For example, rigid master plans that require large and early infrastructure investments can make implementation difficult. A comparison of the 1969 and 1979 plans for Battery Park City (see the accompanying figure) illustrates this.

Each plan called for 14,000 units of housing and 6 million square feet (557,420 square meters) of office space. The 1969 plan is a megastructure that looks a bit like a spaceship moored to the Manhattan waterfront. A seven-story circulation spine, over one mile (1.6 kilometers) long, needed to be built before huge pods of development were plugged into the top. The BPCA could not afford to build the spine, and no developer wanted to start construction without infrastructure. Moreover, the city government hated the plan because it blocked the street views of the water. Nothing was built for a decade.

In contrast, the 1979 plan was based on a limited extension of the Manhattan grid to create streets, blocks, and parks. This plan permitted smaller buildings and more development increments: 36 blocks, rather than seven pods. In addition to yielding a finer-grained urban fabric, an attribute that is now appreciated, the smaller sites allowed the BPCA to involve many types of developers rather than the few enormous firms capable of building a pod.

Streets, blocks, and parks are cheaper to build and maintain than a spine, and are easier to implement through traditional building regulations. The open web of the grid plan also allowed many waterfront views, and permitted the project to be integrated into the existing city, which reduced local political tensions.



The best long-term results appear to come from a systematic approach to facilitating good design, rather than from the benevolent dictatorship of an in-house architect.

Building high-quality public spaces is an opportunity for joint gains for most waterfront redevelopment agencies and their developers. In several cities, waterfront parks have created high-profile public benefits that built political capital. First-rate streets, sidewalks, and parks can improve the value of adjacent parcels by increasing the quality of local amenities and signaling that the agency is serious about creating a high-quality environment.

Because a single design cannot anticipate every political and economic change that lies ahead during a waterfront redevelopment spanning several decades, planning for these projects creates conflicts between agencies, who want to preserve the flexibility to respond to changing conditions, and the local government, which wants upfront guarantees of public benefits. One way to accommodate both objectives is through an incremental urban design approach, which includes general guidelines for building sites and focuses on the quality of public space. Thus, within the overall envelope approved in the master plan, the agency can reallocate uses; at the same time, the local government gains some certainty about the quality and extent of the public realm.

Large-scale urban waterfront revitalization requires substantial startup funding from the public sector and, by conventional measures, rarely generates a positive return on investment to the government. A government should not expect startup costs for waterfront redevelopment to be privately funded, and must be prepared to commit its own tax revenue, grant income or borrowing power to the project.

The value of public access is demonstrated by the popular pressure to preserve it. Good waterfront public spaces are relatively inexpensive compared to other forms of redevelopment and, since they are open to all, provide a democratic benefit.

Finally, redeveloping a decaying and abandoned waterfront can be a powerful symbol of the rejuvenation of a city. It may be possible to assign a monetary value to financial subsidies, infrastructure, and design amenities made of bricks and mortar, but how does one assign a value to the social benefits of waterfront redevelopment; the views from a waterfront park, or to a peaceful stroll along an esplanade?

Article Three

10 Principles for Waterfront Development

Urban waterfronts are unrivaled in their potential for providing a dramatic experience. Imagine the Sydney Opera House, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao or The London Eye not juxtaposed against each city's body of water.

To take advantage of the opportunities afforded at the water's urban edge and to succeed in new development there, the following 10 principles should be considered:

1. Transformation of the urban waterfront is a recurring event in the life of a city, and tends to be predicated by major economic or cultural shifts.

Boston, USA clearly demonstrates this. Historically Boston has accepted major changes along its waterfront. The Quincy Market "urban renewal" project dates back to the 1820s, when a town dock was filled to create the land on which the first market buildings were built. In the late 1800s the reclamation of the 600 acre Back Bay produced one of America's most distinctive residential districts and of course, the "Boston Dig" has been the latest mega-project that Bostonians have lived through.

Boston is again redesigning one of its waterfronts. The 700 acre area now known as the Seaport District, created a century ago through a massive landfill is now being redesigned to balance the survival of the seaport economy and the preservation of a harmonious port-city relationship with concerns about traffic congestion, gentrification and the long-term effects on the adjacent South Boston community. Also, the preservation of public waterfront space and public access to the water; about the balance of uses being planned; about the public's ability to guide the actions of large and powerful landowners; and about whether too much history will be erased.

2. The character of a city largely resides and endures along its waterfront, allowing substantial changes to occur without inevitably harming its enduring qualities of place.

Seizing upon this character during a period of change is key to successful waterfront planning.



In a little over a century, Shanghai has been transformed from a major commercial port city to a multifunctional megalopolis whose population is soon expected to reach 20 million. The city has launched a series of ambitious plans to reorient modern, cosmopolitan Shanghai to its river, the Huangpu, and to clean up its principal tributary, Suzhou Creek. While there will be many future highways, points out Zheng ShiLing, vice president of Tongji University, there will only be one river. Precisely because everything in Shanghai (which means "upriver to the sea" in Chinese) is currently in flux, recommitting to the river is vital, and culturally reassuring. After all, as Professor Zheng notes, "Water reflects the morality and wisdom of our nationality."

Welcoming modernization and growth, planners in Shanghai are less concerned about precisely determining the most appropriate scale and uses along the riverbanks, than holding to the belief that the more the city focuses on the river, the more faithful it will remain to its own heritage.

3. Despite periodic and sometimes rapid change, a waterfront preserves for its bordering city some inherent and unalterable stability.

The infrequent traveler to New Orleans, Cairo, London or Hong Kong will feel that he is in familiar territory in the vicinity of the waterfront, regardless of architectural changes over the years. It is this capacity for geographic persistence, despite the periodic transformations of built forms, that is one of the most valuable qualities of urban waterfronts.

4. As valuable and often-contested realms, urban waterfronts encourage human desires to both preserve and to reinvent.

Typical questions include: to what end should the waterfront or the economy be repositioned? Should planning for reuse support traditional maritime industries or promote new forms of economic activity? Should the city seek new markets and status through a refurbished waterfront, or maintain the area's traditional character? Should public investment favor current residents' needs, attract newcomers, or cater to tourists? Should it increase public access or leverage private development? Should redevelopment favor business expansion or civic and recreational needs, especially those that private initiatives do not readily provide? Should the city seek to profit from the scale of modern development attracted to the waterfront, or should it restrict density while enlarging recreational space?

Cities that are exploring new uses for their waterfronts often have to measure grand expectations against the realities of local markets and traditions and resistance to change. A period of collective self-reflection often ensues before a plan can be made definitive and advanced.

5. Even though a waterfront serves as a natural boundary between land and water, it must not be conceptualized or planned as a thin line.

Land-water relationships are often thought of in terms of opposites, or of the edge between the two. Metaphysically, this edge is razor thin. In terms of city building, the opposite is true. Places like Amsterdam, Sydney or San Francisco make this evident with their complex land-water weave. Even when geography offers limited variation, the broader the zone of overlap between land and water, the more successfully a city will capture the benefits of its water assets.

6. Waterfront redevelopments are long-term endeavors with the potential to produce long-term value. Endangering this for short-term gains rarely produces the most desirable results.

One of the most poignant observations about the seductiveness of the "thin line" was made by Mario Coyula, the director of planning for the Havana capital region, at a waterfront conference. Confronted with a dire need to improve (indeed, to create) an economy, Havana sees international tourism as a very tempting vehicle, and is struggling to decide how much of itself to offer and how quickly. "Do not lead with your best sites," Coyula advised. "The early investors want the best locations but do not do the best projects." Many cities attempt to jump-start waterfront renewal by accepting second-rate development proposals or engineering entire redevelopment plans around specific sites that they believe will enhance commercial real estate.



Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

Among the current development trends yet to be proven of durable value is the introduction of very large draws, such as stadiums, convention centers, and casinos, at the water's edge. Whilst such big projects have the capacity to attract substantial public resources, they animate their immediate environments only sporadically, and when the surrounding mixed-use development is insufficient, as is often the case, the area feels empty once the sporting event or concert ends.

7. Underused or obsolete urban waterfronts come alive when they become desirable places to live, not just to visit.

The mayors of many prominent waterfront cities, Mayor Frank Sartor, former Lord Mayor of Sydney, among them, argue for the importance of maintaining a "living city" despite pressure to yield to more lucrative commercial development.

Vancouver has undertaken a determined campaign to increase housing; the city's "Living First" slogan proclaims that residents are as important to cities as anything else. The city's planning director, Larry Beasley, refers to density, congestion, and even high-rise housing as "our friends," in that they create lively, mixed-use, urban lifestyles. Housing has created demand for virtually everything else: new services, shopping and entertainment, public transportation, and open space.



8. The public increasingly desires and expects access to the water's edge. This usually requires overcoming historic barriers, physical, proprietary and psychological, while persuading new investors that there is merit in maintaining that valuable edge within the public domain.

Along the Canadian shore of Lake Ontario, Toronto, in cooperation with its 31 sister communities, is engaged on one of the most sweeping current endeavors to reclaim a waterfront for public use. Over the past decade, an organization called the Waterfront Regeneration Trust has facilitated a deceptively simple, shared vision of a continuous trail which has yielded over 100 separate projects that, collectively, have produced over 215 miles (346 kilometers) of public trails, along with the determination to double this figure, and connect the entire, 400-mile (644-kilometer) shore of Lake Ontario. Motivated by the twin goals of regeneration and public access, the greenway trail already links nearly 200 natural areas; 150 parks, promenades, and beaches; dozens of marinas; and hundreds of historic places and cultural institutions.

9. The success and appeal of waterfront development is intrinsically tied to the interrelationship between landside and adjacent waterside uses; and to the environmental quality of both the water and the shore.

In the course of its history, Detroit has used its river to great benefit, and abused it thoroughly. The river was unsightly and very polluted, and even Belle Isle, the 1,000-acre, Olmsted-designed island park, began to deteriorate and lose visitors because of inadequate maintenance and the unattractive environment along the river.

Following its designation as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers, work is focusing on recovering brownfields; reducing contaminants in the river and along its banks and replanting native trees and grasses to help stabilize the shoreline. The longer term vision, similar to Toronto's, is of a continuous string of public open spaces and greenways stretching some 20 miles (32 kilometers) along the river.

10. Distinctive environments, typically found at waterfronts, provide significant advantages for a city's competitiveness in its region or in relation to its rival cities.

Beautiful places attract people and investment. And keeping them beautiful, taking advantage of their distinctiveness, is one way to minimize the tendency of modern development to produce generic environments.

The canals of Amsterdam, the intricate pattern of docks and quays in Sydney, the more recently constructed forest of residential towers in Vancouver, and the dense wall of skyscrapers facing Hong Kong Harbour immediately give a powerful impression of place. The value of these "postcard views" is not to be dismissed. For cities and nations seeking access to broader markets, globalization represents both opportunity and the risk of cultural homogenization and the loss of local identity. Local geography, uniquely reinforced by a special pattern of urbanization, especially in relationship to a body of water, can facilitate the goal of competing globally while avoiding the generic and the mediocre.

Increasingly, the makers of emerging economies decide where to work and live on the basis of the lifestyle amenities offered by a locale. Surveys tracking locational choices among knowledge workers consistently show that, in addition to job-related characteristics, other important factors influencing the

choice of one urban area over another include the presence of culture and arts; a healthy environment and natural amenities; opportunities to pursue an active lifestyle; a strong "sense of place"; and socially diverse and progressive-minded populations. In other words, the various ingredients that allow a blending of work and leisure in one locale are proving to be important to prospective workers. Access to water, both for recreational purposes and for the ambience that waterfront settings provide, is a key attractor in cosmopolitan venues. A lively waterfront will attract global markets and possibly forestall the "this could be anywhere" syndrome of much current development.

SEATTLE'S BLUE RING: A VISION AND STRATEGY FOR DISTINGUISHING AND CONNECTING WATERFRONT NEIGHBOURHOODS.

There is increasing consensus among planners that the creation of diverse, mixed-use neighbourhoods is a reliable recipe for enduring waterfront revitalization.

The Seattle Experience

In terms of both content and process, Seattle offers a textbook case that demonstrates how to create a vision and strategy to distinguish and connect waterfront neighbourhoods.

In 2000, the city launched a major urban design effort that is still underway. The effort began with a look back at what had been done to date. Two critical findings from the review are driving the current initiative:

- 1. The waterfront is a major community resource that is critical to "defining the character and identity of Seattle's downtown*
- 2. Plans for the downtown and waterfront neighbourhoods need to be connected in a coherent overall framework*

The 100-Year Vision: The Blue Ring

Declaring that a great city needs an accessible public realm, Seattle proposed an open-space strategy as a vehicle for connecting neighbourhoods and places of importance. Water is central to this strategy. It is conceived as open space, a defining feature, community asset and elemental component of the public realm. Within view everywhere, but currently largely inaccessible by land, water became the basis of a three-pronged strategy that would:

- 1. Improve its accessibility*
- 2. Link the various neighbourhoods of the city centre*
- 3. Reinforce the role of water in creating the city's image and sense of place*

The strategy is intended to realize the public belief that the city should be linked to the water. The Blue Ring is a 100-year vision that is expected to become reality over time by providing a comprehensive urban design framework, updated periodically.

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Alison Cooke
Vice President
First American Title Insurance Corporation

David Edwards
National Director and Regional Investment Strategist
LaSalle Investment Management, Asia Pacific

David Faulkner
Director-Valuation and Advisory
Colliers International (Hong Kong) Ltd.,

Susan Goodfellow
Director of Development
EDAW Limited

Tyler E. Goodwin
Principal
Urban Land Capital

Morgan A. Laughlin
Managing Director
Head of DB Real Estate for Non-Japan Asia DB
Real Estate - Asia
Deutsche Bank, AG Hong Kong Branch

Fanny Lee
Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates PC

Craig Wallace
Principal
Managing Director, Investment Partnerships
Macquarie Global Property Advisors

ULI North Asia Coordinator:

Pamela Ku
Director
International Businesslink Limited
Unit 1, G/F,
The Center,
99 Queen's Road Central,
Kong Kong



ULI- the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007-5201
U.S.A.