

are experimenting with new uses designed to fill the vacuum left behind in the CBD. In highly developed countries, new uses are selected which will meet the demand created by the new lifestyle of a greatly dispersed population: a great deal more leisure time, divided into ever-smaller increments than in previous generations. (Consider the growth of two-earner families with vacation dates set by unrelated employers, or the sudden switch in Japan from the six-day to the five-day week.)

The new uses that have caught on in the US and increasingly in other developed countries are typified by attractions directed at leisure activities – which appeal both to local residents and to visitors who are more and more mobile, due to increased disposable incomes and the ease of jet air travel or driving on the Interstate with its myriad of comfortable new types of hotels and motels. Market analysts tell us that the leisure audience in the twenty-first century will want more than simply to be entertained; they also want some new knowledge, or understanding, to take away with them – hence the term the “experience economy.” This includes such attractions as lifestyle shopping, family entertainment, sports or simulated sports, and cultural venues such as museums, learning centers, art galleries, science centers, and the like.

In addition to providing space for such uses in a central location with a high profile of public recognition, the waterfront also offers a friendly environment for other emerging trends in urban life. Nostalgia is back in favor, and the “new urbanism” or “smart growth” movements, with their emphasis on restoring and infilling old patterns of development, plus the trend toward sustainable development and respect for the environment, all find a natural home in the old city neighborhoods surrounding the port. In addition, there is a strong suspicion that the onslaught of the high-tech world of computers and cyberspace is generating a new form of counter-reaction: a hunger for humane pursuits like reading, or interaction between people. (Perhaps the most popular attraction in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor is simply people-watching, from the benches and sidewalk cafés along the Promenade.)

While the new uses favored by the economy and the emerging trends in human preferences seem to favor the waterfront, there is also a trend in technology itself that may make it easier for those demands to be fulfilled. This includes the use of new materials, the adoption (albeit slowly) of new construction methods, including robotics, the availability of onsite and offsite communications technology, and all of the other advances in methodology that are increasing productivity in the development and construction industries.

At the same time there is a universally acknowledged need for the public and private sectors to join as partners in any high-risk, high-profile development undertaking such as a waterfront development project. This has made it possible to create many projects that would have languished for lack of financing in the twentieth century. Government entitlements are issued from the top down. “Gap” financing from the public sector is an accepted necessity. It has been demonstrated that overlapping jurisdictions and territorial rivalries can be minimized by the use of third-party, quasi-public production, or “delivery,” systems. Meanwhile, the focusing of responsibility for the waterfront and the prospect of sharing credit for a