



WOOLPERT

July 20, 1992

Mr. Thomas Duro
Department of Development
City Hall
Central Avenue and 4th Street
Dunkirk, New York 14048

RE: Waterfront Enhancement Planning

Dear Tom:

Thank you very much for the informative meeting last Friday. I certainly enjoyed your vision, enthusiasm and wealth of information about the Dunkirk waterfront and its possibilities. Woolpert is most certainly interested in working with you on this exciting opportunity. I believe that many ideas can be explored in a short time with some creative sketches to portray the possibilities, some rough order cost estimating to express the dollar side of proposed projects and an implementation/timing schedule that looks at who is best to complete some of the potential projects and when.

I was able to return to Dunkirk on Saturday to better weather and a far greater number of people using various parts of the waterfront. I took some photos that we will use internally to discuss the opportunities for the waterfront. I understand you will be getting together some additional information, copies of reports and some additional photos for us to use. After we have had a chance to look over that information, we will prepare an outline scope of services proposal for discussion purposes. I would hope to have this proposal out to you by the end of the month. Please keep me informed of your progress with establishing some funding for our efforts. Schedule wise, we might be able to get underway by the end of August. Look forward to talking with you soon.

Regards,

Bill Wilbert, ASLA
Associate Member

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Introduction

Lake Erie's waterfront development is at a critical point. While most people agree that development to date has been positive and admirable, some people fear that momentum may be lost and opportunities squandered. To overlook the tremendous potential of this waterfront would be unfortunate.

In Dunkirk, Lake Erie is only a partially realized asset. Further development and investment in the waterfront could become a springboard for major new development. Other cities, both large and small, have demonstrated that waterfront areas can be centers of tourism, trade, and urban recreation. These success stories have been achieved by marrying private and public money and initiative, by providing a fair return to the developer and a fair return to the city in aesthetic enhancement and economic improvement, by having a vision, and by having respect for the people of the community. Dunkirk's waterfront has this potential, but an overall vision needs to be articulated to guide the process.

The principle purpose of this Waterfront Development Strategy is to provide a rational and systematic approach to waterfront development. This strategy provides the overall vision for future waterfront improvements and a focus for continued development efforts.

To develop the waterfront strategy, meetings were held with city officials, citizens, and property owners/stakeholders in the waterfront. Through these meetings, critical issues and opportunities were identified and an overall development concept was developed. A series of recommendations were then refined for the waterfront; these recommendations consider the city's character, climate, competition from other attractions, lack of companion attractions to bring people to the waterfront, and costs of improvements. The recommendations are expressed graphically in plan and perspective sketches.

In order to adequately discuss waterfront improvements, this strategy addresses the waterfront as a whole and then as four subareas. Discussions of the Point Gratiot Park, Niagara Mohawk, Chadwick Bay, and Wright Park areas provide a more detailed description of proposed improvements.

Issues

Through the interview process and field investigations, a series of development issues were formulated. The final plan recommendations are directed toward addressing these issues through the design and implementation of waterfront improvements. Issues identified include the following:

- **Access:** Appropriate, convenient, and identifiable access needs to be provided to all waterfront activities.
- **Ownership:** Ownership of waterfront properties is dispersed among several owners/organizations. While there is a willingness to participate in the future improvement of the waterfront, a significant coordination effort will be needed.

- **Weather:** The weather in Dunkirk and on Lake Erie can be very harsh in the winter months. Weather-resistant materials must be used in improvement projects, and year-round activities must be carefully considered and included in the proposed designs.
- **Erosion:** Erosion of the shoreline is a persistent problem, especially in the Point Gratiot Park Subarea. The Point Gratiot Park and Lighthouse areas have lost a significant amount of shoreline over the past several years. Erosion control measures are needed in conjunction with any investments in these areas.
- **Image:** Dunkirk's waterfront suffers from a somewhat negative image due to its origins as a working waterfront and lack of attention in the past. This negative image needs to be overcome to draw residents and tourists to the waterfront.
- **Economics:** The current economic climate may tend to discourage short-term investment in the waterfront. Creative and aggressive funding and financing strategies must be developed to continue the implementation of improvements.
- **Continuity/Linkage:** Dunkirk's waterfront is segmented among the three city parks, the pier, the lighthouse, and privately developed areas. A lack of continuity exists between the various uses. A better linkage between these uses is needed to promote the overall waterfront.
- **Siltation:** As a result of past breakwater construction efforts, significant silt deposits are limiting water use. Primarily in the eastern end of the new marina, silt limits the use of the marina due to reduced water depth.
- **Focus:** The current configuration of uses along the waterfront lacks a central focus, which could generate the identity and image for the waterfront.
- **Visibility:** The visibility and identification of waterfront attractions is essential for their success. A coordinated identification and directional sign program is needed to properly inform and direct motorists, pedestrians, and boaters.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation:** To implement the Waterfront Development Strategy, cooperation between the various governmental stakeholders is essential. A close working relationship must be maintained between the city of Dunkirk and the state, county, and Corps of Engineers.
- **Link to Downtown:** The waterfront should not compete with downtown. Rather, it should enhance the opportunities provided in Dunkirk and complement downtown activities. Positive links should be reinforced between the downtown and the waterfront.
- **Route 5/Lake Shore Drive:** Lake Shore Drive provides the "front door" to the waterfront. The north side of Lake Shore Drive should not be ignored during waterfront development and should be integrated into the design.
- **Niagara Mohawk Power Plant's Size and Prominence:** Because of its size and location, the Niagara Mohawk power plant is visually prominent on the Dunkirk waterfront. The power plant should be incorporated into the overall concept for the waterfront to establish a visual landmark.

- **Pier:** Using much of the pier for parking limits its potential. An activity focus could be developed at this location.
- **Regional Perception:** Dunkirk does not have a reputation within the region as a desirable destination. Dunkirk's image needs to be enhanced through the promotion of its unique assets so that it may become a regional tourism attraction.
- **Implementation:** Implementation of any waterfront improvements must be carefully considered to ensure that development occurs in an orderly fashion. Improvements should be divided into easily fundable and implementable pieces. Care must be taken so that progress does not lose momentum.

Opportunities

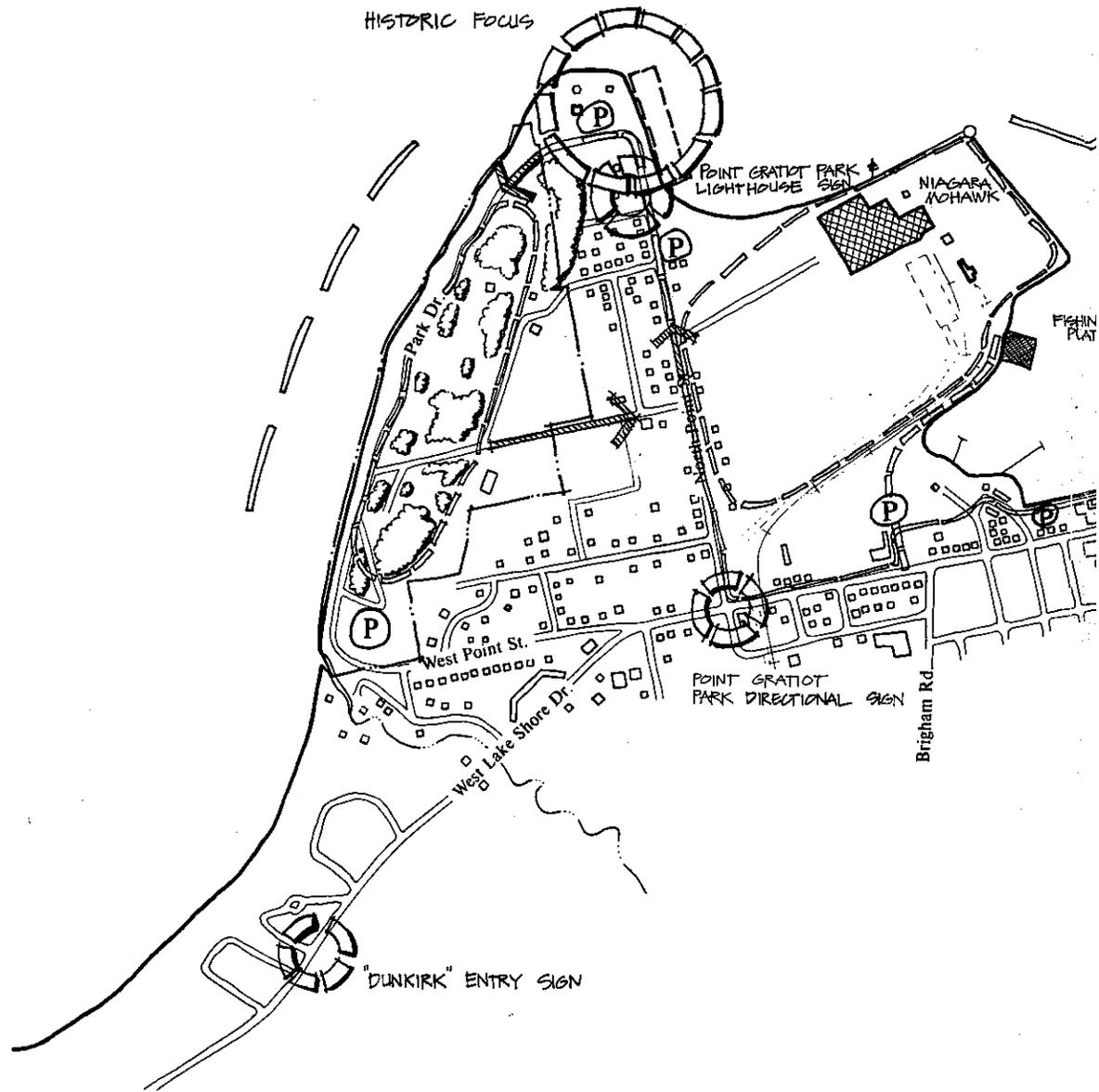
While there are many issues that need to be addressed in the Waterfront Development Strategy, Dunkirk is blessed with a variety of assets and opportunities upon which the final strategy can be based. Dunkirk's natural and cultural resources provide a strong starting point for further development. Several existing features can form the basis for the overall waterfront strategy, including the following:

- Point Gratiot Park, Memorial Park, Wright Park, and the pier provide character, passive and active recreation opportunities, and gathering places for residents and visitors. Enhancement of these areas would generate additional pedestrian traffic and enhance Dunkirk's image.
- The lighthouse provides a link to the past and is a unique attraction. Of the approximately 800 light stations that existed at the turn of the century, only about half still exist. Even fewer have been as well preserved as Dunkirk's.
- The prominence of the Niagara Mohawk plant is a visual landmark from both the land and the water. Enhancement of its appearance can reinforce its landmark role and draw attention to the waterfront.
- There is one vacant parcel and one underused parcel that are prime development sites. By mixing new development into the existing stock, businesses will be strengthened and additional interest in the waterfront will be generated.
- The excellent regional access to Dunkirk and the waterfront allows for easy access for tourists.
- An opportunity exists to capture additional boater markets through the promotion of Dunkirk as a safe harbor and the presentation of an enhanced image from the water.
- The warm-water fishery, which exists as a result of the Niagara Mohawk water discharge, provides a prime fishing area and allows for year-round fishing.
- The recent success of festivals along the waterfront is evidence that people will come to the waterfront for organized events. Potential exists to expand upon this success to generate additional activity.

Overall Development Concept

Several waterfront improvements span subarea boundaries. These improvements address the overall development of the waterfront and the continued economic development of Dunkirk. Overall development improvements include the following:

- Develop and install a coordinated sign program, including gateway, identification, and directional signs. The signs will convey a similar theme and establish a consistent image. Also, the signs will help direct motorists and pedestrians to waterfront activities while reducing visual clutter along Lake Shore Drive.
- Construct a walkway/esplanade to bring people to the waterfront and connect all the various uses along the lake. The esplanade should include pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaping, and seating areas at regular intervals. It should be constructed in three phases: Phase 1 would be from the pier to the filtration plant; Phase 2, from the Pier to Lake Front Drive; and Phase 3, along Lake Side Boulevard.
- Establish the pier as the focal point of the entire waterfront. It is the geographic and psychological center of waterfront activities and should continue to be the primary entrance and activity focal point.
- Promote coordinated activities and events along the waterfront with downtown. Waterfront festivals generate several benefits including publicity, public participation, education, and revenue. Sale events can be coordinated with waterfront and downtown businesses to bring people downtown and promote downtown/waterfront linkages.
- Add pockets of public parking along the waterfront to improve user access to all areas. The parking areas should be spaced at regular intervals along the waterfront and be clearly marked with signs on Lake Shore Drive.
- Create gateways into Dunkirk at the east and west ends of Lake Shore Drive. These signs should be designed with color, vertical elements such as flags, and landscaping to attract the attention of motorists and signal that this is a destination.
- Establish the north side of Lake Shore Drive as a part of the waterfront. Lake Shore Drive between North Point Drive and Main Street serves as the front door to the waterfront. This area should be designed to integrate it with the design of the waterfront. The lighting, street furniture, banners, and landscaping used along the esplanade and pier should be continued on the north side of Lake Shore Drive.
- Illuminate the waterfront to create visual interest from the water and from the shore. A design theme of "New Light on the Lake" has been proposed to generate interest and excitement along the waterfront. Through the illumination of waterfront elements, such as the esplanade, the pier, and the Niagara Mohawk plant, Dunkirk can highlight its unique assets and draw new visitors to the area.



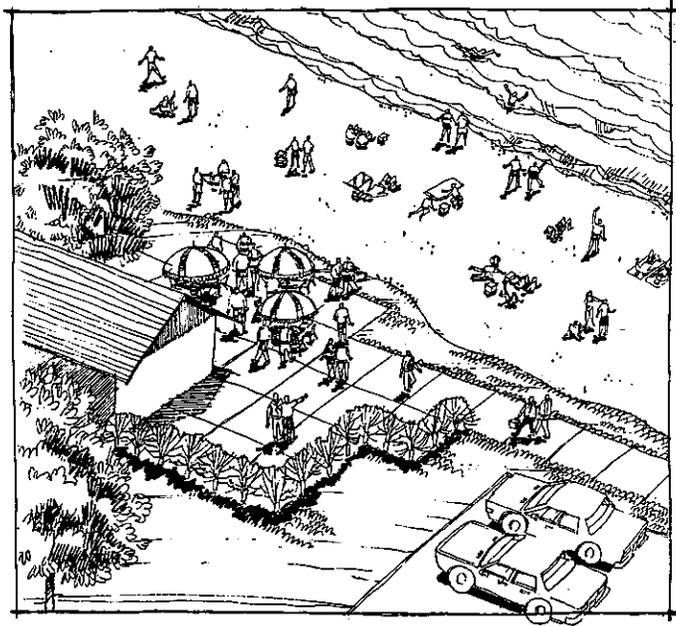
Waterfront Development Str

Dunkirk, New York

Point Gratiot

Improvements within the Point Gratiot Subarea are focused on promoting and enhancing the existing resources in this area to establish it as the historical and passive recreation focus along the waterfront. This subarea should be promoted as the primary beach area on the waterfront. Proposed improvements include the following:

- Control the erosion of the shoreline. This can be accomplished in the short term through the installation of gabion boxes at sensitive areas along the shoreline. Long-term solutions should be coordinated with the Corps of Engineers, who will be studying this area in the near future.
- Re-route the entry to Point Gratiot Park. The entrance to Point Gratiot Park should be rerouted to use North Point Drive as the main entry point. This route is easier to recognize from Lake Shore Drive and will provide a more dramatic entry into the park because of the presence of the lighthouse.
- Improve the internal circulation of Point Gratiot Park. The existing circulation pattern in the park is poorly defined and confusing. The creation of an internal loop roadway system would provide better access to park facilities and would better orient the motorist.
- Clean up and enhance Point Gratiot Beach. The city should consider the purchase of a beach cleaner to keep the sand free of debris and shale. Cedar Beach sand can be used to re-nourish Point Gratiot Beach.
- Improve Point Gratiot Park facilities. The existing restroom facilities at the beach area could be expanded to create a concession area. Paving could be added to create an outdoor seating area. Continued preventative maintenance of other park facilities is essential.
- Expand and define the park's parking areas. The parking areas within the park need to be clearly identified and easily accessible from the various activities. The parking area at the beach should be expanded.
- Promote the area around the lighthouse as the historic focus of the waterfront. This area, which includes the lighthouse and the site of the first shot of the War of 1812, has a strong link to the past that should be reinforced and accentuated with additional improvements.
- Organize the lighthouse grounds. A separate museum facility should be constructed to provide needed display and storage space and to enable the keepers' quarters to be restored to their original state. Also, additional parking should be added.
- Reserve an area off-shore from the lighthouse and museum, near Cedar Beach, for a museum cove. Historic ships and replicas could be displayed in this area in conjunction with the lighthouse museum.
- Link the park and lighthouse to the esplanade with a bike path.



- IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE MADE AT THE BEACH INCLUDING CREATING A CONCESSION AREA WITH A HARD SURFACE OUTDOOR SEATING AREA.

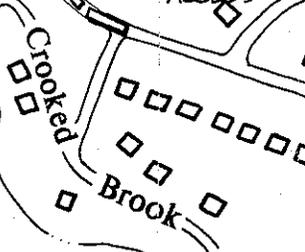
▪ LONG TERM EROSION MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH THE C.O.E

PURCHASE A BEECH CLEANER AND RENOURISH WITH SAND FROM CEDAR BEACH

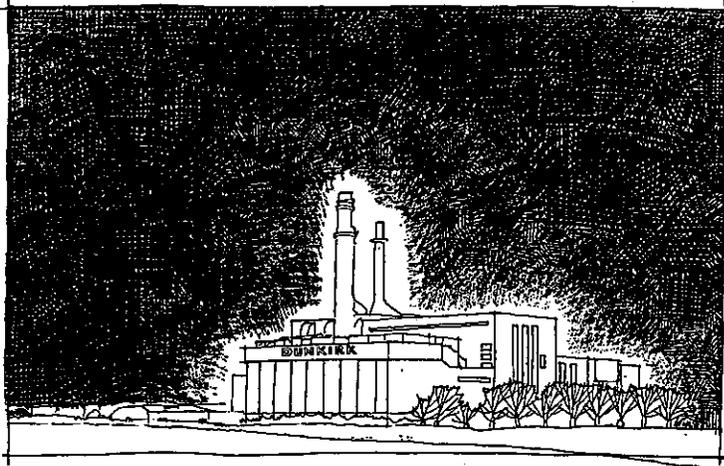
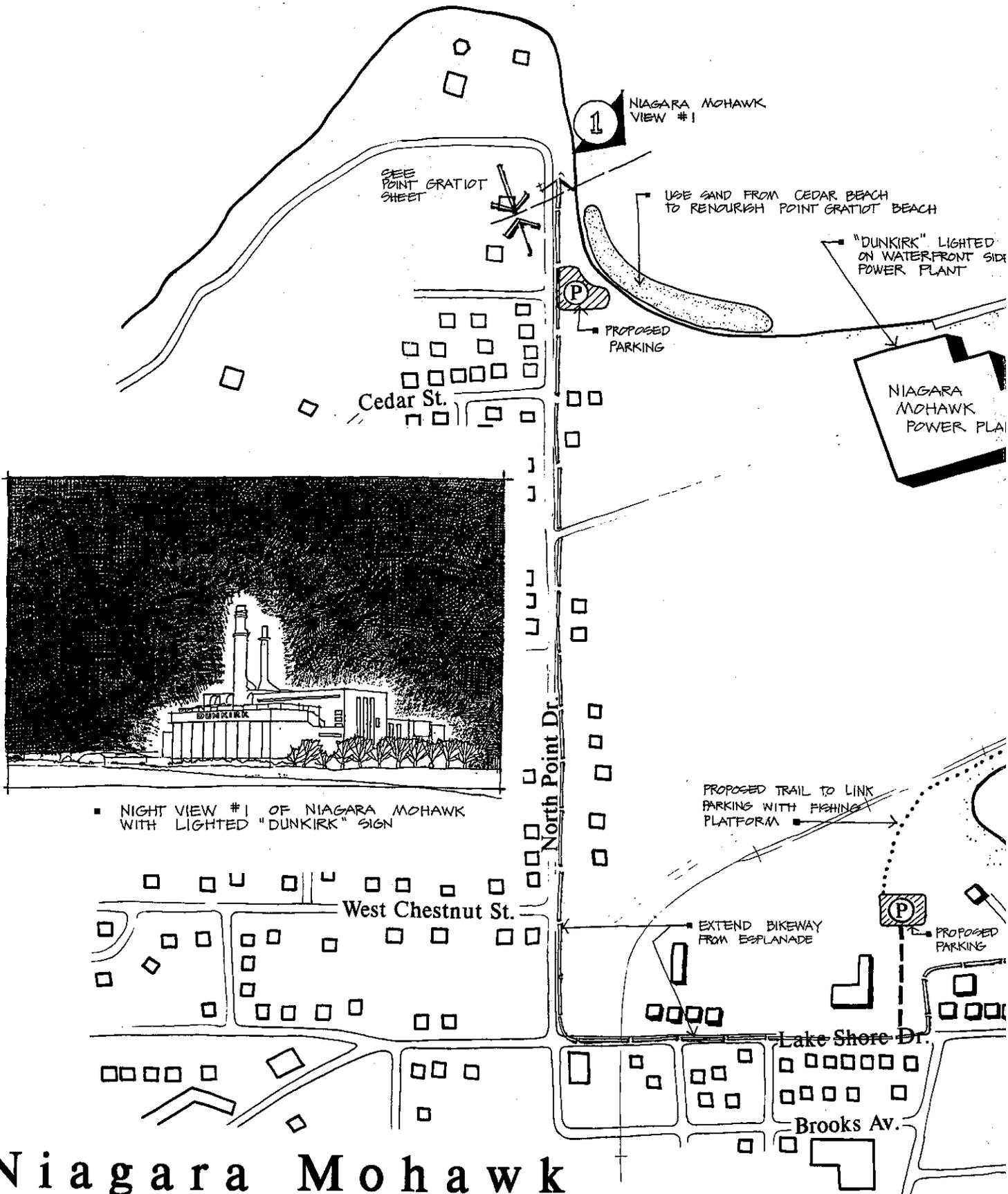
ADD ON TO THE EXISTING BUILDING TO CREATE A CONCESSION AREA. ALSO, CREATE A HARD SURFACE OUTDOOR SEATING AREA

IMPROVE F... FOR THE B...

STRENGTHEN SECONDARY ACCESS

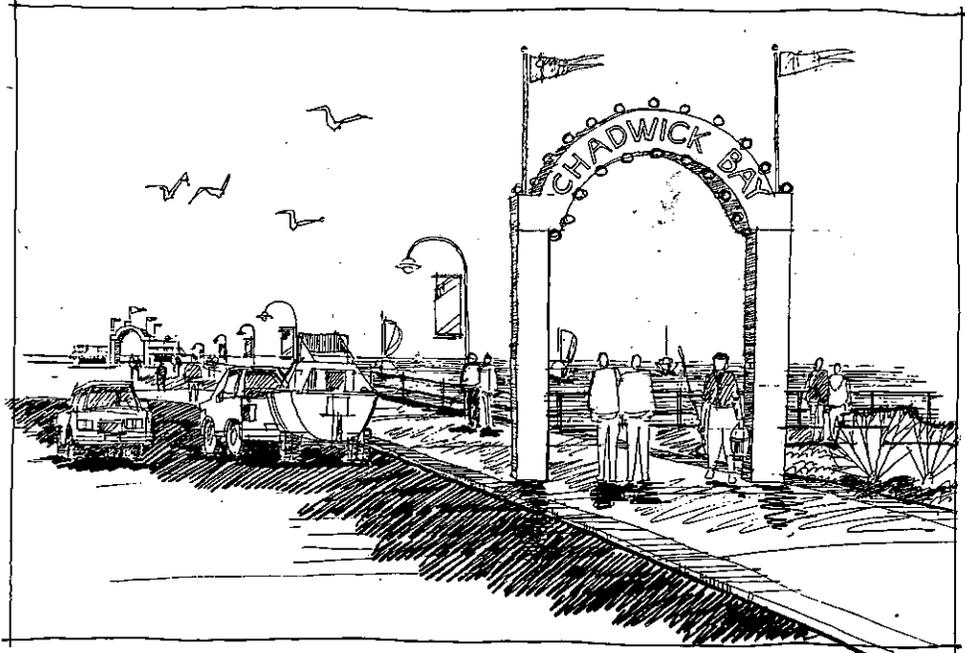


Point Gratiot Waterfront Development Study Dunkirk, New York

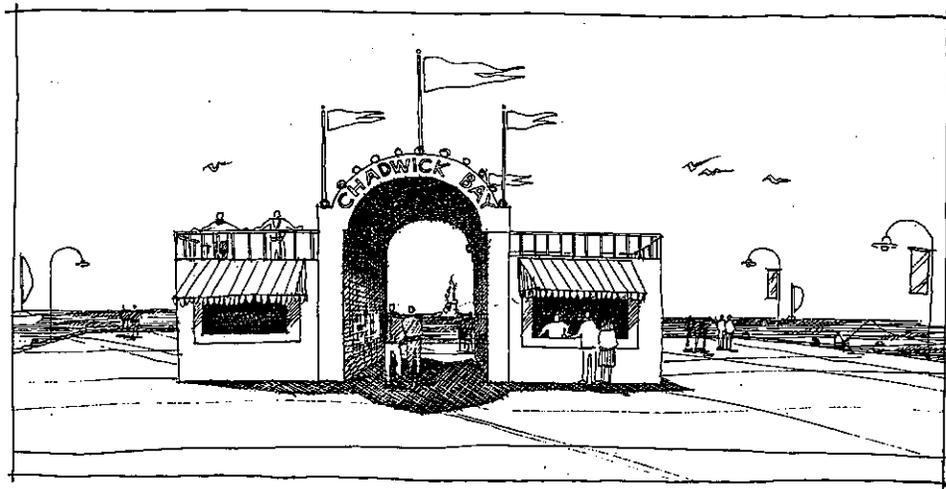


▪ NIGHT VIEW #1 OF NIAGARA MOHAWK WITH LIGHTED "DUNKIRK" SIGN

Niagara Mohawk Waterfront Development Str Dunkirk, New York

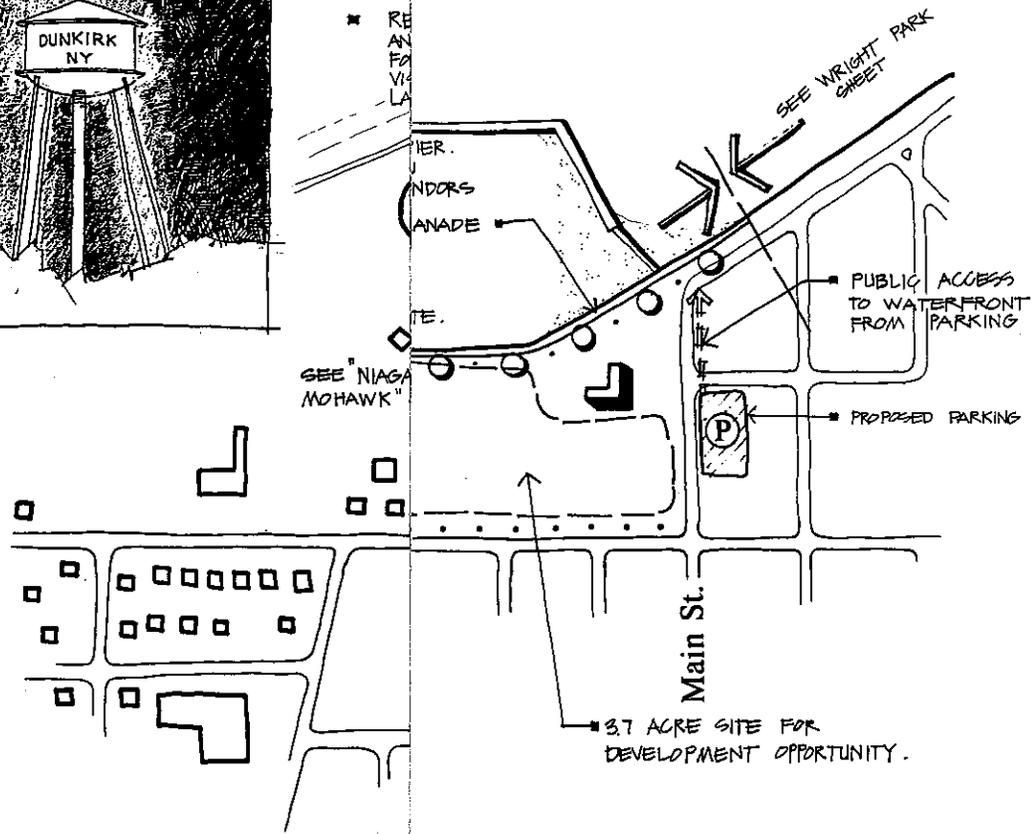
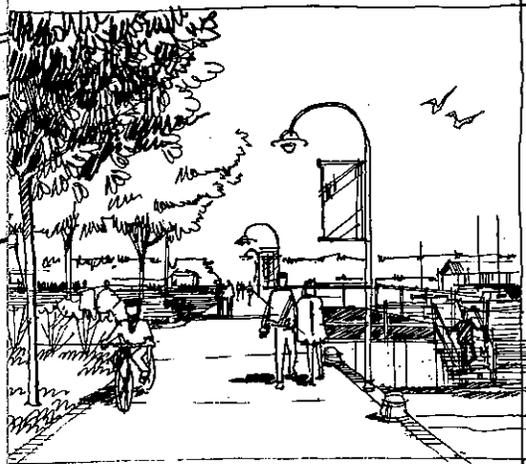


- A PEDESTRIAN SCALE ENTRY GATE WOULD ENCOURAGE AND DIRECT VISITORS TO THE PIER. IT WOULD HELP STRENGTHEN THE IMAGE OF THE PIER AS AN EXCITING AND ACTIVE PEOPLE PLACE.

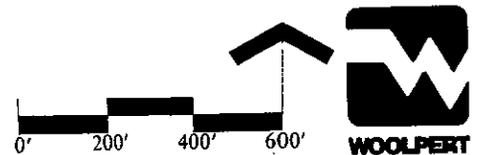


- LOCATED NEAR THE END OF THE PIER COULD BE A DESIGN ELEMENT THAT INCORPORATES COLOR AND OTHER FEATURES THAT PROMOTE ACTIVITIES. THE STRUCTURE COULD CONTAIN CONCESSION/VENDING AREAS ALONG WITH AN HISTORICAL INTERPRETIVE WALL ON THE LOWER LEVEL. ON THE SECOND LEVEL WOULD BE AN OBSERVATION PLATFORM.

Chadwick Bay Waterfront Development Str Dunkirk, New York



Chadwick Bay Waterfront Development Dunkirk, New York



- Add directional and identification signs along Lake Shore Drive and at the entrance to the lighthouse and park. Lighthouse and park signs should be integrated to reduce visual clutter and to promote these as a joint feature.
- Participate in waterfront festivals and events. Special portions of waterfront festivals should be held at Point Gratiot Park to educate the public on activities that are available and to promote its use.

Niagara Mohawk

The theme of the Niagara Mohawk Subarea is to integrate the Niagara Mohawk power plant into the overall fabric of the waterfront. Because of its size, location, and connotation of stability, the plant can be reinforced as a landmark on Lake Erie. The plant has the potential to become the anchor point for the "New Light on the Lake" design theme. Proposed improvements include the following:

- Illuminate the plant to create the focus of the "New Light on the Lake" theme. This illumination should be a creative use of lighting technology, which would promote Dunkirk as well as Niagara Mohawk. The lighting could include a timepiece or establish a unique way to broadcast weather predictions with changes in lighting. The feature should include Dunkirk identification on the water side of the facility for viewing by boaters.
- Construct the proposed fishing platform above the plant's water discharge point. The outfall from the plant creates a warm-water fishery that should be promoted in the region as a unique asset in Dunkirk. A parking area, with vehicular access from Lake Shore Drive, is also proposed with a walkway back to the platform.
- Provide a link between the esplanade, the fishing platform, and the Point Gratiot Subarea by extending a bike path from the terminus of the esplanade.

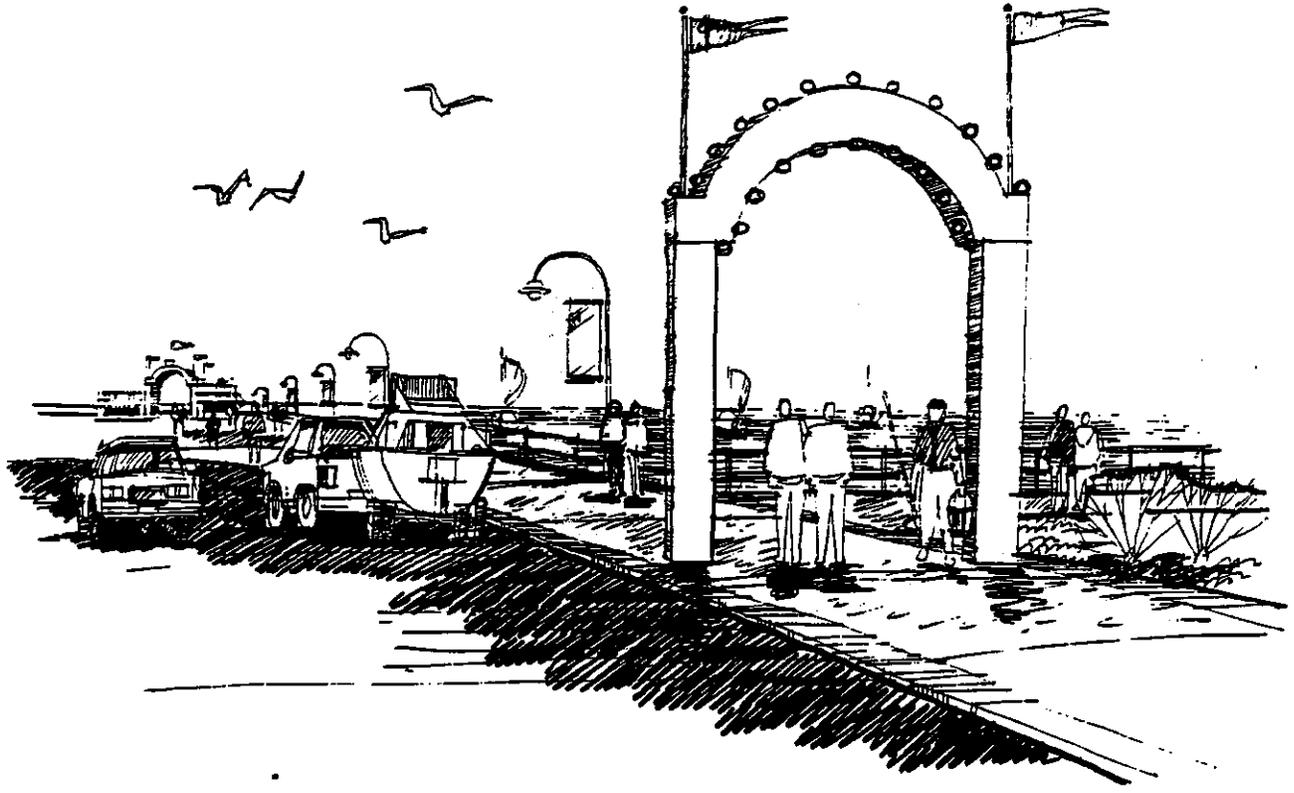
Chadwick Bay

The Chadwick Bay Subarea is the overall focus of the waterfront. It gets its name from the historic name of Dunkirk Harbor. By using this name for the area, a new and unique image can be established. The new name should be promoted as "Dunkirk's Chadwick Bay." The design plan for this area is centered around establishing the pier and the waterfront as pedestrian-oriented areas and providing a strong link to the downtown area. Improvements within the Chadwick Bay Subarea include the following:

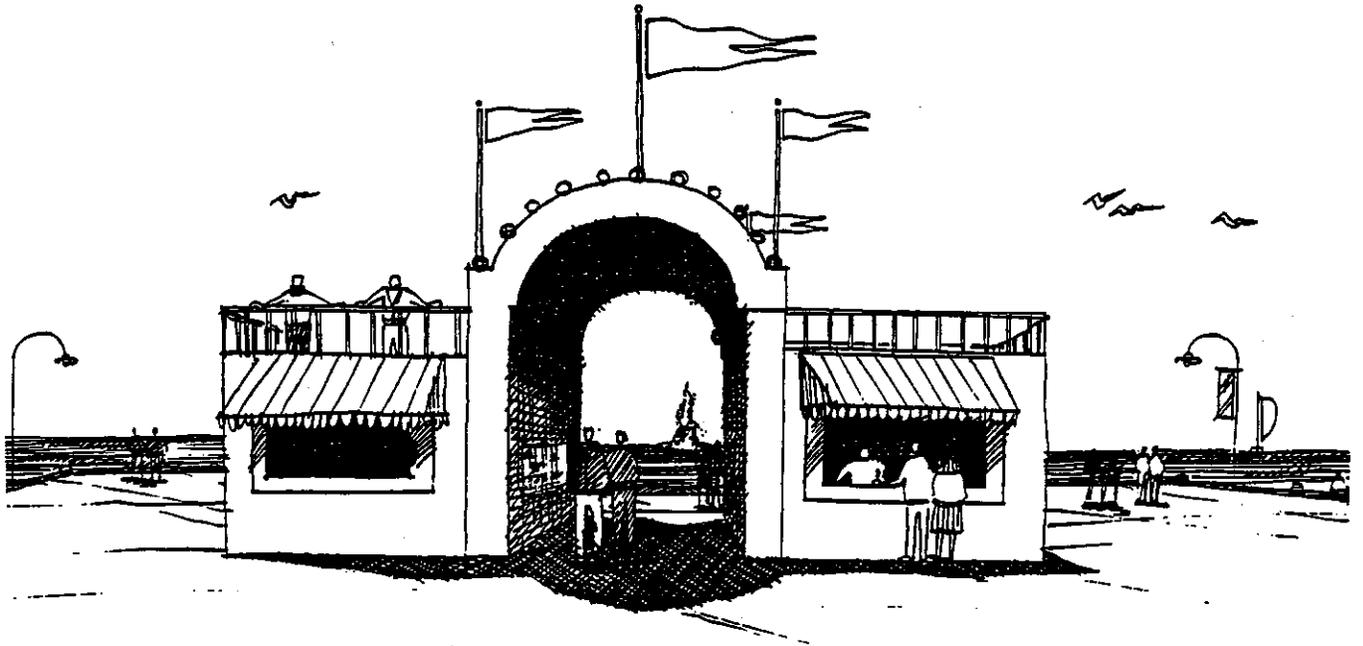
- Construct a waterfront esplanade. The esplanade will be a 15-foot-wide paved area that will accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Trees should be planted along the route in conjunction with pedestrian-scale lighting. The lighting would reinforce the "New Light on the Lake" theme through the Chadwick Bay area. The esplanade should be widened at certain intervals to create small "pocket parks," or seating areas, which would include benches and additional landscaping.

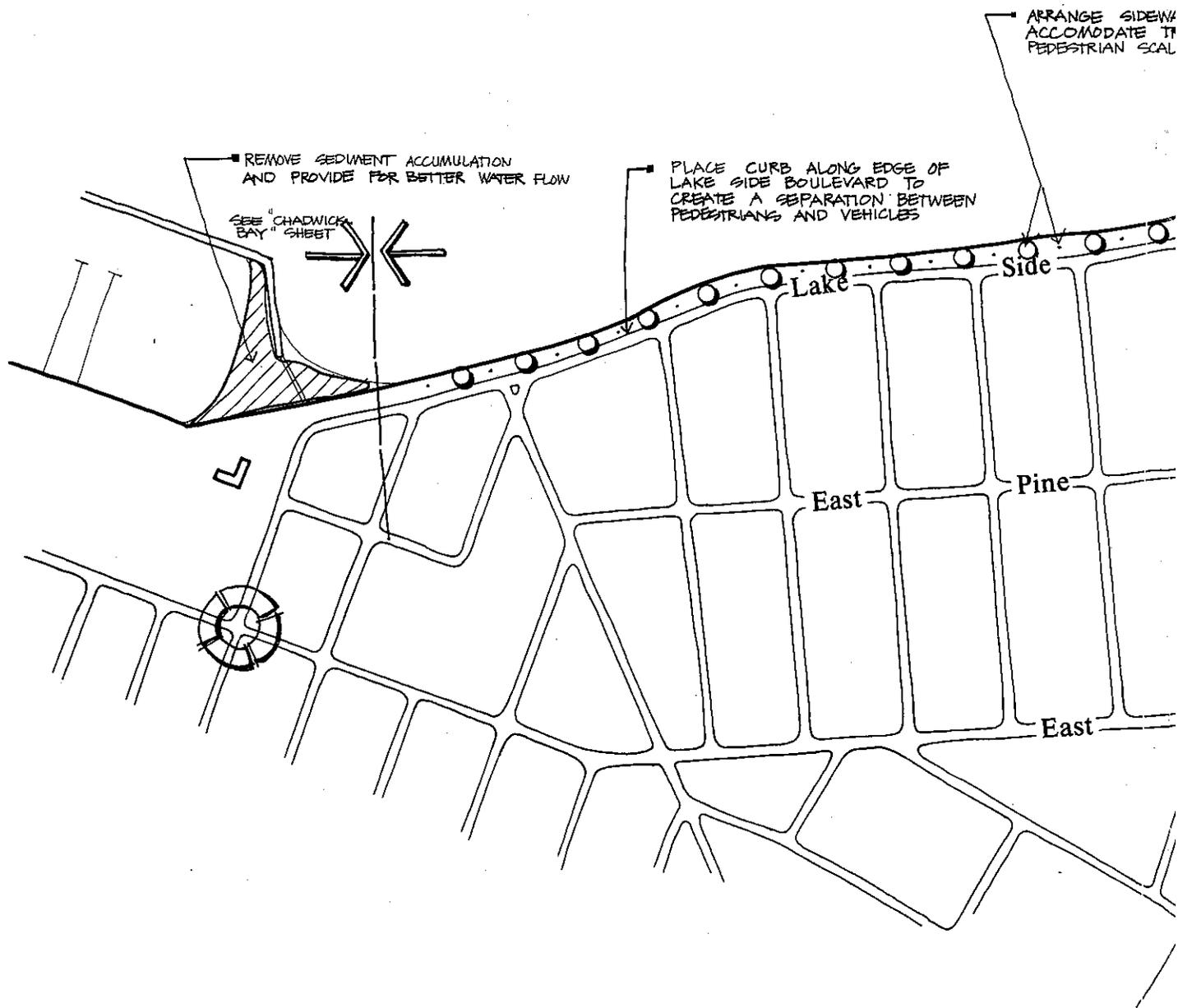
- Improve the pier to establish it as the primary focus. Vehicular access should be limited to the boat launch; parking would be eliminated on the pier itself. Design elements could be placed on the pier to create visual interest and activity and to tie the pier into the esplanade. A pedestrian-scale entry gate should be erected to encourage and direct pedestrians to the pier. Near the end of the pier should be a structure that incorporates vending and concessions with a historical interpretive wall on the lower level and an observation area on the upper level.
- Place a floating fountain in the lake on axis with the pier. This fountain would serve as a landmark from the water side and generate visual excitement from the land side.
- Link the waterfront to downtown by continuing streetscape improvements along Central Avenue to the railroad bridge. These improvements would include tree plantings, pedestrian-scale lighting, banners, street furniture, and sidewalk paving.
- Establish the railroad bridge as an entry portal to the waterfront. Painting and signs could identify the approach to the waterfront for motorists heading north on Central Avenue and could announce the approach into the downtown for motorists heading south.
- Enhance Memorial Park and integrate it into the overall waterfront design. As it is currently arranged, Memorial Park seems ambivalent about its location on the water. By tying it into the esplanade, the park will be brought closer to the water.
- Improve the Lake Shore Drive/Central Avenue intersection to establish an entry point to the waterfront. These improvements would include, landscaping, paving, signs, flags and banners, and lighting.
- Provide public parking areas. Public parking areas should be provided near the Yacht Club and on the site at the northeast corner of Main Street and Lake Shore Drive. The parking area adjacent the pier should be expanded.
- Promote the development of vacant and underused parcels of land. Prime waterfront real estate still remains to be developed. These parcels provide a great opportunity to enhance the waterfront and generate activity. The sites include the 3.7-acre site to the east of the Sheraton Inn and an underused parcel adjacent to the pier, west of the Sheraton. Uses to be considered for these sites should be thematic activity generators that would have their own on-site parking and be compatible with the Sheraton Inn.
- Paint and illuminate the water tower to further advance the lighting theme.
- Establish Chadwick Bay as the festival and activity focus of the waterfront.

Pier Entrance



Pier Focus Structure





Wright Park
 Waterfront Development Str
 Dunkirk, New York

Wright Park

The Wright Park Subarea provides the transition from the southern residential areas to the waterfront and is the active recreation focus of the waterfront. Improvements focus on enhancing existing features and linking this area to the rest of the waterfront. The following improvements are proposed for the Wright Park Subarea:

- Link Wright Park with the rest of the waterfront by continuing the esplanade. The esplanade will need to separate the pedestrian traffic from the vehicular traffic. It will terminate at Serval Street where a bike path will continue into Wright Park.
- Clean out sediment accumulation and provide for better water flow at the east end of the new marina.
- Improve Wright Beach parking. The parking area needs better definition and separation from the roadway.
- Improve the beach access points and access to the esplanade from the residential area. Install crosswalks at the northern ends of residential streets.
- Develop housing and associated amenities at the Battery. Vacant land in this area has an excellent view of the Lake.

Summary/ Next Steps

The improvements outlined in this Waterfront Development Strategy are intended to be building blocks in the physical and economic revitalization of Dunkirk's waterfront. The potential for enhanced recreation and prospects for economic development are vast. Each proposed element is crucial to creating a more livable, viable city. The composite result is the revitalization and rediscovery of the waterfront as the economic and social center of the community.

The next step in the revitalization of the waterfront is implementation. It will require tremendous commitment and initiative from a variety of individuals and organizations to make this strategy a reality. The following table summarizes implementation steps. The table identifies the timing, anticipated costs, and implementation responsibility for each project.

Implementation Plan

Phase 1 1993-1998

<u>Proposed Action</u>	<u>Primary Responsibility</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Gateway Signage	City of Dunkirk Civic Organizations	\$30,000
Esplanade, Phase I	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Local Development Corp.	143,310
Short-Term Erosion Control, Point Gratiot	City of Dunkirk	65,000
Re-Route Point Gratiot Park Entrance	City of Dunkirk	17,000
Point Gratiot Park/Lighthouse Identification Sign and Landscape	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Historical Lighthouse and Veterans Museum	4,200
Point Gratiot Park/Lighthouse Directional Sign and Landscape	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Historical Lighthouse and Veterans Museum	4,200
Fishing Platform	State of New York	Unknown
Lake Shore Drive/Central Avenue Signage, Flags and Landscape	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Local Development Corp.	14,500
Paint/Illuminate Water Tower	City of Dunkirk Civic Organizations	8,500
Wright Park Directional Sign and Landscape	City of Dunkirk	4,200
Wright Park Identification Sign and Landscape	City of Dunkirk	4,200

Phase 2 1999-2004

<u>Proposed Action</u>	<u>Primary Responsibility</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Long-Term Erosion Control Point Gratiot	Corps of Engineers	Unknown
Esplanade, Phase II	City of Dunkirk Civic Organizations	\$122,400
Point Gratiot Park internal circulation Improvements	City of Dunkirk	41,500
Re-nourish Point Gratiot Beach	City of Dunkirk	15,000
Point Gratiot Park Concessions/Seating Area	City of Dunkirk	28,000

**Phase 2 1999-2004
(Continued)**

Proposed Action	Primary Responsibility	Estimated Cost
Bikeway	City of Dunkirk	\$33,000
Point Gratiot Beach Parking Area	City of Dunkirk	14,000
Lighthouse Parking	Dunkirk Historical Lighthouse and Veterans Museum	13,000
Niagara Mohawk Lighting	Niagara Mohawk	Unknown
Pier Entry Gate	City of Dunkirk	13,000
Pier Site Furniture	City of Dunkirk	5,000
Railroad Bridge Portal	City of Dunkirk Civic Organizations	6,000
Central Avenue Streetscape	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Local Development Corp.	106,000
Remove Sediment/Improve Water Flow at Marina	Corps of Engineers Marina	Unknown

Phase 3 2004 - Future

Proposed Action	Primary Responsibility	Estimated Cost
New Lighthouse/Veterans Museum	Dunkirk Historical Lighthouse and Veterans Museum	Unknown
Esplanade Phase III	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Local Development Corp.	\$225,000
Pier Focus Structure	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Local Development Corp. Private Developer	60,000
Enhance Memorial Park	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Veterans	10,000
Lake Shore Drive Lighting and Banners	City of Dunkirk Dunkirk Veterans	350,000
Yacht Club Area Parking	City of Dunkirk Yacht Club	7,500
Floating Fountain	City of Dunkirk Civic Organizations	5,000
Lake Shore/Main Street Parking/Waterfront Access	City of Dunkirk	17,000
Wright Beach Parking	City of Dunkirk	11,000
Beach Cleaner	City of Dunkirk	25,000