

## 2.2 Project Description

### SITE

Erie Street Plaza is the site of the man-made channel connecting Lake Michigan to Milwaukee Harbor and the confluence of the three rivers, which gave Milwaukee its industrial character and reputation as a shipping port. The plaza is a 'left-over' space of odd dimensions and geometries at the foot of Erie Street between a new mixed use project and surface parking lots. Visually-dominated by the Homan Bridge to the east, the site's position on a waterfront bend and its solar orientation to the south affords sweeping views of the surrounding industrial landscape. Sunlight, wind and water create a sense of ever-changing movement on this site – in swirls, waves, and layers.

### PROGRAM

The program simply focuses on creating neighborhood energy and making community connections where none existed before. The plaza connects the riverwalk to the north with the fishing pier and walkway east to the channel-mouth lighthouse. The plaza is designed to accommodate multiple and simultaneous activities, including quiet sitting and reading, eating and drinking, music and dance performances, intimate gatherings, social events, group exercise, and board games, as well as events where the staging of dances, markets, exhibits and other special cultural events can take place. The imagery of the design elements is respectful of the Third Ward neighborhood and the industrial heritage of the site.

### DESIGN COMPONENTS

#### Architecture

The three-masted solar and wind landmark sculpture is both playful and utilitarian. The metal, wood and brick masts reflect the industrial history of the site; the frames created by the masts, the plinth, and the plaza are opportunities to peer under the sculpture and over the water – or viewing from a little higher plane for today's children, both young and old, and the transparent photovoltaic cells on the canopy and the kinetic wind turbines give the sculpture its unique future character. The photovoltaic canopies provide protection from the elements above and power for lighting and water pumps. And, the plinth will be made of a precast 'bones' creating the hull frame, and a wood deck, which will have inset words, dates, and photos telling the story of the harbor development, a veritable informal learning setting.

#### Landscape

The major landscape element consists of a "bosque" of trees designed to provide a dense, shady canopy in the summer and an still providing unobstructed views across the plaza. In winter, the dense branching will filter sun and light to the plaza. The trees will provide a ceiling for reflecting light from plaza uplighting. Slightly curved planted walls form a semi-opaque "green screen" between the plaza and Erie Street and would be planted with clematis, honeysuckle and other similar flowering vines. Large linear planters along Erie Street would be planted with ornamental grasses. Trees would be omitted in the streetscape immediately adjacent to the plaza to open up views into the plaza. An ornamental tree backdrop is formed along Erie across from the plaza and will capture views and form a backdrop to the plaza elements. A decoratively planted median turnaround and a tree-lined boulevard is proposed from the plaza leading out toward Lake Michigan.

#### Furniture and Equipment

Erie Street Plaza is the site of the man-made channel connecting Lake Michigan to Milwaukee Harbor and the confluence of the three rivers, which built the industrial character and reputation of Milwaukee. The plaza is a 'left-over' space of odd dimensions and geometries at the foot of Erie Street between a new mixed use project and Summerfest parking lots. Visually-dominated by the Homan Bridge to the east, the site's position on a waterfront bend and its solar orientation to the south affords sweeping views of the surrounding industrial landscape. Sunlight, wind and water create a sense of ever-changing movement on this site – in swirls, waves, and layers.

#### Hardscape

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