

NEW MORAN

A REDEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL FOR
BURLINGTON'S
MORAN PLANT

Submitted by Room 9 Redevelopment & The Charles Tipper Co.
Public Investment Action Plan, October 17, 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

We propose a mix-used, energy self-sufficient Moran building. This new Moran is a hub for waterfront events and conventions; it supports human-powered recreation and access to local food, art, energy and technology.

Over the last two decades, Burlington citizens have ceaselessly demonstrated their support for public use of the waterfront, resulting in a dramatic transformation of the area into a major recreational and cultural resource. While more than 3 million people traverse the Church Street Marketplace each year, the Burlington bike path and ECHO Lake Aquarium each receive 150,000 visitors annually. Any building at this site has the potential to be a visible cultural landmark; amidst that potential, a new Moran can shift and expand the City's gravitational force, substantially increasing visitors to the waterfront and to the City of Burlington. In an exciting time of economic and cultural growth, the waterfront can be to Burlington now what the redevelopment of Church Street initiated in 1981.

We know a new Moran can only thrive if it is a direct reflection of our City's core values and the remarkable collective energy we believe the community can bring to bear. Our project strives to fully embody the creative potential for re-use of the Moran Plant, preserving its industrial history, while bolstering the economic revitalization and community reclamation of Burlington's waterfront. Furthering that transformation within the overall framework of the Public Trust Doctrine, our proposed redevelopment is built upon the five principles of **Community, Energy, Arts, Food and Recreation**. We move beyond saying "these are the ideas that matter" to acting on the reality that all of these things matter - all the time - and that they are fully interconnected.

**Our Moran is a transition area between heritage and innovation.
It is where communities meet, celebrate and innovate.**

Our project requests \$4.55 million in TIF dollars for the infrastructure improvements and remediation necessary to leverage additional investment in the project. This investment directly complements ongoing Waterfront Access North TIF investment, such as the extension and improvement of Lake Street; it provides public facilities and amenities which support users of the improved bike path and a proposed marina on the North end of the waterfront. Our proposal further supports ongoing waterfront development initiatives as a strategic partner of, and in support of the Community Sailing Center, and as a programmed facility supporting the continual improvement of waterfront events - both for event attendees and in regards to notorious impact on the park and its neighbors.

"The redevelopment of the Moran Plant has been a long-held desire, yet elusive challenge, for the City. It's expansive size and rich history presents a tremendous opportunity for creative adaptive reuse that can serve as an important anchor for the northern end of the waterfront."

-PlanBTV, page 122

A large, multi-story brick building is the central focus, undergoing significant renovation. The structure is heavily encased in a complex network of metal scaffolding and steel beams, particularly on the left and central portions. The building's facade is a mix of dark and light brick, with some sections appearing to be in the process of being replaced or repaired. In the foreground, a chain-link fence runs across the scene, behind which a large number of colorful kayaks (in shades of blue, red, yellow, and purple) are neatly stacked on wooden racks. To the right, a paved area with a metal railing leads towards the building's entrance. The sky is a clear, pale blue, and the overall scene suggests a large-scale construction or restoration project in an outdoor setting.

APPROACH TO PROJECT

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A|B. Project Need & Details

Addressing direct community needs while supporting on-going initiatives

Waterfront Revitalization:

Support the creation of a vibrant, culturally rich year-round waterfront

“The Burlington waterfront is our crown jewel and perhaps our single-most important community asset... However, it has yet to achieve the critical mass of people and the mix of uses needed to extend this vitality into the winter season... when developing in this area, it is important to retain and expand upon the character found in the most loved parts of the City -PlanBTV, Page 57. “Burlington’s waterfront must be developed so that it can be used and enjoyed year-round; and that the waterfront’s heritage be given significant consideration in future plans.” Waterfront Revitalization Plan, Page 5.

Our redevelopment plan retains, to every extent possible, the Moran building’s open space and industrial character while showcasing year-round Vermont’s vibrant artistic, cultural and recreational activities. By restoring the character and reinventing the value of a landmark structure, a new Moran not only preserves the heritage of our formerly industrial waterfront but represents a catalyst for year-round traffic and activity. Such potential for transformative waterfront investment is described in the following project initiatives.

Burlington’s Front Porch:

A place for the community to gather, learn, exhibit and celebrate

“Waterfront Park has been successful as a place to host important cultural, civic, and athletic events that bring tens of thousands of people to Burlington’s waterfront each year. These events celebrate our community and lakefront, expose new people to the city, and generate millions of dollars for the local economy. The continued evolution of Burlington’s waterfront into a mixed-use area that is active year-round will require a careful balance of competing demands...waterfront event planners and organizers need to be sensitive to the impacts that event noise, lighting, and traffic congestion has on their neighbors.”

-PlanBTV, page 59

“Burlington has a relatively small convention market, with most sizable events taking place at the Sheraton

Hotel & Convention Center; the hotel’s location on Route 2 past UVM makes it more challenging to attract convention visitors to downtown shops and restaurants....conferences and conventions scheduled for Burlington should all be considered part of [improving] the Visitor Strategy”

Civic spaces are the heart of the community. Our Moran redevelopment creates a powerful new focal point for community events, conferences, conventions, workshops, education, performance and arts installation at a scale otherwise unimaginable - and sorely needed - in Burlington.

With a capacity of approximately 1,500 people in and around the “Great Room,” Moran provides a new year-round, non-weather contingent alternative to the controversial tent city events in Waterfront Park. The indoor venue not only eliminates weather concerns from waterfront events, but it moves noise away from currently concerned residents. The superinsulation inherent to Passivehaus design not only significantly reduces heat transfer, but acts as an acoustic barrier, absorbing sound and greatly reducing decibel travel outside the building. Furthermore, the variety of flexible event spaces - everything from small breakout meeting rooms to the Great Room itself - will be provided, at a reasonable rate, to building residents as accessible common areas outside of their leased space in the building, as well as to the general public through non-profit program management. Meeting rooms and event halls are equipped with all necessary resources to record and broadcast events, with studio services and educational opportunities provided by Community Media Studio.

The Crothers Management Group (CMG) will work closely alongside the New Moran non-profit management team, collectively forming the New Moran Management Group, to curate and provide management services of the events facility envisioned at the Moran. With over 15 years of facility management and three venues already under its care, CMG is uniquely suited to bring its expertise to this project. Based in Burlington, VT, CMG looks forward to being one of the stewards of Moran and anticipates many promising opportunities to work with New Moran in providing a thrilling, unique, space for a myriad of uses. The Great Room provides a beautiful juxtaposition of performing arts space, community gathering and flexible events space - a place where book signings, crafts fairs, farmers markets, concert events, weddings, banquets, corporate events, lectures, public and TedX-style speakers will all have a home. CMG will book and manage the space, working in tandem with the non-profit management team to bring a rich variety of public and private, ticketed and free events that will invigorate New Moran and help place it in the consciousness of the local and national arts communities.

APPROACH TO PROJECT:

Creative Economy:

Leveraging local leadership in artisan crafts, green technology and community media

“The economy, globally as well as locally, is in the midst of a revolution rooted in knowledge, information, and creativity; a revolution that favors authenticity, social, and environmental responsibility, and a sense of community; a revolution that is fueled by dynamic interactions between technology, arts, culture, nature, work, play and living; a revolution that is alive and well in Burlington, and one that our community is uniquely positioned to capitalize on in the decades ahead. What we do now to support Burlington’s growing creative economy will determine much of the city’s cultural, social, political, and economic success in the future.” -PlanBTV, Page 49

A new Moran not only activates the waterfront year round, it provides strategic leverage for Burlington’s booming localvore, tech and creative economies. As a location, Moran builds the physical infrastructure for serendipitous interactions between residents, visitors and local leaders in technology, non-profits, the agricultural community and a thriving creative culture. This dynamic nurtures the talent existing in Burlington, while creating a magnet for visitors and new ideas both near and far. We believe in emphasizing the best of what is already here in this

town: immense creativity and highly collaborative people with connections close by and very far.

‘**Generator**’ **MakerSpace** is a non-profit Maker Organization providing tools, classes and flexible studio spaces to support the community intersection of art, science and technology. As part of a greater city-wide campus, Moran serves as the highly visible beachhead for the Maker movement pointing well beyond the building. Generator exhibits maker creations in both formal gallery space, and in empty airspace and atriums throughout the building. Apart from formal show, Generator’s anticipates hosting public lecture series, formal shows, workshops and large maker gatherings in the building. Lastly, Generator will manage a “dirty lab” fabrication space accessible for building tenants and housing hands-on classes, and small open studio spaces for competitive artistic residencies.

There is a wide range of memberships available, as well as generous scholarships, and anyone over the age of 18 is welcome (an insurance requirement that will be revisited over time). Membership is not required to take classes, tour, bring school groups, or attend lectures and other public events.

As an expression of the Maker movement, **AO Glass Works** will operate an educational glass blowing

studio on the first floor, expanding the building’s public access and artistic energy by offering free entry to watch creativity in the making. The program hosts daily demonstrations and exhibitions for children and adults, alongside classes, workshops, and school field trips.

Alongside AO and Generator, a **Community R&D Hub** creates open pre-incubation space for local organizations and individuals to access otherwise unavailable or unaffordable technology and media resources. This organization coordinates a home for the wide-array of existing technology-based citizen user groups in Burlington, using Moran’s flexible and well equipped meeting spaces to host meetups. In addition, this hub provides community access to Burlington’s gigabit-potential fiber optic network, the potential for access to Maker Space for prototyping hardware and a venue capable of large conferences or events. Together, those services make our proposed Moran a potential keystone to Burlington’s aspiration as a Regional Technology Center as part of established US Ignite goals.

Lastly, a **Community Media Studio** provides the equipment to process and disseminate media from Moran-building events, building a portfolio for the building and local organizations while providing professional media education. This non-profit studio, run by local leaders in community access media, serves as a Burlington hub for media education and innovation.

A program of this caliber not only supports public access to the intersection of art and technology, but an increased connection to Burlington’s thriving agricultural community and initiative in environmental leadership. In this way, Moran is steeped in innovation; it is a place where established leaders from the energy, technology, environmental and agricultural community interact - and have serendipitous collisions - with each other, younger companies or organizations, and the community at large.