

A nighttime photograph of the Chicago skyline. In the foreground, the Navy Pier is brightly lit with numerous lights and several American flags. The Willis Tower is the most prominent skyscraper, illuminated with lights at its top. Other skyscrapers are visible in the background, all set against a dark blue night sky.

# **The Centennial Vision**

A Framework for Reimagining Navy Pier

June 2011

**Executive Summary**



## Vision and Themes

The Centennial Vision is a framework for reimagining Navy Pier as it approaches its centennial year in 2016. Navy Pier is Illinois' most popular and distinctive attraction, attracting nearly 9 million visitors in 2010. The vision and purpose is not only to expand our audience but enrich the experience of our diverse constituency ranging from midwestern families to global citizens. The Centennial Vision will build on this foundation of success to create a truly great public place, world-class destination, and memorable experience for visitors.

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Like other great Chicago endeavors - Millennium Park is a recent example - The Centennial Vision aims high. It will fulfill the public mission of Navy Pier as "The People's Pier," in a fashion befitting a world-class city with a vibrant architectural, cultural, environmental, and recreational landscape. It operates on the assumption that the descriptions "popular" and "high-quality" are not mutually exclusive.

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Navy Pier is not a theme park. However it does have a theme. It is a real place centrally located in a very real city - one that can be accurately described as a great American city with its combination of world-class character and authenticity.

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The Centennial Vision includes new and renovated features designed to expand Navy Pier's audience. Programmatically, that means more evening and year-round entertainment, more compelling landscape and design features, and a more engaging relationship between visitors and the water.

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Navy Pier recognizes the importance of sustainability in a project such as this. Since its inception and the renovation in 1995, green agendas for cities and the built environment have become an important part of the planning and implementation process. The Pier will begin to assess the opportunities to introduce sustainable programs as it prepares for the next 100 years.



**Pierscape:** Navy Pier offers one of the most dramatically diverse vistas in North America. Its unique location allows visitors to connect with land, air and water – and a vibrant city center. Navy Pier, Inc., the not-for-profit entity that assumed control of the Pier on July 1, 2011, will conduct an international search for the most imaginative, yet feasible, ideas for redesigning the Pier’s outdoor spaces so that this remarkable asset will reach its full potential. Navy Pier will extend an open invitation to design teams comprised of the world’s leading landscape architects, architects, urban designers, artist, engineers, and communication designers to reimagine the Pier’s public realm, which includes Gateway Park, Crystal Garden, Pier Park, the South Dock and East End Park – along with smaller public spaces along the length of the Pier. Recreating the Pierscape will include changes to the landscape and streetscape, the introduction of public art and water features, and relighting the Pier’s exterior. Reimagining the Pierscape presents the opportunity to address a green agenda by ensuring that the new urban elements respond to the environment.

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**Chicago Children’s Museum:** Navy Pier’s modern roots lie in its strength as a family destination, reflected in the selection of Chicago Children’s Museum as the first partner and family anchor for the redeveloped Pier in the mid-1990s. As the Pier and the Museum have explored their respective missions in recent months, they have come to recognize that each institution strengthens the other. They are working together on a plan to locate an expanded Chicago Children’s Museum in the Family Pavilion. If finalized, this new permanent home for the Museum would occupy nearly 100,000 square feet and continue to serve as a key family attraction at the Pier.

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**Chicago Shakespeare Theater:** Chicago Shakespeare Theater is an integral piece of the city’s internationally recognized performing arts scene and its relocation to Navy Pier in 1999 created a cultural anchor for Pier activities. Increased programming by this vibrant company is a logical evolution for the Pier’s future, and serves to expand evening and year-round entertainment options. The Pier’s vision is met by Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s desire to further develop its artistic opportunities and increase its audience with the expansion of its campus through the addition of a 950-seat house to complement its existing 500-seat courtyard-style theater and 200-seat black box facility. The two institutions have identified a central Pier location for the new theater, which would replace the Skyline Stage. They are currently working on terms of a potential agreement.



## Additional Elements

**Family Pavilion:** The Family Pavilion is the entry hall of Navy Pier, its front door, and a connection point to the rest of the Pier. It is anchored with family activities and uses and is served by restaurants, retail shops, and kiosks. Merchandising and design will focus on the family and leisure market and draw on Chicago authenticity. The retail and food tenants in this area take their cues from the anchors and are essential for generating revenue to support the ongoing operation of Navy Pier.

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**Festival Hall:** This venue has been an important destination for festivals, pageants and special events. Consumer focused programming will remain an important part of the ongoing Pier vision, with events like SOFA, Winter WonderFest, and the Chicago Flower and Garden Show continuing to draw year-round visitors. The plan also will look to create better connections between the interior of the building and the South Dock.

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**Events and Entertainment:** An important objective of the plan is broadening the Pier's appeal, particularly among adults in the evening and during the off-season. Navy Pier will focus on creating new entertainment options toward the east end of the Pier that draw on Chicago's musical and performing arts traditions.

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**Boutique Hotel:** The east end of Navy Pier is a unique setting, unlike any other in Chicago. The Centennial Vision capitalizes on this asset by locating a small hotel at the Pier's east end -- a boutique hotel adjacent to and including the historic Terminal Building. This hotel can also take advantage of its South Dock frontage for restaurant use and has the ability to incorporate a dramatic rooftop terrace for dining and special events and offers some of the best views of the Chicago skyline. Navy Pier will further explore the feasibility of this with interested developers.



The projected cost for the public elements of the redeveloped Navy Pier is approximately \$155 million. This cost is preliminary and will change as the design and scope of improvements are developed further. This figure does not include the private investment that would come from partner cultural institutions, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Chicago Children’s Museum, or from commercial partners such as hotel developers, entertainment companies, and restaurants. It is anticipated that Navy Pier, Inc. will provide some investment for these facilities from a pool of MPEA seed funding projected at approximately \$50 million.

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The Pier also will pursue other potential revenue sources for elements such as Gateway Park, the Crystal Garden, Pier Park, East End Park, as well as overall Pier lighting and landscaping elements. These potential revenue sources, beyond investment by not-for-profit and commercial partners, may include naming rights, fundraising by Navy Pier, Inc., and surplus cash flow from Navy Pier operations.

# Renderings

