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Assignment: Final Project Proposal

Introduction

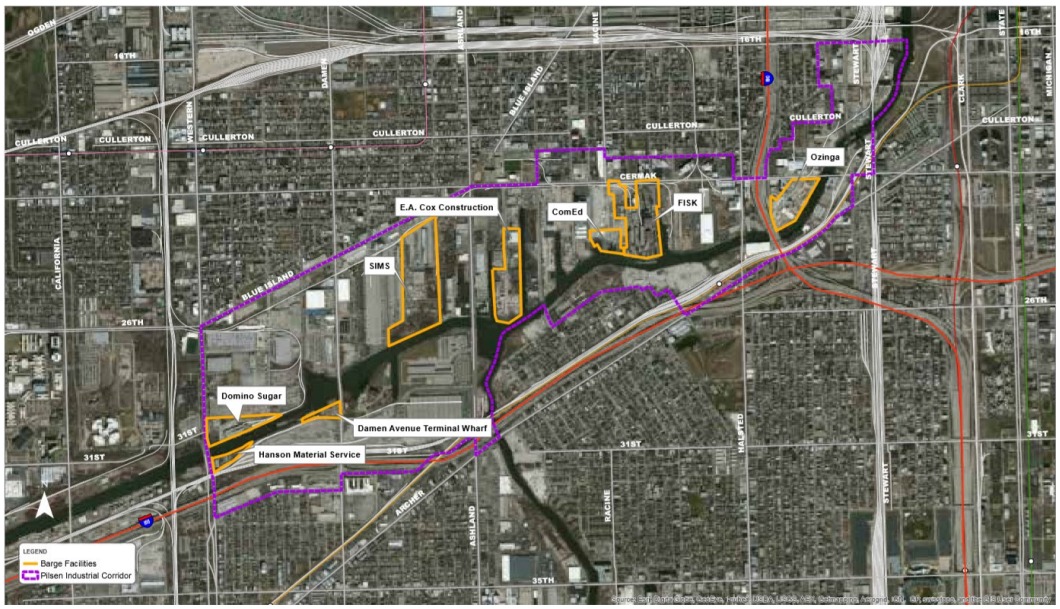
This proposal is based on my landscape design project for an abandoned industrial site —— Damen silos. The Damen Silos site has been abandoned since the 1970's. The large scale and robust construction of the remaining silos make them expensive to renovate or demolish. As the south branch of the river has become an increasingly re-mediated landscape, the Damen Silos site has the opportunity to be transformed into a dynamic new public park and become an integral part of Chicago existing public landscapes. To provide a social-economic background for the landscape design for the site, this research will look into the historical development of the Industrial Waterways System in Chicago, to evaluate the existing industrial activities happening along the river. To seek a deeper understanding of surrounding communities, information will be gathered on demographic, economic and public infrastructures. The ultimate goal of this research is to provide support for my landscape design project related to location and programming, which aims to connect segregated communities around Damen Silos. A broader knowledge on how to reuse abandoned brownfields within a community can also be concluded to enhance the social value of public spaces and promote regional diversity and inclusiveness.

Chicago Industrial Waterways System

Chicago has implemented plans and policies to concentrate industrial activity in specific areas suited for manufacturing since 1865. These areas, usually located along waterways and rail corridors, were formally designated as Industrial Corridors by the Chicago Plan Commission starting in 1992. Damen Silos itself represents Chicago's once-glorious shipping industry and is located in the Pilsen Industrial Corridor. Commerce on the waterway system is small when compared to Chicago's massive trucking and rail industries, Nonetheless, waterway access remains critical for certain industries that transport raw materials including sand and gravel, scrap metal, and certain minerals.

1. **Industrial activities and economy value**

   The development of Chicago has its roots in the industrial system along the river. With the transformation of the city's industry, it remains to be determined whether the traditional industrial activities along the river are still generating significant economic benefits. Census data allows for an analysis of trends in different types of industries within Chicago from 1970 to 2020.



Related data:

Top Waterborne Commodities in the Chicago Region, 2007 and 2012 (kilotons)
https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/waterborne-freight-in-the-chicago-metropolitan-region

Waterborne Commerce Cargo Data (great lake area)
https://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/about/technical-centers/wcsc-waterborne-commerce-statistics-center/

2. **Existing Land use and case study of brownfield transformation**

Change is not only happening in industrial areas. As urban renewal and expansion, the land use surrounding Damen Silos is also very different from what it used to be. This section analyzes the residential, commercial, and vacancy area to understand the relationship between the site and its broader urban context.

Reference cases of the transformation of the industrial corridor in New York can be used as a supplement to the analysis process. The case provides ideas for how to change the industrial land into other land use types and how to maximize the public value of Damen Silos.

Related data:
City of Chicago: Zoning and Land Use Map
https://gisapps.chicago.gov/ZoningMapWeb/?liab=1&config=zoning

3. **Industrial activities and community health.**

A closer look at the industrial usage of the Pilsen Industrial Corridor includes marking the address, area, and type of existing industry facilities on map, it can

show whether the industrial activity poses a potential health risk to the surrounding communities.

Communities around Damen Silos

Damen Silos is located in the south edge of the Pilsen community and surrounded by the Bridgeport community and McKinley Park community, which are three very different communities with their own uniqueness.

Since the 1970's, Pilsen has been identified as a Latino community and residents have consistently been engaged in strengthening and building upon that identity. Pilsen has many assets including its history and strong community identity, proximity to Chicago's downtown business district, accessibility to public transportation, affordable housing.

Bridgeport was historically a white immigrant community and once known for its racial intolerance, today it ranks as one of the city's most diverse neighborhoods. In a sense, Bridgeport "bridges" the gap between many diverse ethnic groups. The cultures include Irish, Italian-Americans, Lithuanian-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and Mexican-Americans.

McKinley Park has served as an important job center with significant portions of its land designated for industrial activity. Today, McKinley Park's location continues to play an important role in attracting businesses, residents, and visitors.

As the most important part of the study, I will use data from Census Explorer and Chicago Data Portal to summarize and compare demographics, workforce characteristics, and community institutions within the three communities. These are important aspects to understand the diversity of these communities and people's quality of life within these areas.

1. **valuate population diversity**

   Data from Census Explorer can be used to analyze population composition of age, gender and races. This includes the data from 1970 to 2020 to show the existing situation and the historical trend. Related data may also include population density and distribution of races showing in the form of mapping and chart.

   Chicago Community Area (CCA) CDS data
   https://datahub.cmap.illinois.gov/dataset/community-data-snapshots-raw-data/resource/8c4e096e-c90c-4bef-9cf1-9028d094296e

2. **Evaluate social-economic diversity**

   The socio-economic factors include income, employment, and housing within the community. This part will focus on more updated information from 2015 to 2020. This will combine with demographic data to explore the existing inequality of wealth distribution and population segregation. The output will be

shown by chart and mapping. Besides, the employment related data will include Occupation statistics and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES).

3. **Evaluate community institutions in community**

In order to identify the gap of public institutions services in the community, this part of the study focuses on the location and quantity of medical, educational and public recreational spaces. Related statistics will include education Level of the demographics in the form of charts. The location, area and service radius are related indicators for the shortage or oversupply of public facilities, which will be shown in mapping.

Related data:
Parks - Chicago Park District Facilities (current)
https://data.cityofchicago.org/Parks-Recreation/Parks-Chicago-Park-District-Facilities-current-/5yyk-qt9y

Data synthesis and comparison

1. **Location for the park**

- The analysis of the industrial context of the site provides us a general understanding whether the relationship between the Pilsen Industrial Corridor and its surrounding communities is positive or negative, Thus we will know the potential value of transforming the Damen Silos into a public recreation space.
- The distribution of community institutions demonstrates the type and amount of community public resources available to residents within the community, which can also be an indicator for the location selection of the park.
- Harmful industrial activities and similar green spaces within the community can further help to choose the right location of the park.

2. **Program within the park**

- Gender and age analysis can combine with education and health services within the community for program arrangement in the park.
- Knowing the population of different races and their distribution can help to customize landscape design and diverse landscape activities. Thus, it helps to create an inclusive public environment.

Summary

In conclusion, the purpose of this study is to figure out the specific needs from the surrounding communities and customize landscape design for an inclusive and dynamic public park. By analyzing and comparing the population, industrial facilities and public facilities within the site, so as to determine the location of the park and the

arrangement of activities within the park. The goal is to make the abandoned site a public space where residents can truly interact with each other.

With the pace of globalization all over the world, it's hard to design a public space without considering its larger site context. My research is focused on a small scale of three communities, which is not enough to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social-economy activities around Damen Silos. However, since the three communities will be the most important users for this public park, my study can still serve as a useful tool for landscape architects to explore inclusive landscapes and promote social diversity.