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CONTACT:
Mary Kay Marquisos
312.791.6237

The Centennial Vision:
Navy Pier As World-Class Attraction With Expanded Year-Round and Evening Attractions, More Dramatic Public Spaces

Navy Pier, Inc. to launch international search for "Pierscape" design team

CHICAGO – The Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority and Navy Pier, Inc. today unveiled a new redevelopment framework that reimagines the Pier as a world-class attraction with dramatic, engaging public spaces and expanded entertainment, dining and retail options to draw more year-round and adult visitors.

The planning framework also anticipates potential expansion of two major institutions, Chicago Children's Museum and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. While plans are not final, possible Pier locations for the expansions are under discussion.

Other elements include a boutique hotel at the Pier's east end to capitalize on the captivating view of the Chicago skyline and renovation of the interior of the Family Pavilion with a focus on authentic Chicago retailers.

The Centennial Vision: A Framework for Reimagining Navy Pier aims to build on the Pier's success to assure its continued growth in coming years. A key goal is to maintain the Pier's family appeal while drawing more adults and year-round visitors with upscale dining and entertainment options and more aesthetically appealing public spaces that take full advantage of the Pier's unique setting.

The document, intended to guide the Pier's redevelopment as it approaches its 100th anniversary in 2016, was to be approved by joint resolution of the MPEA and Navy Pier boards.

The action came as Navy Pier management transitioned from MPEA to Navy Pier, Inc. (NPI), a new not-for-profit board of civic leaders. The July 1 turnover was set last January when the new Pier governance structure was established as an outgrowth of landmark MPEA reforms enacted by the Illinois General Assembly last year.

"The Centennial Vision reflects our belief that we can create a popular attraction that is also a high-quality attraction, such as Millennium Park," said Sarah Nava Garvey, newly elected by the NPI Board to serve as its first Chair. "This framework for redevelopment builds on the Pier's success while recognizing that it must also improve to become a world-class attraction befitting a world-class city."

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NPI is working closely with Chicago Children’s Museum and Chicago Shakespeare Theater on potential locations for their anticipated expansions, said Garvey, who is also on the Interim MPEA Board and chairs the Shedd Aquarium board.

“These two major Chicago institutions would contribute significantly to the future of Navy Pier, drawing diverse visitors from far and wide. Their expanded presence would reinforce the quality of our attractions and increase year-round attendance,” said Garvey.

Navy Pier General Manager Marilyn Gardner announced that NPI will soon invite design teams made up of the world’s leading architects, landscape architects and urban designers to submit creative ideas for the Pier’s public areas or “Pierscape.” The search will culminate with the selection of a design team in six months, she said.

“Inviting and intriguing public spaces also are essential to Navy Pier’s future success by capitalizing on its dramatic vantage point, where visitors can engage land, air and water,” Gardner said.

Public spaces include Gateway Park, Crystal Garden, Pier Park, the South Dock and East End Park – along with smaller areas tucked along the length of the Pier. Recreating the “Pierscape” would include changes to the landscape and streetscape, introduction of public art and water features, and relighting the Pier’s exterior. Special emphasis will be put on environmentally sustainable solutions in reprogramming and redesigning public spaces.

The Pier will continue to solicit public input on the vision and refine the planning framework even as it launches the international search for a team of designers and urban planners. Public input will be solicited on navypier.com, through social media channels, at a kiosk in the Family Pavilion and at briefings for civic and community groups.

The revitalized Navy Pier will be authentically Chicago and appeal to regional, national and international visitors, said MPEA Trustee Jim Reilly.

“Navy Pier is not a theme park. But it *does* have a theme: It is a real place, in a central part of a very real city,” said Reilly. “Chicago can accurately be described as The Great American City, with its rich mixture of world-class amenities and institutions, diverse neighborhoods and authentic character.”

In addition to expanding the audience, other key objectives of the planning framework are better organization of the Pier’s attractions to create a more cohesive visitor experience, and improved traffic flow and vehicle-pedestrian interface at the entrance to the Pier. Navy Pier is currently working with traffic consultants to evaluate options for reconfiguring traffic patterns approaching the Pier.

The Centennial Vision recognizes the constraints of a changed economy by establishing a framework for redevelopment that can be implemented in phases as resources become available, Reilly said.

The projected cost for the public elements is \$155 million, although that likely will change as detailed planning and implementation move forward, Reilly said. Public elements include deferred maintenance, Family Pavilion remodeling and enhancement of the Pierscape. The estimated \$155 million does not take into account private investment by partner cultural institutions or commercial partners.

It is anticipated that NPI will provide some investment for these facilities from a pool of MPEA seed funding estimated at approximately \$50 million. The Pier also will pursue additional revenue sources for redevelopment of public components, such as naming rights, philanthropy and surplus cash flow from operations.

As the redevelopment moves forward, it will stimulate the economy by creating hundreds of jobs in the construction industry, new permanent fulltime jobs at expanded attractions and increased visitor spending, Reilly noted.

With today's approval of the planning framework, Navy Pier has come a long way in a short period of time and is on the brink of finally turning ideas for its future into action, observed MPEA Interim Board Chair David Mosen, president of the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

"There have been several well-intentioned plans in recent years for the future of Navy Pier. But with new governance and a new spirit of commitment by civic leaders focused solely on the Pier, we have developed a visionary yet practical planning framework. We are dedicated to seeing it through," Mosen said.

Last fall, MPEA released an Urban Land Institute study offering a critique of the Pier and suggesting ways to improve it – a report whose findings echo throughout *The Centennial Vision*. Early this year, the new Navy Pier Board was created to give the Pier its own advocate so that it would not be overshadowed by McCormick Place, the other public asset owned by MPEA.

Navy Pier is Illinois' most popular attraction, attracting close to 9 million visitors in 2010.

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MEDIA NOTE: For more details on *The Centennial Vision*, please refer to the Executive Summary that accompanies this release. The full report is available on navypier.com. Images are available via FTP at :

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