



"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

Michelangelo

Dear fellow community member,

Our community has been blessed to have 600 acres of waterfront feeding into the natural wonders of Lake Michigan; connecting us to the navigable waterways of the world. The building blocks of progressive change that have occurred in our region over the past few years, coupled with a caring and deep sense of community spirit from those who reside in the area called Michigan's *Great Southwest* provide the impetus by which the Twin Cities Harbor Study was undertaken.

The Twin Cities Harbor Study Steering Committee members are proud to provide to you this document which outlines a *Study of Potential in Benton Harbor and St. Joseph Michigan*. Using the words of Michelangelo as our inspiration, the study was undertaken to stimulate community dialogue over the unlimited possibilities that can be created on the most precious of community's assets, its waterfront.

At the outset of its work, the Steering Committee adopted five guiding principles to establish the disciplined parameters by which the study would be undertaken. Namely;

1. **Transparency:** The study would be undertaken in a manner in which all information would be posted publicly and shared through discussions with the community.

2. **Inclusion:** The Steering Committee represents a broad-based group of multi-governmental jurisdictions along with community and business interests.

3. **Fact-based:** Obtain and publish the facts associated with current activities, provide a rational data-driven understanding as to the future opportunities, conduct personal visits to other benchmark waterfronts, engage outside experts in the fields of retail market analysis, stormwater management, and transportation to design options for the various segments of the harbor site. Each segment of the harbor can stand alone or function in an interactive way across the entire harbor.

4. **Holistic:** To review the entirety of land use and function throughout the harbor study site, cognizant of the need for proper planning, zoning, public access, and transportation realities for all means of movement, be they walking, biking, boating, and all varieties of motorized vehicles.

5. **Non-prescriptive:** The study highlighted multiple opportunities in various development options without attempting to prescribe or delineate “Must Have” or “Must Do” options, but rather the “What If” associated with the unlimited possibilities for long-term creative development of a vital community waterfront asset.

We, collectively would like to express our deep appreciation to the City of Benton Harbor for soliciting and underwriting this important work. Along with a wealth of other attributes, the harbor serves as a gateway to Benton Harbor. We applaud the City for the foresight it has shown to explore the incredible potential of this asset. The students, faculty and administrators of the Graduate Urban Design Studio at Andrews University School of Architecture, Art and Design also deserve our thanks for their exemplary work. The highly talented and extremely energetic students worked alongside the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and world renowned consulting firms who provided a guiding hand in the process to create a study that does more than guide, but rather inspires our community to “aim higher” for the betterment of future generations.

Now that this study has been completed, the fun begins. Our Guiding Principles shall remain intact as this Steering Committee undertakes the next steps. The Study and the accompanying data that supports it represent a platform for community dialogue. There is now one central place to find the most complete collection of information on the subject. The Study has been provided to multiple public venues, including the public libraries, and posted on the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission website at www.swmpc.org.

We will search for ways to be a catalyst for ongoing community dialogue as to the opportunities that surround the harbor. This Study is a testament to the boundless potential in our future as a community fully embracing our waterfront.

Sincerely,

Your Colleagues from the Twin Cities Harbor Study Committee