



A Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

## *Making Waves: Realizing a World-Class Waterfront*

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date**

December 9, 2013

**Meeting Location**

Jacksonville Main Library

**Meeting Time**

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Purpose:**

- To garner public input regarding the proposed redevelopment plan for The Jacksonville Landing in context of the immediate Downtown environment. The Landing and the adjacent properties have potential to increase the viability and economic impact of The Landing while serving the greater needs of the public.

**Welcome:** Melody Bishop, AIA, DIA Board Member

**Opening Remarks:** Mayor Alvin Brown

**Economic Outlook:** Daniel Davis, JAX Chamber

**Historic Perspective of the Landing:** Anthony Sleiman, Sleiman Enterprises

**The Greater Context:** Aundra Wallace, DIA

**Presentation of The Landing Plan:** Alan Wilson, AIA, Haskell

**Public Comments:** Moderated by Tom Hurst, AIA, President of AIA Jacksonville.

- **Connections**
  - Strengthen Hogan and Laura Streets – could Hogan be pedestrian only?
  - Add river pier at end of Hogan (similar to Fernandina Beach).
  - Stop worrying about cars, need pedestrian focus.
  - Everything is connected –can't just design The Landing in isolation to the rest of the city.
  - Connect Main Street (get rid of the ramps) and make it a local bridge. Southbound on-ramp to Main Street is not necessary. Could access the bridge from Bay Street.
  - Transportation problematic –when the bridge goes up, traffic wraps around and isolates The Landing and is detrimental to the pedestrian.

- Main and Ocean Streets could become 2-way traffic to increase visibility.
- Blow existing Landing out –clean slate!
- Connect to Jag exp., Suns, Times-Union (wine & dine example).
- We can do this –circa 1913 photos show a bustling downtown.
- Focus on pedestrian: close Hogan to vehicles and close Coastline drive for the River Walk.
- Widen towards Times Union Center.
- Follow examples of Jane Jacobs. Increase street activity. “Jane Walk” – blind spots... need to animate folks along Independent Drive as well as Laura Street.
- Make bus friendly (for large bus tour groups) at The Landing.
- JTA transit for international visitors (they expect it).
- Sense of urgency and ambition required to move the project forward.
- Arrival by boat should be improved and increased. Stepping from boat to boat to reach bulkhead is not acceptable.
- Spiral pedestrian ramp down from the Main Street Bridge for direct access.
- Have parking but visitors need to know (see) it, adding street parking (examples- San Marco, Town Center) meets business owner needs of identity and high visibility.
- Connect directly to bridge with stair and elevator to accommodate South Bank pedestrian traffic.
- Taxi/transit for hotels and to and from the airport.
- East-west integration/ connection to Stadium.
- Bikes to be accommodated.
- Vehicular drive to landing is bad and is opposed to pedestrian focus.
- Improve walkability, encourage connections through use of materiality, trees and a datum. Also use branding to create an exciting sense of place.
- Make a better connection to the waterfront from Laura Street.
- Provide Kayak access from the waterfront.
- Needs better social spaces/design for chance encounters.
- Easy transportation link to Jags game and back.
- Consider adding street parking in front of retail –can see where I am going to park.

- **Program/Use**

- Add housing/ residential.
- High-income housing not the solution –should be mixed affordability.
- Create mixed-use “workforce” housing, i.e., police, fire, teachers etc...
- Work force price-point retail and mixed-use for this iconic structure.
- Variety of retail, better retail selections.
- Retail “one-of-a-kind” experience.
- Attraction/appeal –animate the plaza with more activity on Independent Drive by creating street café views to bring people in.
- Good plan but needs things for everyday folks like a grocery store.
- Theater/ IMAX on west side due to sun angle.
- Large transparent atrium could glow at night like a lantern and be seen down Laura Street.
- East side... grocery and residential above.

- Cater to music, big festivals (drawn in younger folks like Mavericks has been doing).
- Residential is essential but understand noise impact. Concerned about sound spilling into the city through the Laura street opening in new scheme.
- Artist's co/op revitalize (not necessarily permanent).
- Interactive art (cloud gate... fountain).
- Art in public spaces creates the place and gives an opportunity for artists to participate.
- Don't cluster or line up all public art along "art promenade" but rather scatter them throughout site to encourage wayfinding & chance encounters.
- Special events and amenities for visitors.
- Laura Street -what needs to be done must be significant –be bold!
- Opening up The Landing will double traffic.
- Space to be active and engage (green space to north east side).
- Too much parking –needs to be more green space. Downtown doesn't need more parking lots facing streets.
- Need a draw i.e., Rain Forest Café.
- Ferris wheel is an example for creating a destination.
- Young creative types want live-work opportunities.
- Loading zone for acts to be considered.
- Add marina/ dock space.
- Focus on harbor/ waterfront views and activities.
- This should create a chain reaction so think about and plan for what happens next.
- Food trucks could have a place to create changeable outdoor dining events.
- Imagine "Uptown" as the new Landing image. "Downtown" has negative connotation.
- Water-focused activity such as kayak rentals, sail boats & more dock space.
- Embers Restaurant rebirth?
- Convention Center program should be considered.
- Department Stores could come back to downtown.
- Floating restaurant would be desirable.
- Boutiques, not big box retail.
- Movie and film industry focus. Studios/ interactive.
- Street food, no chains. Local restaurants are more attractive than large chains and they make a place special and specific. "I can eat at an Applebee's or shop at a Macy's anywhere".
- Young professional are going to King Street or the Town Center for one-of-a-kind restaurants like Black Sheep, Whiskey River & Wet Willie's –be aggressive with the choices for The Landing.
- Please make better connections to the water –romanticize it!
- Improve bicycle circulation.
- Look at Norfolk for an example of a similar failure and what not to do at The Landing.
- Bathroom under the bridge may not be the best location –cool space that could be better used.

- **Architectural Character**

- ¼ of River Walk is in disrepair (need water access).
- Opening up to Laura Street -is this too narrow? Do we lose entertainment area? If it stays, is sound and issue for the residential?
- Reclaim land for the River Walk... too narrow on the East end.
- Can be functional and visually connected but should not look like existing. Needs to be beautiful and include trees and flowers.
- Active green space for things like Frisbee throwing.
- Density is critical –massing for office vs. residential floor plates study required.
- 2-story not enough height for urban context (Alan Wilson’s response spoke of verticality and what the market can bear).
- Taller/ world-renowned architecture. The entry arch in the rendering is too small –make wider.
- Take advantage of upcoming bicentennial to do a wharf like name re-branding such as “Astor’s Wharf” based on Jax history.
- Klutho –integrate his key details.
- See Landon and the clip of “Emerald Necklace” for Jax.
- Green, sustainable buildings required.
- Beautiful landscape i.e., Detroit gardens.
- Contextual (not necessarily Klutho).
- Be iconic.
- Express “progressive” view of downtown, not conservative or stuck in the past.
- New plaza –points of entry to reference the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide movies and coffee bar.
- Entire structure acts as art... interactive such as water fountains –iconic & Jacksonville unique.
- Heat & sun – need shade as a way to seek shelter and minimize heat island effect.
- ADA/ disability access to be provided.
- International “sister cities” (celebrate each holiday of s.c.). Photograph contest from s.c. as a way to demonstrate what can be here.
- Make it contemporary! Contemporary use & design encourages young and creative people to come.
- Have a design ideas competition so that local architects can contribute ideas too.
- Need to provide shade for pedestrians, especially in order to attract people walking from businesses for lunch. Extend the shade along the riverwalk to the east.

- **Other/ Misc.**

- Funding -create limited liability (i.e., developers, banks etc...) and in conjunction with same in sister cities.
- The young scene to be fostered (examples such as 5-points and the Elbow).
- Ground Zero- local ownership required to be successful.
- Millennials – keep them coming back & bring in the young entrepreneurs.

- Safety, are you safe? Establish a Bike Patrol.
- Design downtown as a destination.
- Designated entertainment (reference 2025 plan).
- Bring World of Nations here as its home.
- Create “Uptown” image and branding.
- Safety –brighten and with lights between Hyatt and The Landing.
- Opportunity – think big and understand the focus of the city in 5 or 10 years.
- Don’t repeat past mistakes, need a major attraction.
- Great ideas, especially residential density. The “elephant in the room” is still urban transit and Skyway expansion.
- Shorten Laura Street from the water and provide covered access to the front door of the Times-Union Center or have the front door or ticket sales on riverfront also.
- The Landing should be similar to the Baltimore Rouse project which accepts people in and distributes them elsewhere in a “chain reaction of energy” that supports an active downtown.