

2.2 Waterfront Re-Development

Waterfront redevelopment is a major market niche. Canadians have the experience and expertise needed to compete in the U.S.

Closely related to downtown revitalization and restoration is another significant market niche open to Canadian architects. Redevelopment of urban waterfronts is fast becoming a major focus for developers in the United States. Canadian expertise and experience in this field is well known through developments such as Halifax's Historic Properties, Charlottetown's waterfront, St. John, New Brunswick's Market Square, Toronto's Harbourfront, and Vancouver's Granville Island and False Creek. There are over 80 major towns and cities along the U.S. Atlantic coast and over 30 along the Mississippi River alone. Numerous towns and cities dot inland waterways and lakes throughout the United States.

2.2.1 The Recent Past

Historically, aside from fishing towns, most American waterfront towns formed along waterways for industrial and distribution reasons. Railway lines were often built to service factories and harbours. As a result, most urban waterfronts evolved into a collection of warehouses, railroads, factories and shipping facilities. With such prevalent industrial use, water pollution became common along urban waterways.

America's waterways are being cleaned up.

Environmental concerns in the late 1960's and 1970's resulted in actions to significantly reduce water pollution. With water bodies becoming more habitable, the stage was set for waterfront redevelopment. Combined with the tax credits accruing to historical preservation and increased interest in downtown living, redevelopment of urban waterfronts has become popular in both large metropolises and smaller cities and towns.

Combined with historical preservation tax credits and increasing interest in urban cores, waterfront re-developments are becoming popular.

Projects have ranged from strictly recreational/tourism uses to residential, retail, office, small-scale industrial and, most often, mixed use. Municipalities are particularly drawn to the employment generation and increased tax bases that waterfront projects create as well as to the increased revenues resulting from tourism.

There have been many large waterfront projects implemented in American cities in the last decade. Examples are: