

challenge and an opportunity for cities around the world. Some of the most important redevelopments in recent years have been waterfront revitalization projects: consider, for example, such projects as London's Canary Wharf, New York's Battery Park City, Vancouver's Granville Island, Sydney's Darling Harbour, or San Francisco's Mission Bay. Waterfronts, of course, have historically been the staging points for the import and export of goods. Location next to the water was a competitive advantage to many industrial operations. The edge between city and water, between the production site and its transport basing point, was the most intense zone of use in the nineteenth-century city. Use on the urban waterfront was often exclusively port or manufacturing related. The wealth of cities was based on their ability to facilitate the need of industrial capital to access waterfront resources. However, the creation of this wealth brought with it environmental degradation and toxicity, which today characterize these residual urban spaces.

Our information-saturated, service-oriented economic systems no longer rely on the industrial and manufacturing operations of the past. Technological changes have redefined the relationships of transport and industry. The concurrent advancements of road, rail and water transport, combined with the requirements of containerization, have shifted the basing points for global water transport away from previously historic waterfronts. With this passing, the relationship between water and the generators of economic wealth has changed. Typically, these areas exist as spaces of urban redundancy, as left over spaces in the city. The use and the environmental condition of these spaces are of major concern to many cities in their revitalization efforts.

These waterfront redevelopment projects speak to our future, and to our past. They speak to a past based in industrial production, to a time of tremendous growth and expansion, to social and economic structures that no longer exist, to a time when environmental degradation was an unacknowledged by-product of growth and profit. Through historical circumstance, these sites are immediately adjacent to centers of older cities and, typically, are separated from the physical, cultural and psychological connections that exist in every city. They speak to a future by providing opportunities for cities to reconnect with their water's edge. Because of their size and complexity, these sites require innovative mechanisms for their consolidation. Historically the sites of industry, they now attempt to re-center activity in urban space, to reposition concentrations of activity, to shift the focus from the old to the new.

Waterfronts have been a topic of academic and professional interest since the 1960s. The success of projects such as the Inner Harbor in Baltimore spawned a series of large urban redevelopment projects on waterfront sites around the world. Waterfronts became associated with ways to recreate the image of a city, to recapture economic investment and to attract people back to deserted downtowns. Waterfront development has generated its own discipline. As Meyer notes, "professionals (and academics) from all over the world keep one another informed of the most recent developments by means of international waterfront networks" (Meyer, 1999: 13). The Waterfront Center, based in Washington, DC, Centro Internazionale Città d'Acqua in Venice, and the Association