

# North waterfront

**The North Waterfront district is a significant civic asset to the City of Burlington, serving as the community's front lawn. Numerous opportunities exist to strengthen the downtown's connection with this important recreational area.**

## 1. Battery Park

Battery Park is an important civic space as well as an archeologically sensitive area with the possibility for human remains dating back to its use as a military encampment and hospital during the War of 1812. Interpreting and celebrating this rich history presents an opportunity to restore and rethink this important site. At the northern end of the park is an opportunity to help frame and better define the park space with a capstone building at Sherman Street which could be used to consolidate and relocate a number of public safety structures into a central campus for the City. This could include, but is not limited to, a new consolidated fire station and/or expansion for the police department. Regardless of the occupant, there is great value in locating a building here that can define and help to activate this northern end of the park.

## 2. Battery Street

The existing layout and design of Battery Street from Battery Park to Maple Street is primarily geared towards the automobile, with very little amenities for cyclists and pedestrians. As such, the street creates an obstacle in the city's desire to better connect Church Street to the waterfront. A road diet or complete street project, reducing the predominance of car travel, could increase safety for bikes and pedestrians. Better and more frequent crossings, pedestrian island refuges and bike lanes are examples of improvements that would certainly allow for easier connection.

## 3. depot street

The master plan calls for Depot Street to be kept as a pedestrian and bike connection between the waterfront and the neighborhoods on the bluff to the North. The street should continue to serve as a release valve after major waterfront events or for emergencies, enabling low-speed traffic to exit onto North Avenue. The intersection at the top of Depot Street with North Avenue will require intervention to increase safety and traffic flow.

## 4. Stairway streets

Between Depot and College streets there are no formal connections down the escarpment between Battery and Lake streets. Several opportunities to create stairs, formalized trails or even the possibility a funicular has been discussed for years. The Master Plan calls for a series of connections beginning with Sherman Street and including Pearl, Cherry and possibly Bank streets. While envisioned mostly as staircases, mechanical conveyances such as a funicular or elevators within a parking structure could provide accessibility for those with mobility impairments, located at the most prominent connection points, such as the foot of Pearl and/or Cherry streets.

## 5. Waterfront Park

If Church Street is Burlington's living room, then Waterfront Park is the front lawn. This space plays a significant role in the civic life of the city, hosting the community's most celebrated and signature events throughout the year. The park isn't the site of a weekend festival; it is used by many for quiet contemplation, sunbathing or a impromptu game of Frisbee. Everyone enjoys the beautiful views of the Adirondacks across the lake, and additional facilities for children to play and more seating areas for users to simply relax and enjoy the space should be added. There are several opportunities to reimagine the park's open spaces as clearly defined "rooms" that facilitate specific functions. A new structure is shown at the mid-point of the park between the large open event space to the north and the promenade/lawn to the south. This structure and other landscaping and design elements are intended to differentiate the two spaces from one another, and create an entrance into the event area where ticketing and access control

can be focused. A new building is shown at the far northern end of the park to provide a clear focal point and termination to the open space. This structure could be used to house many of the support services necessary to manage park events such as public restrooms, storage, public safety, event operations, and should stay open in winter months to support nearby outdoor ice skating. In addition, the Master Plan shows the bike path relocated from the middle of the park, with two new routes, one along the water and another along the rail line. This will allow the path to remain open during events. The plan also recommends the use of plantings that provide for open views of the Lake and the addition of stairs that step down into the Lake to allow people to sit closer to the water.

#### 6. waterfront parking structure

Almost nothing is as sensitive a topic as parking – especially on or near the waterfront. It is a “necessary evil” to support public events and activities, yet using this most cherished part of our city to store cars should be handled carefully. If parking is going to be located on our waterfront, it must be within a structure that is hidden. The master plan illustrates two opportunities for parking structures on the waterfront, both wrapped with street level retail and upper story housing or office uses. One structure is shown tucked into the hillside below Battery Street with access only from Battery Street. The parking structure could also provide a needed connection over the embankment at the foot of Pearl Street via an elevator. The building should be designed with a green roof that provides public access to 270-degree views of the waterfront, lake, and mountains. The Lake Street level could also be designed to accommodate the large delivery trucks that need a place to go during events. The other potential garage location is below the southern section of Lake Street, with access from College Street and possibly Lake Street near Main Street. These structures would allow nearby surface parking lots to be redeveloped into civic spaces and mixed-use buildings to further activate the waterfront.

#### 7. mixed-use village

New buildings create an opportunity for additional retail, restaurant, office, and residential uses, critical to expanding the vitality of the waterfront into all four seasons. A collection of smaller complementary buildings should be carefully stitched into the fabric of the existing warehouse structures along Lake Street to create a rich mix of activity and an interesting series of outdoor spaces enclosed by these new and old buildings. This area could target knowledge-based businesses, with housing for employees located in nearby buildings, in the character of a factory town where employee housing was located walking distance to work.

#### 8. moran center

The redevelopment of the Moran Plant has been a long-held desire, yet elusive challenge for the City. It's expansive size and rich history presents a tremendous opportunity for creative adaptive reuse that can serve as an important anchor of activity for the northern end of the waterfront. Potential uses are confined by the Public Trust Doctrine which strictly limits the nature of private use, virtually assuring some form of public access.

#### 9. seasonal skating rink

A seasonal skating rink can activate the northern end of Waterfront Park during the winter, while remaining open for impromptu frisbee, soccer, lounging and special events during warmer months. It's important that such an activity be supported with nearby public restrooms and some shelter from the wind coming off the lake, which could be accommodated in the potential building shown at the northern end of the park.

#### 10. waterfront PAVILLION

The Master Plan calls for a new civic building to be located at the corner of Lake and College streets, where currently there is a surface parking lot. The design of this open and flexible building is representative of the old rail station that once occupied a site nearby. Such a structure will be a defining icon for Burlington's waterfront and could be home to a winter farmers market, seasonal craft markets, indoor concerts, boat building, exhibition space, and more.

NOTES for TPUDC

- Waterfront Pavilion Rendering – Scale of the building needs to be reduce on the rendering to something that looks more like a 2 story building
- Master Plan map – make sure that all “potential buildings” are the darker brown color... some are the red brick color... change that