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MEMORANDUM

From: Shelby Scharen, ASLA
Brenda Williams, FASLA

To: Project Team

RE: **Visitor Experience Plan**
Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial
PN: 42024700

Subject: Visitor Experience Plan Design Narrative

Design Narrative

The Visitor Experience Plan provides a design for a Peace Garden and visitor improvements along Bayview Avenue and the Toledo Avenue corridor at Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial at Put-in-Bay, Ohio. The intent of the design is to improve visitor wayfinding and the transition between the Memorial and the Village of Put-in-Bay, create a space for programs, increase understanding and enjoyment of the park, and connect with the park's interpretive theme of Peace.

The design was developed collaboratively with staff from the park and regional office.

Design Justification

The Memorial is visited by more than 150,000 visitors a year. Currently, the only exterior ground level wayfinding or interpretive signage are two park entrance signs. There is a need for more information to introduce the site and explain the importance of the Memorial. The Memorial dominates the island landscape and draws visitors directly to it but many do not realize the Visitor Center is available and connected to the Memorial. Currently pedestrian crossings are dangerous and visitors have difficulty safely crossing the streets. The lack of on-the-ground orientation and interpretive elements creates a missed opportunity for the visitor experience. This plan provides a detailed design to address these gaps and increase the impact the park can have on visitors and lays the groundwork for future fundraising. The proposed design enhances visitor experience and wayfinding by designing a Peace Garden to link the town of Put-in-Bay to the park visitor center. At each of the corners of Toledo Avenue, where pedestrians arrive to the park from the ferry drop-offs, the design creates entry nodes and signage to welcome and orient visitors.

Design Vision

The Vision for the Peace Garden is to create a space where people can connect with the concept of peace – both from the perspective of the battle and the past, and looking to the future through inclusion, equality, and accessibility.

Goals

- Create a landscape that inspires people to connect with the park's interpretive themes:
 - Peace (#1 priority)
 - Purpose of the park/Significance of the site:
 - preserve the memorial and its cultural landscape • preserve the historical associations connected with the Battle of Lake Erie, the War of 1812, and the

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memorial, acknowledging that these associations involve shared history • inculcate the lessons of international peace by arbitration and disarmament

- Improve visitor recognition of the park and connection to the visitor center.
- Set the stage for visiting the Memorial.
- Provide a sense of entry and clear orientation and direction to the historic core.
- Improve circulation patterns. Provide safety and clarity at Hartford and Toledo intersections. Provide universally accessible routes to the Peace Garden and Visitor Center.
- Function as a link and transition to the park from Put-In-Bay and provide a mental/atmospheric transition between the park and the town.
- Highlight views to the Memorial.
- Create a peaceful place.
- Create a First amendment space.
- Create a place of inclusion that is welcoming and engaging for all people.

Methodology

- The design is informed by recommendations in the park's Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Cultural Landscape Report, Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan (with Environmental Assessment), and the adjacent sea wall project.
- The Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan provides a concept for a new visitor circulation pattern drawing people in to the Peace Garden and creating new walkways and parking areas between the Visitor Center and the Memorial. The Visitor Experience Plan Design process included re-thinking the physical arrangement of the space and adding details and cost estimates to execute the design.
- Development of the design incorporated evaluation of visitor behaviors, activities, and engagement, and includes recommendations for outdoor media, conventional wayfinding signs, wayside exhibits, and three dimensional exhibits.

Key Design Ideas

- The design will create welcoming space that serves as a link between the town and the park, and that serves as a First Amendment space. The Peace Garden will provide orientation to the park and a sense of arrival through welcome and orientation signs that set the stage for visiting the rest of the site. The design of the garden will grab the attention of visitors in order to draw people into the Peace Garden for orientation, and will be eye-catching for people arriving on the island. A plaza on Hartford/Bayview corner will provide ample seating for school groups, tours, people waiting for the ferry. Views will be visible to the Memorial and Visitor Center, framing these views and creating one cohesive space.
- Conceptually, the Peace Garden will:
 - Connect to a personal concept of peace
 - Be inclusive
 - Provoke thought through motion
 - Connect to natural elements of the island: Wind, Weather (Climate), Geology, Ecology

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- Be a fun space

Design Elements

- Key design elements include features that respect the historic landscape while adding space for circulation, seating, wayfinding, and new plantings that will frame views to the Memorial and Visitor Center. The design follows a formal arrangement of symmetrical walks and planted areas, with a central talking circle framed by native prairie. An allee of trees at the north edge of the Peace Garden separates the garden from the busy street and clearly marks the way to the Memorial.
- The design includes a central Talking Circle for presentations, meditation, and/or Ranger-led talks.
- Unique paving, shade, orientation signs at entrance points to the park create a sense of arrival. The paving style is consistent paving throughout, in order to connect the Peace Garden with the Visitor Center.
- Interpretation/wayfinding/signage greets visitors at all corners. A key entrance point and sign on the corner of Hartford and Bayview with a park sign clearly identifies the garden as part of the park. Additional wayfinding signs, visible to both pedestrians and vehicular traffic occur at the corners of Toledo and Bayview and Toledo and Delaware. A low, pedestrian orientation sign will provide a map and directions to the Visitor Center along Toledo Avenue.
- An allee of trees along Bayview Avenue reflects early planned design for this area (never before implemented) and connects the Peace Garden to the Memorial.
- Views to the Memorial are framed by vegetation, which is kept low in the center of the garden to maximize this view and the view to the Visitor Center.
- Plants are predominately species native to the island. A native prairie at the center of the Peace Garden is composed of indigenous plants.
- Site furnishings include seat walls and stone boulders.
- The connections to the park at all corners will have new crosswalk striping and traffic calming, including a painted, traffic-calming surface along Bayview.
- Quotes about peace will be embedded into the sidewalk and engraved into the seatwalls.
- Art sculptures will be featured within the garden.
- The character of materials will create a consistent look throughout the park and will tie into the adjacent seawall project.
- The site will be universally accessible. Improvements to access along Toledo Avenue include new parking places, sidewalk and curb ramps.

Results

This plan will enable the park to create a more robust and complete experience for visitors through the use of wayfinding signs, wayside exhibits, and three dimensional exhibits. These enhancements will have a direct impact on the parks' ability to provide visitors and program participants with opportunities for transformative experiences that educate and inspire. The Peace Garden will provide orientation and interpretive elements to increase recognition of the park as part of the national park system and increase visitor understanding of park themes in addition to the traditional uses of quiet relaxation and contemplation.

END OF MEMORANDUM