

About the Destination Master Plan

In 2010, the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau, a division of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, embarked on a yearlong planning process working with its Strategic Tourism Planning Committee and Egret Communications, a Missouri-based consultant with global tourism engineering experience.

This collaborative effort involved input from a broad range of hospitality businesses, community leaders and other stakeholders. The process was designed to grow Clinton County as a tourism destination in ways that were good for businesses and residents alike.

The final result was the Adirondack Coast Destination Master Plan; a comprehensive, renewable plan that would serve as a guide in building a better place not only to visit but to live by leveraging our core strengths – history, outdoor recreation and agritourism.

The Vision

The Destination Master Plan is structured to help the Adirondack Coast become an attractive, sustainable destination for leisure travelers seeking immersive, interactive and authentic historical experiences and access to high quality outdoor adventures.

Through the Destination Master Plan, we'll improve the Adirondack Coast's significant historical experiences and access to its abundance of natural resources, deepening the pride of the residents in our area, strengthening the regional economy and enhancing our quality of life.





A reenactment on Cumberland Bay, site of the Battle of Plattsburgh naval battle, September 11, 2014

Leveraging History

One of the many goals identified in the Destination Master Plan was to bring history to life by making it engaging, approachable and participatory thus encouraging visitors to return many times. It is this idea that quickly drove the concept of creating a world-class museum and replica ships honoring our history in scale to its importance.

Focusing on Plattsburgh City Beach

As the search began for a future home of the proposed museum, the focus of the committee quickly turned to the Plattsburgh City Beach for several reasons:

- **Parcel Size** - The size of the museum and the outdoor space to place reproductions of ship(s) necessitated a fairly large parcel
- **Interstate Access** – Easy access and visibility from a major highway and access thoroughfares such as I-87 and Routes 9 and 314
- **Historical Significance** - The beach site is in view of the actual location where the Battle of Plattsburgh naval skirmish took place

- **Waterfront Access** – Another goal of the Destination Master Plan was to use tourism as a tool to help our communities interact with the waterfront. Visitors traveling to the Adirondack Coast will expect water views and access. As we accommodate those expectations, we'll also draw our residents back to the water's edge.

Growing the Scope

Once a site was proposed, conversations - and excitement - about the museum quickly grew to encompass a total development of the 99-acre city beach property. The greater vision quickly gained momentum and wide-spread community support with its inclusion of:

- A world-class museum and regional visitors center to serve as a hub and spoke destination that encourages people to visit other areas of Plattsburgh, the county and region. (It has since been given the working title of "the Discovery Center")
- Building reproductions of ships from the Battles of Valcour and Plattsburgh that could be used for displays and/or lake cruises
- Trail systems, ponds, canals and gardens to encourage outdoor recreation
- Retail and restaurants to encourage year round activity

The full scope of the proposed project is outlined beginning on page 8.

Ultimately, the Plattsburgh City Beach offers location, history and potential in successful development which would increase tourism, create jobs and spur further development of retail/services to support the additional residents and tourists who will live and visit the area.



Plattsburgh City Beach today



Artist aerial rendering of proposed beach development, courtesy AES & Santec

Embryonic Concept

It's important to emphasize that this plan is in its early stages of conceptualization. The process to develop this plan will involve an extensive amount of community input to evolve the plan to best benefit residents and attract visitors.

From there, development professionals will be retained to add quality to the design, assist with the business plan and marketing of the various aspects.

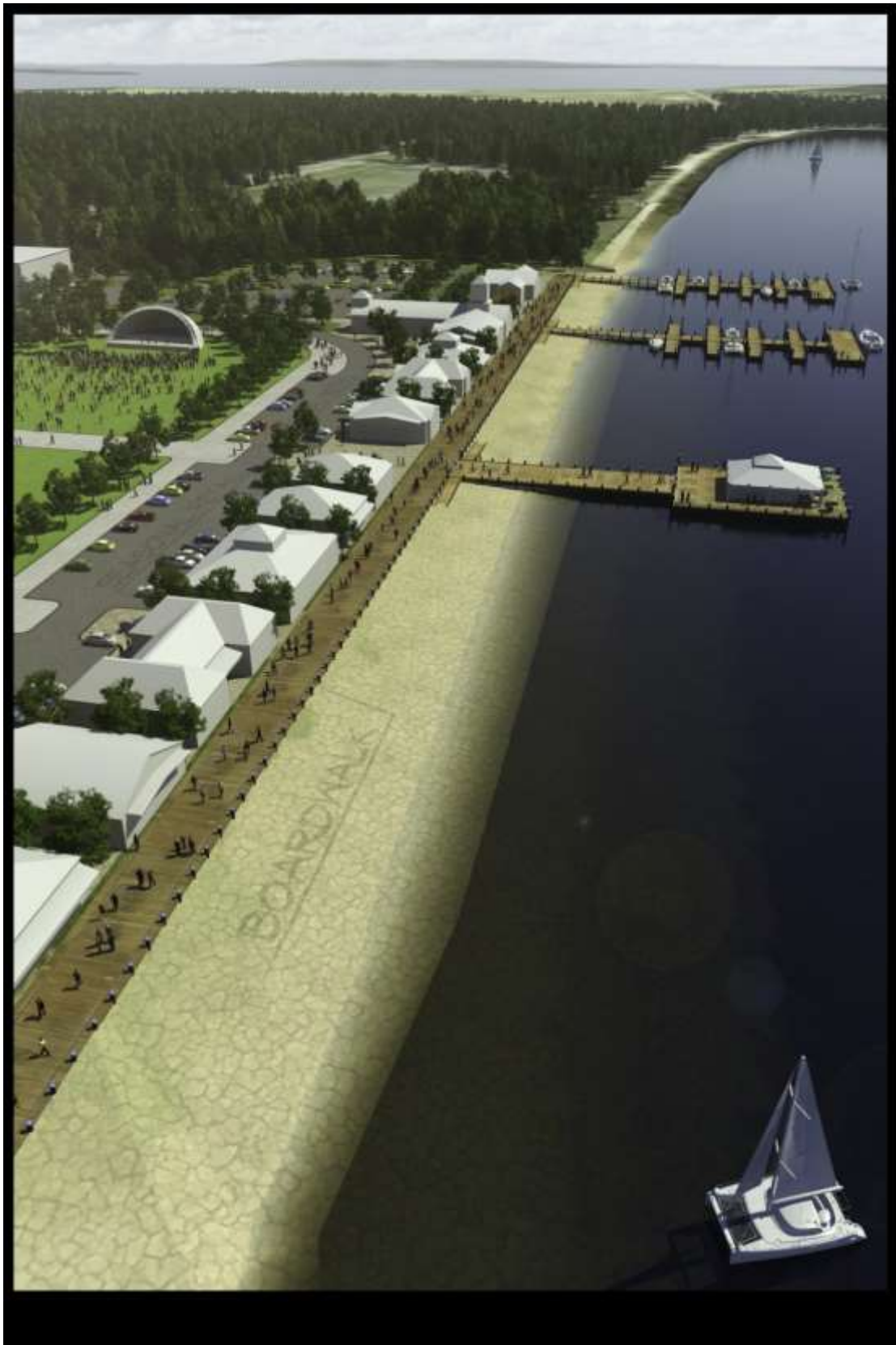
Building Partnerships

The Beach Development Committee, a subcommittee of the Strategic Tourism Planning Committee (STPC), presented this concept to many local organizations and municipalities to build consensus and excitement about the proposed development. Growing support of the beach development vision spans two states and includes:

- **City of Plattsburgh Mayor & Common Council** – The city passed a resolution in March 2012 approving the STPC as an agent for the city of Plattsburgh to act on its behalf “to pursue the legal, environmental and economic feasibility of developing the City Beach property for public and private uses.”
- **Town of Plattsburgh** – The town passed a resolution in April 2012 supporting the proposed development along the shores of Lake Champlain in the Cumberland Bay area.
- **Clinton County** – The county legislature passed a resolution in May 2012 supporting the proposed development of the City Beach as it would “enhance our community by increasing recreational and private-use opportunities to residents and visitors alike, and in doing so bolster the economy of the region.”
- **Lake Champlain Basin Program** – In February 2013, the Beach Development Committee first met with representatives from the Lake Champlain Basin Program’s New York Citizens Advisory Committee and Lake Champlain Sea Grant Institute. Since then, select members of each group have formed the “Discovery Center Committee” to focus solely on the development of the world-class museum and interpretive center.
- **AES Northeast** – AES, a Plattsburgh-based architecture and engineering firm, brought Santec Planning and Landscape Architecture to the table. The two organizations donated more than 240 hours of time to develop the concept drawing of the city beach from provided narrative, an in-kind donation exceeding \$31,000.
- **War of 1812 Museum & Battle of Plattsburgh Association** – The Battle of Plattsburgh Association which operates the War of 1812 Museum, supports the concept of the beach development and creation of a world-class anchor museum. Post 2014, and the bicentennial of the Battle of Plattsburgh, the museum has offered its collections and artifacts to be moved to and exhibited in the Discovery Center.



Artist rendering of proposed beach development, courtesy AES & Santec



Artist rendering of proposed boardwalk and retail sites, courtesy AES & Santec

Proposed Project Outline

It's important to emphasize that the plan to develop the 99-acre beach parcel is in its early stages of conceptualization. The process to develop this plan will involve an extensive amount of community input to evolve the plan to best benefit residents and attract visitors. Below are some of the initial concepts discussed that would help the beach parcel meet its greatest potential, for residents and visitors, while ensuring year round activity and sustainability.

Criteria for Uses

To ensure year round activity and sustainability, it is important that the criteria to qualify uses on this property are tourism related. Any use limited to local residents can be better served in another location suitable for the intended purpose but that does not necessitate a high quality commercial site like the proposed beach development.



Sketch of Battle of Plattsburgh, Library of Congress

PUBLIC USES

World-class Museum & Regional Interpretive Center, aka *"The Discovery Center"*

In the end, no other site has the value – or potential – that the beach site offers to make the proposed museum and regional interpretative center a success. The desire to repurpose the Crete Civic Center versus the need for building a dedicated structure has been discussed.

Conversations surrounding the Discovery Center have also touched upon:

- As there is no regional visitor center north of Lake George, it is important to seriously consider incorporating a regional visitor's center into the concept
- An adjacent man-made pond for ship/fleet construction from our historic battles
- A replica of the Spitfire (sunk at the Battle of Valcour and currently at the bottom of Lake Champlain) incorporated into an aquatic feature with fish indigenous to Lake Champlain
- A large window installed on the lake side of the building to project the Battle of Plattsburgh either by a painting (low tech/low cost) or by a computerized projection (preferable) showing the battle occurring on the lake where it actually happened

Note: It is well understood that the Crete Civic Center is now used for indoor youth soccer and generates considerable revenue for the City. It is also understood that an alternative location could be identified that is better suited to the needs of the soccer program. Potentially a new location can be identified for a new soccer facility that could host lucrative soccer tournaments ultimately serving the needs of residents while attracting more visitors to our area.

Boardwalk

The proposed boardwalk could stretch along the sandy areas providing access the beach and linking various uses and sites. Seating areas along the boardwalk could be themed by artists to celebrate our core strengths.

Festival/Concert Area

An amphitheater and ample green space could be used for music and food festivals as well as seasonal events and activities.

Nature Trails

From a land planning standpoint, different sections of the beach property would be used for their best use. Accordingly, the wetland areas could offer walking, biking and rollerblading in the summer months and cross country skiing in the winter. This natural setting could also be enhanced with additional plantings and tying it into the botanical gardens.

Botanical Garden

Again applying the highest and best use concept to each parcel, the dunes area could be developed into a botanical garden with appropriate plantings. Local colleges could be enlisted to help develop this concept.

Canal System

A canal system could be used for paddling in the summer months along with possible docking of boats and provide a unique ice skating experience in the winter. Weaving a canal through the retail area would enhance the value of the site for retail thus making it more marketable to businesses and attractive to visitors.

Sledding Hill/Sightseeing Tower

The former dump site could be bulldozed into one large mound, appropriately capped and repurposed for snow sledding in the winter months. An observation tower erected at the top of the hill would provide one of the best views in the region year round.



Artist renderings of proposed beach development, courtesy AES & Santec



Artist rendering of proposed pier, courtesy AES & Santec

Piers

Several piers are proposed to draw people to the waterfront. A pier to be used in connection with one of the waterfront restaurants would provide a much sought after dining experience. A second pier could also deliver water access via canoe and kayak rental, a launch site or fishing spot.

Water Shuttle

Much discussion has revolved around the inclusion of a water shuttle or taxi to move people to/from the beach development site to their own larger watercraft anchored in the bay or to provide service between the site and Wilcox Dock, Dock Street Landing, downtown Plattsburgh or other key locations.

PRIVATE USES

Retail

We will study and prioritize what would be the most attractive retail use at the beach site. As undeveloped land along the Route 3 corridor is still the more conventional choice for retailers, destination-type retail outlet stores are an attractive and feasible alternative. Stores such as Bass Pro Shop or Cabela's are also destination retailers that may fit this market well and have year round appeal.



Boardwalk

The boardwalk would have areas of family oriented entertainment.

Restaurant/Entertainment

A restaurant/entertainment district would be stretch along the boardwalk facing Lake Champlain.

Hotel Site

Consideration should be given to a 125-room hotel with a restaurant and bar offering prime water views and access. Bid specifications should require a full service restaurant/bar as part of the hotel to ensure year round activity.

Public/Private Partnership

The entire beach development is conceptualized to be a true public – private partnership. Ideally, land ownership would be retained by the City of Plattsburgh and parcels could be subdivided and sold and/or leased to different entities.

The proposed uses would combine public park recreational uses with private development geared toward retail, entertainment and recreation. There is historical support for this concept at the beach site; the only difference is this proposal is on a much larger scale.



Municipal Benefits

The City/Town could raise substantial revenue by selling or land leasing portions for development, retail use, hotel site, restaurant/entertainment district, entertainment uses along the boardwalk, and the festival and concert use. Hopefully, the city would provide a free long term lease to the not for profit that would run the Crete building as an Interpretive Center museum (along with the land/buildings which would surround the pond. This would enable the not for profit to receive rent from the land/buildings ensuring the long term financial success of the not for profit who would operate the Interpretative Center).

Building Design/Zoning Regulations

The planning organization for the site would draft building design/zoning type regulations to ensure the quality of the overall development. It will be very important to have an integrated **appearance** of the structures built on the site. For example, the buildings surrounding the pond where the ship(s) are proposed to be built would be period buildings from the Battle of Plattsburgh era to enhance the immersive historical experience.

The quality of the development would require the restaurant/entertainment district buildings and the structures along the boardwalk that would be used for family entertainment to have a consistent integrated design that would be visually appealing.

Further, as we continue to develop paddling, fishing and boating as strong activities for visitors—those same activities will become even easier for our already “outdoor oriented” population to enjoy.

We will spend a great deal of energy on the corridor between Dock Street landing and downtown Plattsburgh – revitalizing it and making it both visitor and pedestrian friendly. That connection includes the new Saranac River Trail, expanding on this already great local opportunities, to embrace both the lake and the river.



Proposed Work Plan

The ideal work plan for the next phase of this project would include a full blown, comprehensive feasibility study. Basic components of such a study would include items such as:

- A comprehensive site inventory and analysis
- Analysis of the clean-up/remediation of former dump site including Phase 1 and Phase 2 Environmental assessments
- Archeological assessments
- A review of city zoning, state regulations, and recommend design guidelines
- Updated boundary and topographic survey
- Automobile parking and circulation analysis
- Loading and access for Crete Center
- Water taxi to the downtown
- Expansion/replacement/relocation of existing wetlands
- Entrance gateway sign, directional, informational and regulatory signs
- Address how this site will be linked or integrated with other city and state waterfront assets
- Market and economic analysis for retail, hospitality, restaurants, entertainment venues
- Develop preliminary estimates for construction and operating budgets for the proposed improvements
- Form-based development guidelines; assistance in rebranding the entire development
- Create detailed vision for incorporating – and connecting to – historic corridor downtown

See page 14 for a more detailed analysis of the proposed work plan.

Funding the Work Plan

Following a recommendation by the STPC, the City of Plattsburgh applied for and was awarded a Waterfront Revitalization Grant in the amount of \$32,000. Once released, those funds will be used to begin completing the various components necessary to study the proposed beach site development.

In fall 2013, a second round of grant funding, a total of \$300,000, will be awarded to additional waterfront revitalizations projects that advance the Clinton County Destination Master Plan. We're confident that this project will receive additional funding to help us address the additional components detailed on page 14.



Plattsburgh City Beach, circa 1960

Proposed Work Plan

(Broken Down by Components - Not Necessarily In Correct Order of Work)

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
1	<p>SITE INVENTORY ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN. The consultant shall prepare an inventory that describes the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational resources in the project area. Work shall include identification and mapping of components identified during the project scoping, including but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing land and water uses; • Land ownership, including underwater lands; • Discussion of the process involving the ALIENATION AND CONVERSION OF MUNICIPAL PARK LANDS in relation to this project • Natural resources (wetlands, floodplains, riparian corridors, mature forests, significant habitat, etc.) based on existing records (no actual field investigations); • Description of ecological communities on site and assessment of functional quality; • Key buildings, including gross square footage, original use, current use, and ownership; • Public access and recreational resources, including boat and fishing access; • Transportation routes, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities; • Parking facilities; • Infrastructure (including water supply, wastewater treatment and power); • Scenic resources and view corridors; • Topography, soils and surface geology; • Hydrology and water quality; • Shoreline conditions; • Zoning and other relevant local development controls. <p>The inventory and analysis will consist of both maps and narrative information which describes the resources identified and evaluated. The inventory and analysis will be largely based on existing plans and other sources of information, including comprehensive plans, scenic byway corridor management plans, county plans, and Geographic Information System data. The consultant shall submit the draft inventory and analysis to the City’s Project Advisory Committee for review and approval, and shall incorporate the City’s Project Advisory Committee comments into the final inventory and analysis.</p>	\$20,000
2	UP TO DATE BOUNDARY AND TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE PROPERTY INCLUDING LOCATION OF FLOODPLAINS, FLOOD HAZARD AREAS BOUNDARIES, BASE FLOOD ELEVATIONS, AND OFFICIAL WETLAND DELINEATIONS.	\$15,000
3	PHASE 1 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES (HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES, SOLID WASTE, ETC.).	\$15,000
4	PHASE 2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.	\$30,000
5	PHASE 1 ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE ARCHEOLOGICAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES, AND TO WHAT EXTENT FUTURE PROTECTION OF THOSE RESOURCES IS REQUIRED.	\$10,000
6	MARKET AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS FOR RETAIL, HOSPITALITY, RESTAURANTS, ENTERTAINMENT VENUES.	\$30,000
7	REMAINING COMPONENTS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY: Automobile parking and circulation analysis; Loading and access for Crete Center; Water taxi to the downtown; Expansion/replacement/relocation of existing wetlands; Entrance gateway sign, directional, informational and regulatory signs; Address how this site will be linked or integrated with other City and State waterfront assets; Develop preliminary estimates for construction and operating budgets for the proposed improvements; Form-based development guidelines; Assistance in rebranding the entire development.	\$30,000
	TOTAL:	\$150,000