MICHIGAN
OCZM GRANT #NA-80-AA-H-CZ157
SUBTASK 40-10.4 B

PETOSKEY BAYFRONT PARK

SB485.P48 1982 pt.2

SB
485
.P48
P48
1982
ad pt.2

cument was prepared in part
nancial assistance provided by
Zone Management Act of 1972
ie Office of Coastal Zone Management
iic and Atmospheric Administration

The Setting

Petoskey Overview

Petoskey is a city blessed with many assets. The city's coastal location and dramatic topography contribute to the attractive and unique setting of the city. A well-maintained and vital central business district anchors the town's economy. Colorful historic buildings and the well-known gaslights provide a comfortable setting for local and visiting shoppers. Tree-lined, compact neighborhoods border the downtown, offering a nearby population, which supports the city center.

Public and private institutions are another important factor in Petoskey's community strengths. Northern Michigan hospitals and the Burns Medical Clinic provide medical services rivaling more metropolitan places. North Central Michigan College presents a wide range of vocational and educational opportunities. The Virginia McCune Arts Center and the Little Traverse Historical Museum are locally supported cultural facilities.

The Petoskey waterfront and the Bear River are a portion of this city's valuable features. The Bear River provides a rustic, natural setting in the middle of an urban environment. Fishermen gather at the river's mouth each spring and fall. The unrealized potential for this park is significant, since the city owns or controls much of the river's edge.

The fate of Petoskey's waterfront is also in the hands of the community. Nearly half of the city's waterfront area is owned, or controlled, by the municipality. A public marina is situated east of the Bear River mouth with the Historical Museum and two baseball fields in this area as well. The variety of uses has generated continued interest in the waterfront of Petoskey.

Petoskey's waterfront offers a unique opportunity to provide public access to the Little Traverse Bay. Public improvements to the site will be utilized by residents and visitors alike. Improving the appearance of the waterfront will enhance the image of Petoskey as a city gifted with many resources.

Historic Waterfront

The Bear River was tapped for its natural resources even before the white man arrived. Chief Petosega, after whom the city is named, was reputed to have killed forty bear per month on the river during his youth. Undoubtedly, the river was a scene for fur trapping and fishing during initial white settlement. The Little Traverse Bay was a great fishing resource as well, via the waterfront.

The Petoskey waterfront was a place for religious practices amongst the Indians and white man alike. The oldest building in Petoskey still stands at its original site on the waterfront. The St. Francis Solanus Indian Mission Church remains as an artifact of early Christian settlement in Petoskey.

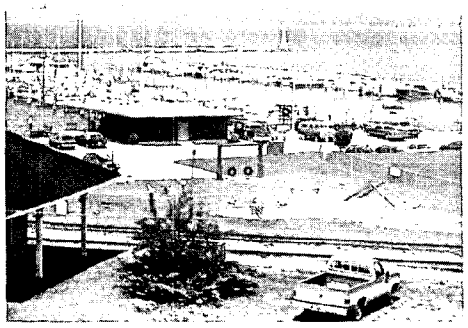
Changes in the uses of the waterfront and Bear River were accelerated as a result of the Industrial Revolution. In 1866, John W. Cook began building and renting boats on the waterfront. Around the same time period limestone mining and kiln operations were introduced at the east end of the waterfront. Other waterfront businesses included ice storage, coral and agate works, and commerical fisheries. By the 1880's, the commercial fisheries were boxing and freezing 15-20 tons of fish per day.

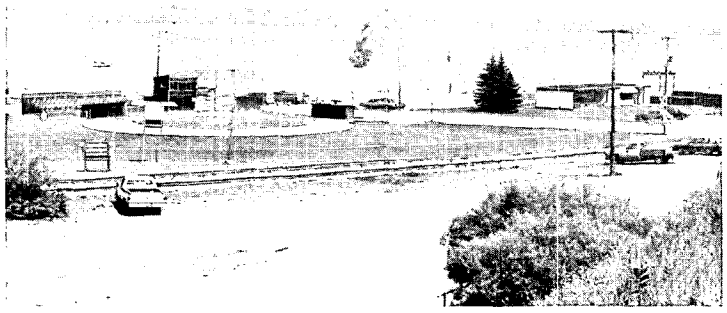
Bear River industries of this era were largely wood products. Logs were usually floated down to the waterfront for shipping. Wood pulp and paper products were manufactured as well. A flour and grist mill was sited on the Bear River at this time.

Another important influence upon the river and waterfront was the 19th Century boom in transportation technology. In the 1870's, four different passenger steamboats continuously made stops in Petoskey. The G.R.& I Limited and Suburban Railroad Depot was handling 90 "dummy" trains per day in 1902. In 1895, the Army Corps of Engineers built the breakwater to protect Petoskey's harbor.

These transportation improvements generated a new form of economic growth in the Petoskey region. Persons living in the industrial cities of the Midwest could ride a train to northern Michigan to "restore" physical and mental health. Mineral wells at the mouth of the Bear River were believed to provide lifegiving water. Spas, bathhouses and resort hotels were built to accommodate the tourists.

The forties saw the introduction of the ballparks to the waterfront as recreational use of the area grew. In 1950, the Municipal Dock was constructed, followed by the bathhouse construction in 1968. Finally, in the early sixties Sunset Boulevard "bypass" was constructed between the waterfront and the central business district. While it did much to improve through traffic and circulation, it separated the waterfront from the community. Even today, full utilization of the waterfront in the future continues to be dependent on reducing the barrier effect of the "bypass."





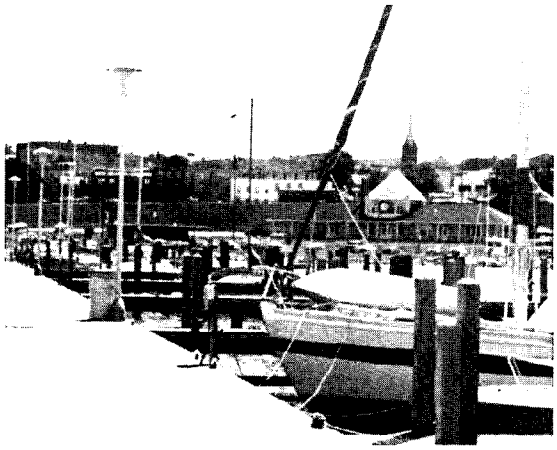
The Plan

Planning Process

In the early seventies, the Water Resources and Development Commission was formed in order to initiate planning activities for the waterfront and Bear River. The Commission identified a need to organize present and future improvements on the waterfront. In 1980, the Commission, with the assistance of the City Planner, prepared the Waterfront Concept Plan as a means to establish priorities regarding use and development of the waterfront.

The plan documents primary and secondary goals that should continue to guide development of the waterfront. The primary goals included the following: 1) enhance and preserve the environmental qualities of the waterfront, 2) promote and enhance the waterfront for recreation uses, and 3) encourage community unity and participation regarding waterfront development. The secondary goals define means by which the primary goals may be achieved, and include the following: 1) provide for and manage circulation of waterfront users, 2) link the waterfont to other key areas of the city, 3) provide adequate access to the waterfront, 4) provide appropriate facilities for waterfront users, 5) reduce land use and activity conflicts, 6) promote use of the waterfront for educational and cultural purposes, and 7) reduce maintenance and operation costs.

The Waterfront Concept Plan indicates that environmental improvements to the waterfront are the highest priority of the Commission. Funding was secured through the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program to hire a landscape design firm for preparation of the more detailed plans contained in part in this summary brochure.



The development plan for the Petoskey waterfront is based upon the guidelines set forth by the Waterfront Resources and Development Commission for short-medium range improvements. The plan, as illustrated, includes those projects that are implementable without requiring extensive land acquisition and assembly, and can therefore, be programmed with a reasonable degree of certainty.

The plan is an illustrative representation of the form and character possible for the waterfront area. While the plan is purposely detailed to convey design intent, it should be considered only as a guide to development. The future is likely to bring changes in philosophy, requirements, and opportunities. Therefore, flexibility is inherent in the plan to allow revisions as individual projects are funded and final design detailing is accomplished.

The basic components of the plan are organized as follows:

Roadway and Parking Improvements
Central Park Improvements
Bear River Improvements
East Park Improvements

Roadway and Parking

Entrance and Marina View Area. This project consists of a new roadway and short term parking area at the shoreline of the marina basin to allow visitors a direct access to the waterfront. The project also includes a paved shoreline pedestrian area with benches for water viewing, fishing, etc.

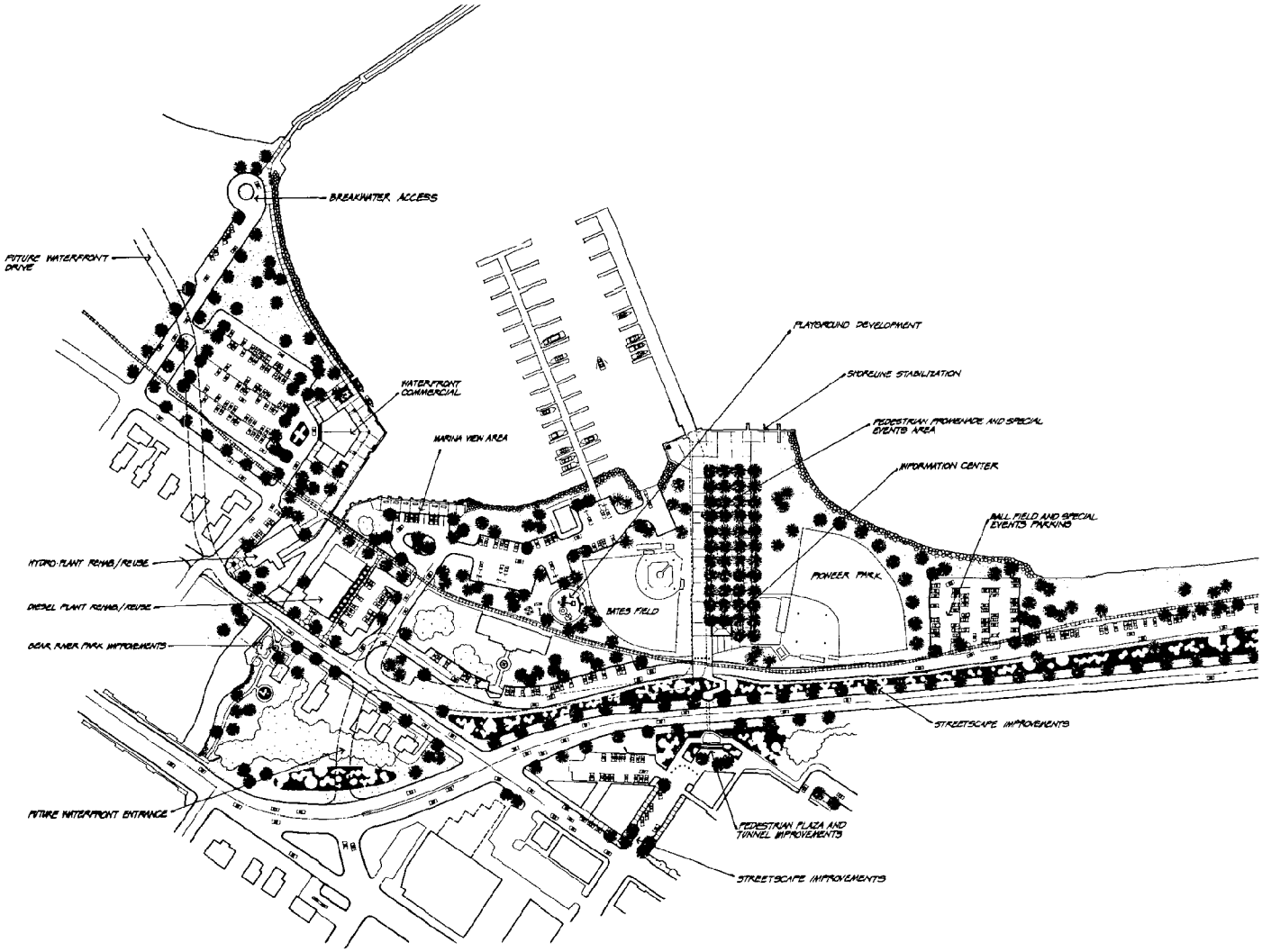
East Park Access Road and Parking. This project consists of an improved paved roadway connection from the main park entrance at Lake Street to the foot of the overlook park area to provide vehicular access to the east park activity area. Parking for the informal day use and arboretum areas will be provided along the roadway.

Ball Field and Special Events Parking. This project consists of a paved parking area for approximately 75 cars adjacent to the adult softball field. The parking is intended to alleviate present congestion in the central area and to replace parking that will be lost due to construction of the pedestrian promenade.

Breakwater Access. This project consists of constructing a permanent roadway extension of Wachtel Avenue from Quinlan Street to the foot of the breakwater to provide improved vehicular access. The project also includes a turn-around and short term parking spaces.

Central Park

Pedestrian Plaza and Tunnel Improvements. This project consists of significant improvements to the approaches to the pedestrian tunnel on both sides of U.S. 31 and the creation of barrier free circulation between downtown and the waterfront park area. The Bay and Petoskey Streets intersection will be removed to allow development of a pedestrian plaza including planters, benches, special pavings, decorative lighting, etc. as a terminus to the special downtown shopping area. On the waterfront side a system of planters and ramps will provide access from the tunnel to the main pedestrian promenade and special events area.



Streetscape Improvements (Petoskey-Lake Streets). This project consists of improvements to the sidewalks at the corner of Petoskey and Lake Streets and along Petoskey Street to the tunnel entrance plaza. Removal of a minimal number of parking spaces will allow expansion of the sidewalk and introduction of special sidewalk paving and street trees.

Pedestrian Promenade and Special Events Area. This project consists of removal of the roadway between the ball fields and the construction of a major pedestrian walkway between the tunnel ramps and the public pier. A walkway grid, lawn panels, shade trees, and benches adjacent to the promenade will provide areas for special events such as art shows, antique fairs, etc. This space is intended as the major pedestrian focus and activity area of the central park.

Information Center. This building, located at the beginning of the pedestrian promenade, will contain approximately 900 square feet and is intended as an information dissemination and convenience center for visitors to the park. The building will include a display and meeting area, public restrooms, and food and drink concessions. In addition, tickets for special activities such as train rides, boat tours, etc. will be sold in the building.

Shoreline Stabilization. This project will be integral with full construction of the pedestrian promenade and will consist of stabilization of the eroding shoreline with a combination of structural sea walls and rock revetments. In addition, moderate land filling behind the revetment will create an expanded setting for the softball field and parking area.

Playground Development. This project consists of an expanded integrative play area in the location of the existing tot lot. The development will include creative play equipment, open play area, seating area for adults, and potential special features such as sculpture, drinking fountain, spray pool, etc.

Council Bluff Area Development. This project consists of earthwork and grading to reshape the existing landform to remove vehicular access and eliminate bluff erosion due to the steep shoreline slope. Stabilization of the area will include planting of new lawn, native shrubs and shade trees.

Picnic Sites. This project involves development of a series of picnic pods, including paved pad, table, and grill throughout the informal use zone near the council bluff area and overlook park.

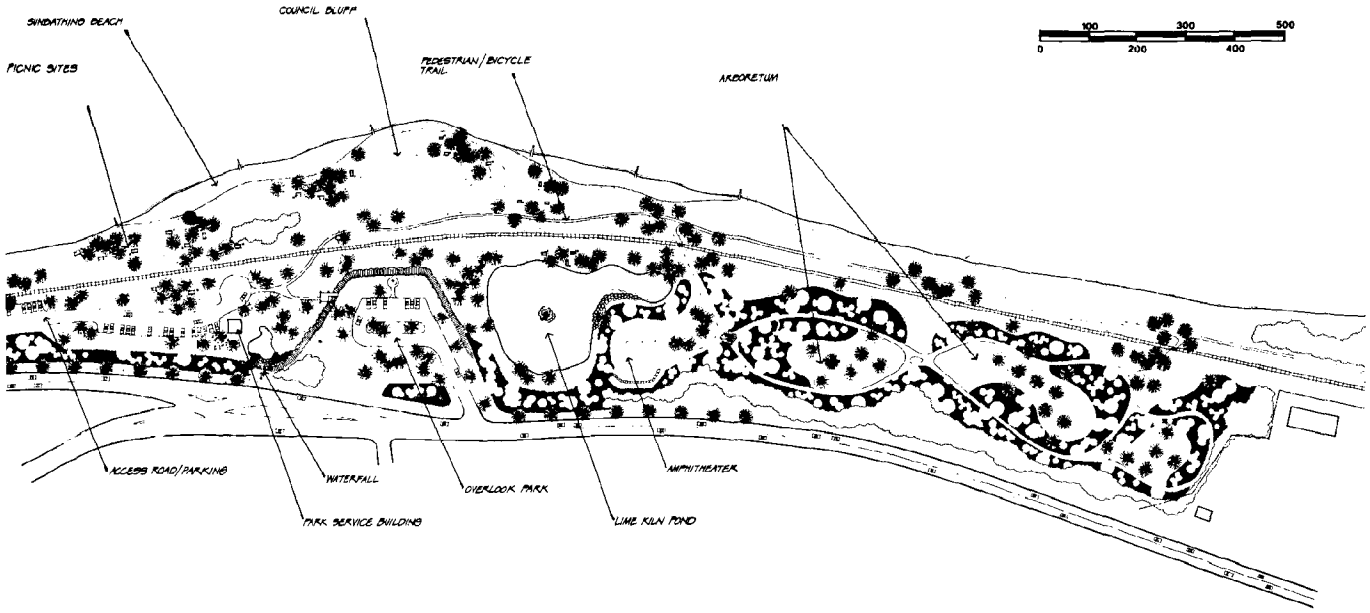
Sunbathing Beach. This project consists of two sand sunbathing beaches on either side of the council bluff area. Construction will include reshaping landward of the shoreline, sand fill, and installation of a groin system.

Park Service Building. This structure, located near the turnaround at the end of the east park access road, will contain approximately 400 square feet, and is intended to serve the picnic areas, sunbathing beaches and east park activities. The building will include public restrooms, concessions, and storage space.

Waterfall Area. Improvements to the waterfall area will include reconstruction of the storm sewer outlet pipe, installation of natural plantings, and excavation of a small pond at the base of the waterfall. Redevelopment of this area will create a significant feature for the terminus of the east park access road.

MASTER PLAN
PETOSKEY BAYFRONT PARK
City of Petoskey, Michigan

Petoskey Water Resources and Development Commission
Beckett and Raeder Inc. Landscape Architects and Planners



Bear River Area

Bear River Park Improvements. This project consists of renovations and additions to the Bear River Park area between Mitchell and Lake Streets. Development will include a new entrance plaza as the beginning of a future pedestrian walkway along the Bear River Corridor. The main feature of the plaza will be a sculptured fountain utilizing water flow from an existing artesian spring. Other features of the park will include new walkways, improved plantings, riverbank stabilization, and a wood fishing and observation deck at the head of the spillway.

City Utility Buildings. This project consists of adaptive renovation and re-use of the existing hydro and diesel plant buildings at the rivermouth. Land use strategies suggest use of one of the buildings for public activities such as meetings, indoor recreation, etc., and use of the other building for private offices or commercial venture such as a restaurant. Re-use of the buildings is a key component of the plan to create greater activity in this area of the waterfront.

Waterfront Commercial. This project consists of private sector development of a special commercial facility at the rivermouth on property presently owned by the city and property to be purchased by the city and/or developer. The development may include a restaurant and specialty shops along with a public shoreline walkway with benches, landscaping, visitor boat moorings, etc. to encourage as great a public access to the shoreline as possible.

East Park

Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail. This project consists of a paved trail from the east park access road turn-around to the railroad r.o.w. at the eastern boundary of the park. This section of trail will be a part of the future "Little Traverse Bikeway."

Overlook Park Improvements. This project consists of improvements to the overlook park area to establish a waterfront orientation area for visitors to the community. Improvements will include a paved access drive and overlook parking area, landscaping, identification signage, and a waterfront map and directory.

Lime Kiln Pond. This project consists of a clean-up and reshaping of the pond and adjacent areas including grading and filling, bank stabilization and landscaping consistent with the intended natural character of the area. Also included is a special feature water jet in the pond to provide aeration and a visual focus.

Amphitheater. This project consists of a grassed area for informal performances adjacent to the pond. Improvements will include earthwork and grading, terracing and landscaping to create a secluded setting.

Arboretum. This project consists of selected plantings of native and ornamental trees, shrubs, and ground covers and overall landscaping of the entire east park area. The intent is to achieve a long range vegetative cover of the barren areas for informal activities such as nature study, walking, jogging, etc.

The Pieces

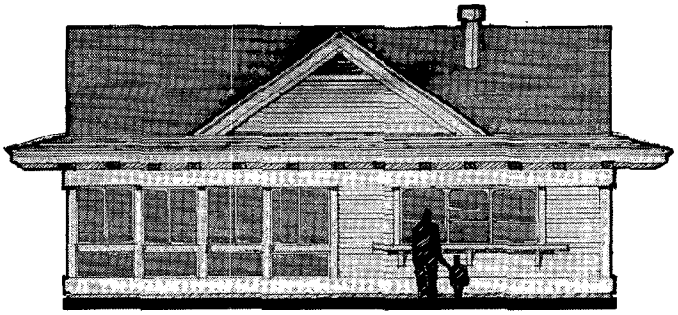
The detailing of any plan is a critical step in the transformation of the plan idea into reality and can literally "make or break" even the best designs. The quality of detailing, coupled with the quality of construction, establishes the character and aesthetic appeal of a project, as well as whether the project is in harmony with its surroundings.

This is of particular importance on the Petoskey waterfront as it is not a totally new project but rather a combination of new construction and rehabilitation of old. Both the improvements made to the existing facilities and all new construction must be in character and harmony with what is existing as well as with each other.

Petoskey is noted for its historic structures and for its small town atmosphere and the waterfront is designed to reinforce this. The plan recommends a reinforcing of this historic character for the waterfront by sympathetic new construction. This means the use of compatable construction materials and special attention to the design and construction of light fixtures, benches, signage, and other amenities.

Architecture

The architectural style proposed for new structures on the waterfront is influenced by the character of the Bear River Park Shelter House and the Historical Museum. Two new structures, an Information Center and a Park Service Building are included in the plan. The predominant building material for the structures will be wood and the concept for roof framing, window and door detailing, and facade development will emphasize the historic charm for which the community is noted.

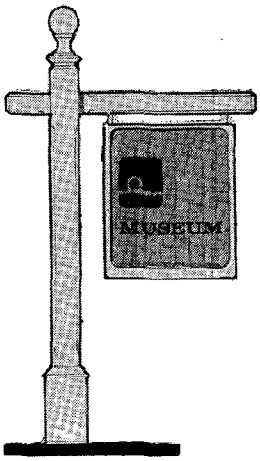


In addition to the new buildings, major renovation and reuse is proposed by the plan for the city utility buildings at the mouth of the Bear River. While private developer participation will be encouraged in redevelopment of the buildings, an attempt will not be made to transform or commercialize the structures by adding false skin-type facades or by creating new roof forms. Rather, the visual character will be modified while retaining the general integrity of the structures through the replacment of windows and doors, selective painting, and the addition of "soft" details such as window awnings, grill work, etc.

Signage

A key to the efficient functioning of the waterfront, as well as its visual image and sense of orientation to visitors, is a coordinated system of signage. The system proposed includes three levels of signage, park identification, facility identification, and traffic control.

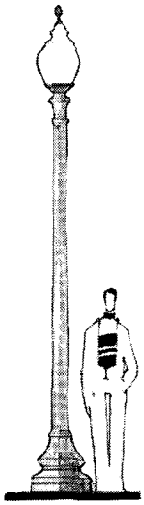
All signs will be specially fabricated of wood in a style consistent with the recommendations for new structures within the waterfront area.



Lighting

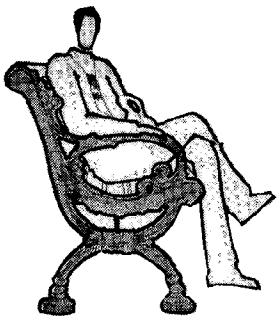
Lighting is a particularly important element in the design of the waterfront. As the use of strong design, color and materials is to create a special environment during the day, lighting must display and enhance that atmosphere at night. Lighting should add to a dynamic atmosphere identifying important elements and areas, and accent special features while producing a lighting level sufficient to insure safety and security.

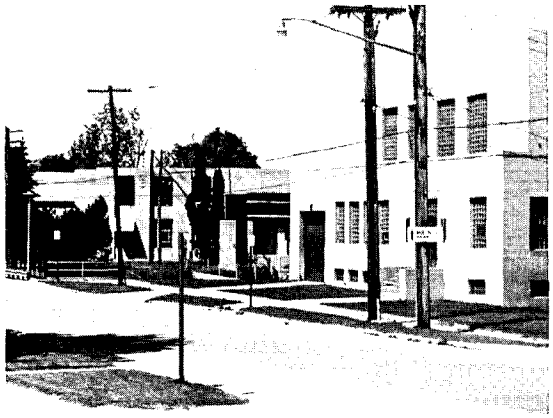
The lighting concept consists of a higher level of lighting in areas of high or concentrated pedestrian use such as the tunnel entrance plaza and main promenade. In addition to higher levels of light, a special fixture is recommended to add interest and detail to the environment. The suggested "promenade light" consists of a cast iron standard and acorn globe, both of a style historically compatible with the promenade bench and Information Center architecture.



Furniture

Furniture within the waterfront area will consist of benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains and special amenities such as sculpture and art. Standard Petoskey benches of wood and concrete will be located throughout the waterfront. A special bench of wood with decorative cast iron end supports is recommended for the pedestrian promenade. Trash receptacles and drinking fountains will be coordinated as to materials and design character. Sculpture and pieces of art may be used throughout the area to add color, interest, and variety. The type of piece may range from a commissioned work by an established artist or design school to an interesting antique or unique piece of machinery.





Planting

Planting, along with the repetition of paving materials, signage, lighting, and furniture, is an element that will help pull together the many facets of the waterfront design. In the context of a variety of architectural styles, activity areas, and special features, the plantings will serve to unify the whole of the area while softening the "hardness" of the more intensively developed pedestrian areas.

The predominant plant material will be shade trees, planted formally along U.S. 31 and within the pedestrian promenade and informally in open lawn areas and as the basic structure of the arboretum

In special pedestrian areas plants may include flowering trees, shrubs, and ground covers to provide a wider variety of textures and color.

The arboretum is intended to be a collection of a complete range of hardy materials and will provide an ideal opportunity for volunteer participation by individuals, groups, or organizations.

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER LIBRARY
3 6668 14104 8357

This brochure was funded in part through financial assistance provided by the Office of Coastal Zone Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Department of Commerce, through funds provided under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (PL 92-583). And administered by:

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Chris Shafer, In Charge, Coastal Zone Management Unit
Dave Warner, Project Representative

City of Petoskey
Joe Kilborn, Mayor
Steven Hoffner, City Manager
Bradley Leech, City Planner

Petoskey Water Resources and Development Commission
Brent Billideau, Chairman
Stephen Selden
Rick Neumann
Harry Miller
Sally Clark
Glynn Becker
Ed White
Maxine Gingras

Beckett and Raeder Inc.
Landscape Architects and Planners
Ann Arbor, Michigan