



# Summary Report

## Lake Superior Estuarium

March 4, 2024

Lake Superior Estuarium  
*Community Design Charrette*

In collaboration with:

City of Superior  
University of Wisconsin-Superior  
Lake Superior Reserve & Estuarium  
Douglas County  
The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension  
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**RIVER FALLS**

Land Use + Community Development



Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Community Vitality + Placemaking

*Signature Effort*



## Design Wisconsin Team

A research-based approach to community **placemaking**

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## Introduction

The University of Minnesota-Duluth, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension collaborated with the Lake Superior Estuarine Research Reserve to facilitate a 2-day visioning process on December 4-5, 2023. The purpose of this program was to develop a shared vision that celebrates connections to the water at the Estuarium and the surrounding context of Barker's Island. This document provides details as to the purpose, process, and outputs of that program. It is not a final plan, but the beginning of a conversation that identifies ideas that may lead to design and implementation of aspects of this vision.

## The Estuarium

The Estuarium ("estuary" + "museum") is a public science and interpretive learning center located on Barker's Island in Superior, Wisconsin. The facility and its programs are created with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), University of Wisconsin-Superior and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. Interactive displays provide education about the St. Louis River Estuary, Lake Superior, and the communities in the region.

## Waterway Benefits Study

This project grew out of the interest in communicating and applying the results of the Waterway Benefits Study. This study was led by PhD Candidate and the NOAA Lake Superior Reserve Margaret A. Davidson Fellow Molly Wick. The study focused on assessing cultural ecosystem services in the St. Louis River Estuary communities of Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin (Figure 1). Cultural Ecosystem Services (CES) are defined as the services that give rise to intangible benefits to human well-being. CES have great potential for informing beneficial and equitable environmental decision-making. Both social and environmental factors influence the delivery of specific sets of CES to specific beneficiary groups. To apply CES



Above: Waterway Benefits Study Area



for equitable decision-making in environmental justice contexts, an understanding of CES delivery across diverse populations is needed. The Waterway Benefits Study, conducted in 2022 and 2023, addressed this gap by applying mixed methods to assess perceived holistic CES and barriers to CES within a single community, across a range of socio-demographics. The study included a survey tool with quantitative and qualitative questions as well as 42 follow-up interviews with research participants.

The research showed that CES benefits and barriers to CES benefits are associated with socio-demographics. The most common CES benefit experiences included walking, appreciating aesthetics, socializing with others, and resting or relaxing, all of which are experiences generally accessible with few financial, knowledge, or physical requirements. Less common CES were associated with higher costs, knowledge, and/or physical requirements. Based on responses to short answer questions about barriers to CES experiences, twelve barrier theme categories were identified. These included, in order of frequency of citation among participants, access, environmental concerns, personal resources/privilege, communication and education, amenities, health and ability, social/people, safety, transportation, climate and weather, community programs and events, regulations and governance, and other. Detailed results of the study are forthcoming.

The Lake Superior Reserve developed this project to facilitate transfer of this research understanding and knowledge to community practitioners. In addition to improving the understanding of CES delivery broadly, the findings of this study can inform and improve local decision-making to improve the equity and access to benefits from water for the Twin Ports community. The Lake Superior Reserve offices and Lake Superior Estuarium, are located on Barker's Island, which is a center for local connection with the St. Louis River estuary. The Estuarium is situated alongside popular amenities including the Festival Park, Barker's Island Beach, a fishing pier, public dock, Marina, SS Meteor Museum, and a miniature golf course, all connected on a major cross-city trail. The Reserve and the City of Superior saw an opportunity for a placemaking effort to maximize City property to help increase universal accessibility and facilitate community connection to the estuary on the property around the Estuarium and Reserve, which is owned by the City. The placemaking effort helps both disseminate research results to community members and decision-makers and helps demonstrate the fundamental connection and relationships between the community and the waterways of the region.



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## Design Wisconsin

Design Wisconsin is a community design program offered by the University of Wisconsin-Extension's Community Vitality & Placemaking Team—a "Signature Effort" that combines best practices and expertise from applied research in community development, economic development, natural resources, positive youth development, organizational and leadership development, and sustainability. Design Wisconsin helps communities identify and visualize their short-, medium-, and long-range visions. University of Wisconsin educators and specialists worked with local high school students to facilitate the process. Outputs from this process can be used to inspire and guide positive community change.

## The Community Design Charrette

A charrette is a brief and intense period of public participation, planning, and design. By compressing planning activities into a short period of time, ideas are generated quickly with enthusiasm that can create momentum for implementation. Because the final presentation includes hand-drawn illustrations of the shared vision, community members can quickly grasp concepts and be motivated to pursue them. The outcomes in this document include hand-drawn illustrations and digital simulations of the shared vision as well as ideas for pursuing that vision.

## The Design Team

The Design Team for this program included: Molly Wick, PhD candidate, Water Resource Science, University of Minnesota Duluth and Margaret Davidson Fellow, Lake Superior Estuarine Research Reserve; Sharon Krause, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension Positive Youth Development Educator; Todd Johnson, University of Wisconsin-River Falls (Extension) Land Use & Community Development Specialist; and Ed Freer, professional landscape architect and waterfront/urban designer who volunteered his time and talent for the program. Team members worked collaboratively to facilitate the visioning session, synthesize input into shared issues and opportunities, and develop planning and design alternatives.

## Community Planning Team

Extension worked with the Lake Superior Estuarium to develop a group of local stakeholders to serve as the Community Planning Team. Included were representatives from: City of Superior, Lake Superior Reserve, Wisconsin Sea Grant, Friends of Lake Superior Reserve, Zeitgeist Artists, Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish & Wildlife Indigenous Advisory Group, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, IndiGo, and students from local schools. A detailed list of members can be found at the end of this report.





**Above:** Local stakeholders and staff at the visioning session.

## Schedule

The community design charrette took place over two days. The first day was devoted to gathering input while the second day was all about developing output. The schedule below provides further detail.

### Monday, December 4, 2023

- 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Design Team reviews and refines schedule of activities.
- 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Design Team sets up workshop and meeting space on site.
- 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM Design Team takes a walking tour with orientation led by Estuarium staff.
- 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM Group supper for Design Team and local stakeholders.
- 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM Design Team facilitates a visioning session with local stakeholders.
- 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM The Design Team debriefs workshop outputs.

### Tuesday, December 5, 2023

- 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM Design Team work session.
- 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM Presentation setup.
- 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Presentation of planning and design alternatives.
- 8:30 PM - 9:00 PM Questions and comments.
- 9:00 PM Adjourn

## Study Area

The Lake Superior Estuarine Research Reserve is located on Barker's Island in Superior, Wisconsin. The site is part of the University of Wisconsin-Superior campus and is operated by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension's Natural Resource Institute with leadership from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The surrounding land is owned and maintained by the City of Superior. For the purpose of this visioning program, the study area includes the Estuarium as well as the surrounding context of Barker's Island.

## Walking Tour & Site Analysis

The Design Team conducted a walking tour of the study area to familiarize themselves with the site and surrounding context. Members from the Lake Superior Reserve provided information regarding the current use, ownership, and maintenance of the site as well as access, circulation, and micro-climate. Key observations included: lack of trees to shelter from shade and elements, plethora of surface parking, spatial relationships between activities, lack of visual screening from mechanical equipment and storage, and the need to expand the study area beyond the Estuarium.



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Above: Extension Design Team collecting information from local stakeholders at visioning session.

## Shared Vision

Following the walking tour, Design Team members facilitated a visioning workshop with the Community Planning Team. Participants engaged in discussion about their hopes and concerns for the site, Barker's Island, and the surrounding context. Participants were asked about the benefits they receive near the water or at Barker's Island and what we could do to enhance that experience. The responses are listed below

- Clean Water
- Filter Trash
- Inclusive
- Public Transportation
- Increase Awareness
- Young People Access
- Fauna & Flora Education
- Continue to Hold Events
- Supplement with Education
- Definition of Water's Edge
- Migratory & Seasonal Patterns
- Eliminate Algae Bloom
- Accessibility & Walk-ability
- Education About Eco Restoration
- Mitigate Traffic Noise
- Beach Volleyball & Other Sports
- Make Estuarium & Dock Visible & Welcoming
- Murals
- Life Preserver Rings
- Phenology Information
- Poetry & Art
- Causeway Railing Safety Issues
- Communication Safety of Eating Fish
- Provide Fishing Gear & Events
- More Berries & Berry Education
- Native Foods to Eat
- More Food Trucks & Food Options
- Community Gardens
- Fishing Pier Enhancement at Pickle Pond
- Enhance State to Provide Shelter from Rain
- More Tree Shade & Wind Break
- Fire Pits
- Water Fountains
- Covered Space for Jam Sessions
- Audio Kiosks for Bird Calls & I.D.
- Bird Blinds & Scopes
- Creative Play Space
- Nature Playscape
- Friends of Barker's Island Group/Trust



Above: Local expert "Heinz" sharing wisdom.

Participants were asked to identify barriers keeping them from experiencing the water or Barker's Island and strategies to minimize or eliminate those barriers.

- Security Cameras
- Water Taxis to Get Here
- Spaces Out of the Wind, Especially in Winter
- Teach How to Access Water Safely (Paddling & Fishing)
- Bike Repair Station, Racks/Corral
- Visual Signage to Show Where to Go and Where to Avoid
- Community Ownership, Not Agency
- Trolleys to Loop Between Fairlawn Museum and Superior Public Museums
- Maintenance of Facilities
- Don't Develop Open Spaces, Keep Flexibility

Participants were asked about what ideas they were most excited about.

- Firepits
- Ice Cream
- Pickle Pond Fishing Piers
- More Attractions
- Murals
- Sports Stuff
- Marketing
- Inclusion (Strollers, Wheelchairs, Artists, Brown Bag Poets)
- Ice Skating & Warming Huts
- Space for Education About Reserve & Sustainability

The Design Team synthesized the input from the visioning session and developed the following planning and design concepts.

- Creating a Destination: Transforming the collection of existing places, activities, and circulation into a integrated system the elevates the entire experience of Barker's Island.
- Programs & Activities: Developing a shared focus on nature, the outdoors, and region.
- Physical Spaces: Improving existing spaces, creating new spaces, and rethinking circulation.
- Collaboration: Developing the necessary organizational structure to coordinate development, operations, maintenance, communication, and marketing of spaces, activities, and events.
- Communication: Using art, light, signage, and electronic platforms to promote the shared focus on nature and the outdoors.

## Indigenous Community & Public Art

Among the shared values that came out of the visioning process was acknowledging and celebrating the Indigenous culture of the region. Consider commissioning Indigenous artists to develop public art installations to be on display throughout Barker's Island to help communicate the shared values of nature, the outdoors, and the local setting while telling the story of their community. In the following sections, there will be references for incorporating Indigenous art for the causeway, screening devices, and other elements. Those illustrations are merely simulations inspired by the local Indigenous artist Moira Villiard, but not created by her. It is our intent that Indigenous artwork created as a result of this visioning effort should be commissioned by Indigenous artists and that their work be allowed to tell the story of their community for the benefit of all visitors to Barker's Island.



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## Key

1. Reserve Building
2. Estuarium
3. Reserve Expansion
4. Paddle Craft Livery
5. Storage Building/Gateway
6. S.S. Meteor
7. Stage
8. Warming Structure
9. Volleyball
10. Observation / fishing pier
11. Submerged rubble mounds
12. Ferry Shuttle
13. Demonstration Garden
14. Playground
15. Drinking Fountain (dogs included)
16. Wetland Education
17. Mini-Golf
18. Ice Skating Ribbon
19. Half Court Basketball
20. Public Restroom
21. Splash Pad
22. Learning / Gathering Circle
23. ADA Drop-off and Food Truck Parking
24. Naturescape playground

Above: Concept illustration of Barker's Island incorporating shared vision elements.

## Creating a Destination

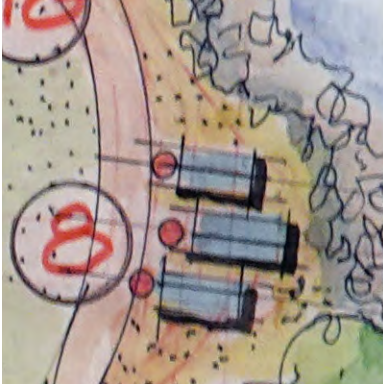
The Estuarium is one of several places on Barker's Island that contribute to an overall experience for staff, visitors, and residents. The S.S. Meteor Maritime Museum, Barker's Island Festival Park, Capt'n J's Miniature Golf, and the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute also play a role in the operations, circulation, maintenance, marketing, way-finding, and identify of the site. In addition, the walking paths and causeway not only serve as connections to other nearby places (i.e. Barker's Island Beach and Pickle Pond) but serve as unique experiences themselves.

Weaving all of these discrete places into a integrated system that strengthens Barker's Island as a destination will require coordination among existing stakeholders and perhaps inviting new ones into the fold. The illustration above provides a sketch of what a more integrated program of spaces, circulation, and activities might look like. The purpose of the sketch is to help stakeholders re-imagine how existing places and activities might evolve to accommodate new places and Barker's Island might reinforce the shared interests of experiencing the outdoors, nature, and the unique setting.

The following sections will describe some of the programs, activities and physical elements that may be considered when re-imagining Barker's Island.

## Programs & Activities

The visioning workshop identified a need to establish an identity of Barker's Island as a place in which people can connect and learn about nature, enjoy the outdoors all year round, and embrace the unique setting. Consider the following programs and activities to help address the themes above.



### Warming Huts

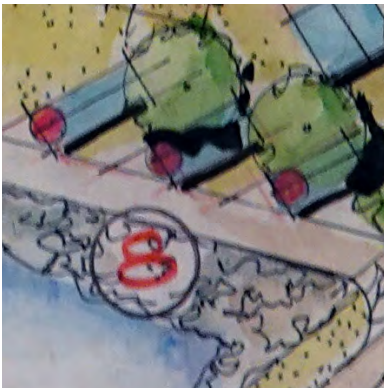
Barker's Island is exposed to the elements. It's part of the unique setting and charm. However, those conditions can also prevent people from exploring all the Island has to offer. Consider small warming huts that can accommodate a small group of people. Work with local artists to design a structure that protects folks from wind, rain, and sun but is accessible, inviting, and adds character to the site. The huts could be located along the shore and the ice skating/walking path. They could include firepits and movable furniture as well.



Above & Below: Examples of ADA warming huts with individual gas firepits (1 & 2).







## Firepits

Another way of gathering folks is around a fire. Firepits and fire rings can provide warmth, food preparation, and relaxation. They also pose some issues regarding air quality, invasive species, fire safety, and maintenance. Consider working with local officials and maintenance crews to craft an appropriate firepit. This may include using gas instead of wood and requiring reservations. Recognize that the firepit itself could be sculptural and include design elements relevant to Barker's Island, nature, and outdoor activities.



Above: Example of a gas firepit (3).



Above: Example of a stone gathering spit (4).



Above: Example of an outdoor fireplace (5).





## Bird & Wildlife Viewing

Participants in the visioning session indicated the value in connecting people with nature, including birds and other wildlife. In addition, research tells us that bird watching brings in more revenue than other forms of outdoor recreation and tourism. Providing people of all abilities access to view wildlife up close requires observation areas with a wide field of vision and, in some cases, visual blinds. Observation areas and blinds can be sculptural-providing opportunities for local artists and craftspeople to express their art while connecting people to nature.



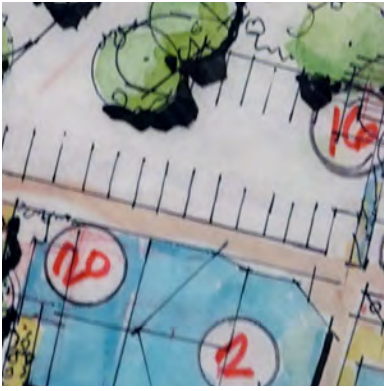
Above & Below: Example of wildlife observation blind (6 & 7).



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## Bike Racks

A bike-friendly Barker's Island encourages healthy outdoor activity that is environmentally friendly. This requires bike racks. The design and location of bike racks requires some planning. Local cyclists and youth can provide valuable insight as to the best locations for racks. Creative rack designs can add beauty and supports the shared values of the Island. Consider working with local artists and schools to design and fabricate unique bike racks that celebrate the unique setting of Barker's Island, nature, and outdoor activities.



Above: Bird-shaped bike racks (8).



Above: Braided cable bike racks (9).



Above: Fish-shaped bike racks (10).



Above: Outdoor-themed bike rack (11).





## ADA Shore Fishing

Fishing and accessibility were topics that came up multiple times during the visioning session. ADA fishing pier and deck designs vary in size, shape, and materials. Because of the extreme micro-climate, work with local experts and builders to create practical and sustainable facilities that meet the needs of all users.



Above: Shore fishing from an ADA pier in Minnesota (12).



Above: Example of ADA fishing platform (13).



Above: Example of ADA fishing platform (14).



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## Seating

The Estuarium and its neighboring attractions benefit from residents and visitors spending time forming stronger connections to water, the surrounding context, and each other. Getting people to linger requires comfortable and flexible seating. For areas in which fixed seating is preferred, take the opportunity to rethink the typical park bench as outdoor sculpture in which people can sit. For all other areas, consider movable chairs that can be reconfigured by users to meet their individual needs. Work with local students and designers to create a unique “Barker’s Island Chair” that could be donated by local organizations and businesses as a way of showing support.



Above: Bench and tables with painted murals (15).



Below: Fish-shaped bench (16).



Above: Dragonfly-shaped seating (17).

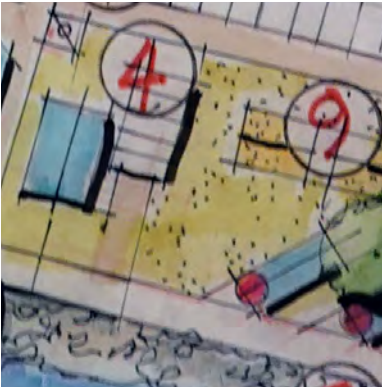


Above: Painted chairs (18).



Above: Wooden beach chairs (19).





## Games

In order to meet the interests of a variety of users, provide different types of outdoors games that can be placed throughout the site. This could include movable games such as cornhole, croquet, kubb, ladder toss, and kite flying. Stationary games like chess, horseshoes, and bocce could be provided as well. Consider working with existing clubs, organizations, and Capt'n J's Miniature Golf for ideas for locating and checking-out or renting game equipment.



Above: Kubb playing event (20).



Above: Kite flying events (21).

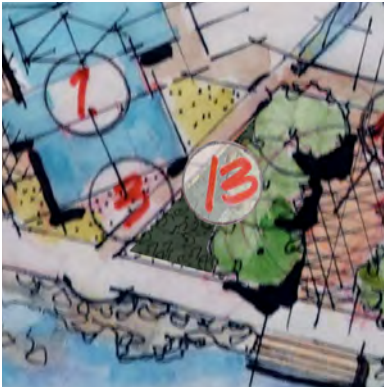


Above: Bocce courts (22).



Above: Outdoor chess (23).





## Native Medicinal Plants & Garden Plots

The area between the Lake Superior Reserve & Sea Grant building and the Estuarium could have space dedicated as a living exhibit of native medicinal plants and sustainable gardening. Staff could partner with local organizations and schools to design, install, and maintain exhibits and offer workshops. Elsewhere, community garden plots could be made available to provide fresh local food and strengthen community ties to the environment, the Estuarium, and Barker's Island.



Above: Indigenous plant exhibit (24).



Above: Medicinal garden exhibit (25).



Above: Carroll St. Community Gardens, NYC (26).



Above: Community garden, Montreal (27).





**Above:** Artist's concept of a gathering circle and pier located between the Estuarium and Sea Grant facilities.

## Physical Spaces

Input from the visioning session and site tour revealed opportunities to re-imagine the physical spaces of Barker's Island. The Design Team considered a phased, but coordinated, redevelopment of existing places combined with a system of enhanced pathways that weave individual places into shared experience. The pathways could offer different modes of transportation depending on the season and be enhanced with lighting and art. The following are just a few examples of potential redevelopment.



### Outdoor Learning & Gathering Circle

The Estuarium and Sea Grant building share an outdoor space between them. The planned expansion of the Lake Superior Reserve & Sea Grant building into this space will create additional office space. Consider expanding the Estuarium as well-adding public restroom facilities that can be accessed from outdoors. This would provide much-needed facilities and frame in the outdoor space as a natural gathering area for visitors. Encircling the space with shade trees and providing movable furniture makes the space more inviting while allowing it to be flexible. Permeable pavers could protect the ground from heavy foot traffic while serving as a teaching tool

for stormwater management. A fishing/observation pier located south of the space extends the gathering space-providing a "window" to the bay. Placing boulders just offshore may provide additional protection from wave and ice movement while inviting otters to gather for photo ops. In addition, public art and decorated crosswalks could express messages and imagery that reinforce nature, outdoor experiences, and Barker's Island.







Above: Existing parking and circulation (left) and proposed concept featuring parallel parking (right).



### Parking Reconfiguration & Access

The current parking and circulation serves a variety of functions while allowing for a central stormwater management system. The images above show the existing parking and circulation (left) versus a proposed redevelopment that dedicates a small portion towards parallel parking (right). Adding parallel parking near the outdoor performance area would provide opportunities for loading and unloading larger vehicles and for food and entertainment vendors to park. This could help support and expand existing events and lead to the development of new events such as farmers' markets, art fairs, night markets, etc.



Above: Pop-up night market located in public plaza (28).



Above: Food trucks at local event (29).

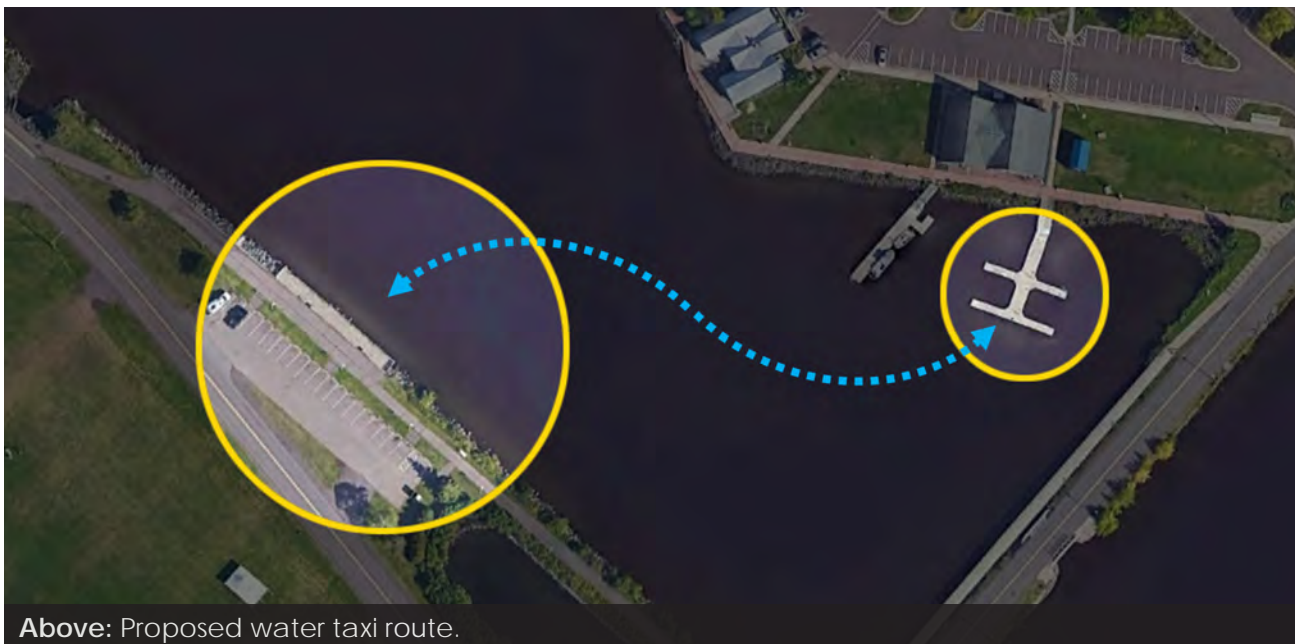




**Above:** Artist's concept of water taxis transporting people from the dock at the Osaugie Trail to the Estuarium.

## Water Taxi

One of the best ways to connect people to water is to provide more opportunities to get on the water itself. Barker's Island already provides access for boaters and paddlers with public dock and equipment rental. Consider developing a water taxi service to provide additional access during special events or to be an event of its own. The route could make use of the existing docks at the Estuarium and Osaugie Trail (see image below). Work with local schools, boating enthusiasts, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and others to explore this opportunity.



**Above:** Proposed water taxi route.





Above: Example of ice skating/walking path, Dunlop Park in Cloquet, MN (30).

### Ice Skating/Walking Path

Participants identified a strong interest in creating opportunities to enjoy Barker's Island all year round. Winter months pose challenges that could be recast as opportunities. Consider developing a concrete walking path that in the winter can be transformed into a skating path. Cloquet's Dunlop Park is an example of a ice skating/walking trail nearby.



Above: Location of proposed ice skating/walking path.





Above: Youth cool off at splash pad in Baarn, the Netherlands (31).



## Splash Pad

Communities build splash pads and water playgrounds to provide relief from hot summer days, attract visitors, build a sense of community, and encourage outdoor activity and play. These facilities often become a central focus to a neighborhood and park. Locating a splash pad or water playground at Barker's Island can help attract visitors while supporting other activities. If designed appropriately, it could serve as an educational and sculptural piece as well.

Waterfront Park in Vancouver, Washington has a interactive water feature that doubles as a natural resource teaching tool. The water feature resembles a meandering stream with areas for people to sit and climb. On the upstream end of the space, water flows from a 12 foot by 16 foot slab of stone. A bronze relief of the Columbia River basin along with educational materials is engraved on one side. The splash pad side of the slab features a topographic model of the watershed. Water flows from the map onto the surface below where it winds in and out of stones. Some of the stones include engraved text of scientific facts and poetry about the flow of water. Waterfront Park in Vancouver is one example of how a outdoor recreation space can be re-imagined as an educational tool and an artistic expression. Consider working with local artists, the Indigenous community, and natural resource educators to create a unique water feature that can become yet another jewel in the crown of Barker's Island.



Above & Right: Vertical slab of stone in which water flows into splash pad area below (32 & 33).





Above: Example of a natural playground in Stłużewiecka Park, Warsaw (34).



### Naturescape Play Area

Young children benefit from outdoor activity that challenges balance, increases motor skills, and encourages risk. Outdoor play areas with a focus on natural elements and materials can provide opportunities for exercise and play as well as connecting youth to the natural world. These “naturescapes” can include formal play areas and activities as well as informal spaces

in which children can create their own play. Consider working with local youth, artists, schools, and builders to create a fun and unique naturescape at Barker’s Island.



Above: Nautical-themed natural play area in Torrington, UK (35).

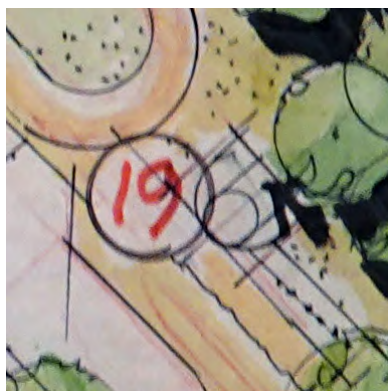


Above: “Robin Hood’s Hideout” natural play space, Sherwood Pines, UK (36).





Above: Ga-Ga ball pit with indigenous inspired art reminiscent of local visual artist Moira Villiard (37).



## Sports

During the visioning session, local youth representatives pointed out the need for a variety of outdoor activities including sports. Activities such as sand volleyball, basketball, and ga-ga ball require designated space and maintenance and should be located near parking, drinking fountains, and restrooms when possible. To support the thematic elements of Barker's Island, work with local artists, youth, and builders to design and construct sporting facilities that tell the story of Barker's Island and connect people with nature.



Above: Simulation of basketball court with Lake Superior map.





**Above:** Architectural and scenic lighting at the Light.Move.Festival in Lodz, Poland (38).

## Lighting

Light enhances visibility which enhances safety. It can also be considered an artistic element. Light adds color, movement, whimsy and intrigue to a space. It can accent and highlight, and help tell a story that welcomes and draws people in. Lit facades and windows after business hours, showcases interiors while indirectly helping to light the surrounding space. Strategically-placed lighting transforms natural settings into fun and inviting spaces at night and directs people from one space to another. Lighting near the water/snow/ice reflects and allows nature to take on new shape and character. Consider enhancing the visual quality of the buildings, paths, bridges, and landscaping at night using inexpensive LED lighting. The overall effect attracts visitors and provides visual security at night.



**Above:** Landscape lighting, Lodz, Poland (39).



**Above:** The Pont Saint-Michel causeway lit at night, Toulouse, France (40).



**Above & Right:** Decorative lighting at the Snow Light Path Festival, Otaru, Japan (41 & 42).



## Multi-Modal Circulation

A vibrant Barker's Island welcomes people from all walks of life with a variety of things to do and with a variety of ways to move about. Consider working with local youth, seniors, cyclists, and local businesses to make Barker's Island accessible by auto, bike, boat, skating, skiing, and walking. Some strategies to consider include:

- Flashing lights that indicate pedestrian and bike crossing.
- Traffic-calming features (planters, changes in surface texture and color, speed bumps, etc.).
- Designated bike lanes and routes.
- Crosswalk curb extensions (a.k.a. "bump outs") that shorten the travel distance across traffic.

Below: Artist sketch depicting decorative crosswalks with curb extensions to shorten travel.



## Way-finding

Directional signs, informational kiosks, and plaques are way-finding elements that guide visitors while telling the story of Barker's Island. Directional signs help people get from place to place. They can also be designed to strengthen a local theme or brand. Informational kiosks provide information about cultural and natural history and can serve as a bulletin board of events. Plaques denote key places and artifacts that residents and visitors should see and learn about. Modern way-finding elements sometimes include quick response (QR) codes that enable viewers to access online information using a smart phone or tablet computer. Barker's Island benefits from lots of interesting places that could be enhanced and celebrated using a variety of way-finding elements integrated with online content. Develop a new brand and vocabulary of way-finding elements that connect people to nature, the setting, and each other.



Directional sign with QR code (43).



Outdoor plaque with QR code (44).





**Above:** Simulation of causeway improvements: painted metal panels to prevent climbing and LED lighting below to attract visitors and provide visual security at night. (Mural design inspired by local visual artist Moira Villiard.)

## Public Art

Art attracts visitors, becomes a destination itself, provides educational and cultural awareness, tells a story, and strengthens community. Murals can be placed onto existing structures and be incorporated into screening elements for outdoor mechanic equipment and storage. Sculptures can serve as teaching tools and way-finding elements. Consider commissioning local artists to develop permanent and temporary art that enhances the Barker's Island experience.



**Above:** Simulation of Esturium featuring painted metal panels to provide visual screening of outdoor storage area and mechanical equipment. (Mural design inspired by local visual artist Moira Villiard.)



Nature-themed sculpture at Pagham Harbor Local Nature Reserve, UK (45).



**Above, Center, & Right:** Nature-themed sculptures of fish, otters, and insects (46, 47, & 48).





**Above:** Mini-golf course that models local geography of Kielder, UK (49).

### Mini-Golf Re-imagined

Since 1982, Capt'n J's Miniature Golf has been an anchor resident of the Barker's Island. The 18-hole course provides family-friendly entertainment and snacks with outstanding views of the bay and S.S. Meteor. Providing shade trees and seating will encourage users of all ages to enjoy the setting and linger. Updating the course to reference nature, outdoor recreation, and the local setting allows Capt'n J's to remain a focus while providing cohesion among other activities at Barker's Island.



**Above:** Shade trees and seating at mini-golf course in Vichy, France (50).



**Above:** Mini-golf course integrated with high ropes adventure course in Chaumont-sur-Tharonne, France (51).







## Collaboration

Transforming Barker's Island into a destination built on shared values requires collaboration and coordination. The diagram right illustrates some of the organizations, jurisdictions, agencies, and groups that have a shared interest in the future of Barker's Island. Small, simple changes can occur with informal arrangements and agreements. Complex and permanent change may require a new organizational structure that coordinates development, operations, maintenance, communication; and the marketing of spaces, activities, and events. If a new organizational structure is needed, consider working with a skilled facilitator to provide a process that takes into account all interests.



## Communication

Telling the story of Barker's Island requires effective internal and external communication. Regular and effective internal communication can lay the foundation of strong partnerships. As partnerships grow and as activities and events become more interconnected, internal communication may need to evolve into regularly scheduled face-to-face meetings, shared calendars, and newsletters.

Communicating a shared message to residents and visitors may require developing new physical signage and maps. It's important that these reflect a shared brand and image that doesn't confuse visitors and reinforces the shared values of the Barker's Island community. Quick Response (QR) codes that direct people to online information could be incorporated into physical signage, flyers, posters, maps, and art. In addition, online map applications can be used to explore different features of the Island and be used as virtual "scavenger hunts". These applications and individual websites for each Island activity could have a "home" on a singular website to make it easier for residents and visitors to find information. Work with professionals to create a Barker's Island brand and communication structure that reflects the shared interests of all partners.





## Implementation

Implementation is work, but it doesn't have to be painful. Ideas are realized when a group of people come together to get something done, take deliberate steps to bring folks into the process, provide clear and consistent communication, and celebrate success.

The ideas generated during the charrette provide opportunities for community members to come together to create something that benefits the entire community. Use these ideas to identify common interests and energy. Convene a series of planning meetings to identify why people are interested in the idea, what they can offer, and what's left to figure out. Start with simple "quick wins." Build capacity and confidence to take on larger more complex projects.

## Community Change

Dr. John Kotter describes the steps for making change happen in a community in two books, "Leading Change" and "The Heart of Change." He recommends the following steps:

### Step 1: Establish Sense of Urgency

- Examine market and competitive realities
- Identify and discuss crises, potential crises or major opportunities

### Step 2: Form a Powerful Coalition

- Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort
- Encourage the group to work as a team

### Step 3: Create a Shared Vision

- Create a vision to help direct the change effort
- Develop strategies for achieving that vision

### Step 4: Communicate the Vision

- Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies
- Teach new behaviors by the example of the Guiding Coalition

### Step 5: Empower Others to Act

- Remove obstacles to change
- Change systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision
- Encourage the risk-taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions



## Summary Report

Lake Superior Estuarium (2023)





#### Step 6: Plan for and Create Wins

- Plan for visible performance improvements
- Create those improvements
- Recognize and reward people involved in the improvements

#### Step 7: Change Improvement Checkpoints

- Use increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't fit the vision
- Hire, promote, and develop people who can implement the vision
- Reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes, and change agents

#### Step 8: Institutionalize New Approaches

- Articulate the connections between the new behaviors and organizational success
- Develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession

Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, Mass., Harvard Business School Press. Kotter, J. P. and D. S. Cohen (2002). *The heart of change : real-life stories of how people change their organizations*. Boston, Mass., Harvard Business School Press.

### Positive Change for Barker's Island

Local community members are encouraged to work with local Extension educators and state specialists to develop a plan for action. Key elements of implementation often include:

- A Recipe for Success: Community Planning Team members consider past projects that were successful in: volunteerism, communication, ideation, fundraising, and leadership. As a team, document what aspects of each made it successful and what lessons can be learned and applied to future projects.
- Community Change Structures: Local community members document existing community structures for change and identify resources needed to move forward. Consider the relationship of formal and informal groups, businesses, and individuals who "make things happen". What is the path of least resistance and is equipped to support change? What barriers exist that need to be removed, repositioned, or bridged to support change? What new community resources or relationships might be needed to support change?
- Positive Change Workforce Assessment: Community members provide information needed to assess what types of skills, associations, and interests are available to make change happen. Using a simple form, individuals will document what they "bring to table" to help make positive change happen.





- Prioritization: Community members self-sort themselves into similar interests and explore ways in which their group can make change happen.
- Action Planning: Fundamentals of community change as well as planning tools are used to help community members develop basic action plans for implementation.
- Celebration & Reflection: Community members are given examples of evaluation and reflection methods that can double as opportunities for celebration and benchmarking.

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### Community Planning Team

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## UW-Extension Community Vitality & Placemaking

### *Signature Effort*

The UW-Extension Community Vitality & Placemaking Signature Effort is a group of UW-Extension county educators and state specialists who research, create, and test community placemaking curriculum in response to the challenge set forth by the Wisconsin Idea. Design Wisconsin is one of several community placemaking programs offered by the group. Current members include:

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Brian Gauthier, Community Development Educator, Lac du Flambeau Extension

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Nathan Sandwick, Supervisory Community Liaison, USDA Rural Development

Neil Klemme, Positive Youth Development Educator, Iron County Extension

Sharon Krause, Positive Youth Development Educator, Oneida & Lac du Flambeau Extension

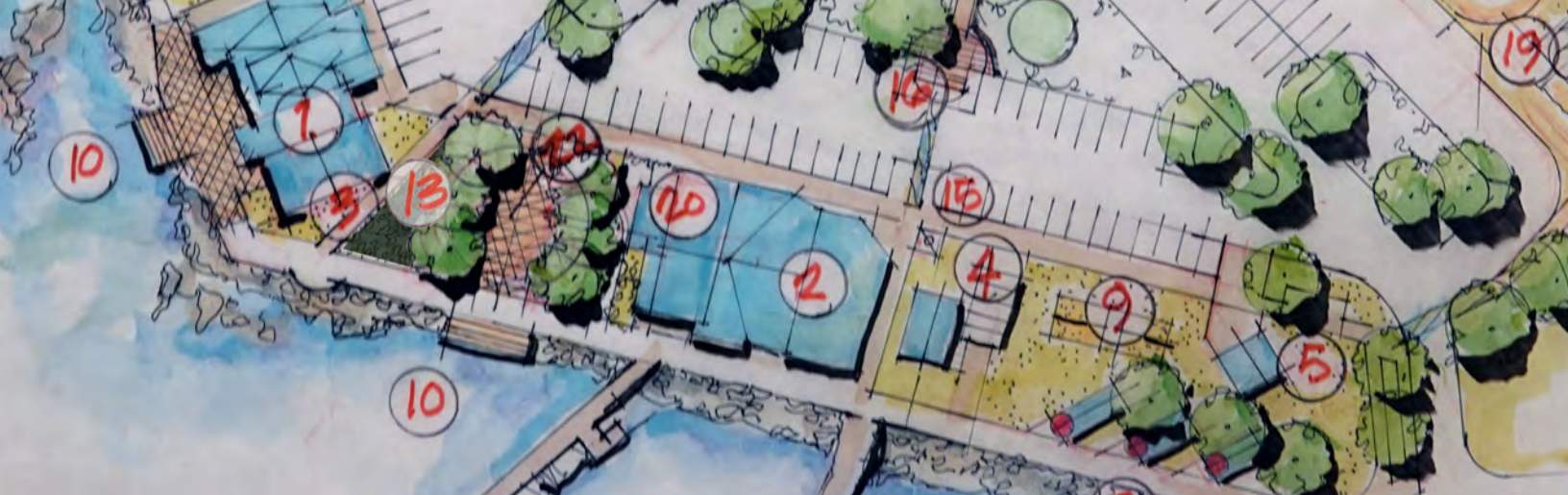
Steve Grabow, Professor Emeritus, Jefferson County Extension

Taylor Seale, Positive Youth Development Educator, Dane County Extension

Todd Barman, Downtown Development Specialist, UW-Madison, Division of Extension

Todd Johnson, Land Use + Community Development Specialist, UW-River Falls (Extension)





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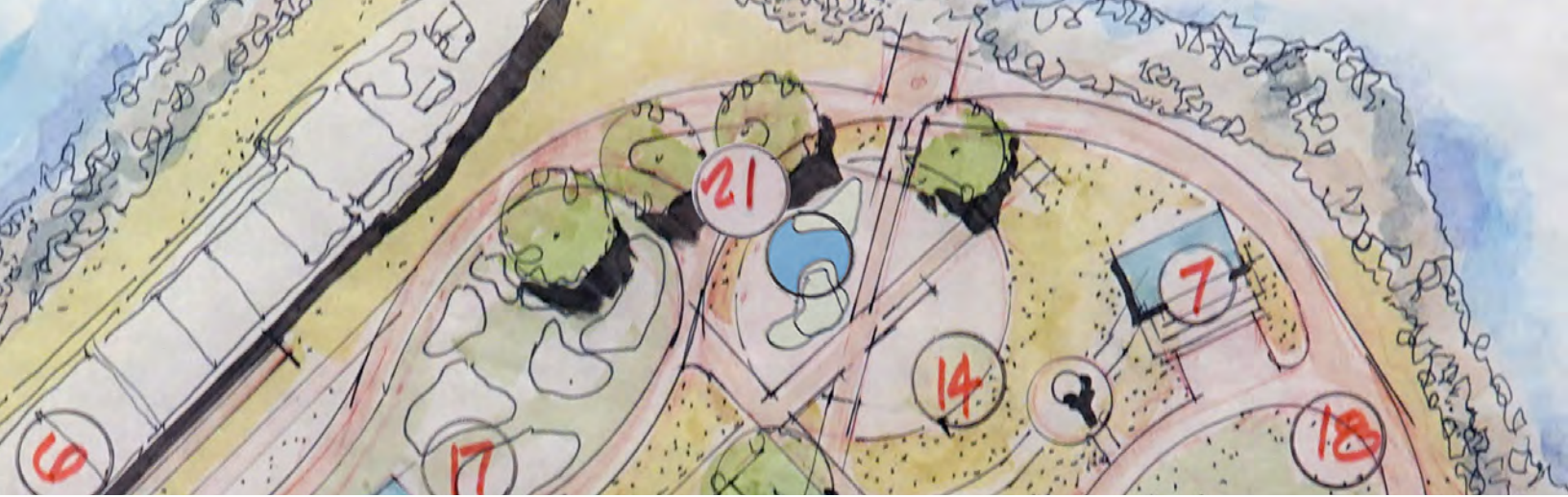
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### Who We Are

With an office in each Wisconsin county, Extension develops practical educational programs tailored to local needs and based on university knowledge and research. We deliver our expertise to the public, addressing a wide range of needs to people, plants and animals, in both urban and rural areas of the states.

### What We Do

We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

### The Wisconsin Idea

"The University of Wisconsin's direct contributions to the state: to the government in the forms of serving in office, offering advice about public policy, providing information and exercising technical skill, and to the citizens in the forms of doing research directed at solving problems that are important to the state and conducting outreach activities."

– Jack Stark, "The Wisconsin Idea: The University's Service to the State", p.1



## Contact

For more information about the University of Wisconsin-Extension Community Vitality & Placemaking Signature Effort and the Design Wisconsin program, please contact:

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## Key

1. Reserve Building
2. Estuarium
3. Reserve Expansion
4. Paddle Craft Livery
5. Storage Building/Gateway
6. S.S. Meteor
7. Stage
8. Warming Structure
9. Volleyball
10. Observation / fishing pier
11. Submerged rubble mounds
12. Ferry Shuttle
13. Demonstration Garden
14. Playground
15. Drinking Fountain (dogs included)
16. Wetland Education
17. Mini-Golf
18. Ice Skating Ribbon
19. Half Court Basketball
20. Public Restroom
21. Splash Pad
22. Learning / Gathering Circle
23. ADA Drop-off and Food Truck
24. Naturescape playground



Above: Concept illustration of Barker's Island incorporating shared vision elements.



Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Community Vitality + Placemaking  
*Signature Effort*



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**RIVER FALLS**  
Land Use + Community Development

