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I, Suchi Sharma, hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:

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This work and its defense approved by:

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Abstract

In this age of diminishing direct interaction between people, due largely to the automobile and the internet, it is important that public spaces be designed to help initiate interaction between people. This in turn will increase something that is desperately needed, sense of community. Spaces for informal interaction are in tremendous need; thus it is imperative that we design spaces that stimulate interaction and bring people together to use the public space regularly. An effective way to achieve this is to bring together a combination of uses, civic and social, to one site, in order to interest everyone and bring a mix of users to the site. Varying uses, in the case of this thesis project, include a public library as an anchor on one side and a restaurant as the other, a visitor’s center, art gallery, café, offices of local organizations as well as a bar, small shops, and a public park. This thesis stems, in large, from one major idea: “Communities are in desperate need for the civic space required for social interaction, dialogue, and collaboration.”1 In other words we need rebuild the backbone that can support a strong community. It investigates the idea of community space through studies of

1 Ronald B. McCabe, Civic Librarianship: Renewing the Social Mission of the Public Library (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2001) 111.
attributes and character of successful public spaces. Further, this thesis will focus on the meaning of identity as related to community. The conjecture is that architecture can help facilitate the face-to-face interaction that is much needed in society today. The thesis will produce strategies for designing a public plaza that will help develop a sense of community for the city of Vermilion while representing its identity.
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Introduction

This thesis is about preserving an important human need that has begun to disappear; sense of community facilitated through direct human interaction. A sense of community and connection with others within a city is often related to the identity or character of a district, which in turn leads to similar interests and connections that turn the city at large into a community. The goal of this thesis project’s goal is to help foster a stronger sense of community and preserve the identity of Vermilion, Ohio. The project itself aims to become the “front porch” where the population goes to relax, socialize, meet people, and attend community events. The project will have a range of uses built into the program, all aimed at the people in the area. Included are places that people visit regularly such as a newsstand or public library, places for conversation such as a restaurant, or even those that a person may visit occasionally such as a community art gallery. In addition to these uses, the use of the waterfront and the water itself will be considered very important, for it is what Vermilion holds closest to its heart; it is the core of the city’s identity. Vermilion, Ohio is a small town of approximately 10,000 people, on the southern shore of Lake Erie. The site for this project is a quarter-mile south of the lake, bound by water on three sides, and a state route on the other. The major waterway along the site’s border is the Vermilion River that empties into Lake Erie. The town itself is a regular
summer home to many people who love the city’s relaxed atmosphere and come for the recreational boating that is the major interest of those who live and visit Vermilion.

The first chapter of this thesis discusses the meaning and ideas behind “community” and “identity.” It also talks about how community has changed over the years and the reasons behind this change, followed by the connection between both identity and community. The second chapter looks at public space and how this can help increase community strength when designed well. The bulk of this section focuses on how to design public spaces that function well and become important part of the city or community. The focus on public space also includes designing for water fronts in particular, which is very important to this particular project. The third part of the thesis is a study of other projects that have a similar site, intentions, or function. Finally, the last part of the thesis will goes more into more depth in information about the city, the site, and the program. The goal of this research is to bring together what is important in building community through architecture.
1.0 Community and Identity
This thesis has two goals; facilitate interaction between those who live and visit
the small city of Vermilion and to create architecture that encompasses the
identity of the city and preserves that identity against encroaching influences.
The one overriding idea that binds these ideas together is community. Along with
community comes the idea of identity, and what comes to mind when the public
thinks of the town and its character.

This chapter discusses the definition and idea of community, and the broader
implications and interpretations of this definition and how it applies to the
perception of identity. The second chapter focuses on how community has
changed over time and where it stands today. Finally, an examination of the
forces that have molded the way communities today work and interact will
disclose the need for change in how people interact, and the need for spaces that
bring people together and facilitate the interaction between them.
1.1 Definition of Community

Dictionaries list several definitions of the word “community”:

1. a) A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government.
   b) The district or locality in which such a group lives.
2. a) A group of people having common interests: the scientific community; the international business community.
   b) A group viewed as forming a distinct segment of society: the gay community; the community of color.
3. a) Similarity or identity: a community of interests.
   b) Sharing, participation, and fellowship.
4. a) Society as a whole; the public\(^2\)

These characterizations are very broad. They range from the finite, concrete notion of a group in the same locality, to a broader, more subjective idea that a community is made up of people sharing the similar beliefs and ideas.

The root of the word “community” comes from the Latin words *communis* and *communitas*, the former meaning “common” and the latter meaning “fellowship.”\(^3\) This offers some insight into what a community is really about,


beyond the concrete. It is much more that just a proximity between people. It is a connection between individuals and groups that goes beyond the physical. It implies similar interests, beliefs, friendship, and identity, relationships that go to the very core of what bonds people together. A community such as this can be made up of any number of people, with members spread out across the world.

One of the first thoughts that comes to mind when pondering the word community is that it consists of all the people who live within the same locality. But this is not as simple as it sounds. We can break a city down into neighborhoods, streets, or even clusters of homes and still consider all the people who live within these areas as part of the same community. People who are part of a more localized community are part of a larger community within yet another community, and this pattern continues. This interpretation of community assumes that proximity equals interaction. It suggests that there is face-to-face contact and dialogue, which in turn suggests a sense of unity through the sharing of thoughts and ideas. This sort of community, defined by your location, is only scratching the surface of what community means.

There are some things that community is not. For example, community “is not formed by people who get together and agree to sign their names to a document”
creating a contract to become a community; rather, it is created over time as people form connections with each other, develop trust and respect for each other, and create a sense of common purpose.”4 Community cannot be forced upon people; it is a relationship that usually develops over time.

In the big picture, there is no limit to how many communities that you can belong to or feel connected to. Technology today allows people from all over the globe to communicate and form communities. There are varying ways to think about what community is and how the members within a community may interact. Each and every one of these notions that has been discussed thus far is valid in its own right. This document defines community as a group of people enjoying a similar identity in a localized area who, because of this association, have formed connections and a sense of comradery and commonality among themselves.

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1.2 How and Why Communities have Changed

“Where there is man there is community.”⁵ Since the beginning of human existence, there have been many forms of community. This began with groups in early humanity. According to sociologists, “human beings have a need to live with other human beings . . . throughout human history the urge to cooperate is compelling. It is this compelling urge for sociality that makes community a reality . . .”⁶ From this basic fact of human nature, community has continued to evolve and change.

Throughout human history, the most important public spaces where community socialization has occurred have been shopping areas. The list starts with the Agora of ancient Athens and continues on to include the forum of the Roman Empire, the Oriental Bazaar, the medieval square, “Mainstreet USA,” and the contemporary street corner in Urban America.⁷ These were all important places for communities to gather and were focal points for friends and neighbors to talk and interact casually as they walked or shopped.⁸

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⁵ Carey 1.
⁶ Freie 21.
⁷ Freie 57.
⁸ Freie 57.
Residential streets, especially front porches, were heavily used places for socialization prior to the popularization of the automobile, television, and air-conditioning. Before the onset of the car, the street was a truly public space where people talked and met, where children played, and where people “would feel comfortable picnicking.” During “summer evenings the front steps became informal meeting places where neighbors carried on conversations well past dark” often listening to the radio. This typical American town is the idealized image of community. It was a place where people “…shared a way of life characterized by common values, common habits, and a common culture.”

It was after World War II that suburbs such as Levittown boomed. These initial suburbs did not have town centers or true public spaces. These developments allowed many people to own their own home away from the bustle of a large city. The major shift from close-knit comminutes to outlying suburbs, away from the larger cities, was fueled by transportation. It was the fact that many could now afford a car that made the suburbs accessible for many Americans. And

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9 Freie 67.
10 Freie 25.
11 Carey 2.
thus the public now had a new freedom provided by cars and the highway, allowing them to leave the city proper. The proliferation of the automobile transformed how streets and front porches were used. In addition, “streets lost their sociability function and became seen as primarily designed for the flow of automobile traffic.” Around the same time, the television was just becoming popular. The television further “accelerated the decline of the front porch as it drew the family into the living room in the evenings . . .”

In addition to the car and television, two suburban elements that cause the greatest problems today are the “extreme separation of uses, and the vast distances between things.” This is driven by the capabilities of the car and zoning ordinances that enforce the separation of use in response to industrial activity in the city becoming a nuisance. Similar zoning laws followed people into the suburbs, even though this is not ideal for those living outside the city.

Of the many things that have caused the demise of community in everyday life, some can be changed to help bring it back. A good start is to change zoning laws

12 Freie 68.
to allow mixed uses in close proximity to help reduce the major dependence on cars. This reverses the isolation that occurs when a person is cut off from other people on a day-to-day basis. Both these ideas of proximity can be combined with the idea that shopping areas have throughout history been the most important public spaces for community socialization.14 These ideas bring us to this project’s complex shops and related uses in close proximity to each other and the town it serves. Close proximity being defined as a short, easy walk, defined as 600 feet or 10 minutes maximum by some.15 An effective design will help bring communities back together and give back to the people a “front porch” for the whole town.

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14 Freie 57.
1.3 Importance of Community

A fundamental part of being human is that we are social animals who seek the company of others. Frequent contact between people is essential to our well-being. “Primitive societies grouped their dwellings by this rule.”16 Unfortunately, many modern dwelling situations, such as the suburb, are diminishing our contact with other people. People get in their cars and drive to their destinations, sealed off from direct contact with another person on the way. The spontaneous meetings and conversations that used to occur on a regular basis are dramatically reduced.

Advances in technology and transportation have helped increase the divide between people. Instead of meeting face-to-face, “electronic communication is a growing substitute for physical proximity.”17 Television, air-conditioning, and the internet have increasingly kept people indoors. They can pay bills, contact people through several electronic means, look up the news, order groceries and clothing, and even work without ever leaving their homes. This new age of convenience comes at a price.

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17 Lynch 188.
Because contact with other people is a fundamental need of human beings, it is imperative that we remedy this trend toward increasing isolation. This lack of contact has implications for the future. As more generations are born into this increasingly isolated society, the nuances and the intricacies of human speech and conversation will be lost. The ability to interpret cues given when talking person-to-person—body language, gestures, and tone will be lost. The loss of gestures and body language began with telephone conversation, and continues with email, instant messaging, and the time spent alone in the car.

Because people’s time in public is increasingly spent “driving around in isolation chambers, it is no surprise social cites are witnessing a decline the the civic arts of conversation, politics, and simply getting along.”\(^{18}\) In the current state of cities and suburbs:

“people who ought to get together, by means of central activities that are failing, fail to get together. Ideas and money that ought to meet, and do so often only by happenstance in a place of central vitality, fail to meet . . . Without a strong and inclusive central heart, a city tends to become a collection of interests isolated from one another. It falters at producing something greater, socially, culturally and economically, than the sum of

its separated parts.\textsuperscript{19}

It is unplanned encounters that join people together as citizens and neighbors.\textsuperscript{20}

In today’s society, communities need places for interaction, dialogue, and collaboration\textsuperscript{21} to fulfill the yearning for informal socialization.\textsuperscript{22} We can help by designing spaces for communities that encourage interaction.

\textsuperscript{21} McCabe 111.
1.4 Identity and Community

Community and identity are closely related ideas. Where there is community, there is also identity, whether or not is it recognized by those involved. When recognized, “conscious identification with the community provides members with a sense of rootedness and illustrates a sense of caring for others. Members of a community possess a sense of trust, common purpose, common respect, and a sense of connection.”\(^ {23} \) One major dictionary defines identity as “the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known.”\(^ {24} \) As mentioned above, a sense of connectedness is a basic human desire and need, and this includes both community and identity. Community and Identity refer to the connection of a person or group of people to a certain place though the feelings a location evokes and its unique attributes.

In his book about the preservation of spirit and character of small towns, Harry Garnham sets out what makes up the identity of a place. He says that the “components of identity” are as follows:

1) Physical Features and Appearance
The actual physical structure of a place. The reality of its buildings, landscape, climate and aesthetic quality.

2) **Observable Activities and Functions**
How a place’s people interact with it, how their cultural institutions have affected it, and how the buildings and landscapes are used.

3) **Meanings or Symbols**
A more complex aspect, primarily the result of human intentions and experiences. Much of a places’ character will be derived from people’s reaction to its physical and functional aspects.25

The spirit of a place, the “genius loci,” which in most cases occurs through the combination of “function, art, architecture, and the people’s activity in public space,” gives each town its “own individual special uniqueness, character, identity and spirit which differs from all other places.”26 This spirit of place is meaningful to the people who live there and to others who cherish the area, and the loss of it would diminish their quality of life.27 This is what we want to prevent from happening in the city of Vermilion, as decrease in quality of life for residents and long time visitors alike. The identity of the town is very strong to

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26 Garnham 6.
27 Garnham 7.
the people who live and play there. But outside forces, such as suburbs of Cleveland threaten to encroach.

Vermilion needs to stay an entity unto itself to maintain the strength of community in Vermilion. This strong identity and character can be described in the terms that Garnham describes above. First the physical features and appearance play a large part. The city has a river that snakes through the center of the city, and ends in Lake Erie. Hence, much of the city is connected to water in one way or another. Also, because the city is on relatively flat land, there is fairly steady view of the lake if you are located anywhere on the north side of the city. Observable activities and functions are strongly related to the first part of what makes up the identity of Vermilion. One of the most common activities in Vermilion is recreational boating. As you make your way around the city boats are located everywhere: in driveways on a trailer, docked along the river and Lagoons, on the lake into the distance, and traveling up and down the river. Along with boating comes fishing and the city annually holds different fishing festivals and contests throughout the boating season. Another important festival for Vermilion is the Wooly Bear Festival, touted to be the “largest one day festival in the state of Ohio”. This is a festival solely devoted to the caterpillar
that includes a parade and caterpillar races. Thirdly, the character that is derived from reaction to physical and functional aspects also applies to how Vermilion’s existing character came to be. The area was first settled because of the river and lake access. The town’s center and downtown is hence located close to both, not more than a quarter mile from either. You can also see that most of the older original homes, including the “captain’s homes” are all located along the lake shore, and as time passed, newer and newer homes and business were built successively further away from the water. This adds somewhat to the character because the gradual change in architecture is perceptible when traveling towards or away from the lake. Overall, all of Granham’s observations of what makes up identity and character of a place holds true to what makes Vermilion a well remembered and enjoyable place.

Christian Norberg-Schultz says that “the relation of man to place . . . has to do with a . . . process of identification.” Through this idea, “human identification with a place presuppose[es] that places have ‘character’, that is, attributes which distinguish one place form another and which lend a place its unique presence of genius loci.”28 This “community identification” has to do with “ties to place.”29

This means we “identify with a place in the city because we use it, and get to know it reasonably intimately.”30 The importance of identity and uniqueness is that it attracts people. No one remembers something or someplace that is ordinary and mundane, and “almost nobody travels willingly from sameness to sameness and repetition to repetition, even if the physical effort required is trivial”.31

There are similar interpretations on perceived identities of well known cities. For example, Oldenburg says, “Its profusion of sidewalk cafés seems to be Paris, just as the forum dominates one’s mental picture of classic Rome, the soul of London resides in her many pubs, that of Florence in its teeming piazzas.”32 Here he is describing how certain images and different unique aspects of a city stick with you and become the city in one’s mind -- or its identity.

Identity can give focus to a community and represent what a place stands for. Further it creates a unique image in your mind for remembering a place. Strong

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30 Jacobs 169.
31 Jacobs 169.
identity, which implies uniqueness, attracts people to the same place over and over. And to accomplish this in a small city is to create a place where everyone wants to gather, bringing the community that much closer.
2.0 Public Space

We commonly think of public space as a place such as an outdoor park or plaza, arcade, building lobby or atrium, that anyone can use, free of charge. This is associated with people meeting, mingling, playing, and enjoying the company of others. Public space also includes another aspect, an area that anyone can use such as roads, sidewalks, and the like, even though the purpose of these is not necessarily a place for people to interact, although history proves that these too could be places for “hanging out.” Throughout history, public spaces have always played an important role in society, serving as settings for people to gather to exchange ideas. These places include the agora, the forum, the Oriental Bazaar, the medieval square, and lastly, “main street USA.”

The ancient agora, or marketplace, “was an essential part of the ancient Greek polis or city-state. An agora acted as a marketplace and a place of congregation for the citizens of the polis.” After this came the forum of the Roman Empire, where public trials took place, speakers addressed crowds, festivals took place,

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34 Freie 57.

and people gathered daily to “chat.”  

The oriental bazaar, next in succession, was a place where there was an endless variety of goods to buy, sell, or trade, and were very lively and full of people. The medieval square was similar to the forum; it was a place for festivals, markets, and other events. “Main street USA” is a term given to the idea of the ideal small town where you know everyone and enjoy a laid-back lifestyle. Today the question is whether modern society has lost its civic realm.

“Historically, the public spaces of cities have been centers of diversity. Even when housing was segregated along class or ethnic lines, public spaces were where people from all kinds of different backgrounds were exposed to each other.”

This needs to occur in today’s public space as well. People from every walk of life need to be represented in and use the public space in order to form a strong sense of community and a collective identity. The pre-automobile city had places where a “certain energized crowding of people” took place.

“Historical cities provided intense and active meeting places for commerce, the exchange of ideas, worship, and recreation. . . People of diverse backgrounds

37 Besser.
came to, and lived in, the city, knowing that this conglomeration of people and the interaction offered by it would enrich their lives. Interaction with other people does enhance our lives; we need it for a healthy existence. But as time goes by we are losing that aspect of our lives.

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2.1 Importance of Public Space

Public spaces should be as important today as they have proved to be through history. “Every city needs a plaza or square to generate urbanity, civility and sense of community.”

Contact among different groups occurs in truly public space. It is in public space that differences between people can be negotiated through a “hospitable setting, comfortable for an extended stay, with shops and businesses that attract everyone and events such as farmers markets and celebrations that create a festive atmosphere.”

This describes what it takes for people to get to know one another; they need to “frequent the same places” and “feel comfortable in the presence of the other.”

It is in public space that the community building process can flourish, for this is where people can meet and celebrate together.

Our society is moving towards an increasingly isolationist culture. Architects can help remedy this alarming situation where “concrete person-to-person communication becomes less necessary and less easy.”

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39 Lennard 3.
40 Lennard 1.
41 Lennard 2.
spaces and places within cities and neighborhoods that attract people who represent a cross-section of the city. Beyond attracting people to a location, everything about the location needs to encourage people to mingle and interact, to facilitate human contact and communication. All these things are important in fostering sense of community, because a space that makes “... a community a community and not merely an aggregate of individuals ... [is] a gathering place for the people humanizing then by mutual contact.”43 One way this project intends to attain this goal of creating a strong sense of community is through a multifunction city center for Vermilion, Ohio that is one large gathering place, through the combination of many smaller gathering places.

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2.2 Character of Great Public Space

There are two major voices when it comes to the character and topic of successful public spaces. The first is Ray Oldenburg, a well-known urban sociologist and the author of *The Great Good Place*. His focus is on what he calls the “third place.” The Second is John F. Freie. Freie is a political science professor who has spent a good portion of his career researching the creation of community.\(^4^4\) He has much to say about the idea of “genuine community.” Both authors are concerned with what characteristics are common in places that are well used and loved as public spaces. They want to know what makes great public spaces different from those that lie empty.

Ray Oldenburg’s, main interest is in the “third place.” According to him, the “first place” is home, and the “second place” is work. The “third place” is where informal interaction is most likely to occur. These places include cafes, bars, beauty parlors, coffee shops, general stores, and other “hangouts.” These are considered “genuine third places” and here “conversation receives the highest priority.”\(^4^5\) These places of informal interaction are places where “friendships are formed, where activities and customs may form, [and] where social skills are

\(^{4^4}\) Freie 212.

\(^{4^5}\) Freie 71.
honed . . . “46 The focus of a third place is good conversation.47 Oldenburg says “third places” are very crucial to the formation of community. These places make people feel at home, nourish relationships, create a sense of place and belonging, and invoke civic pride.

Instead of calling these spots “third places,” John F. Freie refers to them as places of “genuine community:”

While grounding us in the supportive environment of community, genuine community also allows people to take risks so that they may further discover aspects of their own identities. It is through serious confrontation of difference that a person truly discovers what he or she believes. Thus, genuine community devoted to human growth and discovery will encourage and support a diversity of interaction – diversity in terms of people and diversity in terms of the types of situations in which interactions take place.48

Freie, like many others, believes that the places of genuine community, “. . . a public environment where the members of that community come to know each other through both playful and serious interaction. . .” have lost their appeal. In fact, he says “. . . these environments . . . have declined in number and been

46 Freie 26.
47 Freie 71.
48 Freie 24.
deadened in character.”

This decline disturbs Freie: “Public spaces are crucial for the maintenance of genuine community. In public spaces (marketplaces, parks, street corners, cafes, taverns, front porches), members of the community meet, usually informally and often spontaneously, to socialize.” If we lose “genuine community,” we are also in the process of losing an environment in which we learn about others and ourselves. And in turn the demise of community will continue.

Both Freie and Oldenburg believe that the casual “hangouts” and places for food and drink are very important to the sense of community and the well-being of people. These places encourage people to talk and connect with each other, and hopefully to the people around them who also visit the same places. But what both have to say about places that strengthen community is more general; they describe the feeling invoked in such places and what these places can do for community.

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49 Freie 75.
50 Freie 58.
2.3 Design Guidelines for Great Public Space

More specific than either Oldenburg or Freie, who talk about character, are people such as Suzanne Lennard and Camillo Sitte, teach how to design successful public spaces.

According to architect Suzanne Lennard, certain essential ingredients for successful urban public space have proven to be successful ingredients in many different spaces.⁵¹ They come together to create the type of space that Freie calls “genuine community” and Oldenburg a “third place.” The following paragraphs go through Leonard’s suggestions.

The first “essential ingredient” is the space’s location in the urban fabric.⁵² She describes this by saying, “If one wants to foster a sense of community, one must ensure that many people in the city use the space on a daily basis . . . . When people see each other on a regular basis in the same place, the ‘stranger’ becomes a ‘familiar’.”⁵³ Also important about the location is that there must be people around to use the space. Most of the time, “what attracts people most . . . [is]

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⁵¹Lennard 5.
⁵² Lennard 5.
⁵³ Lennard 6.
other people.”

Or as Jane Jacobs put it, “Life attracts Life.” Hence, location is very important. The basic design requirements are that the building or space is easily accessible and that people are attracted to it.

The second thing that is needed to make a successful public space is encompassing a mix of uses and building types. Different uses bring together many diverse groups to the space; “cafes and restaurants . . . can immediately generate life on the square.” Not only is a mix of uses needed, but the design needs to provide “overlapping territories, shifting use, and rules of tolerance.” Besides offering a mix of services and uses, consideration needs to be given to the spaces between the buildings. The space should only be loosely connected to any one function; a dominant relation to one use will discourage others from using the space. For example, if the outdoor space around a café begins to look like it “belongs” to the café, only those who are patrons of the café will use that outdoor space. This decreases the number of people in that area, which in turn affects the number of people in surrounding space. After all, “What attracts

54 Zucker, 122.
55 Jacobs 454.
57 Lennard 5.
58 Lennard 6.
59 Lynch 160.
people most . . . [is] other people.” 60

A civic building facing a public space provides a focal point for community life, and it can “also offer a dramatic and beautiful backdrop for life on the plaza.” 61 On top of that, “human beings love focal points. The restless human mind loves to have a goal in view . . . ” 62 Many civic buildings, such as city halls and public libraries, are often the anchor or focus of a community. These buildings bring a mix of people to them for various uses, and also help facilitate discourse and exchange of ideas by their users. These visitors will also be tempted to take advantage of nearby shopping and entertainment facilities and accompanying outdoor spaces.

Public spaces should provide both formal and more relaxed, informal seating. Without “pleasurable supports for more extended conversations,” few people are likely to remain for any length of time. 63 Formal seating consists of benches, chairs, and tables, places that the public knows are meant for sitting and congregating. Informal seating, which is used just as much or even more, refers

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60 Zucker, 122.
61 Lennard, 9.
62 Kunstler 127.
63 Lennard, 2.
to such elements as wide steps or ledges. Ledges around plant beds or low walls can be designed for people to sit on. Make them comfortable and count on them being used as seats. Having a wide variety of types of places to sit and talk accommodates many different styles and informality of conversing and meeting. Having many people scattered thought the space creates “visual excitement and sense of activity.”

Lennard also believes that visual enclosure is important. She says that the feeling of being inside a square, “surrounded by building walls, with the sky as a ceiling” helps create a sense of being “at home” and helps create a sense of a “citizen’s sense of belonging.” In addition, the passages in and out of the space should be angled in a way that there is no direct view out of the space.

The idea of designing to a human scale is also important, according to Lennard. In fact she says it is “critical.” Tall buildings and open spaces make a person feel “insignificant.” This is what a designer wants to avoid. Instead, the buildings should be scaled to human proportions and human use, with a maximum of 4 to

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65 Lennard. 6.
6 stories.”66 Building facades that are open and friendly can “facilitate contact through windows that open, balconies, doors, etc. . .”67

One other important point made by Lennard is proper paving. Paving materials can help differentiate paths for cars from those for pedestrians. In addition, “pedestrians appreciate variations in color and texture, designs that symbolize the city’s history, and provide a sense of place.”68 The paving can give the space character, distinguish different uses, and even become a source of play for children.

Celebrated 19th century town planner Camillo Sitte says that a space surrounded by buildings is not a plaza or square until “character and meaning” are understood in the space.69 He prescribes some design consideration for the design of a plaza. He recommends placing monuments and fountains in spaces that unused and out of the way of traffic, not on a central axis or in such a way as to block the view of the surrounding buildings.70 He also believes that there

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66 Lennard. 7.
67 Lennard. 8.
68 Lennard. 10.
69 Sitte 32.
70 Sitte 24.
should be a strong sense of enclosure because it makes people feel secure and comfortable.\textsuperscript{71}

Neal and Oldenburg, mentioned earlier, are also relevant to ideas in this section. Neal says:

\begin{quote}
Movement routes may be biased to vehicular transport but should still be designed to accommodate the needs of people. Visual clutter should be kept to the absolute minimum and the inclusion of landscape and green space should be used to minimize the impact of the vehicle — though this should not be undertaken at the expense of safety and functionality.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}

Neal’s major point is to give importance to the pedestrian, and keep the car from invading the space. Oldenburg wants his “third places” to be accessible by people most of the time.\textsuperscript{73} The more accessible a location, the more it will be used. People should be able to use the space in the morning before work and late into the night talking with friends.

Drawn from the above research the following outline emerges as guidelines for this particular project:

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{71} Sitte 34.
\textsuperscript{72} Neal 116.
\textsuperscript{73} Oldenburg 32.
\end{flushleft}
Site
- Location in Urban Fabric

Program
- Mix of Uses (Lennard)
- Civic Building Provides Focal Point

Furnishings
- Formal and Informal Seating

Design
- Human Scale, Maximum 4 to 6 Stories High
- Paving Material to Differentiate uses
- Monuments and Fountains not on Axis
- Visual Clutter to Minimum
- Importance to Pedestrian
2.4 Waterfront Design Precedents

The specific location of the project site is in Vermilion, Ohio along the Vermilion River, and a quarter mile south of Lake Erie. The location of the site poses the additional consideration of the design of the waterfront in addition to the park and built structures themselves. One city that has already addressed this issue successfully is Chicago. They have produced the “Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines” to guide successful and attractive waterfront design. Vermilion’s climate is similar to that of Chicago, and both cities engage a riverfront. This makes strategies used in Chicago a good precedent for design considerations in Vermilion.

The “Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines” provide standards for riverfront development. They are broken down into three sets of issues: “1) public access, walkways and open space; 2) urban design and landscaping; and 3) land-uses along the river’s edge.”

The two sets that can be most applied to this project are “public access, walkways and open space” and “land-uses along the river’s edge.” The latter

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focuses on conditions along the river and access to the water. The guidelines in that section are as follows:

- Minimum 25 foot and optimum 50 foot building set-back (Figure 4)
- 10 foot wide dock level walkway
- Maximum of 400-foot long facades along water’s edge
- Maximum public access to water’s edge
- 8-foot obstruction-free pedestrian walkway along water’s edge75 (Figure 5)

The Land-use recommendations encourage “lively, active uses such as restaurant and retail” along dock level walkways, and also providing provisions for watercraft.76 For the treatment of the water’s edge where a hard edge is necessary, it is preferred that “concrete or masonry steps” are used to “permit access by small [water] craft.”77 (Figure 6)

Because there is heavy watercraft use in Vermilion and there are several events associated with the water, access for both boats and spectators is very important. Hence the goal, as outlined in the Chicago River Guidelines, is to allow easy and

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75 Acosta 8.
76 Acosta 13.
77 Acosta 22.
clear access for pedestrians along the river’s edge and encourage the edges use by watercraft. Other built area should be set back from the waterfront.
3.0 Precedents
An appropriate precedent of a public plaza is Piazza San Marco in Venice. It is in central Venice, with one edge open, looking onto the water and across to other buildings in the distance. Many festivals and celebrations take place there. It is considered the “only true square in Venice” and also “one of the most magnificent combinations of plazas.” 78

Piazza San Marco, also known as St. Mark’s Square, is not actually a square. It is in fact trapezoidal. It widens toward the end where Saint Mark’s Basilica sits. This gives the illusion that the space is actually larger than it really is. 79 On the north and south side run the procuraties, or colonnades; Procuratie Vecchie (old) and Procuratie Nuove (new). 80 Construction of the older one began in 1512. 81 The east side of the plaza is “dominated by the city’s most important historical sites – the Basilica San Marco, the Doge’s Palace and the Campanile.” 82 The Campanile

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80 “St Mark’s Square in Venice (Piazza San Marco),” Venice Click, created on 08 Feb 2005 <http://www.veniceclick.net/Guide/St-Mark.htm>.
is the tallest structure in Venice.\textsuperscript{83}

The current Campanile was in fact only constructed in the early 20th century. The first tower was constructed on the site in 1173 to act as a lighthouse to assist navigators into the Lagoon. The current appearance of the tower dates back to the 16th century, when it was restored by Bartolomeo Bon after an earthquake. In 1902, the foundations of the tower unexpectedly gave way, and it collapsed. A new, identical tower opened in 1912.\textsuperscript{84} The Campanile also serves as a clocktower, and is the beginning of the Merceria, a road, which “refers to the many shops on both sides of it. It still today the place to buy the finest local and international products.”\textsuperscript{85}

On the west side is Ala Napoleonica, built by Napoleon in 1797, it completed the enclosure of the plaza.\textsuperscript{86} Napoleon described the space as the “the finest drawing room in Europe.”

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} “St Mark's Square in Venice (Piazza San Marco),” Venice Click, created on 08 Feb 2005 <http://www.veniceclick.net/Guide/St-Mark.htm>.
The plaza itself is split into two parts, the Piazza and the Piazzetta. The Piazza is surrounded by colonnades on three sides and St. Mark’s Basilica on the fourth, and includes the vertical marker of the Campanile. The Piazzetta is enclosed on three sides; the fourth opens out to the harbor. The Piazzetta has vertical markers of its own, the columns of San Marco and San Teodoro. The column of San Marco is topped with a winged bronze lion, a symbol of Venice.87 The column of San Teodoro is a platform for the statue of San Teodoro, the patron of Venice before San Marco.88

The square best illustrates Sitte’s suggested method of organizing building groups.89 The method advocated by Sitte is one in which “space itself becomes the ‘figure,’ the positive element, the volume to be designed and buildings are relegated to a supporting role, the ‘ground’.”90 Camillo Sitte, carried out extensive research on public spaces, says the following regarding Piazza San Marco:

If we were to examine the means by which this unexcelled grandeur was

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89 Cliff Moughtin, Urban Design: Street and Square (Boston: Architectural Press, 1999) 82.
90 Cliff Moughtin, Urban Design: Street and Square (Boston: Architectural Press, 1999) 84.
achieving they would, indeed, prove to be extraordinary: the effect of the sea, the accumulation of superlative monumental structures, the abundance of their sculptural decoration, the polychromy of S. Marco, the powerful Campanile. However, it is the felicitous arranging of them that contributes so decidedly to the whole effect.91

The arrangement of making the square itself the positive element, the presence of the sea, a strong focal point, and the “felicitous” arrangement of them all, makes Piazza San Marco a great public space. But it through what this does for the use and character of the space which makes it so. Compared with similar tourist attractions in other countries it “differs from its foreign counterparts in two major respects: (1) It’s more attractive, and (2) It hasn’t been corrupted by the automobile.”92 Hugo Honour describes the space as:

. . . Beautiful at all times of day or night and all seasons of the year. It is one of the few delicate works of architecture that can absorb a bustling vulgar crowd without loss of dignity; a great city square which retains a feeling of animation when there are few people in it.93

In a painting by Canaletto in 1730, Piazza San Marco is depicted with activities of everyday Venetian life:

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91 Sitte 196-197.
93 Ibid.
... People engaged in conversation, others crossing the piazza, some observing activity, children running about and playing, dogs stretched out in the sun, venders and hawkers along the edges. The space filled with energy and a palpable sense of the enjoyment to be derived from spending time in such a lively public setting.\textsuperscript{94}

More than two hundred years later, the plaza still remains the backdrop for such activities, with the addition of the outdoor café. By the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, Piazza San Marco was home to 24 of them. These cafes were “places to be seen, meet and gamble . . .”\textsuperscript{95}

These descriptions of the space sound very much like what Oldenburg considers “third places.” These are the types of places that we need more of in order to bring communities back together, and create places where people can go to watch, be seen, and interact. What is to be learned through Piazza San Marco is what elements help make a space a strong magnet.

Piazza San Marco follows many of the guidelines and suggestions laid out in this thesis for the design of public space. The Campanile and the columns create a focal point for people in the plaza and even the city. In addition to this, the

columns give meaning to the squares, something that Sitte says is essential to make a space a true plaza or square. There are many outdoor cafes scattered throughout the plaza, touted by Oldenburg to be a very strong third place. In addition to these, utmost importance is given to the pedestrian and access to the waterfront from the Piazzetta. Piazza San Marco, considered one the best examples of public space, makes use of many of the design rules set forth for this thesis project.

Another project, similar to the ideas behind this thesis project, is the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, Maryland. The Inner Harbor master plan, 95 acres in size, was created in 1964. The master plan by Benjamin Thompson and Associates called for nothing from the site to be saved, except for the piers. The festival marketplace was added to the site in 1980. The new marketplace pavilions, Harborplace, are the work of James W. Rouse.

Baltimore is located that the mouth of the Patapsco River; and it is the largest stretch of inland harbor in the country. Thirty years ago, the site was full of decaying docks, unsightly parking lots, and empty sheds. Until the 1920’s the

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Inner Harbor was where the focus of commercial life was located in Baltimore. It was then that “the big freighters began to dock instead at the marine terminal further downriver and the Inner Harbor began to lose its importance as a transportation center.”98 Since then Inner Harbor has become the “city’s symbolic centerpiece, attracting millions of people a year from all over the world.”99

The basic approach taken by Thompson & Associates, was the same as at Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston. They wanted to create “settings for festive human interaction” that are “made up of food and clothes as well as buildings.”100 For this particular project they looked to precedents “related to this dual setting of harbor and park where land and water meet.” Hence, they looked to “the tradition of commercial water front construction” (shed-like warehouses, boathouses, ferry terminals), “pleasure pavilions” (in parks), and “buildings that enclosed great spaces with crystalline prismatic forms, achieving reflection,

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100 Canty 34.
festivity and a sense of see-in transparency”.101

According to some, the balance between “retail activity and passive recreation seems to have been achieved gracefully and almost effortlessly.”102 The project consists of broad, 30-foot esplanades along the waterfront, and Rouse’s Harborplace; twin, two-story pavilions “containing some 250,000 square feet of shops, restaurants, stands and other assorted delights.”103 Along the promenades there is “one side a glittering array of restaurants, cafes and shops spills down to the walks in a series of terraces and balconies” and on the other side “the Harbor, with its historic ships, aquarium, and ever-changing reflections.”104 The esplanades and promenade provide for sitting and facing the “daytime bustle” or the “evening glow” on the water.”105

The Inner Harbor has “attracted and sustained a flourishing mixture of cultural, commercial, and recreational facilities that, for the most part, continue to

101 Canty 34.
102 Sanders. 95.
103 Canty 33.
104 Sanders. 95.
105 Sanders. 95.
thrive.”

Washington Post writer, Phyllis C. Richman, wrote this about the area:

Harborplace is now the Saturday afternoon outing for kids, the place to stop and eat on the way home from a weekend in New York, the location to meet for a drink after work. It is Baltimore’s diner and lunch and breakfast and late supper and all-day snack shop. . . . It works. And one thing that makes it work is the mix. . . . You can relax indoors or outdoors in a quite corner or in the middle of a mob.

In fact, the Inner Harbor is a favorite gathering place for the city and is usually well populated. Two-thirds of the people who use the space are locals who keep coming back. This is a very good sign that the space has been successful and is a valued part of the life of the city. According to one critic, it is the retail space that has activated the space by “drawing people, energizing and enlivening the area, making the space in front of it seem comfortable and well-maintained, offering the jostle of humanity that answers a deep need for

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107 Canty 34.
109 Millsbaugh. 40.
It has been said that this kind of development, at its best, can create a good center city in which to live, work, and relax. More important, perhaps, it can foster a new image and spirit that gives citizens a fresh outlook . . . In the case of Baltimore, the new Inner Harbor has created a strong “surge of civic pride.”

The Inner Harbor, like Piazza San Marco, follows many of the recommendations for successful public space. First, there are many “third places”, or places for relaxed informal interaction, such as restaurants and shops. The project also provides for formal seating as well as informal, impromptu seating that allows for both passive and active recreation. In addition to these, there is the same consideration, as in this thesis project, given to addressing visibility on both the waterfront and land front. The 30 foot esplanades along the harbor well exceed the minimum recommended walkway along the waterfront, allowing maximum access by users to the waters edge.

Both these projects, the Piazza San Marco in Venice, and the Inner Harbor in

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111 Millspaugh 41.
112 Millspaugh 39.
Baltimore, are examples of community space done well. They are both strongly tied to the identity of the cities in which they are located and are exemplary examples of “third places.” Locals as well as visitors seek out these locations to visit for their atmosphere and activity. The lessons that are learned from these projects can help the design of this thesis project.
4.0 The Town Center

This section goes through numerous factors that could have some sort of influence on the project. This includes the history of the city, the history of the site, factors affecting the site such as climate, and location. It presents the major factors influencing the design, the program, and the project and the design itself.
4.1 The City – Vermilion, Ohio

Vermilion, Ohio is a small city situated at the mouth of the Vermilion River, on the south shore of Lake Erie, about 50 miles west of downtown Cleveland (See Appendix A) The first known history of the area starts in the 17th century, with the French explorers, but very little is known of that time, and what remains are the French words that name the river and other locations nearby. The name Vermilion comes from the French word that means “red.” It is believed that the city was named after the red clay of the earth.

Numerous groups of Native Americans lived on the land: Erie, Iroquois, Ottawa, Huron, and Chippewa. Before the area was inhabited by settlers, the Native American’s lived along the river where they had plenty of food and game from water and woods. In fact, the “river was the key to livability in the rugged and wild life of the native.” Unfortunately, nearly all of them were gone by 1800.

The first white settlers came to Vermilion Township between 1808 and 1811. The land was offered by Connecticut to the families whose property had been

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plundered during the Revolutionary War by the British. Hence, most of the people who first settled in Vermilion were from Connecticut with a few from New York and Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{115} The population in 1820 was 520.\textsuperscript{116}

1837 was a major time in Vermilion’s history. It was the year the Ohio legislature incorporated Vermilion as a city. It was also a time of industrial growth. The small harbor, and was described as having the “look of a typical New England hamlet.” There was a saw mill, new warehouses, shops, shipping docks, and most importantly, shipbuilding yards.\textsuperscript{117} The first half of the 1800’s was the “golden age of shipbuilding” for Vermilion. “Friendship” and “Vermilion” were the first two ships built there. Both were around 50 feet long; as big as the river would allow. They were the most efficient way to transport goods to the settlers until the steam railroad.\textsuperscript{118} As the river grew more and more important through the shipbuilding, the Army Corps of Engineers built Vermilion Pier in 1840.\textsuperscript{119}

The river was also important to the next major industry to come to Vermilion,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
fishing. Fishermen soon began to use trap nets on the river and lake to satisfy market demand for fresh and salted fish. From 1820 to 1880 it was the first commercial fishing port in the area. When the railroad expanded the market to big cities by 1900, the steam tug was used for most fishing.\footnote{Sesquicentennial: Vermilion, Ohio 1837-1987 (1987) 23.}

After the major booms in shipbuilding and fishing died down, Vermilion became primarily a resort town. The automobile allowed more distant visitors to enjoy the lake and the relaxed atmosphere and character of Vermilion. Now, the population in the summer is made up of many transient tourists who come to use boating and fishing facilities in this large boating center.\footnote{Neil W. Guda, The Vermilion Plan: Prepared for the Mayor’s Committee for Vermilion (Vermilion, 1958) + +3.} In 1916 only three pleasure boats were docked on the river; now it supports over 8,500 yachts and small boats; “sail for fun has replaced sail for work”\footnote{Sesquicentennial: Vermilion, Ohio 1837-1987 (1987) 27.} Boating is a major part of life in Vermilion, earning the city of 11,000 residents the distinction of being the “largest small boat harbor on the great lakes”\footnote{Cassell. 1. Vermilion, Ohio and Surrounding Areas.}
4.2 Site Environs

The project site is bound by the Vermilion River on the west, man-made water channels on the north and east, and State Route 6 on the south. On the west side, across the river, is Harbour Town, where the city was located up to 1937. Vermilion was home to over 100 Great Lake captains many of which have been kept in shape and saved from demolition in attempt to preserve Vermilion’s nautical history. The area was also dressed in a new streetscape, along which are many small specialty and souvenir shops, the mayor’s office, and the Great Lakes Maritime Museum, which is now scheduled to be moved to a neighboring city.\textsuperscript{124}

On the eastern border of the site is Linwood Park, named for the abundance of Linden trees that first occupied the site. It first opened in 1884, and is a gated, semi-private family park. It includes a beach, park, and many rented cottages. There are few permanent residents in the Linwood Park, for most are rental homes occupied during the summer months. It is a popular place in the summer, for it has not changed much through the years. Much of the city goes to Linwood Park every year for their annual parade. Linwood Park is described as having “a charm, a grace” and being “a haven, so close to civilization, yet so

Closer to the site, on the north and east sides are the “Lagoons”, a private residential development. The project site was originally slated be part of this community, but the original plans for the site never panned out. The Lagoons were developed in the 1930’s as a way to keep people busy and working during the depression years. It is a private housing development built along artificial waterways that connect to the river, and then to the lake. Unlike Linwood Park, most of the homes in the Lagoons are permanent residences, with the exception of some “summer homes.” The Lagoons provide the residents with good dockage for their water crafts and great access to the lake. The charm it is said comes from the uniqueness of the Lagoons and through “the uniformity of the architecture of all buildings found there.”

All the homes have the “. . . charm of Cape Cod homes, all white with dark roofs and shutters, amid trees (mostly all willows in the beginning) and fronting on lagoons is undeniable and gives to the vermilion lagoons its own inimitable

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flavor.”

What is said about the Lagoons seems to match up with what people think about Linwood Park and Harbour Town, and Vermilion in general. The consensus seems to be that Vermilion has charm and the feel of a Cape Cod coastal town. This is considered to be a unique characteristic in the mid-west away from the ocean coasts, and is what draws people to the city.

The project site itself is currently has two uses. The eastern half houses storage, repair, and gas facilities for boats. That is the only known use of that half of the site. The western half has a little bit more history. After the bridge, just south of the site, was built in 1929, a restaurant was built on the site. Below the restaurant was a thriving small boat and canoe rental business. In 1934 the boat rental shut down and it became McGarvey’s restaurant. It has now been torn down and replaced with yet another restaurant. But to this day, it is McGarvey’s that old-timers remember. It was a popular place for boaters to stop for a bite, as well as others from around the area. Boaters pulled up right next to it.

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4.3 The Site

As mentioned before, the site is located in the heart of Vermillion, Ohio, on the southern shore of Lake Erie. The site is bound by the Vermilion River on the west, manmade water channels on the north and east, and State Route 6 on the south. State Route 6 is a major thoroughfare through the city. (See Appendix B)

In the vicinity, clearly viewable form the site as well known landmarks is the Liberty Bridge and the Vermilion water tower (now used as a landmark for boaters on Lake Erie).

The site is almost 5 acres (212,500 sq.ft.) in size. The site is an irregular peninsula formed by the contours of the river, the Lagoons, and the road. Entrance to the newly designed site will be from many different directions. Cars and pedestrians will enter from the State Route. The dockage around the site will provide entrances for those approaching by boat.

This site is one of the most prominent locations in Vermillion. This makes the location ideal for the goals of this project. Because of the visibility of the site from all sides and from the water and road, if designed correctly, a project in this location can be a magnet that ties the city together. The more people who can see
the space and action within it, the more likely it is to be use.

There is an elevation change on the site of about 15 feet, much more prominent on the southern third of the site. The slope of the site keeps the occasional flood water from overtaking the whole site. The maps indicate that floodwaters encroach a maximum of 6 feet into the site on the east, north, and west sides. The higher elevation of the south end keeps it out of flood waters. Flooding occurs when ice jams the mouth of the river, due to a break wall. The worst flood on record was 17 feet higher than the river level. Typical flooding occurs at an interval of a few years and reaches about five to six feet about the normal river level.

The average temperature in Vermilion is 24 degrees Fahrenheit in January and 72 degrees Fahrenheit in July. They also receive and average of 12 inches of snow each month, starting in December and ending in March.130 (See Appendix C)

The site currently has very little vegetation and almost no grass. The west side of the site is currently paved for a parking lot and the eastern half is gravel. There is

small park and parking lot on the north border of the site, though they are separated by a “lagoon.” Hence, the site is very open. The only shaded area on the site occurs on the southwestern part of the site, where the bridge creates a small shadow during the day. Because the site is so open, the wind has free reign and because Vermilion has an average wind speed of 10 miles an hour, there can be a constant breeze.
4.3 Program

The program selection for this project is essential to achieve the goals that have been set out in this document; the building of community through design of a “front porch” for Vermilion, Ohio. Ideas most useful and related to developing the program are those of Oldenburg and Freie. Both talk about the places that can bring people together and become important fixtures in a community. Other things that influence the program selection are the size of the site, size of the city, the needs of Vermilion. The park/greenspace and treatment of the water’s edge is part of the program due to influence by the needs of the city.
# Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Along Waterfront</th>
<th>Library</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dockage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelf Space</td>
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<td>Reader Space</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Space</td>
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<td>Circulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seating</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Seating</td>
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<td>Bar Preparation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Restroom</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Area</td>
<td>Square Footage</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore/stationary store</td>
<td>2,500 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display</td>
<td>900 ft. sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff / Storage</td>
<td>1,000 ft. sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>600 ft. sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor’s center/chamber of commerce</td>
<td>3,000 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>2,000 ft. sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>500 ft. sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display</td>
<td>500 ft. sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Enclosed Square Footage</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,580 sq.ft.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>80,000 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park/green space</td>
<td>113,450 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total site size</strong></td>
<td><strong>238,030 sq.ft.</strong></td>
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4.4 Design

This project is about the design of a “front porch” for the city of Vermilion in Ohio, on Lake Erie. In particular, to design places where people feel comfortable and where all types of informal activities occur. This includes impromptu conversation, town celebrations, and meeting friends for food and drinks. It is to be a location to be useable and loved by all residents and visitors, and a focal point for socialization in the town.

The following are the design guidelines outlined in chapter two:

Site
- Location in Urban Fabric

Program
- Mix of Uses
- Civic Building Provides Focal Point

Furnishings
- Formal and Informal Seating

Design
- Human Scale, Maximum 4 to 6 Stories High
- Paving Material to Differentiate uses
- Monuments and Fountains not on Axis
- Visual Clutter to Minimum
-Importance to Pedestrian

In addition to these strategies there also other considerations and priorities for the design of the project that come from the site. The site itself is surrounded by water on three sides, and a roadway on the fourth. One of the water edges is actually a well-traveled river in the summer, and the roadway is a major thoroughfare through the city. The conditions compel that the project have frontality on both the water and the state route, for the site will be seen and approached from both sides. Hence, the space needs to inviting and approachable from both sides. In addition to this, because of Vermilion’s strong association with water, boating, and fishing, there should be strong ties to the water through boat dockage, pathways along the river, and views. This important aspect of life in Vermillion must have a place in the design if it is to truly be a community building space.

In addition to the more concrete “rules” for this project, there are also the more conceptual and theoretical goals. This includes making the project into a front porch for Vermilion. The front porch has been with us from prehistoric times in the form of overhanging rocks around dwellings, and has progressed through history progressing from columned verandas, shaded walkways, Loggias, and
Piazzas, to the American front porch starting in the early eighteenth century. A century later, the front porch was an essential part of American architecture and society. What is now known as the American front porch is an area attached to the front of a house, and created a shaded and covered area for various uses. The front porch represents the “ideal of community in America.” It is a zone between public and private, an area to be shared by both. It is here that interaction with community occurs. The porch is place to talk to whoever may show up, a friend or a new face, without risk of letting them into your home.

This project aims to be a “front porch” because the project’s goals of becoming a place for building community can be achieved through what a front porch can do for a community or neighborhood. The idea of this project is to transpose residential front porches that were once common place, into an active central location where the community can thrive and hold on to its identity. The porch as mentioned before is a transitional space between public and private, with a threshold separating the two. The nature of the program of this project is to be publicly used private space, a sort of transition between the two. Compared to the traditional porch, where the porch was on one side and a private residence on the other, this project sandwiches the private zone between two public zones.

131 Cook, Scott.
132 Cook, Scott.
The private zone including the enclosed interior spaces and service areas, and public defined as the exterior spaces on either side, the walkways along the river, and park on the east. The park is located on the east side as a buffer between the more active areas of the site along the river’s edge and residential area east of the site.

Besides the zoning of public versus private and more active areas spaces versus more passive spaces, what becomes really important are the connections. The connection between pedestrians entering the site and the different functions, especially to the elevated walkway that brings them in. This includes visual and physical connection. The same is the case for the connection between the public areas through the interior core that separates them. This is in order to keep a connection between all parts of the site so as not to isolate the functions from one another. Lastly, the third important connection that will be addressed is the connection between the several walkways and levels located between the river and interior program. There will be at least three different levels along the river to allow different perspectives of the actives occurring on the river, the river’s edge, and park, in addition to allowing multiple choices and possibilities for seating and meeting places in both open and covered areas.

There is also the question of character and identity. The project will launch from Garnhams “components of identity” and address the three components in order
to shape the character of this project. The first component states that the physical feature and appearance are part one of makes up identity. In the end design, the project will have distinct, distinguishable elements that make the place a landmark and what the city is remembered for. Part two includes observable activities and functions. The project is separated into two different parts; the river walk and the park. The river walk side’s aim is to be festive and lively with people talking, eating, boating and shopping. The park side’s aim is to be more relaxed with people sitting the grass, reading, and people watching, more detached from the shopping and other activities on the other side. This is in hopes to give visitors a choice between activity levels. The third component for identity rests in meanings and symbols. Looking into Vermilion’s history, it seems appropriate to incorporate symbols boating, fishing, or shipping. The addition of these will help locate the project with in Vermilion.
Appendix A
Appendix B
### Appendix C

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average temp. (°F)</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>30.3</td>
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<td>High temperature (°F)</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>49.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low temperature (°F)</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
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<td>22.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Precipitation (in)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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**Average weather in Vermilion, Ohio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
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<tr>
<td>Days with precip.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wind speed (mph)</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning humidity (%)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afternoon humidity (%)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine (%)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days clear of clouds</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partly cloudy days</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Cloudy days</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snowfall (in)</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Normal climate around Vermilion, Ohio**
**Bibliography**


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