

# Activation of the Charlestown Navy Yard Waterfront & Water's Edge

Letter of Interest

Charlestown, Boston, Massachusetts

May 11, 2017

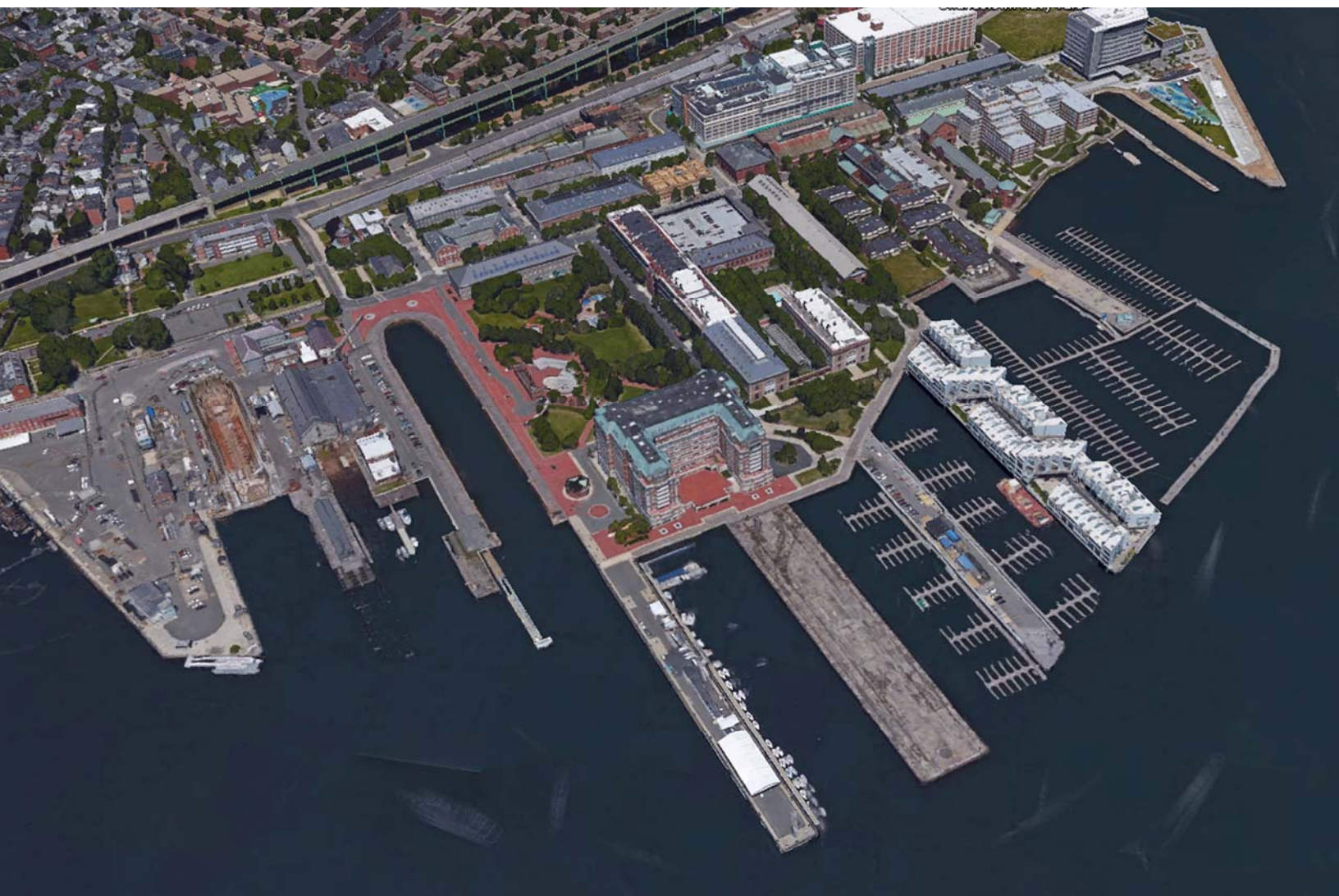


Exhibit A  
Letter of Interest



May 11, 2017

To: Boston Planning & Development Agency  
Re: RFI for the Activation of the Charlestown Navy Yard Waterfront & Water's Edge

Being duly authorized to represent and act on behalf of Context, llc, and having reviewed and fully understood all of the requirements and information provide, the undersigned hereby submits the attached Application and supporting materials and hereby applies for the opportunity to provide or submit a proposal for the activation of the Charlestown Navy Yard waterfront and water's edge as described in the RFI for the Activation of the Charlestown Navy Yard Waterfront and Water's Edge (the "RFI"). Capitalized terms used herein but not otherwise defined shall have the meanings ascribed to such terms in the RFI.

The BPDA is hereby authorized by the Applicant to conduct any inquiries and investigations to verify the statements, documents and information submitted in connection with this Application, and to seek clarification from references and other third parties regarding any financial and experience issues.

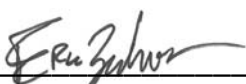
If the BPDA has any questions regarding this Application, please contact the following individual:

Eric Zachrison  
Manager, Context llc  
1 Ludlow Street, Charlestown MA, 02129  
312.780.9456  
[eric@thecontextworkshop.com](mailto:eric@thecontextworkshop.com)

The undersigned confirms and warrants that there is no officer, director, partner, employee or spouse of any of the foregoing categories of individuals who is:

- (a) An elected official of the City of Boston or an employee of the City of Boston, or
- (b) Related to or has any business or family relationship with any elected official of the City of Boston or any employee of the City of Boston, such as that there would be any conflict of interest or any appearance of conflict of interest in the evaluation or consideration of this Application by the BPDA.

The undersigned declares that the statements made in the information provided in the duly completed Application are complete, true and correct in all respects.

By,   
Eric Zachrison  
Manager, context, llc

## 1.0 Organization Structure

### MasterPlan/Architecture

Context llc , incorporated in Illinois  
1 Ludlow Street, Charlestown MA, 02129  
Eric Zachrison, Manager  
312.780.9456  
[eric@thecontextworkshop.com](mailto:eric@thecontextworkshop.com)  
[www.thecontextworkshop.com](http://www.thecontextworkshop.com)

### Legal Team

Lawrence S. DiCara,  
Nixon Peabody  
100 Summer Street, Boston, MA  
617.345.1000  
617.345.1300  
E: LDICARA@nixonpeabody.com  
<https://www.nixonpeabody.com/en>

### Programmatic/Cultural Program Partner/Producer

Public City  
Meredity Powell  
(512) 656.7240  
[mp@public-city.org](mailto:mp@public-city.org)  
[www.public-city.org](http://www.public-city.org)

## 1.2 Context

Context was founded with the fundamental belief that everything we do seeks to **create platforms for increasing engagement and improving the human condition.**

At the heart of our place-making philosophy is a belief that everyone imbues the spaces where they live with memories of shared experiences and aspirations for advancement and happiness. And, because we are diverse and complex individuals, we each identify with places in many different ways, at different times during the day and in our lives. For this reason, it is critical to us that we, as a team, deeply integrate ourselves with our communities and clients and relish the relationships we build there. You'll notice that we use the term 'we' a lot. We are talking about ourselves in combination with our clients, neighbors, collaborators and friends. We believe in partnership, and that the ultimate success of a project is directly proportional to the level of understanding and kinship that we can achieve with the people with whom we work, learn and live. To us, 'we' is every stakeholder, team member and voice.

We believe that a radically visible approach which involves the widest range of people possible, and at every step of the visioning, discovery, design, refinement and approval, is ultimately going to be the most successful and rewarding. A completely outward facing approach like this will foster the greatest sense of understanding between constituents, it will build the greatest foundation of goodwill moving forward, and it will create a deeper understanding of the final plan.

## **1.2 Public City – a culture-driven public engagement consultancy and studio**

Public City curates experiences and helps to tell the stories that matter. Clients enlist us to help shape strategies for engaging their publics, both internally and externally. With a combined 30+ years experience strategizing, designing, planning, commissioning, exhibiting, and partnering with cities, businesses, non-profits, speakers, artists, and curators, we've created and produced large- and small-scale events and installations that are rooted in a keen awareness of human-centric, place or content-based approaches.

At Public City, we work with clients to connect to the people that matter to them. Leading with content, culture, and creativity, we design and execute programs that drive deep engagement between our clients and their constituent groups. The execution varies: it might take the shape of an art installation, a symposium, or perhaps a pop-up experience. But regardless of the format, we always strive for high-touch, high-impact programs that reinforce our clients' missions.

Community Engagement Strategy + Event Production + Experience Design + Execution + Public Art Curation + Project Management + Content Curation and Management + Cultural Strategies & Strategic Plans + Piloting Public Policy and Master Planning through Temporary Works + Facilitation

## **2.0 Summary of Activity**

We propose tying the development of any one parcel or asset to an overall strategy for activating all of these parcels. We must fully capitalize on the remaining assets, tying their success and development to the ideas, built elements and events that are required to activate and optimize all of the Navy Yard.

**We would like to offer our services as Community Planning and Architects, and would like to work with the BPDA to:**

- **Conceptualize and communicate design and activation proposals coming from a variety of sources and with varied implementation timelines.**
- **Work with the many and diverse neighborhood groups in Charlestown to evaluate Development Options.** These would likely include opportunities such as: Innovation Space, Residences, Education or Lab Space at Pier 5; event infrastructure at the foot of Drydock 2 vs. sculpture or built elements; and maker space/innovation vs. storage and exhibition at various docks
- **Work with the city and neighborhood groups to select development teams and operators**
- **Work with neighborhood groups to determine how profits are re-invested to further activate the Navy Yard**
- **Identify and work with event organizers**
- **Investigate establishing a Community Benefit Organization funded by development**

## **2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

### Engagement:

In 2013, the Mayor of London issued the World Cities Culture Report, reporting that culture is equally as important in crafting and shaping world cities as are finance and trade. Building on this body of research, the 2015 report states, “cultural vibrancy and city success go hand in hand.” With increasing frequency, economists, planners, designers and policy leaders attribute culture as a driver of growth and prosperity by playing a key role in stimulating long-term economic and social growth in cities, counties and regions.

By shaping a sense of place and social space, cultural richness increases a region’s attractiveness to an educated workforce, the businesses that employ those workers, and visitors seeking authentic, place-specific and human-centered experiences unique to the destination itself.

Public City works with organizations interested in creating vibrancy and connection to place by crafting and developing authentic, site-specific installations and activations to engage the public in conversation about the potential for what a space could be.

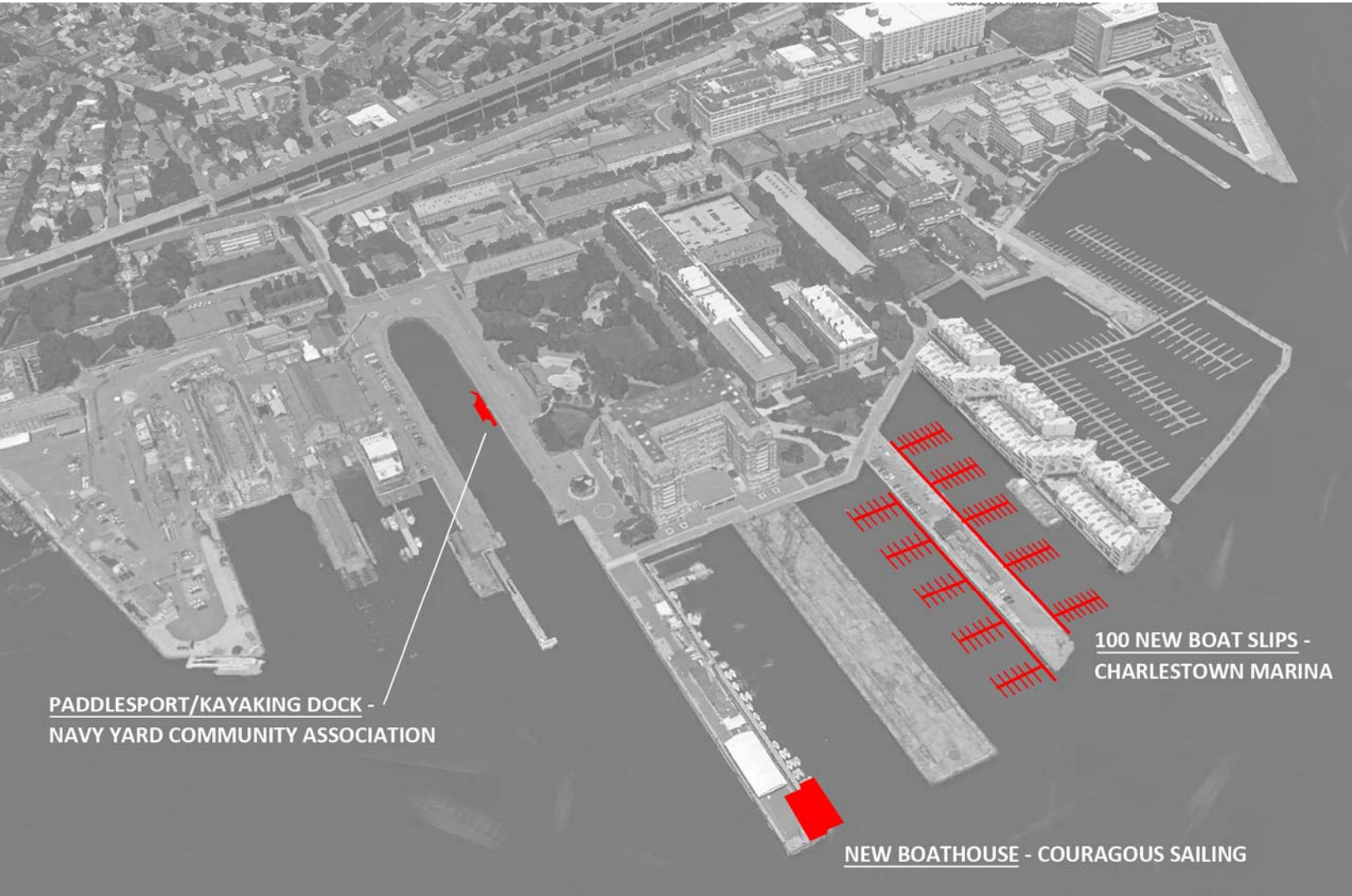
Based on our experiences working with public improvement districts (PIDs), business improvement districts (BIDs), tax increment financing districts (TIFs), cities and municipalities, we’ve seen the power of active public engagement strategies brought to life.

Culture is the lifeblood of the region and a major reason why people gravitate to places — to live, work or visit. Culture is deeply embedded in the social and economic fabric. As regions face population growth — and in some cases demographic and economic shifts — so increases the impact and importance of culture and creativity at the heart of public and economic policy.

We love to help organizations position themselves to develop strategies and implementation plans that build partnerships across sectors and solidify frameworks for collaboration to advance cultural ecosystems for the future.

## 2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.

We will continue our work with community residents and business owners to identify ongoing projects which are partially or fully funded, or about to begin construction such as:



**2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

The Charlestown residents and business operators that we've spoken to have already provided us with a wealth of ideas as to the assets and amenities that future developments should provide or support (in the Navy Yard or elsewhere in Charlestown):

kayaking  
job training  
affordable housing  
deli  
boats  
schools  
methadone clinic  
community gardens  
alternate grocery store  
parks  
waterfront dining  
increased public water transportation  
expand harborwalk  
historical markers  
housing for long-term residents  
statues  
exhibition space  
event/theater space  
amusement park

And we know that our future conversations will help add to, place and prioritize these ideas.

## 2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.

Throughout our conversations to date, one theme has been most intriguing and may become our guiding principle: **The Navy Yard needs more Boats.**

People are drawn here because they love boats. They want to see and learn about one of the most influential ships in history. But, when that is finished, they are left without much opportunity to see and enjoy more water activities and access. The Activation Plan recognized this and proposed Story Loops of Seamanship and Maritime Technology, which would appeal to those visitors and users.

**The Navy Yard could be the heart and center of boating** in the city and the region. From here, we should tell the history of boats and boat building in New England. We should showcase boats in temporary and permanent exhibits. We should display old and current methods of boat making and restoration. And we should be exploring, sourcing and explaining new maritime technologies.

We should surround these existing, wonderful and unique amenities with a cluster of educational, recreational and symbiotic partners.

technical educational programs  
unique live-aboard amenities construction  
e inc. USS Constitution floating park  
Charlestown Marina Courageous Sailing exhibits  
rehabilitation Constitution Museum  
USS Cassin Young Constitution Marina  
Spaulding Visiting ships at Pier 4 sales  
maritime maker space Seaport Academy  
retired "sailor's" home



## **2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

The establishment of a community benefit organization funded through these developments in the Navy Yard naturally builds on the existing relationship between the City of Boston Planning and Development Agency and Charlestown property owners. In collaboration with the residents and stakeholders, developers and the City, Public City will work to activate spaces prime for both development and preservation to test ideas, concepts, future uses and potential partners to inform the development process and ensure future projects and investments are culturally relevant, purpose driven and deeply rooted in place.

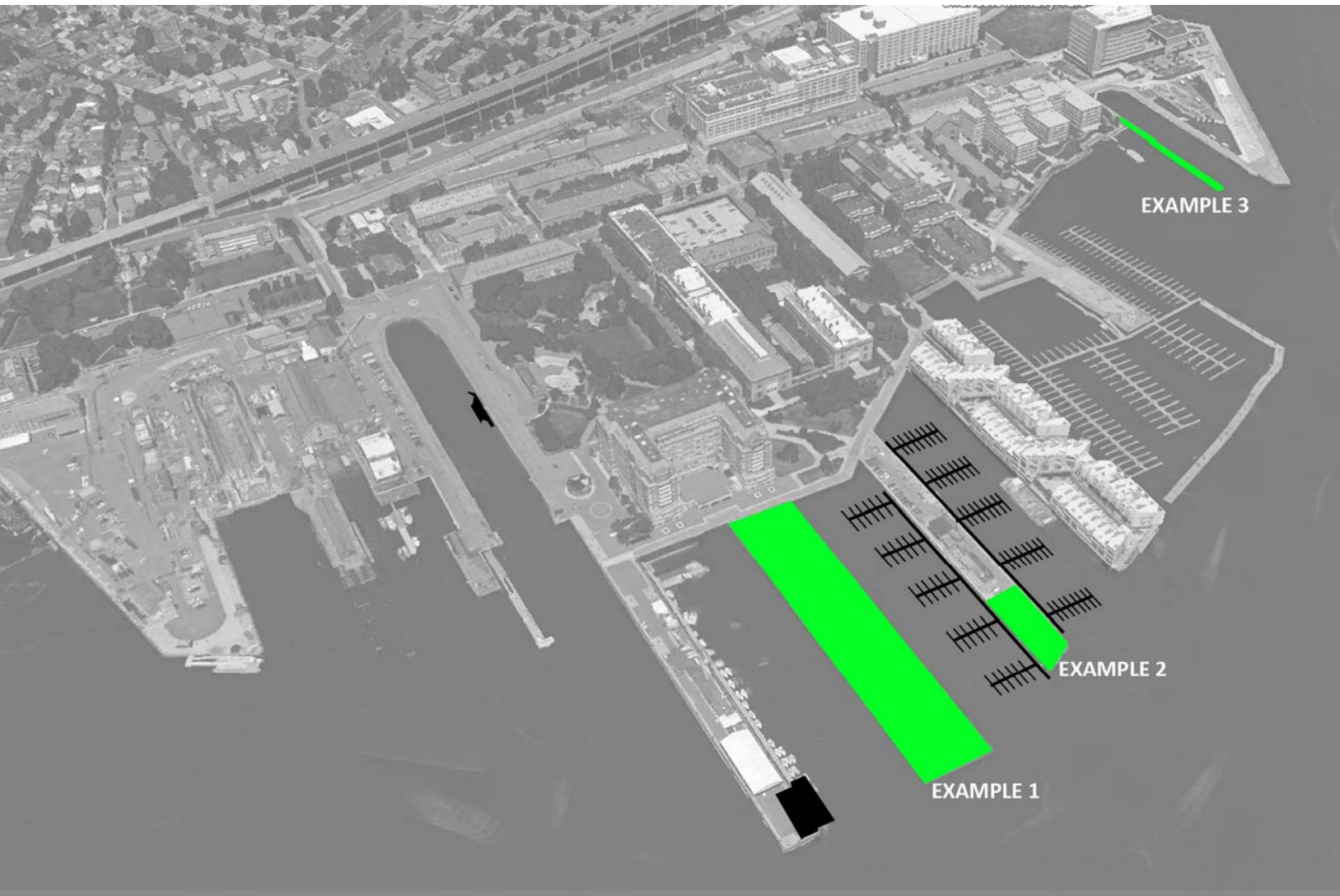
From the initial exploratory conversations we're having, the maritime culture provides a cohesive identity worth continuing to invest in. Activations that nurture, support and celebrate the maritime ecosystem create a unique, place-specific approach that develops a destination only made possible by staying true to Charlestown.

Given the established and strong neighborhood associations and existing program of events and cultural assets, iconic and otherwise, Public City will work from the ground up with the residents and stakeholders to confirm what cultural events, experiences and assets to build on and what is missing. We'll establish a strong staple of iconic experiences along with a balance of fun, unexpected, and ever-changing activations unique to the Navy Yard ethos.

We'll simultaneously work top down with the City of Boston Planning and Development Agency and the selected developer(s) and business owners to invest resources strategically that will initiate and sustain the culture-driven community and economic development generated through the on-going activations of the Navy Yard.

**2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

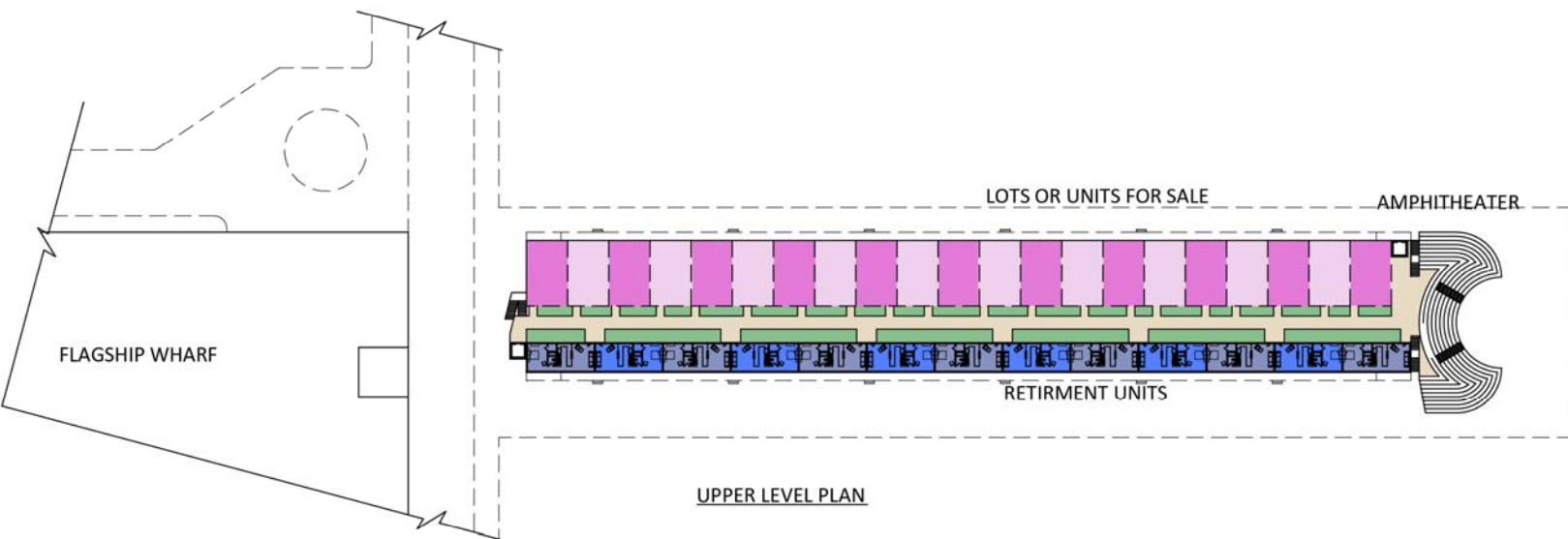
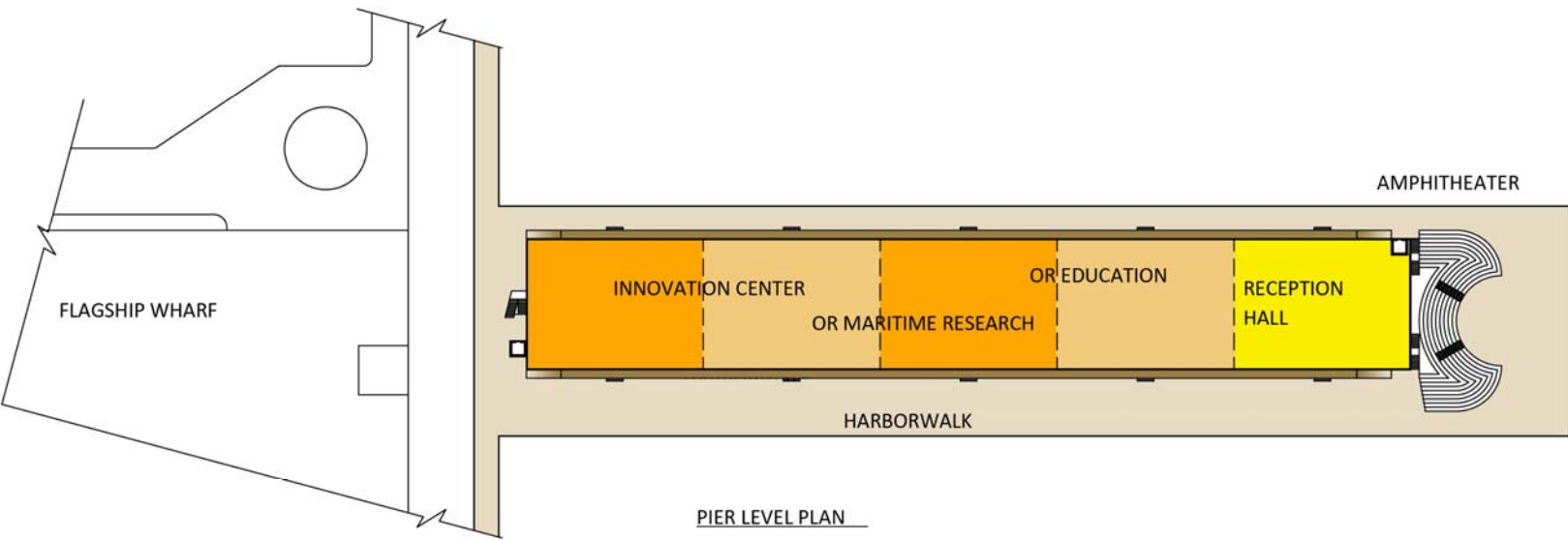
For Example: to sponsor and support a range of new amenities for the Navy Yard, we would identify assets which would be leveraged to provide deeper resources while enhancing the community within the overall framework:



Example Site 3 above might be leased as an exhibition space, event space or as a for sale/lease boat 'showroom'. We'd love to explore a pier city, a half a dozen unique workspaces or learning environments. Example Site 2 could add another waterfront restaurant which would compliment the existing restaurant and shuttle to the new restaurant in East Boston, providing both revenue and desired amenity. While Example Site 1 would likely provide the greatest opportunity to develop resources.

**2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

In this initial proposal for Pier 5, we envision a mix of uses to capitalize on this asset by providing amenities and resources. At the Pier Level, we construct a 'soft floor' and seek a partnership with an organization such as Cambridge Innovation Center, the Seaport Academy or Wood's Hole; and create an amphitheater or event space in a platform building. One or more of the spaces could simply be a reception hall for waterfront events and weddings. On the upper level, we create a number retirement units. These small units with fantastic connection to the water could provide homes for an ideal retirement. We would like to consider a special community with a preference for people who have spent a decade or more in maritime industries, an 'Old Sailor's Home.'



Condo lots could be sold or leased which allow the owners to build custom units within FAR and dimensional constraints, maximizing the value while creating a smaller scale and visually diverse amenity.

**2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

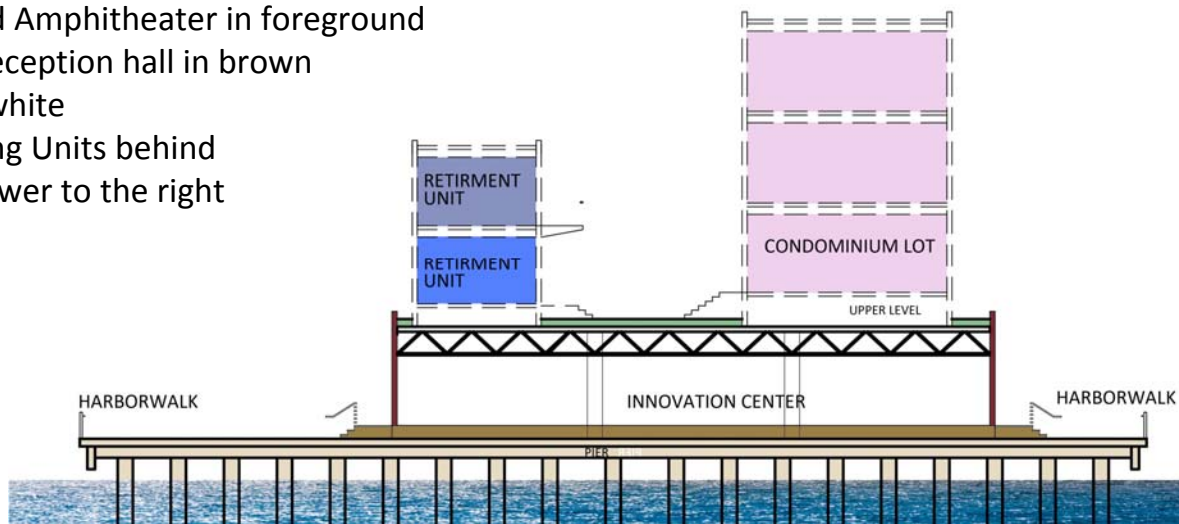
In addition to investment resources, this provides:

- Extension of the Harborwalk by almost ¼ mile
- Waterside Theater
- Daytime residents with eyes on the street and movement
- Both types of residents support existing and empty retail

And, a variety of uses diversifies impacts on parking and other resources while expanding opportunities for residents and outsiders to engage with the Navy Yard.

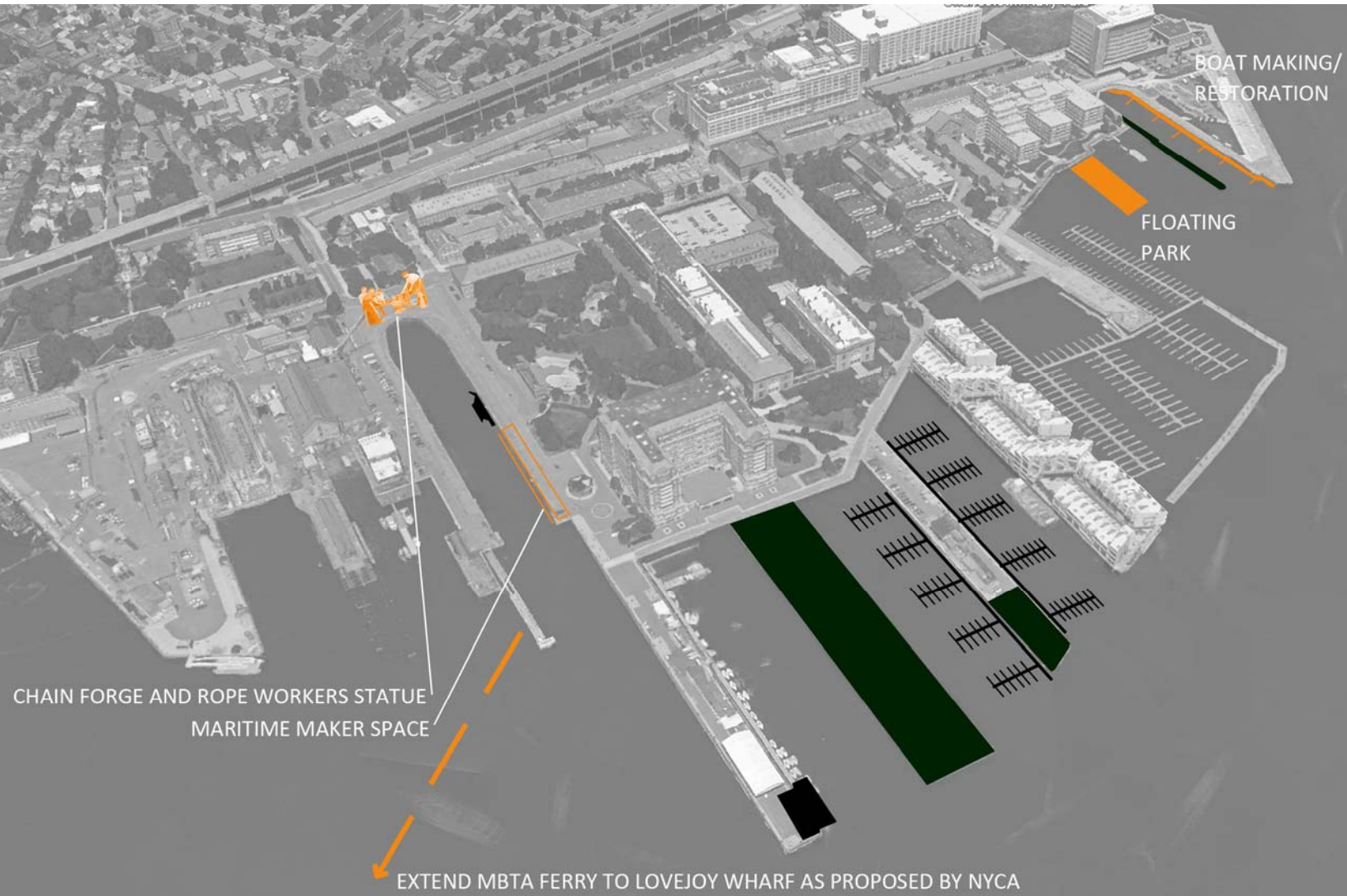


Harborwalk Plaza and Amphitheater in foreground  
Innovation Center/Reception hall in brown  
Retirement Units in white  
Condominium Housing Units behind  
Elevator and Light Tower to the right



**2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

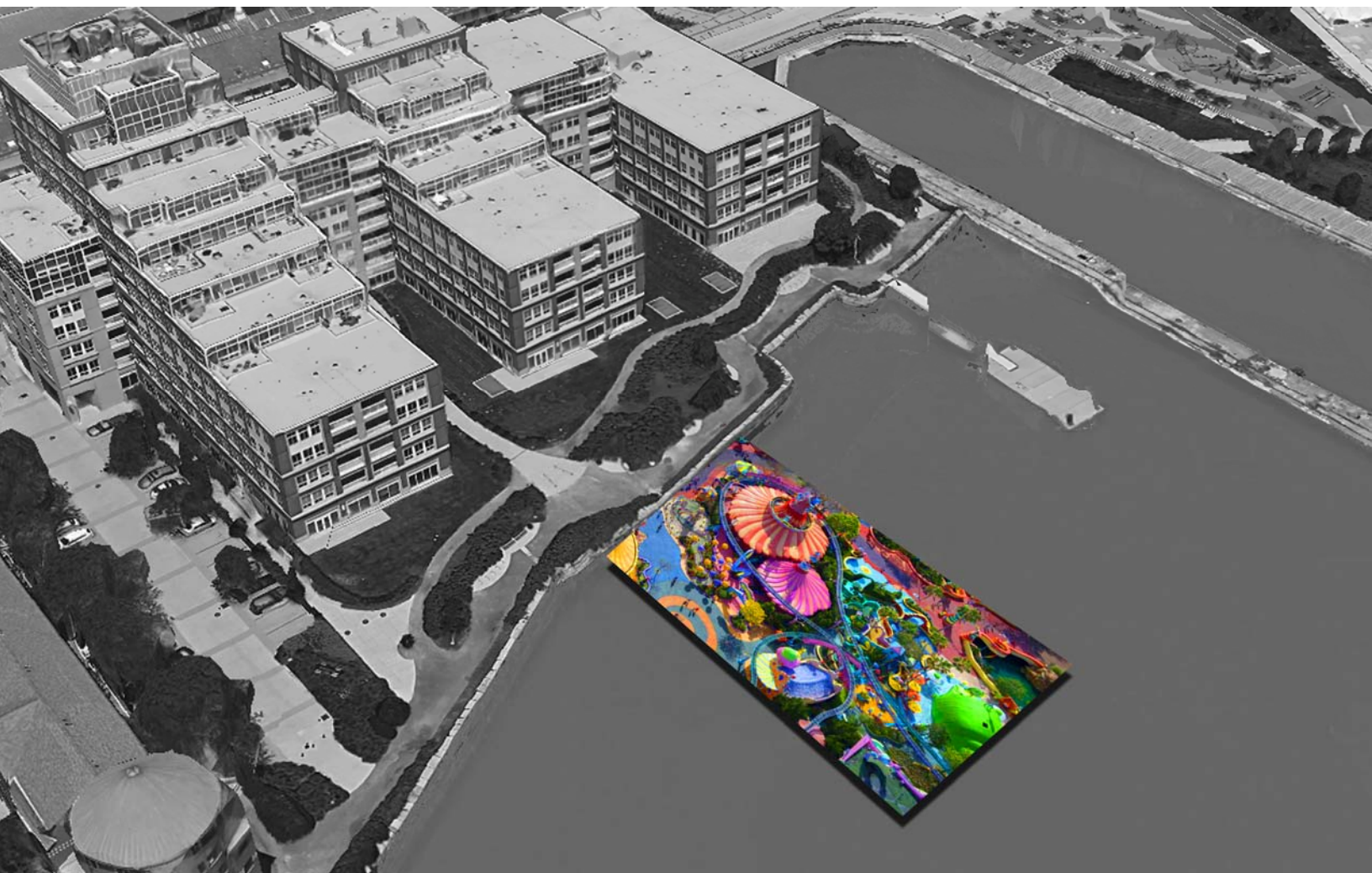
We, the community, the BPDA, and other stakeholders, then use those resources to sponsor new assets that strengthen the cluster of activity.



## 2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.

One popular suggestion is that this becomes a node in a network of docking points for a floating park system. We envision building small special purpose parks on barges which could be located at places such as this for a span of 3 or 6 or 12 months, and then switched out with another waterfront location and replaced by a fresh environment. Some of these could be educational or exercise oriented, art or performance spaces etc.

And as the center of boating innovation in New England, the Navy Yard could be the first docking point, and possibly even the originating point for all of these new parks.



**2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

The foot of Drydock 2 is already an ideal location for one of a kind photographs. This should be accentuated with statues that commemorate the Chain Forge and Rope Workers.

Special consideration can make these statues the kind of elements that people interact with in memorable ways. Perhaps water or light or digital features can make them even more memorable.



Navy Yard Concept



Bratislava



Freemantle



Milwaukee

## **2.0 Summary of Activity cont'd.**

We would especially like to thank the people and organizations that we've already spoken to for their ideas and passion for the Navy Yard, Charlestown and the various communities that make this such a rich and vibrant place to live, work and raise a family.

Special thanks to:  
Charlestown Marina  
Pier 6  
NYCA  
Flagship Wharf  
Cordia  
Courageous Sailing  
Constitution Marina

And we look forward to working with the rest of the businesses and organizations that are so invested in making this one of the greatest places to live in the world.



“All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days . . .nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.”

-John F. Kennedy